Chapter One
Contexts: The Frontier, William Burroughs and the Cold War

The purpose of this opening chapter is to define the key terms of the thesis, as suggested by its title: William Burroughs and the American Frontier. The first section will concentrate on tracing the shifting definitions of the frontier, with particular attention paid to definitions relating to American history, culture and literature. The second section, which centres on defining "William Burroughs", discusses the theoretical debate over authorship, places William Burroughs in the context, to quote Susan Howe, of "family, history and ideology", and reviews the critical constructions of William Burroughs as pioneer.[1] The final section provides a historical context for Burroughs' writing in the 1950s, by relating Burroughs' reading of Count Alfred Korzybski, Oswald Spengler and Wilhelm Reich to key themes in American post-war society.

I: The American Frontier

As Elliot West suggests in his essay "American Frontier", the word "frontier" is one of the most "evocative and elusive" words in the "American idiom".[2] It is a word that must be handled carefully, since it has many interrelated, but often contradictory, meanings. In this study, the term "frontier" will be deliberately used in a variety of different ways. The frontier will be seen as a literal location, a geographic area at which a frontier is situated. The frontier is also represented as an on-going historical process, one which moves through and effects geographical regions but is not tied to them. The definitions of "frontier" employed here relate not only to external, geographical space, but also to "inner space", the unexplored areas of consciousness which William Burroughs has claimed to be moving through.[3] It will also be seen as a metaphoric location, both as an indeterminate no man's land between binary opposites, and as the borderline which separates those opposites. Since the primary subject of this study is a novelist, the term "frontier" will also be used in relation to literary experimentation, and to describe the treatment, within literary texts, of genre, authorship and identity. Such an open-ended approach clearly has its dangers, and it is therefore necessary to provide an overview of previous definitions of frontiers, so that the definitions used here are placed in their proper historical context.

The "Frontier" in New Western History

The definition of the word "frontier" has always been an area of critical debate, but in the last ten years that debate has intensified considerably, and in particular, it has intensified with regard to definitions of an "American frontier". This debate has centred on the transition taking place within scholarship on the American West between what is termed "Old Western History" and "New Western History". As with

most critical debates, a simplistic depiction of a struggle between opposed groups, here the "Old" and "New" Western Historians, detracts attention from interesting continuities and conflicts between and within the opposing groups. Nonetheless, it can certainly be stated that a key group of historians writing on the American West, particularly Patricia Limerick, Donald Worster and William G. Robbins, have expressed the need for a paradigm shift in understanding the history of the region. One important aspect of the shift they propose is to question the usefulness of the term "frontier" in describing historical developments within the American West.

The "Old Western" school is closely associated with Frederick Jackson Turner, who gave the most famous definition of the American frontier in his 1893 essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History".[4] Patricia Limerick describes Turner's essay as the "cornerstone of the Old Western History".[5] Turner claimed that he wrote "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" in response to a "bulletin" put out in 1890 by the "Superintendent of the Census".[6] This "brief official statement", quoted by Turner, declared that the "frontier of settlement" had been "so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement" that the "frontier line" could no longer "have a place in the census reports."[7] Turner, writing only three years after this declaration, was already writing in nostalgic vein for the frontier that he felt was now closed forever. The closure of the frontier was, Turner wrote, a "great historic movement."[8] To the New Western Historians, this nostalgic perspective is deeply problematic, and Turner's thesis, which until recently has served as the most consistent framework for both populist and critical conceptions of the frontier, is considered an inadequate model, a "quaint and mythical" reminder of "a different national mood."[9]

Turner's emphasis, in "The Significance of the American Frontier in History", was on the frontier as process, and that process involved, in Turner's account, the

forming of the American character, and the gradual breaking of ties with Europe. "The frontier", he wrote, "is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization."[10] Linked to this process of Americanization was the transforming effect of the "wilderness", and of the "simplicity of the primitive society", which the newly arrived Europeans encountered at the frontier.[11] The wilderness took the "European" and stripped the "garments" of his "civilization".[12] In adopting to the wilderness, Turner argued, the "colonist" was forced to turn native: he planted "Indian corn", shouted "the war cry" and followed "the Indian trail."[13] This "continuous" interaction with the "simplicity of primitive life" had meant that, up until the 1890 census report, "American social development" had "been continually beginning over again on the frontier."[14] The frontier was therefore connected, in Turner's reading, with the idea of "perennial rebirth", the recurrent transformation, by immersion into the primitive Indian society and the wilderness, of the American identity.[15] Turner's romanticization of the process of Americanization has been severely criticised by the New Western Historians, notably Donald Worster, who claims that Turner's "strong patriotic impulses" blinded him to the "shameful side of the westward movement".[16]

Turner's frontier model was based on dualistic formulations. He presented the American frontier, for example, as the "meeting point between savagery and civilization."[17] While Turner romanticized the influence of native Americans on the process of Americanization, they nonetheless remained the savage other, who were, even in Turner's stirringly celebratory reading, not only to be emulated by the colonist but also to be conquered. As Gerald Thompsom notes, in his essay "Pioneer Ideals and the State University" Turner stated that the "first ideal of the pioneer was that of conquest", and that his "task was to fight with nature for the chance to exist."[18] The "mountainous ramparts", the "desolate grass-clad prairies", the "arid deserts," and "a fierce race of savages" all had "to be met and defeated."[19] As Richard White and

Annette Kolodny have pointed out, Turner's bifurcated model of the frontier was gendered. The Old Western Historians "culturally coded" the "far side" of the frontier as "feminine".[20] The land beyond the frontier was "virgin", awaiting its "white American groom."[21] As Kolodny points out, Turner metaphorically linked the virgin land, an untouched woman, with the "hope of rebirth and regeneration".[22] As with Turner's romanticisation of the Indian "savages", however, there was a darker side to the pursuit of "regeneration", since the story told by the Old Western Historians, as White points out, concerned the masculine attempt to "overcome and dominate a feminine nature."[23]

The shift in perspective from the Old to the New Western Historians can be explained, partially at least, in terms of shifting political attitudes towards and within the American West. According to Limerick, Turner's frontier thesis, with its mythic, nostalgic reaffirmation of American exceptionalism, was "trounced in the 1930s and 1940s", and indeed the 1950s, notably by Fred A. Shannon, Henry Nash Smith and Earl Pomeroy.[24] However, being well suited "for carrying the ideological freight of the cold war", the Turner thesis was, in Limerick's words, "pulled out on the road again" in the 1950s, only to "run full tilt into the 1960s".[25] It was the 1960s, with its cultural currents of disillusion and discontent, that provided the emotional basis for the New Western History. William G. Robbins, in his essay "The Emergence of New Paradigms", quotes William Howarth: "After Dallas and Vietnam it was hard to admire gunfighters or new frontiers [...] Today, the Western news is of dying farms and toxic dumps, the latest detonation at Ground Zero."[26] Faced with changed political and historical circumstances, the New Western Historians turned away from the dualistic, mythic frontier presented by Turner, and employed instead theoretical models that stressed, to quote William G. Robbins, "race, class, capitalism and related themes."[27] Limerick, citing "Thomas Kuhn's model of paradigm shifts", claims that by

the late 1970s, the "pressures had built up on the fault lines" of the "old" Turnerian "paradigm" and "something had to give."[28]   According to Limerick, new research conducted in the areas of Indian, Chicano, Asian-American, feminist, environmental, legal, social and urban history constituted the "principal force" that heightened the "abundant tensions along the fault line of the frontier model."[29]

One of the primary shifts in perspective suggested by the New Western Historians has been their movement away from the term "frontier". As Limerick suggests, Turner left his own definition "curiously befogged", first offering, in Limerick's description, a "clear and concrete definition"[30], the "frontier" as "a place occupied by fewer than two people per square mile", but then immediately arguing that the term was "an elastic one" that did not require "sharp definition".[31] In practice, Limerick argues, the term "frontier" is "nationalistic and often racist" when "clearly and precisely defined", being, "in essence, the area where white people get scarce".[32] When it is used without these ethnocentric connotations, it "loses", according to Limerick, "an exact definition".[33] Instead, Limerick proposes a "number of terms" to "characterize the process that shaped" the West: "invasion, conquest, colonization, exploitation, development, expansion of the world market."[34] These definitions allow the study of an on-going process shaping the history of the American West, which continued after Turner's closure of the frontier in 1893, and indeed, continues today.

There are two possible responses to Limerick's disavowal of the term "frontier". The first, followed by Annette Kolodny in her essay "Letting Go Our Grand Obsessions: Notes Toward a New Literary History of the American Frontiers" (1992), is to propose a non-Eurocentric definition of "frontier". Kolodny defines the frontier as a "locus of first cultural contact".[35] Such a definition of "frontier" widens to include frontier environments in which there was no European involvement. Kolodny describes the "frontier processes in pre-colonial America", in which, for example,

"Pueblo-dwelling agriculturists and Apachean hunter-collectors confronted one another in present-day New Mexico and Arizona."[36] Mary Louise Pratt suggests a similar conception of a "contact zone" in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), although she differentiates between a "contact zone" and a "colonial frontier", which she perceives to be "grounded within a European expansionist perspective".[37] Another non-Eurocentric definition is provided by Gloria Anzaldúa, in *Borderlands|La Frontera* (1987). Anzaldúa uses the term "borderlands", rather than "frontier", to describe not only a geographic "contact zone", the "Texas - U.S. Southwest / Mexican border", but also to describe areas of contact between different genders, psychologies, races, classes, and languages.[38]

The second possible response to Limerick's refusal of the term "frontier" is suggested by Michael P. Malone in his essay "Beyond the Last Frontier". Malone advocates a global perspective for the study of the frontier process, so as to "see beyond the introspectiveness of Turner's America."[39] Malone draws attention, for example, to the work of L.S. Stavrianos. In *Global Shift* (1982), Stavrianos depicted "wave after wave of capitalistic expansionism radiating out of the core metropolis of northwestern Europe, reducing first eastern Europe to 'third world' or economically colonial status, then the Americas, finally the long established civilizations of India, Russia and China, and the nearly impenetrable heartland of Central Africa."[40] To Stavrianos, writes Malone, the "key fact of modern history" has been this pattern of "European conquest".[41] Using such a global modal, the ethnocentrism that Limerick finds inherent in the term "frontier" becomes once more vital to its meaning. That is, the "frontier" process that Turner traces across the American continent can be seen as a wider process of European colonization, beginning, as Walter Nugent suggests, with the Norse expansion into Iceland and Greenland, and including the attempted white American expansion into Mexico, the Pacific Rim and South America.[42] Given the

primary subject of this thesis is a white, male, upper-middle class WASP writer, William Burroughs, it is inevitable that the term "frontier" will most often be employed here in its ethnocentric incarnation. This definition of the "frontier", directly linked to white European and later white American imperialism, will be applied, for example, to Burroughs' residency in Mexico City, and his expeditions into South America, recorded in his correspondence and fictionalised in *The Yage Letters* (1963).

Such a model, however, raises in turn further questions. What meaning, for example, does the term "frontier", used in this ethnocentric sense, have in the post-colonial world? Malone notes that Stavrianos' global history concludes with the "successful struggle", after World War I, "of one third world after another to break the bonds of colonialism."[43] Do such successful struggles mean the end of the frontier process? Further, if the definition of frontier as the often violent, colonializing extension of an economic frontier, closely linked to European capitalist expansion, is accepted, is it possible, as Gerald Thompson asks in his essay "Another Look at Frontier/Western Historiography", to trace the progress of that "capitalistic frontier" when capitalism exerts its influence globally? Thompson suggests that such a frontier might be said to exist in "Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea", although Thompson himself finds such a conception of the frontier, as "a synonym for 'modernization'", to be "so far-flung as to be almost meaningless."[44] Malone notes that in Immanuel Wallerstein's interpretation, the "capitalist 'world-economy'", which arose out of "the crisis of feudalism in Europe during 1300-1450", dominated in turn by the Dutch, the British, and the Americans, had created a "world system" that has:

> come to encompass the earth, dividing it into 'core' and 'periphery' zones
> of commodity linkages that cross national boundaries and through which
> various states in turn have prospered at the expense of others.[45]

No longer linked only to national or continental expansion, are the ever shifting outposts of the global economy no longer frontiers? This question will be raised when

Burroughs' residency in Tangier is considered. Tangier, intermittently a colonial outpost throughout its history, was an International Zone from 1925 to 1956. The city's status as, to quote Iain Finlayson, a "free foreign exchange" while under "international administration" ensured it was, prior to its loss of international status, a conduit for foreign capital, and was therefore also briefly, in Malone's reading, a trans-national capitalist frontier.[46]

The Frontier in American Literature and Culture

Related to the New Western Historians' disavowal of the term "frontier" is their attempt to de-mythicize frontier history. Donald Worster, for example, writes of creating a "new history, clear-eyed, de-mythologized and critical."[47] To de-mythologize the history of the American West, to quote Limerick, is to re-perceive the region as a "real place"[48]. Freed from Turner's dualistic model, the New Western Historian, following Kolodny, Pratt and Anzaldúa, is freed, for example, to explore the complexities of gender and race in the American West. In this manner, the new historians aim to do what the wave of white European and American expansionists, and indeed the white European and American mythologizers of history, did not do: that is, appreciate difference.

As Renato Rosaldo notes in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (1993), such "demystifying approaches have proven their value."[49] However, Rosaldo continues, these approaches "all too often short-circuit their analyses by rushing to reveal the 'real' interests", the "real class interests" or "underlying social strains", and fail to "show how ideology convinces those caught in its thrall."[50] The methodology employed in this thesis, however, is somewhat different. The focus here is on a Euro-centric, or, more precisely, on a white, male, upper-middle, WASP-American perspective, on the term "frontier", and the intention is to show the continuing effects of white American mythology in the twentieth century. As Richard Slotkin notes in *Regeneration Through Violence* (1973), through myths "the psychology and world view of our cultural ancestors are transmitted to modern

descendants, in such a way and with such power that our perception of contemporary reality and our ability to function in the world are directly, often tragically, affected."[51] A parallel point is made by Michael Taussig in *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man* (1986). Taussig argues that it is impossible to understand the machinations of colonial power in the Putamayo rubber boom without also understanding the "mythology of imperialism".[52] To simply de-mythologize, to employ the "petrified dogmas of historical materialism", is not enough.[53] Taussig instead follows Conrad's methodology in "dealing with the terror of the rubber boom in the Congo": "*to penetrate the veil while retaining its hallucinatory quality*."[54] That is, to attempt "a combined action of reduction *and* revelation - the hermeneutics of suspicion and of revelation in an act of mythic subversion inspired by the mythology of imperialism itself."[55]

As Patricia Limerick acknowledges in her essay "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century" (1994), despite the attempts of New Western Historians, the term "frontier" is still used with extraordinary abandon, and the mythicized version of American frontier life continues to live on in advertisements, theme parks, movies, newspaper headlines and presidential speeches.[56] Limerick, Slotkin and William V. Spanos all note, for example, the strategic employment of frontier rhetoric during the Vietnam offensive, most particularly in President Kennedy's famous "New Frontier" speech. Kennedy placed the American people at the "new frontier", beyond which lay "the uncharted areas of science and space, unsolved problems of peace and war, unconquered pockets of ignorance and prejudice, unanswered questions of poverty and surplus".[57] Kennedy here was evoking the frontier as the unknown future, the "frontier of the 1960s - a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils - a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats."[58] Kennedy's somewhat conflicted mixture of optimism and dread seems "composed", as Limerick

notes, of "Buffalo Bill Cody and Frederick Jackson Turner" in "equal parts": the "frontier of violence and inverted conquest, in which innocent Americans defended themselves against the attacks of savages" uneasily combined with the vision of "peaceful, pastoral Americans seeking a better world."[59] This paradoxical evocation prefigured the equally conflicted Vietnam offensive.

In *The Errant Art of Moby Dick* (1995), William V. Spanos claims that the Vietnam offensive was "conducted in terms of the very self-representation of America", and the frontier mythology was a vital element in that "self-representation".[60] According to Spanos, this "naturalized cultural imaginary", the "origins" of which Spanos places in the "Puritan theological/theocratic 'errand in the wilderness'", and whose development he briefly traces through figures as diverse as Daniel Boone and Ralph Waldo Emerson, has been "institutionalised by the American culture industry", both the "information media" and the "institutions of learning".[61] Spanos argues that the field of "American literary studies" has been part of a wider process that has "served to legitimate and reproduce the power of the dominant socio-political order both in the United States and abroad."[62] The assumptions made about the frontier in literary criticism, therefore, need to be interrogated as carefully as those made by historians or politicians.

Spanos' solution to this dilemma is to distance himself from those "Americanist" critics who have "remained too parochially within the framework of the Americanist cultural discourse they would interrogate."[63] In practice, this means Spanos adopts the "estranging perspective" of European theoretical models, notably Foucault and Heiddeger, to "interrogate", as if from outside, American cultural discourse.[64] While such a position is perfectly valid, it is not the position adopted by this thesis. Spanos' acknowledgment of the importance of Richard Slotkin's work on early American frontier literature confirms that to adopt an Americanist position is not necessarily to

adopt an apologist position with regards to white American culture.[65] Indeed, as Susan Howe suggests in *The Birth-mark*, to adopt a Foucauldian model, based on European post-Enlightenment history, to discuss twentieth century American history, is to disregard the important historical and cultural differences between two distinct periods and places.[66] In *Terrible Honesty*, Ann Douglas defends her position as an "Americanist" by noting the "tangible and unique mission" of the American nation, "concocted of unlimited resources, theological obsessions" and a "multiracial and polyglot population".[67] Douglas acknowledges that the assertion of American exceptionalism runs counter to "much current academic opinion", but her work, along with Susan Howe's *The Birth-mark*, which draws upon Americanist critics, from D.H. Lawrence, Charles Olson, Richard Slotkin and Douglas, proves the existence of an on-going Americanist tradition.[68] The particular emphasis in this thesis is on the work of Leslie Fiedler, Richard Slotkin, Annette Kolodny and Howe, who have established the importance of the frontier as an important aspect of the "tangible and unique" white American experience, without evading the destructive elements of that experience, or the limits of its understanding.[69] To establish those limits of understanding in this thesis, non-white American perspectives, such as those offered by Gloria Anzaldúa, D.Emily Hicks, Edward Said and Deleuze and Guattari, will be examined alongside these Americanist models.

Leslie Fiedler, in *The Return of the Vanishing American* (1968), claims that "geography in the United States is mythological" and traces the mythological meaning of westward expansion back to depictions of the West, as "the forbidden and impossible fourth quarter of the globe", in European literature.[70] He claims that the European perception of the West was dualistic, with the West being viewed both as "the place of escape from pain and death, the infinitely desirable garden", and also the "forbidden garden, the haven denied to fallen man by a just God, a paradise lost

irrevocably as long as human history endured."[71] In *Regeneration Through Violence*, Richard Slotkin reiterates Fiedler's claim about the dualistic nature of European perceptions of the West, but concentrates on the creation, in the early captivity narratives, and frontier hero myths such as those of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, of the mythology of the white American nation. Slotkin argues that the mythology created was based on the "hunter myth", in which the "relationship between man and nature" is "that of hunter to prey", and the "final expression of such a relationship is the "domination, destruction and absorption of one by the other."[72] Annette Kolodny, in *The Lay of the Land*, argues similarly that the white male perception of the American continent as a fecund, boundaryless woman was preliminary to, and indeed part of the same process as, the conquest and exploitation of the land.[73]

In *Love and Death in the American Novel*, Fiedler argues, in a move that both continues and complicates Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis, that the frontier is a visual representation of the "breach" in the "American psyche" between "consciousness unconsciousness, reason and impulse, society and nature."[74] Similarly, in *Regeneration Through Violence*, Slotkin claims that the root for American frontier mythology is in the conflict, enacted in Greek mythology, between pre-Olympian maternal deities and patriarchal society, represented by Zeus.[75] Slotkin relates this mythological conflict to the psychological relationship between "the male and female sexual principles", and the "conscious and unconscious realms of the mind."[76] To both Fielder and Slotkin, then, the frontier is not only, as in Turner's reading, the westward-moving focus point for the creation of the white American identity, but the symbol of crippling divisions within the white American identity.[77] The binary oppositions that provided the framework for Turner's thesis are still in place, however, as is the implicit assumption that the "American psyche" is white, and male.[78] Like Turner, Fiedler genders the binary oppositions he uses.[79] For example, "civilization", which

Fiedler links to the "pale, genteel women busy in schools and churches", is opposed to wilderness and savagery, which is found by his male protagonists either beyond the frontier, or in foreign lands.[80]   As with Turner, in Fiedler's reading of westward expansion the meeting with the "savage" other is of central importance. In *The Return of the Vanishing American*, Fiedler claims that the "Western story in archetypal form" concerns the "confrontation in the wilderness of a transplanted WASP and a radically alien other, an Indian".[81]   The meeting between "WASP" and "alien other" leads "either to a metamorphosis of the WASP into something neither White nor Red", or "else to the annihilation of the Indian".[82]   Fiedler's emphasis on the meeting between "WASP" and "alien other" will be returned to in the discussions, later in the thesis, of the depictions of Mexicans, South American Indians and of the Arabian inhabitants of Tangier in Burroughs' fiction and correspondence.

In *Border Writing: The Multidimensional Text*, D.Emily Hicks offers a more contemporary, and multi-cultural, analysis of the representation of frontiers in literature. Like Anzaldúa, Hicks presents borders formed out of "heterogeneous cultures", in which the "cultures of Europe and the United States" are not conceived of as "fundamental cultural models."[83] While in Fiedler's "western" story, the "transplanted WASP" meets the "radically alien other", the "Indian", in "the wilderness"[84], Hicks refuses the fixity of this "middle-class, Western cultural" perspective, the "metonymic reduction in which a white, male, Western 'subject' dominates an object."[85]   Hicks' range of reference is far more culturally diverse than Fiedler's, combining readings of Latin American writers, including Gabriel García Márquez, Luisa Valenzuela and Julio Cortázar, with an understanding of the "border text" derived, in part at least, from European post-structualists critics Deleuze and Guattari.[86]   As Neil Larsen suggests in his "Foreword" to *Border Writing*, Hicks' project is, in part, an examination of ways in which to "think about culture" without

employing rigid notions of "national culture."[87] Indeed, Hicks claims to be addressing "cultural, not physical, borders", and she further argues that "the sensibility that informs border literature can exist among guest workers anywhere, including European countries in which the country of origin does not share a physical border with the host country."[88] To cross a border, in Hick's reading, is to "cross over into another set of referential codes."[89] Central to Hicks' analysis, and an important point of distinction between her reading of the "border" and Fiedler's, is the notion of "deterritorialization", taken from Deleuze and Guattari. Hicks links deterritorialization to the "decentered subject", using Paul de Man's notion that the "dismemberment of the body corresponds to dismemberment of language 'as meaning-tropes are replaced by fragmentation' into words, syllables, and letters."[90] The "nineteenth century notion European notion of the subject", in Hicks' brief historical overview, is replaced by the border writer's "fragmentation in cultural, linguistic and political deterritorialization."[91] The notion of "deterritorialization" will be employed in discussing the deconstruction of identity which was closely related to Burroughs' adoption of the cut-up technique.[92]

Closely related to Deluze and Guattari's notion of "deterritorialization" is Edward Said's advocacy of "exile", particularly in relation to ideas of nationhood.[93] In *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994), Said declares exile to be "one of the saddest fates."[94] Said argues that exile is not only an "*actual* condition", but also a "*metaphorical*" one.[95] In its "metaphysical sense", exile is related to "restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others."[96] The exile, in Said's account, "cannot go back to some earlier and perhaps more stable condition of being at home", but also "can never fully arrive", or "be at one" with a "new home or situation."[97] Having argued that exile is "one of the saddest fates", Said somewhat reverses his judgment by claiming that the "intellectual as exile" often "tends to be

happy with the idea of unhappiness, so that dissatisfaction bordering on dyspepsia, a kind of curmudgeonly disagreeableness, can become not only a style of thought, but also a new, if temporary habitation."[98]   There are, then, positive elements to derive from exile and marginality. "Even if one is not an actual immigrant or expatriate", Said argues, "it is still possible to think as one, to imagine and investigate in spite of barriers, and always to move away from the centralizing authorities towards the margins", where the exile has a perspective denied to those who "have never travelled beyond the conventional and the comfortable."[99]   The unfixed exilic self can also be freed from the constrictions of national identity, and begin to understand other cultures and value systems. In Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands|La Frontera*, the version of self that is proposed, formed out of Anzaldúa's own experiences of "straddling" the "*tejas*-Mexican border", is capable of existing "on borders and in margins," of keeping intact "one's shifting and multiple identity".[100] In the frontier environment Anzaldúa presents us with, there are no singular ideas of nationhood, and language and culture are hybridised.[101]   Edward Said argues, in a distinct echo of both Anzaldúa and Deleuze and Guattari, that a frontier self might emerge from "the negative and unofficial, or perhaps anti-official sphere," which Said connects to "the politics of exile, immigration, the crossing of borders, heterogeneity, hybridity."[102] The "exilic wanderer" Said proposes would cross "forbidden territory with sympathetic adaptation rather than stubborn assertions of identity."[103]

It is important to note the differences in presentations of exile in the work of Fiedler, Deleuze and Guattari, and Said. While Said's definition of exile is based on loosening ties between the exile and his/her country of origin, Fiedler's presentation of exile is applied only within certain limits, limits closely related to gender, class and race. The exile in the "homoerotic Western" presented in *Love and Death in the American Novel* is described as the "questing lover", a "renegade from respectability

and belongingness".[104]   According to Fiedler, this American archetypal hero is "a surrogate for the artist, the articulate man [...] whose tale is presented typically in the form of a first person narrative, journal diary, or running reminiscence".[105]   He is the "artist projected as a pariah".[106] "Typically white and Anglo Saxon", Fiedler's fleeing exile is a "disaffected child of the reigning race and class."[107]   His archetypal story, then, almost exclusively concerns the negotiation of a middle, or upper-middle class, white American inheritance.

Another point of difference between Fiedler and Said's presentation of exile concerns their respective pessimism and relative optimism about the positive aspects of exile. This difference can be highlighted by examining their respective approaches to *Moby Dick*. Said sees Captain Ahab as an "allegorical representation of the American world quest", since Ahab, like America, is "obsessed, compelling, unstoppable, completely wrapped up in his own rhetorical justification and his sense of cosmic symbolism."[108] *Moby Dick* is therefore placed by Said in the context of the territorial expansion of the United States, and in particular its "offshore" expansion, which "ranged from the North African coast to the Philippines, China, Hawaii", and encompassed "the Caribbean and Central America."[109]   It is precisely against such imperialist expansion, seen by the imperialists themselves as natural, that Said proposes the "standpoint" of "exile". One "advantage" of the exiled "standpoint", Said argues, is the ability to see "situations as contingent", as the "result of a series of historical choices made by men and women," not "as natural or god-given, therefore unchangeable, permanent, irreversible."[110] Fiedler, by contrast, "obsessed, compelling, unstoppable, completely wrapped up in his own rhetorical justification and his sense of cosmic symbolism", presents a mythological system in which Captain Ahab, and all that he represents, is presented as an inevitability.[111] In Fiedler's reading of *Moby Dick*, Ahab is closely associated to the two central themes of American fiction: the

"substitution of terror for love" and the "Faustian commitment", that is, the "pact with Satan".[112] Fiedler evokes the relationship between Ahab and Fedellah as the novel's Satanic pact.[113] Fiedler's universalizing pessimism, which may derive from his reliance on Freud, often becomes dogmatic, and his reading of *Moby Dick* is unbalanced by his insistence on the centrality of the Faustian commitment, and thereby the centrality of Ahab to the novel. This insistence detracts attention away from Ishmael, the exile of *Moby Dick*, and the set of positive possibilities, in political, psychological and cultural terms, that Ishamel represents.

A further point of difference between Fiedler and Deleuze and Guattari concern their differing responses to psychoanalytical theory. Fiedler's adoption of the Freudian psychoanalytical model, based on Freud's readings of Greek mythologies, contrasts with the repudiation of mythology, and of the "daddy-mommy" of oedipalization it presents as inevitable, found in Deleuze and Guattari's work.[114] According to Deleuze and Guattari, in its indebtedness to mythology, psychoanalysis had "become very dismal, very sad, quite interminable, with everything decided in advance."[115] In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari propose nomadic wandering as an alternative to the constrictions of the Freudian Oedipal family romance. According to D.Emily Hicks, Deleuze and Guattari believe a "border family" should replace the "Oedipal family structure".[116] In Robin Lydenberg' paraphrase of their work, they use the phrase "deterritorilization" to describe the process of transition from "the restrictive channeling of desire" within the "enclosed theater of the family", with its "rigid configurations of oedipal conflict and castration fear," to a "model for a machinery of desire which would produce continuous pulsations, flows and breaks in every realm of human and non-human activity."[117] While Deleuze and Guattari propose a deconstruction of oedipalized norms, and refuse to employ Freudian terminology, Fiedler's version of exile is rooted in a Freudian family romance of white middle class

American society. Indeed, the most recurrent source of binary terms in *Love and Death in the American Novel* is not Frederick Jackson Turner but Freud. Fiedler, for example, recurrently opposes the Freudian "ego", the "thinking self", to "its rejected impulses", represented by "the id."[118] Fiedler's Freudianization of American literature provides *Love and Death in the American Novel* with its strangely exuberant energy, its exasperating exclusivity, and its inherent instabilities. Since Fiedler's criticism will be used extensively in this thesis, it is important to explain how his work will be used, and to deal with the objections that can be raised against it.

Fiedler's reliance on Freud is problematic for two particular reasons. The first is the cultural specificity of Freud's theories of psychoanalysis. As Ann Douglas notes, Freud's "family romance", the "tortured triangle of mother, father and child" called the "Oedipus complex", was derived from his study of "the educated and affluent white Viennese bourgeoisie, turn of the century Europeans", living in a "form of what we now call the nuclear family."[119] This "traditional unit of two parents and their offspring" was, in Douglas' words, Freud's "most basic reality grid", and lead to Freud's pessimistic and claustrophobic conclusion that a "child's possibilities of development were seen as restricted to whatever resources and pathologies his parents possessed."[120] As Douglas goes on to note, Freud's psychoanalytical framework is not necessarily at all useful in understanding social groups whose family structures differ from this pattern.[121]

The second problematic area is Fiedler's Freudianized treatment of gender.[122] Nina Baym, in her essay "Melodramas of Beset Manhood" argues that Fiedler constructed a myth system in *Love and Death in the American Novel* that relates only to white, middle class, males. Indeed, Fiedler often comes across as the Captain Ahab of American literary criticism, its monomaniac obsessive, possessed by his own myth, seeking to defy anything which does not come within its limited circumference.

Fiedler's myth of American fiction excludes women by seeing them only as symbols of a "encroaching, constricting, destroying society".[123] A partial explanation for Fiedler's exclusivity can be traced back to his reliance on Freud, and to Freud's own masculinizing tendencies. Ann Douglas contends that Freud's writings were a "detour around his compulsive interest in the secrets of the mother by way of an induced obsession with the father".[124] In *Terrible Honesty*, Douglas relates Freud's matrophobia to his selective employment of the Greek mythology that served as the framework of his psychoanalytical theories. The central tenet of Freudian psychoanalysis, the Oedipal complex, was based on Sophocle's play, *Oedipus Rex*. From his reading of *Oedipus Rex*, Freud fashioned his theory: "as Oedipus had killed his father, Lauis, and married his mother, Jocasta, all men want to murder their fathers and bed their mothers."[125] This reading, Douglas argues, creates a theory rooted in "masculine struggle", since in Freud's understanding of *Oedipus Rex*, "father and son compete *for* the mother, not *with* her."[126] In *Totem and Taboo* (1913), for example, Freud presents a myth of origin in which the "first father" is murdered by a "horde" of his sons.[127] The sons kill and then eat the father, but are then "overcome by guilt and begin to worship him as God", in what Freud describes as an act of "deferred obedience."[128] The myth of origin is then a story of "male authority and male conflict, male transgression and male retribution."[129] The wives and mothers, over whom the fathers and sons fight, are nameless, and passive.[130]

The Greek mythologies, from which Freud, and indeed Fiedler and Slotkin, borrow, enact the myth of the Fall, which has been vital to Western thought. In the case of Slotkin's mythic transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, the fall is from "gratification" into "responsibility".[131] According to Slotkin, the "chief misery" of the fall is the "loss of the foetal or infantile relationship to the life source".[132] In Freud's writings in particular, however, there is a curious reluctance to discuss the earliest

period of infancy, which would relate to this mythic fall from gratification. There is, however, an "alternate scenario" for the myth of origin, which, according to Douglas, Freud "constantly rearranged and buried but never altogether omitted."[133] This alternative scenario can be found in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy, which predated the *Oedipus* cycle "by several decades."[134] In this myth of origin, one of the first father's wives "goads and possibly seduces" her youngest son into killing his father.[135] According to Douglas, the "most logical explanation" for the mother's involvement in the "murder of the father" is that "she was avenging her own loss of superior status."[136] In Douglas' reading, Freud "refused to scrutinise the *Orestia*" because of its matriarchal, and matricidal, plot-line.[137] Freud's preference for the male-centred Oedipus narrative, Douglas argues, suggests that he "could not place the mother" within his theories "because he literally could not face her."[138] In *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West* (1990), Jane Flax makes a similar claim, arguing that Freud's theory of the oedipal conflict with the father is "in part a defence against deeper terrors".[139] The real terror is the threat of the "return of the repressed mother world", against which the father becomes an ally, rather than a foe.[140] Flax notes Freud's claim in "Civilization and its Discontents" (1930) that he "cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection."[141] In Flax's reading, therefore, the "dread of castration", which according to Freud arises in the oedipal phase, is "in part a displacement of more primitive and deeply buried anxieties": the "fears of annihilation, loss of love, our aggression and rage at the mother for her autonomy and power over us, and our desire to take that power for ourselves."[142]

As Ann Douglas suggests, however, despite these internal suppressions and contradictions, or, indeed, because of them, Freud's presentation of the "exchange and struggle between masculine and feminine elements" does provide a "blue print" by

which to understand the internal machinations of white American middle class society.[143] "From its beginning", Ann Douglas argues, "American history" has been "marked by a polarized gender dynamic of action and reaction not dissimilar to the one Freud sketched in his anthropological fables: eras of masculinzation engendered eras of feminization and vice versa, in an apparently endless series."[144] In nineteenth century white American middle-class society, the divisions between the sexes were rigidly demarcated. The women, as Ann Douglas notes, might have been "supreme" within their "own sphere", "the home, the church, and the patronage of the fine arts", but the men "ruled the marketplace, the frontier, and the city streets", and could develop their own "highly masculinized cultural enterprises there".[145] There were important exceptions to these rules, but essentially the rule of opposition was strongly in force: there was a mother's world, and a father's world.[146]

Douglas' work provides a critical overview of the transition between Calvinism and Victorian sentimentalism, a transition she interprets as a transition from masculinzation to feminization. The "Puritan fathers", in their attempt to "protect a highly masculine theology from corruption", had separated from England, the "mother" country.[147] The Victorian era, with its "courted susceptibility to sentimentalism, nostalgia, and guilt", and its "unprecedented transfer of cultural power from masculine to feminine hands", was a "delayed reaction" to the act of matricide in which America had been first taken.[148] The period was characterized by "deferred obedience", to use Freud's formulation, to the murdered mother.[149] In the cultural shift of the Victorian period, the "masculine vision of history" as a "series of political and economic facts enacted and marshaled by men" was replaced by "a feminine view of social and biological process."[150] That is not to say, however, that masculine history ceased during this time. Indeed, the period between "1820 and 1875" was marked by the "transformation of the American economy" as it became the "most powerfully

aggressive capitalist system in the world."[151] This dramatic transformation, according to Douglas, barely registered within white, middle-class American culture, which seemed "bent on establishing a perpetual Mother's Day."[152] There was, inevitably, a masculinizing backlash against this feminization of culture. As Douglas notes, the "closing of frontier, actual and metaphorical" in 1890 was linked to deep concern over the "feminization" of white American culture, and lead to shifts in educational, sociological and political theory and practice.[153] This shift in social and political perspective ran parallel to, if distinctly separate from, a shift in literary and artistic sensibility. The "Victorian matriarch", Douglas notes, had "successfully attacked the Calvinist patriarchy", only to be "hunted down", at the start of the new century, by the "forces of masculinization" that were "bound together" in the modernist movement.[154]

As Douglas suggests, Freud's attempts to apply his psychoanalytical theories not only to himself, or to other people, but "by a bold extension to the human race as a whole", tells us less about the "'universal laws' of human nature" and more about "the man who formulated those laws", and "about the white urban American moderns who adopted them so eagerly."[155] These "white urban moderns", Douglas suggests, were caught up in a family romance of their own, one that distinctly echoed Freud's epic conflict between deposed gods.[156] The "negative centrality" that was "accorded the feminine", the "insistent and fearful denigration of feminine capacities that is characteristic of psychoanalytical thought", came as "second nature" to a "culture in which modernism and matrophobia were synonymous."[157] Freud always reminded his readers that "Gods deposed become demons", and in Douglas' "family romance", the deposed female Gods, the "Furies", depicted in Aeschylus' *Orestia*, "haunted modern American urban culture", and "afflicted" both sexes "in different ways and to different degrees."[158] As Douglas suggests, "violent repudiation" often signals a "undiagnosed need for what is repudiated", and this ambivalence was certainly present within the

modernist movement.[159]   According to Douglas, the modernists could not "altogether sever the umbilical cord" with their hated Victorian inheritance, and the "very weapons" they used against their supposed enemy "were borrowed without acknowledgment from her arsenal."[160]

Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel*, which purports to examine the "pattern imposed" on American literature by the "writers" of the "past" and by the "very conditions of life in the United States", in fact is continually caught up within the psychological, political and cultural struggles that Douglas charts within white American middle class life.[161]   Caught up within these inner struggles, Fielder, like Freud, tends to disregard anything outside their obsessive frame of reference.[162]   It is important to note the vast blank spaces in Fiedler's work, the absence, beyond the projections and fantasies of white middle-class males, of women and of other classes, and races.   However, as Douglas suggests in her culturally specific employment of Freud's work, once the specificity of Fiedler's analysis is acknowledged, it remains a useful critical tool.

II: William Burroughs

William Burroughs: The Author

To define the term "William Burroughs" is no easier than to define the term "American frontier", since the critical debate about the status of the author, and the meaning of his name, has been as lively in recent years as has the debate over "frontier" definitions.   In *Image-Music-Text* (1977), Roland Barthes gallantly announced the death of the author, or his "removal", or "distancing", with the "Author diminishing like a figurine at the far end of the literary stage".[163] Barthes privileged the "multi-dimensional space" of the "text" over the "single 'theological' message" of the "author-god".[164] In Michel Foucault's description, in his essay "What is an Author?" (1969), in Barthes' schema the writer "is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence", and "must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing."[165] As Foucault notes, this lead to an "indifference" in "contemporary writing" about the "writing subject", an "indifference" which Foucault expresses by quoting Beckett: "What does it matter who is speaking?"[166] There are, however, a number of objections which can be raised against Barthes' now infamous pronouncement. As Foucault notes, Barthes' privileging of the work and removal of its author leads only to further questions.

One line of questioning, suggested by Foucault, is as follows: "What is an author's name? How does it function?"[167] At one level, as Foucault suggests, the words "William Burroughs" are, when applied to a literary text in a contemporary capitalist environment, a mark of "ownership", relating to "strict rules concerning author's rights, author-publisher relations," and "rights of reproduction".[168] As Paul Auster points out, in an interview in *The Red Notebook*, there is a "strange kind of trickery involved in the writing and the reading of novels", since writing a novel,

within a capitalistic, property-based environment, involves creating an "author self", a "mysterious other" whose name appears on "the covers of books."[169]   This "author self", Auster notes, is "finally not the same self who writes the book."[170]   The name given to this "author self" need not even be same as that originally given to the author.[171]   William Burroughs' first novel, for example, was initially published as *Junkie* by William Lee. Is the "author" of *Junkie* therefore "William Burroughs", who wrote the text, or "William Lee", who was, until the Olympia Press publication of *Junkie*, the author-name given on the book's cover?[172]   As Auster suggests in *The Red Notebook*, these apparently empty authorial selves are "fascinating" liminal areas, existing on the borderlines between the "autobiographical self" and his "text".[173]

The "strict rules" regarding ownership which Foucault applies to the literary text do not apply to all forms of discourse. Foucault notes, for example, that a "private letter may well have a signer - it does not have an author."[174]   Indeed, correspondence, like fiction, has its own important set of conventions and limitations that should be noted. A letter will normally include a date, a place-mark, and a signature. All three of these notations alter the way a letter is read. As Foucault notes, while the "private letter" does not have an "author", it does have a "signer".[175]   This means that the letter-form, in private as opposed to business use, lies outside the "system of ownership".[176]   The private letter is also space in which emotional material can often be transmitted: as Oliver Harris notes, Burroughs' correspondences were "emissaries seeking the return of a Whitmanesque affection".[177] However, the letter is not therefore an unrestricted form. As a "printed book", to quote Susan Howe, "enters social and economic networks of distribution", so too does a private letter.[178]   Once posted, a letter is at the mercy of the postal system through which it travels. It can pass through frontiers, and cross continents, but it is vulnerable enroute. Burroughs' letters, as Oliver Harris notes, were "intercepted by the police", in New Orleans in 1949, and in

Tangiers in 1959, and their writer was held responsible for their contents. "Be careful what you say", Burroughs warned Jack Kerouac, in 1949, about any future correspondence he might send, "it may be opened and read. No references to junk or weed."[179] The signature at the bottom of the letter, then, tells its reader, to quote from Burroughs' correspondence, "*whose letter it is*."[180] Likewise, the date and place mark help the reader to place the letter within space and time, a convention which does not apply to many other forms of writing.

As many critics have implicitly suggested, Foucault's image of the contemporary role of the author as a "dead man in the game of writing", has considerable resonance for William Burroughs. Sylvere Lotringer, for example, has claimed that Burroughs "writes from a distance beyond death."[181] Another recurrent image of Burroughs is, to quote Robert A. Sobieszek, the "shy and retiring surveillance agent, quietly gathering the facts, penetrating the most hardened defenses of cultural 'Control,' and reporting the details back from the front lines."[182] Sobieszek, surveying Burroughs' "self-appointed role as agent provocateur", moves effortlessly from this image of the "surveillance agent" to another Burroughsian manifestation, the "Invisible Man", whose "invisibility allows him to approach and withdraw without anyone noticing."[183] Burroughs himself has often used these images to describe his writerly strategies. In his essay "Remembering Jack Kerouac", for example, Burroughs quotes approvingly from Kerouac's *Vanity of Deluoz*: "I am not 'I am' but just a spy in someone's body pretending these sandlot games [...]"[184] In the same essay, Burroughs states that writers are "all dead, and all writing is posthumous. We are really from beyond the tomb and no commissions ..."[185] Simultaneous with these expressions of the author's invisibility, and status as a secret agent or dead man, however, the reader of "William Burroughs" is faced with the increasing visibility of the "author", and the increasing importance, within cultural and literary fields, of the

author's name.

At one level, Foucault observes, the author's name is "the equivalent of one, or a series of, definite descriptions".[186] Therefore, the words "Aristotle" also mean "'author of the *Analytics*", or "'the founder of ontology'".[187] The words "William Burroughs", however, often become a short-hand description for certain cultural, rather than strictly literary, reference points. Indeed Burroughs has, as Richard Dellamora notes, been "converted into an icon",[188] or in Wayne Pounds' description, has become "a media image in his own right".[189] One version of "William Burroughs" is, in Dellamora's phrase, the "patron saint of Soho and the East Village."[190] Another "William Burroughs" is part of a less specific process of iconisation. For example, as Geoff Ward suggests in his essay "William Burroughs: A Literary Outlaw?", Burroughs' brief appearance alongside Allen Ginsberg, Paul Bowles, Gregory Corso and others in a "monochrome 1950s-style" advert to Pepe Jeans links "William Burroughs" to a wider contemporary nostalgia for the "certitudes of the postwar period."[191] Yet to Burroughs' earlier critics, such as Frank Kermode and Leslie Fiedler, the words "William Burroughs" were synonymous, as Richard Dellamora points out, with "the collapse of Western civilization."[192] The words "William Burroughs" therefore have a pervasive cultural meaning, or rather, a series of meanings, often bafflingly at odds with each other.

To some critics writing on Burroughs, the "author" threatens to overwhelm the "text". Robin Lydenberg, for example, writes of the "Burroughs legend" mythologizing the "man" and obscuring the "work".[193] Lydenberg states that the aim of her study of Burroughs is to centre attention instead on Burroughs' "stylistic accomplishments": his "radical notions about language and literary production".[194] Such an approach is clearly highly applicable to Burroughs.[195] However, Lydenberg's attempt to shift attention away from the "Burroughs legend" is continually undercut

by her own tendency to write about Burroughs as an extraordinarily omnipresent authorial figure, who, despite Lydenberg's poststructualist scepticism about the role of the author, has definite authorial intentions. For example, Lydenberg writes that the "reader will not find in Burroughs the kind of Rabelaisian joy in the body and in language that surfaces in Ehrmann or Bahtkin, for ultimately Burroughs intends to leave behind body and language."[196] Unless Lydenberg expected the "reader" to perform some brief surgical operation on the elderly author in this futile search for "Rabelaisian joy", then presumably "Burroughs" here means the entirety of Burroughs' literary production.[197] "Burroughs" also means here, however, the controlling authority behind, and in some sense separate from, these texts, whose intention it is to "leave behind body and language."[198] These recurrent, and entirely understandable, lapses in Lydenberg's criticism suggest the impossibility of leaving the "author", and questions of authorial intention, behind altogether.

The attempt to move beyond the author seems particularly problematic in the case of William Burroughs, since Burroughs' life has always been intertwined with his fiction. This is especially true of Burroughs' early fictions, *Junky*, *Queer* and *The Yage Letters*, where Burroughs, like his contemporary Jack Kerouac, was fictionalising, in more or less chronological order, particular events in his own life. Ann Charters notes that Kerouac, prior to the writing of *On the Road*, had been inspired by certain key observations made by Henry A. Murrary concerning Melville's *Pierre*. Murray had described *Pierre* as an "quasi-autobiographical novel", claiming that Melville was not "writing autobiography in the usual sense, but, from first to last, the biography of his self-image."[199] Burroughs, who was very familiar with, and indeed was partially influenced by, Kerouac's early writings, also adopted this detached perspective from his "self-image".[200] Like the mysterious distinction between the author's "autobiographical self" and the "name" which appears on the "covers of

books", the distinction between the author and his protagonist is a liminal area.[201] As Burroughs writes in his essay "Remembering Jack Kerouac", there is "nothing more elusive than a writer's main character, the character that is assumed by the reader to be the writer himself, no less, actually doing the things he writes about."[202] Burroughs' correspondence certainly clarifies that the author used himself as a starting point for his main character, William Lee. In April 1952, quoted a description of Lee from his work in progress to demonstrate his use of a third-person narrative: "Though he was near 40 he had the thin delicate body of an adolescence."[203] However, while Burroughs acknowledged that he himself did "have the same physique I had at 18", and that this was "uncommon and significant in delineating the character", his comments also stress the detachment that his third-person narrative allowed him from his protagonist.[204] His early correspondence also stresses that while *Queer* was to be based on Burroughs' relationship with Adelbert Lewis Marker, their fictional selves, then "Allerton and Dennison", were "to be regarded as derived from rather than copied from the original."[205] Despite this detachment, the distinctions between "Lee" and "Burroughs" became increasingly confused, since Burroughs began signing his personal letters "Willy Lee", suggesting the close identification of the author with the protagonist.[206] Despite the problematics of the task, however, it is important to retain the distinctions between author and protagonist, since their conflation can lead to inaccuracies and misapphrensions.

William Burroughs: An Historical Context

With these distinctions in mind, this thesis will provide a biographical and historical context for Burroughs' work. Burroughs has said, when questioned about the autobiographical content of his fiction, that "Every word is autobiographical, and every word is fiction."[207] The extent to which Burroughs' work is autobiographical is

clarified by his use in his fiction, particularly in the period 1952 to 1959, of materials taken from his own correspondence.[208] In his introduction to the first published edition of his correspondence, Burroughs notes how John Livingston Lowes, in *The Road to Xanadu*, "traces the sources of Coleridge's poetic imagery in the books that he is known to have read, and shows the conversion of raw material - mostly from accounts of sea voyages - into *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* and other poems."[209] Burroughs suggests that his own letters, which contain the "raw material" for *Naked Lunch*, present a "devious road" into the text.[210]   While, for Coleridge, the "raw material" was found in literary source, in Burroughs' letters, the material is, in part at least, the lived experience of "junk", and, indeed, of expatriation, homosexuality, and analysis. Since this thesis will examine the important cross-fertilizations between the author's correspondence and his fiction, Lydenberg's post-structualist focus on the work rather than the author is inappropriate here. However, as with the occasionally blurred distinctions between author and protagonist in Burroughs' work, the examination of the cross-overs between correspondence and fiction will attempt to retain the distinctions between these different types of text.

In *The Birth-mark* Susan Howe insists that it is important not to answer "indifferently" the rhetorical question with which Foucault's investigation of authorship concludes: "What matter who's speaking?"[211] Howe insists that the minute details of an author's position within time and space matter. For example, Howe stresses how important "Noah Webster's original *American Dictionary of the English Language*" was in creating the "singularly North American" employment of language found in the writing of Emerson, Thoreau, Melville and Dickinson.[212] She notes how Dickinson "paid attention to the smallest physical details of the page" on which she was writing, working into her writing references, for example, to the embossed seals at the corner of her paper.[213] She also claims that an important part of the difference

between Melville and Dickinson is "that Melville is from one side of the Connecticut River, and she is from the other side."[214] Applying the specifics of space and time that Howe delineates so carefully in *The Birth-Mark* to William Burroughs is not a straightforward matter. Howe, explaining, in *The Birth-Mark*, her enthusiasm for Michael Paul Rogin's *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville*, asserts that you "cannot separate an author from family, history and ideology."[215] Burroughs, however, has often argued that "history" is a "fiction."[216] In his essay "Remembering Jack Kerouac", for example, Burroughs claims that his "own birth records," his "family's birth records and recorded origins", his "athletic records in the newspaper clippings" are "not real at all".[217] The "past", Burroughs insists, "can be changed, altered at your discretion."[218] The truth of this observation becomes clear when, in attempting to reconstruct Burroughs' family history, the reader turns to the most obvious starting point: the two biographies of Burroughs, *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs* (1988) by Ted Morgan, and *William Burroughs: El Hombre Invisible* (1992) by Barry Miles. Both biographies, as will be shown here, have been assembled from a variety of other texts, or spoken accounts, which may or may not be accurate.

Consider, for example, the manner in which Burroughs' childhood home, at 4664 Pershing Avenue, is described by his biographers. In Ted Morgan's *Literary Outlaw*, the description is as follows: "The three-story house at 4664 Pershing Avenue had a slate roof, a fifty-foot front lawn, and a large backyard with a garden and a fish pond, separated from the neighbours by high wooden fences overgrown with morning glories and rose vines."[219] In Barry Miles' *El Hombre Invisible*, the description is markedly similar: "They lived at 4664 Pershing Avenue, which still exists, a large, unpretentious red brick three-story house with a slate roof [...] There was a large back garden filled with roses, peonies, irises, and a fish pond which attracted frogs."[220] It is

clear that Burroughs' biographers have constructed the childhood home out of a series of visual props: red brick, slate roof, peonies, fish pond and frog. The initial source of almost all of these props are supplied by the Prologue to *Junky*, a fictionalised account of Burroughs' childhood that was reluctantly produced, as will be detailed in the following chapter, at the instruction of Burroughs' publishers. This "original" text, therefore, in itself suspect as a source of historical information, has given birth to many other sur-texts, which in turn give birth to others, only subtly changed each time. The "original" house, which it is stressed "still exists", is not the issue here, for it is the textual representation of it, which begins in a piece of fiction, that has become real. Despite the biographer's insistence that "4664 Pershing Avenue" is still there, the reader may begin to wonder if Burroughs' didn't make the house up, if it doesn't still exist only in the fiction where it began.[221]

To abandon the attempt to historicise Burroughs altogether, however, and thereby avoid the issues of "family, history and ideology" that Susan Howe rightly considers so important, would leave Burroughs' work floating in a timeless vacuum.[222] Implicit to Howe's reading is the notion that the past, while it can never be reliably returned to, can also never be finally escaped. She insists specifically that issues of family, politics and art are best dealt with "together".[223] Michael Paul Rogin, in *Subversive Genealogy*, argues that Melville's family history "implicated" the author in the "decisive issues and racial confrontations of antebellum America, Manifest Destiny, and slavery."[224] Melville's grandfathers were "merchant heroes of the Revolution."[225] His "paternal antecedents" were involved in the "Boston Tea Party."[226] His "maternal ancestor defended Fort Stanwix against British and Indian attack."[227] Burroughs' family history also "implicated" him in many of the "decisive issues" of late nineteenth and twentieth century American society and politics.[228] As Jennie Skerl notes, for example, the history of the Burroughs family brought together the "northern

and southern strains of the American Protestant tradition and its elite".[229] Burroughs' mother, Laura Lee Burroughs, was "the daughter of a distinguished minister whose family claimed descent from Robert E. Lee."[230] Burroughs' "maternal grandfather", James Wideman Lee, was a "Methodist Episcopal minister in Atlanta and St. Louis", and "eloquently preached" a "Calvinist doctrine".[231]

James Wideman's Lee' son, Ivy Ledbetter Lee had been the "Father of Public Relations".[232] After having worked for several years on New York newspapers, he became a "press agent for big business".[233] Lee believed, according to Skerl, that the "best response to the muckrakers" was to employ the same media techniques as the muckrakers to "present business in a positive light."[234] Lee's approach was to use "symbols and phrases", rather than rational argument.[235] In May 1914, Lee went to work for the Rockefellers, helping to improve their public image, which had been tarnished by disputes with the United Mine Workers. In April 1914, these disputes had culminated in the Ludlow Massacre, in which "two women and eleven children" had been killed by state militia.[236] Lee encouraged the Rockefellers to reconsider their relationship with the general public, to become more media-friendly, and "philanthropy" was made the cornerstone of the Rockefeller image. Rockefeller Sr., seen "distributing shiny dimes to newspaper boys" and "cutting his ninetieth-birthday cake in public", was transformed from a "monster " into a "humanoid".[237] "Mr. Lee", wrote Robert Benchley, "has devoted his energies to proving, by insidious leaflets and gentle epistles, that the present capitalist system is really a branch of the Quaker Church, carrying on the work begun by St. Francis of Assisi."[238] Encouraged by his success, and a "blind faith" that an image-change could dispel any problem with low popularity, he moved seamlessly, in 1933, from Rockefeller to Hitler, receiving "$33,000-a-year" to improve the public image of the new Nazi government in America.[239] Perceived as being "Hitler's press agent", Lee was brought before the Un-

American Activities Committee, and died soon afterwards, his reputation in tatters.[240]

Burroughs' paternal grandfather was William Seward Burroughs I, the inventor of the adding machine. The first William Seward's father, Edmund Burroughs, had been a relatively unsuccessful mechanic and inventor, but when Seward followed his father to St. Louis, and successfully patented the adding machine, a mechanical device for adding a column of figures, his life became, in Ted Morgan's words, "a parable of entrepreneurial capitalism in the land of limitless opportunity, where anything was possible".[241] His partner, Joe Boyer, however, became president of the Burroughs Adding Machine Company, and benefited far more financially from Burroughs' invention than the Burroughs family. While the "Fords and the Roosevelts" amassed extraordinary fortunes, Burroughs was "a shooting star, who left his children little more than a bright afterglow."[242]

The Burroughs family history was effected by a number of important social and economic shifts that occurred through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Rogin notes that the Melville family, in the changes it underwent through "three generations", was representative of a wider national shift from "patriarchy to capitalism to expansionist politics".[243] Kathleen Neils Cozen, in her essay on the role of the family in westward expansion, "A Saga of Families", similarly identifies a shift from patriarchal to patrimonial to entrepreneurial family structures.[244] As Rogin points out, this shift had an important impact on family life, since "Victorian middle-class fathers" were "increasingly absent from the home", and "more authoritarian than their eighteenth-century counterparts."[245] The "job of internalizing authority" was handed over to the mother, and the "bond between mother and son" was increasingly emphasized in child-rearing manuals and sentimental novels.[246] The home became, in Rogin's words, a "defence against the unstable, self-seeking marketplace which the grown boy would have to enter."[247] In middle-class American life, then, an

increasingly severe bifurcation existed between the world of the home, and the world of work, the two worlds if not acting in opposition, then certainly acting in ignorance of each other. The degree of ignorance could be extraordinary: as Gregory Wood notes, by the time Burroughs arrived at Harvard, he believed that children were "born through the navel".[248] The different worlds had their own complex rituals of initiation, intended for girls and boys respectively. Burroughs' father, for example, introduced Burroughs to using guns by taking him along, at the age of eight, to his "duck club", where they would shoot ducks with "the president of the First National City Bank and the owner of the St Louis Post Dispatch."[249] At fifteen years old, Burroughs was been sent to Los Alamos private school. This famous institution had been conceived of by its founder Ashley Pond as a means to turn "pampered boys from the East" into men, separating them from their "oversolicitious mothers" and placing them "on the back of a horse," teaching them to "camp in the mountains", and to "hunt and fish and trap animals."[250] They would therefore "regain their American heritage of outdoor wisdom", as learnt first at the frontier.[251] The school was then created out of the fear of "feminization", described by Ann Douglas, that was closely linked to the closing of the frontier.[252] Ashley Pond had found his inspiration in the procedures of the "Pueblo Indians", who "segregated the boys of the tribe until they reached manhood."[253] The "tightly organised" routine of Los Alamos, with its stress on "leadership qualities", was "designed to turn out" not rugged backwoodsmen, but "captains of industry".[254] The relationship with the wilderness, as much as there was one, was based on the earlier frontier ethic: the wilderness was there to be conquered.

William Burroughs: Critical Responses

Critical responses to William Burroughs have played an increasingly important part in the construction of the author, and it is therefore important to trace the

developments within academic criticism of Burroughs, and note the ways in which those critical responses have reflected a variety of wider cultural, political and theoretical shifts in the last thirty years.

As is appropriate for a writer concerned with crossing frontiers, Burroughs has been recurrently presented as a "pioneer", though the word "pioneer" has been defined differently by different critics, and has been used with both positive and negative connotations. In "Queer Apocalypse: Framing William Burroughs", Richard Dellamora usefully places critical responses to Burroughs in the context of the 1960s "modernism versus postmodernism debate", in which "Burroughs" was seen by traditional modernists as a "sign of the collapse of modern civilization."[255] Dellamora's observations on Kermode, who he sees as symptomatic of the traditional modernist position, also apply to two other critics of Burroughs, Leslie Fiedler and David Lodge. David Lodge, in his "Objections to William Burroughs", links Burroughs to the " institutionalization of the 'adversary culture' of modernism", and agrees with Lionel Trilling that "this process" is not "a symptom of cultural health."[256] Lodge complains that Burroughs' cut-up novels lack the "thematic and dramatic continuity" of the earlier modernist writers, Joyce and Eliot.[257] Burroughs is instead linked, in a negatively expressed comparison, to the "neo-modernist" experimentation of Andy Warhol and John Cage.[258] Implicit to Lodge's argument are ideas of a literary tradition based on the artist's exercise of discipline and control, and a conception of literary worth based on "narrative, logical, syntactical and thematic" continuity.[259]

Leslie Fiedler also explicitly reads "Burroughs" as a "sign of the collapse of modern civilization", though his responses are more unstable, and indeed more interesting, than Lodge's.[260] Fiedler's initial responses to Burroughs, as expressed in *Love and Death in the American Novel*, had been largely positive. The "opening pages" of *The Soft Machine* were described, if only in a footnote, as "a masterpiece"

of the science fiction genre.[261] By *Waiting for the End*, however, Fiedler's perspective on Burroughs had shifted.[262] While acknowledging that Burroughs had written a "terrible and deeply moving group of books", their author is described as an "extraordinarily naïve man", and as a "pioneer mutant", whom "almost any family" would "be willing to disclaim as human".[263] As Frank McDonnell suggests in his essay "William Burroughs and the Literature of Addiction", it is a "disappointing" position for Fielder to adopt, symptomatic of his "homiletic" critical judgments on novels written post-1955.[264]

Fiedler's paradoxical fascination with and disdain for Burroughs is closely related, in his essay "The New Mutants" (1965), to a wider cultural disregard for "limits" and "history".[265] In *Waiting for the End* Fiedler links the injection of morphine, which "penetrates the body, and modifies its state, giving joy and threatening to impregnate what it penetrates with itself", with the "sexual act seen from a passive point of view".[266] In "The New Mutants", Fiedler suggests this adoption of a "passive point of view" is part of wider a process of cultural feminization, whereby the "young men" of the contemporary generation "assimilate into themselves", or "assimilate [...] themselves into [...] that otherness, that sum total of rejected psychic elements which the middle class heirs of the Renaissance have identified as 'woman.'"[267] "What could be more womanly", Fiedler asks, returning to the injection of morphine, than to admit the "penetration of the body by a foreign object which not only stirs delight but even (possibly) creates new life."[268] Burroughs, as junkie and homosexual, is identified as the "chief prophet" of a "post-male, post-heroic world".[269]

William L. Stull, in his essay "The Quest and the Question: Cosmology and Myth in the Work of William S.Burroughs, 1953-1960" (1981), also uses the word "mutant" in connection with William Burroughs, although he takes a very different

approach in judging Burroughs' "newness".[270] Stull concedes that if Burroughs had "actually managed to reject the fundamental patterns of mythology", in defiance of the "insights of Freud and Jung", he "would be, psychologically if not physically, a mutant, out of touch with the patterns of unconscious life that have formed our literature and history".[271] Stull, however, claims that Burroughs' work does in fact fit within those "fundamental patterns", and uses Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949) to conduct an archetypal analysis of *Junkie*, *The Yage Letters* and *Naked Lunch*. Stull's analysis ends, unconvincingly, with the conflated author/protagonist "Burroughs/Lee" represented as the archetypal fertility hero, spreading, through the act of writing *Naked Lunch*, "a new sense of vitality and innocence" over the "wasteland".[272] As will be suggested in the discussion of *Naked Lunch* later in this thesis, Stull's reading fails to recognise Burroughs' refusal of the conventional mythological and psychological system he is applying.

Eric Mottram, who wrote the first full length study of Burroughs, *The Algebra of Need* (1977), quotes Burroughs' well known declaration that he is "attempting to create a new mythology for the space age", since the "old mythologies are definitely broken down and not adequate at the present time."[273] Mottram claims, however, that Burroughs' aim was "freedom from mythology - what Edward Dahlberg calls freedom from living mythologically."[274] Burroughs' "radical" disavowal of previous mythologies is contrasted in *The Algebra of Need* to the attempt to "revive" the "authoritarian God" and "fertilize the Fisher King's cemetery kingdom" in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.[275] Mottram's reading of Burroughs is, therefore, diametrically opposed to Stull's. Mottram also notes, however, that Burroughs' recurrent attempts to escape from his own "God of Conflict", the "Bradly-Martin" of the cut-up novels, are recurrently thwarted. "He *imagines* a possible end", Mottram writes, "but the end is repeated endlessly."[276] As will be suggested throughout this thesis, while Burroughs

may refuse the terms of conventional mythology, he cannot completely escape those terms.

In Richard Dellamora's account, more recent criticism of Burroughs has reflected a shift in theoretical perspective from traditional humanism to the deconstructive strategies variously termed poststructualism, postmodernism and posthumanism. As Dellamora suggests, Burroughs' post-structualist critics have tended to define themselves in relation to their apparently more flat-footed precursors, the traditional modernists. However, the adoption of post-structualist theory alone does not resolve the problematic tensions in Burroughs' writing.[277] Indeed, the tendency to construct Burroughs as an important precursor to post-modernist fiction and art, while useful and valid, tends to distort the particularities of Burroughs' writings and aesthetic.

Geoff Ward, in his essay "William Burroughs: A Literary Outlaw?" (1993), argues that it is Burroughs' "gleeful" deconstruction of the "pre-existing network of association and codes" that is the core of Burroughs' lasting radicalism, and he traces Burroughs' ghostly and "corrosive" exposure of "society's dominant narratives" through the developing ironic narrative strategies of *Junky* and *Naked Lunch*, to the "disintegration of writing" itself in the cut-up novels.[278] Ward compares Burroughs' indigestibility with the manner in which Burroughs' contemporaries, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, have been "swallowed whole" by modern American culture. Ironically, however, Ward links Burroughs to a key "American archetype": the "outlaw", if, in Burroughs' case, a "literary one".[279] The notion of Burroughs as "outlaw" is a recurrent one, being most sustaintedly expressed by Ted Morgan's biography, *Literary Outlaw*. As Burroughs himself notes, to be an "outlaw" one must first have a "base in law to reject and get out of."[280] In Ward's reading, the "base in law" is the "pre-existing network of associations and codes",

which presumably must stay in place in order that Ward can continue to construct Burroughs as "outlaw".[281]

To Nicholas Zurbrugg, it is Burroughs' employment of new technologies and of non-literary mediums that is radical. According to Zurbrugg, Burroughs' "intercontextual" approach places him beyond the orbit of "intertextual" critics, who, following Roland Barthes' maxim that the literary text is always "already read", have paid insufficient attention to two "main categories" of "radical works": literary work influenced by "extra-literary" activity, such as Burroughs' adoption of the montage technique in the cut-up texts, and work, conducted by a "literary occupant" that explores "a new, technological discursive space", such as Burroughs' tape-recorder experiments.[282] Zurbrugg cites Burroughs' pioneering claims for the use of "elaborate sound equipment" that surpasses the conventional tape recorder: "by using ever-expanding technical facilities, sound poetry can create effects that have never been produced before, thus opening a new frontier for poets."[283] Zurbrugg, as with Ward, also slips in a description of Burroughs, as "an archetypal intercontextual explorer, a writer fascinated by what he terms 'effects that have never been reproduced before'", that suggests an "archetypal" continuity for Burroughs' project, and also implicitly suggests a remarkably old-fashioned analogy between writer and colonizing "explorer".[284] Similar slippages are noticeable in the quotation from Burroughs with which Zurbrugg concludes. In a letter to Alan Ansen, quoted by Ansen in his essay "Anyone Who Can Pick Up A Frying Pan Owns Death", Burroughs expressed his "complete dissatisfaction with everything I have done in writing ... Unless writing has the danger and immediacy, the urgency of bullfighting, it is nowhere to my way of thinking ... I am tired of sitting behind the lines with an imperfect recording device receiving inaccurate bulletins ... I must reach the Front."[285] The references to "bullfighting", the "danger and immediacy" of writing, and the implicit representation

of the literary frontline as a combat zone, suggest a strikingly romantic conception of the writer, not dissimilar to that of the now much reviled Hemingway.

Robin Lydenberg, in *Word Cultures: Radical Theory and Practice in William S. Burroughs' Fiction* (1987), places Burroughs' work in the context of "radical" critical theorists, namely Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, J. Hillis Miller, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous and Delueze and Guattari. Burroughs' description of "the Aristotelian 'either-or'" as "one of the greatest errors of Western thinking" is linked by Lydenberg to the deconstructivist project's "critical analysis of the basic dualism underling our civilization, and the development of a methodology which attempts to break through the strictures and structures of binary opposition into a more free and open space."[286] "There are certain formulas", Burroughs claims in *The Job*, "word-locks, which will lock up a whole civilization for a thousand years"[287], and one such "formula", is the "Aristotelian 'either-or'".[288] According to Burroughs, thinking in terms of binary oppositions "doesn't even correspond to what we know about the physical universe."[289] In the case both of Burroughs and the deconstructivists, Lydenberg argues, the methodology employed centres on the concept of a third term which "cannot be absorbed into a binary structure and which, in fact, confounds and disperses it."[290] As Frederick Nolan points out in his perceptive essay on Burroughs' *The Western Lands*, if the "problem is Western metaphysics itself", then the radical writer's "task is immense indeed".[291] To overturn either-or logic would require a "transfiguration" that was "not only a moral or individual concern", but also a "political one", since it would call "into question the character of our shared world".[292] It would also call into question the conception of what a frontier or a borderline is. As Gloria Anzaldúa writes, borders "are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*."[293] To exist without the "dividing line" created by binary oppositions would be to live in "a vague and undetermined place created by the

emotional residue of an unnatural boundary."[294] The extent to which Burroughs' work

dismantles this borderline between "*them*" and "*us*" will be questioned throughout this

thesis.[295]

Lydenberg also links Burroughs to the related deconstructivist attempt to move

beyond the dualistic model for reproduction. She notes the "shift", proposed both by

Burroughs and Deleuze and Guattari, from "organic to mechanical modes of

reproduction."[296] Once more, this movement in seen as pioneering. The "free and

uncertain subject", for example, released by the liberatory "schizoanalysis" proposed

by Delueze and Guattari, is described by Lydenberg as having escaped the

"claustrophobic enclosure of the family to pursue nomadic wanderings in an uncertain

wilderness."[297] Here, Burroughs' status as a "pioneer mutant", whom "almost any

family" would be willing to "disclaim as human, much less their own" becomes a

positive advantage.[298]

There are a number of objections that can be raised against Lydenberg's

apocalyptic carnivilization of "William Burroughs", however. Lydenberg describes

Fiedler's masculinzing disdain for Burroughs in "The New Mutants" as "patriarchal",

and points instead towards "the developments in post-structuralism, deconstruction

and feminist theory", which have advanced our "understanding of the impulse to

feminize discourse" beyond Fiedler's "view of that phenomenon."[299] However, the

notion of the third term that Lydenberg takes from deconstructivist theory is also

employed by Fiedler in his last book, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self*.

Fiedler argues in *Freaks*, a study of the "other" throughout history, that the "true Freak

challenges the conventional boundaries between male and female, sexed and sexless,

animal and human, large and small, self and other, and consequently between reality

and illusion, experience and fantasy, fact and myth."[300] The notion of the "Freak" is, of

course, a terrifically problematic one, and it comes with considerable cultural

baggage: the voyeurism of the freak show, for example, and the exploitative manipulation of 'abnormality'. However, Lydenberg's notion of the "mutant" is not free from these associations either, given her reference, in the conclusion to her advocacy of Deleuze and Guattarian strategies, to the "monstrous freedom of the carnival", and the "mad and marginal world of the abject."[301] It is questionable, as will be suggested in Chapter 5 of this thesis, whether such phrases help to break down the distinctions between "*them*" and "*us*" that are central to Anzaldúa's notion of the borderlands.[302]

Similarly problematic is Lydenberg's association of Burroughs with French feminist theory. As Alice A.Jardine points out in *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity*, the crisis of legitimisation "within the master narratives" of the West has lead to "a vast self-exploration, a questioning and turning back upon their own discourse, in an attempt to create a new *space* or *spacing within themselves*".[303] Jardine notes that, in France, this "rethinking" has often involved a "reincorportion and reconceptualization of that which has been the master narrative's own 'non-knowledge,' what has eluded them, what has engulfed them." This "space", Jardine continues, has been "coded as *feminine*, as *woman*."[304] Therefore, when Lydenberg draws attention to Burroughs' "aversion to binary opposition, to definitions and naming, to all repressive boundaries and laws," she makes a comparison with Kristeva's identification of a "power" which she calls "woman", a "something that cannot be represented, something that is not said, something above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies."[305] The comparison is a potentially productive one, but, as Lydenberg notes, there are "obstacles" to such an identification.

An important issue raised by Jardine's notion of *gynesis*, for example, is whether the exploration of a unrepresentable "space" outside of ideology and history, gendered "*feminine*" deconstructs, or merely repeats, the gendering of the frontier, in Turner's

model, as feminine", and its association with male renewal and domination. In this context, one obstacle to Burroughs' identification with "radical" French feminist theory is his repetitive misogyny. Catherine R. Stimpsom, in her essay "The Beat Generation And The Trials of Homosexual Liberation", argues that Burroughs, along with Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, were unable to "cross" one important "cultural boundary": the "traditional construction of the female, and of the feminine."[306] The instability of Burroughs' responses to the "female" and the "feminine", and his attempts to cross this particular "cultural boundary", will be returned to throughout this thesis.

III Post-war America

The examination of William Burroughs' writing in this thesis begins in 1945. There are a number of reasons for selecting this starting point. Firstly, it is the approximate date given for the commencement of the events described in Burroughs' first novel, *Junkie* (1953), later *Junky* (1977). "My first experience with junk", the main narrative of *Junky* begins, "was during the War, about 1944 or 1945." (*Junky*/1) While work on *Junky* did not begin for another five years, Burroughs had begun to collect the experiences, and perspectives, that would shape his first novel.[307] Secondly, the year 1945 provides a rich historical starting point: the end of the war, the immediate aftermath of Hiroshima, and the first stirrings of the Cold War. As will be demonstrated, this historical context was extremely important in molding the subject matter and form of Burroughs' writing. Lastly, 1945 was the date of William Burroughs' first letter to his long-term friend, Allen Ginsberg. Burroughs' letters, especially those to Ginsberg, were also vital to the creation of Burroughs' fiction. These letters will serve as a guide to the extraordinary, alchemical process of transformation, by which Burroughs' life became fictionalised.

In the following section, three important influences on Burroughs in this post-war period will be examined. As Oliver Harris suggests, the three writers discussed here were "oppositional or marginalized figures"[308]: Wilhelm Reich, author of *The Cancer Biopathy* (1948), Count Alfred Korzybski, author of *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* (1919) and Oswald Spengler, author of *The Decline of the West: Perspectives of World-History* (1922).[309] In different ways, these three writers reflected the mood of the post-war American society in which Burroughs began writing.

The Decline of the West

Burroughs makes no mention of his reading of Spengler in his early letters, although Ted Morgan clarifies that Burroughs had versed himself in Spengler.[310] Spengler's view of history, as presented in *The Decline of the West*, is cyclical, constructed around three major phases of development and decay. In the first phase, which is termed the "primitive" stage, the "fugitive and heterogeneous" peoples, or "people-shapes", gradually form themselves into a "culture", a "*group of great peoples of identical style*".[311] This imperial culture is Spengler's second, and, in his reading, most important, phase. The "great Cultures", Spengler claims, are "entities, primary or original", and the people within that culture are "under" its "spell."[312] They are the "products" of that culture, not its "authors".[313] Spengler defines these peoples, who exist within "the style in their Culture", as "*Nations*."[314]   Nations, argues Spengler, are the "only historical peoples."[315]   They alone make "*world-history*."[316] "*Underlying the nation*", Spengler asserts, "*there is an Idea.*"[317] This "Idea", formed in the "collective being" of the nation, "possesses a very deep relation to Destiny, to Time and to History."[318] The great nations are the "*true city-building peoples*", and in their cities the nation ripens to "the full-height" of its "world-consciousness."[319] Spengler traces the shifts in the idea of nationhood through a variety of eras, the Classical and the Magian, for example, before examining the period in which we find ourselves: the "Faustian" era.[320] The "idea" of the "Faustian" nation, Spengler contends, is its "tendency to the Infinite", both in terms of space and of time.[321]   The Faustian nation looks to extend its "geographical horizon".[322]   Its "boundaries" are "vast" beyond the understanding of an "individual" within that nation, and its vastness has a "symbolic depth and force" that "men of other Cultures can never comprehend."[323]

Extending itself in space, the Faustian nation also looks to extend its "distance *in time*", perpetuating its own history through a dynastic structure.[324] The "Faustian peoples" are "historical", and it is by the inheritance of history, not by "place or consensus", that the Faustian "community" feels itself "bound together".[325]

At the end of a civilization, Spengler argues, the dominant cultures, symbolized by their great cities, "dissolve".[326] The "whole pyramid of cultural man vanishes."[327] What remains is the "primitive blood", the surviving remnants of those "people-shapes" who had not formed into the dominant culture.[328] Existing on the margins, they have, from Spengler's perspective, been "robbed" of their "strongest and most promising elements."[329] This "residue", which forms the third phase of Spengler's cycle, is termed "the *Fellah type*."[330] The Fellah experience life as the "zoological up and down, a planless happening without goal or cadenced march in time".[331] There are "many" occurrences in Fellaheen existence, but they are, "in the last analysis, devoid of significance."[332] The "*Idea*", the essence of the nation, has been lost.[333] According to Spengler, the end of an imperial culture is hastened by a "minority of timeless, a-historic, literary men", who, lead by "reason" rather than the "pulse of blood and being", can "no longer find any 'reasonable' connotation for the nation-idea."[334] These "bookmen", described by Spengler as "(historically speaking) waste products", become the "*spiritual leaders of the fellaheen*".[335] The "extinction of the nation", welcomed by such intellectuals, leads inevitably, in Spengler's view, to a "state of nature", characterised by "long submissiveness", "brief angers" and "bloodshed."[336]

Spengler's thesis found evidence for its assertions in the "deeply felt genealogy of 'the Aryan race'", with which, according to Spengler, ideas of "race" and "Destiny" became "almost" inseparable.[337] Many of Spengler's observations on the Faustian nation's tendency towards temporal and spatial expansion also find obvious parallels in the American concept of Manifest Destiny, which employed a naturalizing

discourse similar to Spengler's. The original formulator of the phrase "Manifest Destiny", John L. O'Sullivan, had argued that "foreign interference in the acquisition of Texas" could not be allowed to check the "fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions."[338] As Clyde Milner notes, the "reference to divine purpose and the claim of national superiority" ran parallel to the "idealistic rhetoric that stressed the benefit to all humanity of America's growth."[339] The native Americans, who had already been "subjected to the paternalistic attitude and the ethnocentric idealism of the removal policy," were "already familiar with such self-serving assumptions."[340] However, while Spengler was convinced about the "deeply felt genealogy" of the "Aryan race", he was less sure about the "genealogy" of white America.[341] "It has long been obvious" he wrote, that the "soil of the Indians" had "made its mark" on those European immigrants who went to America, and that, "generation by generation they become more like the people they have eradicated".[342] In Spengler's reading, white America had passed through its second phase, as imperial culture, with the speed of a flicker book, and was already on the verge of the third phase: the demise of its supposedly dominant values.

Although Spengler is entirely absent from Burroughs' letters of this period, the "apocalyptic prophecy" in *The Decline of the West* of "historical change and cultural entropy" had considerable resonance in post-war American society, and Spengler's work, as Oliver Harris notes, "formed a cornerstone of the Beat sense of history."[343] The post-war generation that sensed the demise of its own imperial culture. As W.T. Lhamon observes in *Deliberate Speed: The Origins of a Cultural Style in the American 1950s*, the perceived demise of the imperial culture raised the question of:

> what to do when the father, God, authority in the abstract died not only as an intellectual concept (The Death of God), or as a political problem (the governance of conquered zones), but as a diffuse enigma running through

all the experience of culture expressed top to bottom.[344]

Lhamon suggests that perception of "inadequate authority" manifested itself in the images of "missing, dead, or derelict" fathers in "contemporary texts".[345] There were a variety of responses to this patriarchal absence. The mass media, according to Lhamon, attempted to "prop up the father figure, thus denying any problem while telegraphing an obsession with it."[346] Within serious literature, attempts were made to find the missing father: Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* becomes, at its close, an elegy for "the father we never found".[347] Faced with this paternal absence, the protagonists of *On the Road*, Sal and Dean, turn to each other, to "brotherly bonding".[348] Like the 1920s modernists, the 1950s generation of writers looked back to the 1850s American Renaissance, for precursors. Melville, in his letters to Hawthorne, had famously written that "the Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and we are the pieces."[349] This "infinite feeling of fraternity", which Melville felt in common with Hawthorne, along with the Whitmanesque notion of the Camerados, were reprised in Ginsberg's celebration of "manly America".[350] While Burroughs never explicitly joined in Ginsberg's celebrations of male American comradeship, his intense relationship with Ginsberg did echo, as Oliver Harris notes, its "Whitmanesque affection".[351]

The Beats paradoxically employed Spengler to signal their distance from the collapsing dominant narrative of their own imperial culture. As Robert Holton notes, Jack Kerouac "recognized himself", and the "postimperial" condition of white America, in Spengler's work, but his response to Spengler inverted the basic tenets on which Spengler's analysis rested. Kerouac borrowed Spengler's concept of the "fellahin", but instead of perceiving of the fellahin as a "residue" left behind by the imperial culture, having been "robbed" of its "strongest and most promising elements"[352], Kerouac's protagonist in *On the Road*, Sal Paradise, eulogised the "Fellahin Indians of the world" as the "essential strain of the basic primitive, wailing humanity that stretches in a belt around the equatorial belly of the world".[353] Sal's earnest wish to "finally learn ourselves" amongst the fellahin was signaled as a rejection of his own racial identity, the "disillusioned" "'white man'".[354] Sal instead wished to be "a Negro", a "Denver Mexican", or "even a poor overworked Jap".[355]

Another important aspect of the "apocalyptic prophecy" the Beats responded to in Spengler was their experience of living in the world after Hiroshima.[356] According to Ted Morgan, to Burroughs "the Bomb", rather than the "birth of Christ" was the "dividing line of history."[357] When asked about "turning points in history" in his

interview with Re/Search, Burroughs mentioned "August 6, 1945. God almighty, the Atom Bomb. Was that a date!"[358]   To Burroughs, writes Morgan, the "true significance of his stay at Los Alamos" was connected with its "destiny" in world history.[359] "*It was no accident*", Burroughs has stated, "*that I went to the Los Alamos Ranch School where they couldn't wait to make the atom bomb and drop it on the Yellow Peril.*"[360] During the Second World War, the Los Alamos Ranch School was commandeered by the military for the development of the atom bomb.[361] The decision was approved by Los Alamos' school director, A.J. Connell, who reportedly said, in a comment that chillingly recalls Turner's gendering of the frontier: "We always said on the frontier, it's better to kill one bitch wolf than ten male wolves."[362]   The School had become a "parable for the age": the "idyllic Ranch School", a deliberate echo of frontier life, was "commandeered [...] for a team of foreign-born scientists", who in disclosing the "secrets of mass destruction", also destroyed "the America the school had represented."[363] By dropping the bomb, Burroughs realised, America "had made a Faustian pact, selling its soul for power and losing its innocence."[364] After the bomb, nothing would ever be the same. "It seemed to Burroughs", writes Morgan, "that the end of classical culture, predicted by Spengler and Korzybski, had now come about, the end of culture and religion and the traditional values of society."[365]   Post-Hiroshima, everyone "existed in a world in which everything was permitted."[366]

Science and Sanity

If Spengler is curiously absent from Burroughs' letters of the immediate post-war period, Count Alfred Korzybski is a continuous presence, although he is only mentioned once by name. "Allen," Burroughs wrote firmly to Ginsberg in 1949, "please do me one favour. Get Korzybski's *Science and Sanity* and read it."[367] Significantly, Korzybski's perspective in *Science and Sanity* is almost diametrically

opposed perspective to Spengler's approach in *The Decline of the West*. If *The Decline of the West* argues that history is cyclical, *Science and Sanity* is intent on breaking that cyclical pattern.[368] One of its many opening quotations is from A.N. Whitehead: "A civilization which cannot burst through its current abstractions is doomed for sterility after a very limited period of progress."[369] Central to *Science and Sanity*, and its attempt to encourage "non-aristotelian orientations", was its disavowal of "either-or" thinking.[370] On this fundamental point, Korzybski was diametrically opposed to Spengler.

The Decline of the West is deliberately structured around "either-or" logic.[371] Spengler, for example, defines his concept of a nation by setting up a series of binary oppositions. The Nation is associated with Destiny, blood and history, while the "*spiritual leaders of the Fellaheen*" are associated with Reason, intellect, and timelessness.[372] Such oppositions are starkly revealed in Spengler's treatment of gender. The male, claims Spengler, "*makes* History", while the "Woman *is* History".[373] Male history is "political, social, more conscious, freer, and more agitated" than Female history, which is "the eternal, the maternal, the plantlike (for the plant has ever something female in it), *the cultureless history of the generation-sequence*."[374] By contrast, Korzybski was profoundly distrustful of such linguistic oppositions. In his Preface to the Third Edition of *Science and Sanity*, Korzybski refers to a formulation he calls "time-binding", introduced in his earlier book *The Manhood of Humanity*, whereby "the reaction of humans are not split verbally and elementalistically" into separate categories ("'body', 'mind', 'emotions', 'intellect', 'intuitions' etc."), but, rather, are treated "from an organism-as-a-whole-in-an-environment [...] point of view."[375] In *Science and Sanity*, Korzybski extends his argument, arguing against the "*general sharpness of 'either-or'*" logic, proposing instead a "complete methodological departure" from "two-valued, 'objective' orientations" to "*general, infinite-valued,*

process orientations".[376]

In 1939, Burroughs attended a series of five lectures given by Korzybski in Chicago. Korzybski would begin his lecture, Burroughs recalls, by "thumping a table".[377] "'Whatever this may be", Korzybski would declare, "it is *not* a table. It is not the verbal label table. We can call it anything so long as we agree that this object is what we are referring to."[378] Burroughs, following Korzybski, would later write in his essay "On Coincidence" that "either-or, absolute terms" do not "correspond to what we know about the human nervous system and the physical world."[379] In his Foreword to Dr Irving Lee's book *Language Habits in Human Affairs* (1941), Korzybski expressed his despair at the "contagious disease of the pathological use of language", whereby "verbal distortions, falsifications, identifications, etc." were used to train a "whole generation".[380]

The "principles of Semantics" were a recurrent theme in many of Burroughs' earlier letters to Allen Ginsberg, serving as the basis for a series of stern lectures.[381] The influence of Korzybski's distrust of language could be perceived in the formulation, in a 1948 letter to Ginsberg, of a one-man philosophical movement: "factualism."[382] In factualism, the developing strands of Burroughs' world-view were collected together. The specific context of Burroughs' adoption of factualism was his disillusionment with psychoanalysis. "Have you resumed analysis?" he asked Ginsberg, and suggested that Ginsberg "might have a go at the Washington School", while making it clear that his own intentions were very different: "Myself", he explained, "I am about to annunciate a philosophy called 'factualism'."[383] Burroughs' letters to Ginsberg and Kerouac in this post-war period particularly expressed his impatience with the use of psychoanalysis. "These jerks", Burroughs wrote, referring to psychiatrists, "feel that anyone who is with it at all belongs in a nut house."[384] What psychiatrists were really looking for, Burroughs felt, was "some beat clerk who feels

with some reason that other people don't like him. In short, someone so scared and whipped down he would never venture to do anything that might disturb the analyst."[385] Behind psychoanalysis, Burroughs detected the "naïve conviction" that "anyone who is 'fully analyzed' will turn out to be a nice liberal."[386] While specifically rooted in his rejection of psychoanalysis, factualism was also a response to the American liberal establishment, and indeed to any discourse that did not have its basis in "fact".[387] Burroughs' expressions of his impatience with Ginsberg were the expression of his far wider impatience with mainstream white American liberal society.[388] By lecturing Ginsberg, Burroughs was also lecturing liberal America, literally picking to pieces the advice that Ginsberg was being given. "All arguments," Burroughs wrote, "all nonsensical considerations as to what people 'should do,' are irrelevant. Ultimately, there is only fact on all levels, and the more one argues, verbalizes, moralizes the less he will see and feel of fact."[389] This letter is the only definition of factualism Burroughs ever made, and it is suitably short and to the point. "Needless to say," he concluded, "I will not write any formal statement on the subject. Talk is incompatible with factualism."[390]

Burroughs' reading of Korzybski's *Science and Sanity*, then, played an important part in forming Burroughs' adversarial position. There was, however, one key point on which Burroughs and Korzybski differed. Korzybski's project, in creating "General Semantics", was a profoundly optimistic one. "We *need not* blind ourselves with the old dogma", Korzybski wrote in 1947, "that 'human nature cannot be changed', for we find it *can be changed*."[391] "We must begin", he continued, "to realize our potentialities as humans, then we may approach the future with some hope."[392] According to Korzybski, "healthy, well-balanced people are naturally 'moral' and 'ethical', unless their educations have twisted their types of evaluations."[393] If only "General Semantics" could be taught on a widespread basis, Korzybski argued, then

"'morality', 'ethics', awareness of social responsibility, etc.", would "follow automatically."[394] Burroughs, however, used Korzybski's observations about verbal distortions to expose naively liberal ideas about progress and basic human decency. Burroughs' primary technique, following Korzybski's advice, was to pick out the "over/under defined" terms in any of the formulations that Ginsberg was providing him with.[395] In response, for example, to Ginsberg's doctor's statement that Ginsberg's "mystical experiences" were "just hallucinations", Burroughs replied: "Did he say *in terms of fact* what an hallucination is? No - because *he does not know*. No one knows. He is just throwing around verbiage."[396] Equally liable to dissection were Ginsberg's own poetic pronouncements. For example, Burroughs dismantled, by letter, Ginsberg's assertion that "evil" is "a sexless womb giving birth to discord."[397] It was, Burroughs admitted, a "pretty turn of phrase", but this slight compliment gave way to a sceptical line of questioning:

> what do you mean by evil? *What are your standards?* What is harmony and why is it desirable? What for that matter is discord in political and economic terms? Where does a "necessity" to think in future time come from? What in the name of God is a "world without ideas"? [...]
>
>   You come on like a prophet talking about "evil", "necessity" and so forth. But where in a "world without ideas," where noone is supposed to look beyond his "non-supersensual reality" do you find the standards on which to base this moral discourse?[398]

Post-Hiroshima, such "moral discourse" seemed to exist in a vacuum.[399] Burroughs also took exception to Ginsberg's claims that there were "knots" in "a consistently selfish position."[400] There were, Burroughs replied, "2 bases for any ethical system. (1) *Aristocratic code* (2) *Religion*."[401] "Liberals", like Ginsberg, had rejected both these "bases", which left them with "exactly nothing."[402] Without "a code of conduct" or "the belief in some Cosmic order", a person has "no reason other than preference to consider any interests other than his own."[403] The "only *possible* ethic", Burroughs wrote to Jack Kerouac, "is to do what one *wants* to do."[404] This conclusion, Burroughs continued, was the point "to which psychoanalysis leads, though many practitioners of analysis shrink back from this final but inescapable step."[405] Burroughs' claimed that "in the end people will do what they want to do, *or the species will become extinct*." (italics mine)[406] These observations resembled less Korzybski's utopian vision of natural morality, and more Spengler's presentation of the natural primacy of the will as expressed in *The Decline of the West*.[407]

Wilhelm Reich

Burroughs' interest in Reich in the post-war period primarily concerned Reich's *The Cancer Biopathy*. Having read the latter text, Burroughs told Jack Kerouac that, while Reich's "social and political theories" bored him, Reich was "the only man in the analysis line who is *on that beam*."[408] The "*beam*" that Burroughs felt Reich was "*on*" was related to Reich's theory of the orgone and its relation to the "cancer process".[409] Burroughs' own experiments in constructing an orgone accumulator were incorporated in the first version of "Junk", an early manuscript that was developed into *Junkie*, and references to Reich are recurrent throughout Burroughs' writing.[410] Of particular concern here, however, is the intersection between Burroughs' reading of Reich, and the science-fiction like paranoia of cold-war American culture.

As Patricia Limerick notes, the 1950s saw the opening of the "nuclear frontier".[411] The events of Hiroshima, and the stirrings of the Cold War, provoked anxiety over the uses to which atomic energy would be put, anxieties reflected in Burroughs' correspondence of this period. In a letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated May 1950, Burroughs referred to his wife Joan's "atomic kick"[412]: her belief, to quote Oliver Harris' paraphrase, that "low-level radiation from atom bomb tests" were "posing an invisible threat, in terms of psychic control rather than physical contamination".[413] Burroughs told Ginsberg that Joan had "convinced" him that this "atomic kick" contained a "solid core of reality."[414] As Harris notes, Joan Burroughs' concern with atom bomb testing echoed Reich's increasing alarm, encouraged by "the outbreak of the Korean War", concerning "global nuclear warfare" and the effects of "atomic radiation".[415] As Harris also suggests, these set of concerns paralleled the "science fiction scenarios" of "contemporary American cinema".[416] Reich, who was investigated in 1954 by the Food and Drug Administration, became increasingly paranoid, and, in Ted Morgan's account, identified "UFOs as spaceships powered by negative energy", and believed he could "disrupt" the weather with "orgone energy".[417]

He also told his "associates" at Orgonon, his research institute in Maine, to "carry firearms against the HIGs", the "Hoodlums in Government".[418] These extraordinary science-fiction like plotlines, believed in passionately by those involved, were symptomatic of a wider cold war paranoia.   Jonathan Paul Eburne, in his essay "Trafficking in the Void: Burroughs, Kerouac and the Consumption of Otherness" (1997), describes the "remarkably hegemonic cultural and political body" within post-war American politics and culture, that "had fashioned a narrative of opposing internal and external forces, positioning 'us' versus 'them.'"[419] Under this "pervasive political consensus", Ebrune argues, a "mass of 'anxieties'", drawn from such variedly "internal" and "external" sources as "the fear of communism, the Bomb, homosexuality, sexual chaos and moral decrepitude, aliens (foreigners *and* extraterrestials)", were "condensed with nightmareish lucidity upon a unifying rhetorical figure": a "festering and highly contagious disease" which threatened the nation's body-politic.[420] Ebrune quotes Andrew Ross' evocation of the "Cold War culture of germophobia", with its "many fantasmatic health concerns": "Is Fluoridation a Communist plot?"[421]

In a related development, the 1950s saw the return of interest in, and nostalgia for, the mythic American frontier. It was not accidental, as Patricia Limerick suggests, that Turner's frontier thesis, so well suited "for carrying the ideological freight of the cold war", was "pulled out on the road again" in the 1950s.[422] David Campbell argues, in *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, that the "myth of the frontier" was an important "resource" in the "well-established discursive economy of identity/difference" that has been drawn upon, throughout the history of the United States, to discipline "contingency" and represent "danger" in moments of cultural and political "flux."[423] Turner's frontier model, located on the "boundary between 'barbarism' and 'civilization'", helped to differentiate the

project of the United States, which aimed to "assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual", from that of the Soviet Union, which was the embodiment of the "idea of slavery under the grim oligarchy of the Kremlin."[424] Campbell quotes Mary Douglas' observation that danger "is always present at the border",[425] and as Ebrune suggests, the "danger" which Turner's frontier model helped to represent was internal as well as external. Indeed, Campbell argues that the perceived threat to cultural hegemony was not primarily the breach of the nation's "territorial borders", but the "transgression of the nation's boundaries of identity."[426] Anybody "other" to the nation's conception of itself, for example women, blacks, foreigners, radicals, the 'insane', the users of narcotics and the 'sexually deviant', were, along with communists, the "targets of anti-communism's discursive practices."[427] In *Junky*, Lee meets a conspiracy theorist in a bar in New Orleans who believes that there is a "tie-up" between "narcotics", "Communism", the unions, and immigrant groups, or, in his words, "Dagos", "Spiks", and "Niggers". (*Junky*/71) Campbell notes that such a linkage between narcotics and internal minorities had a long established history within American society, Chinese-Americans being associated with "opium smoking", for example, Hindus with "cannabis", and Mexicans with "marijuana".[428] Campbell also notes the association made between communism and homosexuality. He argues that "'deviant' sexual behaviour become a national obsession in the U.S. after World War II".[429] In 1950, for example, the Senate issued a report entitled "Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government", which claimed that "one homosexual can pollute a Government office."[430] In *Queer*, Lee notes a contemporary attempt at "purging the State Department of queers". (*Queer*/97)

Lee's further observation, however, that the purge of the State Department would leave only a "skeleton staff" (*Queer*/97) suggests that the "cultural and political

body" of white American culture wasn't quite as "remarkably hegemonic" as Jonathan Eburne suggests.[431] Indeed, Burroughs' own relationship to the dominant narratives of white American culture suggest the complexities of the cold war paranoia, rather than relatively straightforward distinctions between 'them' and 'us'.   While Burroughs, unlike Kerouac, made no gestures of identification with racially marginalized others, he nonetheless occupied a distinctly liminal area in relation to the imperial culture Kerouac was supposedly rejecting. At one level, Burroughs' status as homosexual and heroin user made him a distinctly marginalized figure in his own right. Burroughs' correspondence from the late 1940s details his frustration at harassment from the state and federal authorities after being charged with possession of heroin. Burroughs wrote to Ginsberg explaining he would have to leave New Orleans because the narcotics agents, who had "orders to question 'known addicts' when and wherever encountered", "won't let me alone."[432] In a latter letter to Jack Kerouac, he described the "seizure" of his car in connection with enquiries about the possession of narcotics as a "violation of the Constitution", and raged that the Constitution "might as well" have been torn up by these "bastards."[433] Burroughs' letters from within America do not discuss his homosexuality, but his letters to Ginsberg from Mexico admit the "drawbacks of being queer", and explicitly relate those "drawbacks" to residence in the United States.[434]

   While Burroughs' status as junkie and homosexual suggested that he belonged to the deviant 'them' of white American post-war culture, his status as white, upper-middle class American linked him to the conforming 'us'. Indeed, Burroughs' distrust of repressive bureaucracy and legal restraint often lead him to express nostalgia for an earlier, freer America, described by Frederick Nolan as "a yearning for the prewar world of the nonadministered society."[435]. Throughout his early letters to Ginsberg, Burroughs expressed his contempt for any system or institution that would interfere

with the individual's right to "do what one *wants* to do."[436] Among Burroughs' targets were the "Welfare State"[437], the "Unions"[438], the "New Deal", and the Federal government.[439] His fury at the "obscenity bunch of bureaucrats" who curtailed his activities, economic as well as narcotic, began to directly echo the most paranoid pronouncements of the right-wing anti-Communist paranoia of 1950s America.[440] Writing from New Orleans, Burroughs expressed the opinion that rent controls should be scrapped. "To dictate to a man what he can and can't do with his own property", Burroughs fumed, "is *Un-American Socialism*. Such insidious measures leave the back door of the Ship of State ajar so that the cur of Communism can slink in and plunder the American ice-box."[441] In other words, Burroughs perceived the "*Un-American*" spread of bureaucracy as a threat to his rightful white, middle-class, property-owning, American freedoms.

This white American viewpoint was important to the construction of Burroughs' attitudes towards the frontier. "Whatever happened", Burroughs asked Jack Kerouac, in a letter from Mexico City written on the very first day of the 1950s, "to our glorious Frontier heritage of minding ones own business?"[442] The "Frontiersman", wrote Burroughs, answering his own question, "has shrunk to a wretched, interfering, Liberal bureaucrat."[443] Such evocations of the glorious frontier past are, as Renato Rosaldo points out, part of a curious process by which "agents of colonialism" express "nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was 'traditionally.'"[444] The "peculiarity" of this "yearning", Rosaldo continues, is that the "agents of colonialism" mourn for the "very forms of life" that they themselves have "intentionally altered or destroyed."[445] Rosaldo terms this yearning "imperialist nostalgia."[446] Burroughs' curious position at this time, both marginalized other and nostalgic imperialist, suggests his complicated relationship to the dominant white American culture. This issue will be returned to in the following chapter, which will examine the writing and publication of Burroughs'

first novel, *Junky*.

1 Susan Howe, *The Birth-mark*, 163.

2 Elliot West, "American Frontier", *The Oxford History of the American West*, 116.

3 Burroughs has claimed to be a "cosmonaut of inner space". Burroughs quoted in Eric Mottram, *The Algebra of Need* (London: Marion Boyars, 1977), 13.

4 Frederick J. Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1894). Turner's paper was "first read as a paper at the meeting of the American Historical Association", at the World Fair in Chicago in July, 1893. It was "first printed" in the "*Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* in 1894, and then "reprinted" in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893*, also published in 1894.

5 Patricia Limerick, "The Trail to Santa Fe: The Unleashing of the Western Public Intellectual", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 62.

6 Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", 199.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 William G. Robbins, "Laying Siege to Western History: The Emergence of New Paradigms", *Trails: Towards a New American History*, 184.

10 Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", 199.

11 Ibid., 200.

12 Ibid., 201.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 200.

15 Ibid.

16 Donald Worster, "Beyond the Agrarian Myth", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 10. It is important to note also, however, the note of unease about westward expansionism that Turner often sounds. On the first page of his thesis, for example, Turner quotes Calhoun in 1817: "We are great, and rapidly - I was about to say fearfully - growing!" Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", 199. Turner also noted that the frontier was "productive of individualism" and that individualism "produces antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control." He therefore links the frontier to the promotion of "democracy". However, he felt that a "democracy born of free land, strong in selfishness and individualism, intolerant of administrative experience and education, and pressing individual liberty beyond its proper limits", had "its dangers as well as its benefits." Ibid., 222-3.

17 Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", 200.

18 Frederick Jackson Turner, "Pioneer Ideals and the State University", *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1947), 269, quoted by Gerald Thompsom, "Another Look at Frontier/Western Historiography", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, pp. 92-3.

19 Ibid.

20 Richard White, "Trashing the Trails", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 28.

21 Ibid.

22 Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), pp.136-7.

23 White, attempting to demythicize American frontier history, points out that the "virgin" land beyond the frontier had in fact been already farmed, and thereby considerably altered, by the native Americans. Therefore, the notions of the land's virginity were the projections of the white Americans. White, "Trashing the Trails", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 35. The example White gives is of the setting of "prairie fires" in order to ensure "earlier growth of grasses in the spring." Ibid., 30.

24 Limerick, "The Unleashing of the Western Public Intellectual", *Trails: Towards a New American History*, 63-4. In the footnotes to his essay "Laying Siege to Western History", William G. Robbins lists three key precursors to the New Western History written in this period: Fred A. Shannon, "A Post-Mortem on the Labor-Safety-Valve Theory", *Agricultural History* (no. 19, January 1945), Earl Pomeroy, "Toward a Reorientation of Western History: Continuity and Environment", *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (no.44, March 1955), pp. 579-600, and Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950). Quoted in Robbins, *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, pp. 264-5.

25 Limerick, "The Trail to Santa Fe: The Unleashing of the Western Public Intellectual", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, pp.63-4.

26 William Howarth, "America's Dream of the Wide Open Spaces", *Book World* (Jan. 4, 1987), 4, quoted in William G. Robbins, "Laying Siege to Western History: The Emergence of New Paradigms", *Trails: Towards a New American History*, 186.

27 William G. Robbins, "Laying Siege to Western History: The Emergence of New Paradigms", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 192.

28 Limerick, "The Unleashing of the Western Public Intellectual", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, ed. Patricia Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, Charles E. Rankin, 64.

29 Ibid., 65. The New Western Historians have faced resistance from a number of sources. Patricia Limerick recalls a "grumpy columnist" from the *Arizona Republic* who gave his verdict on the new history: "Why can't the revisionists leave our myths alone?" Limerick, "What on Earth Is the New Western History?", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 87. The novelist Larry McMurty has described the New Western History as a "wretched animal", and has claimed that the tragic history of the West has been told by "abler historians than most of the revisionists." Larry McMurty, quoted in William G. Robbins, "Laying Siege to Western History", *Trails*, pp. 191, 214. As Charles S.Peterson notes in his essay "Speaking for the Past", in 1989 and 1990 the conflict between Old and New Western

historians was covered in the national press, the story being covered under such headlines as "Shootout in Academia over the History of the U.S. West, New Generation Confronts Frontier Tradition". Charles S. Peterson, "Speaking for the Past", *The Oxford History of the American West*, 743. (The headline quoted is from the *Washington Post*, (Oct. 10, 1989). The story was also covered in the *New York Times* (Dec. 1989, Mar. 1990) and the *U.S. News and World Report* (May 1990), under the headline "The Old West: The New View of Frontier Life".) While such news coverage crassly simplifies the debate, turning it into another Western gunfight, it is nonetheless clear from the statements of the New Western Historians that they feel they are rewriting an important aspect of American history, or, more exactly, providing alternative histories to compete with the dominant myths.

30 Patricia Nelson Limerick, "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century", *The Frontier in American Culture: Essays by Richard White and Patricia Nelson Limerick*, ed. James Grossman (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: The University of California Press, 1994), 67.

31 Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", 200. As Limerick notes, if the sole definition of the "frontier" was its population scarcity, then large areas of the United States remain frontier territory, and as the urban planner Frank Popper puts it, the "frontier never died and shows no sign of dying." Frank Popper, "The Strange Case of the Contemporary American Frontier", *The Yale Review* 76 (Autumn 1976), quoted by Limerick. Limerick also quotes Dayton Duncan's observation that in 1990, one hundred years after Turner's closing of the frontier, "132 counties within fifteen Western states", that is "13 percent of the nation's contiguous landmass", was home to fewer than two people per square mile. Dayton Duncan, *Miles From Nowhere: Tales from America's Contemporary Frontier* (New York: Viking, 1993), pp. 6-7. Both quotations from Limerick, "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century", *The Frontier in American Culture*, 77.

32 Limerick, "What On Earth Is New Western History", *Trails: Towards a New American History*, 85.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., 86.

35 Annette Kolodny, "Letting Go Our Grand Obsessions: Notes Toward a New Literary History of American Frontiers", *American Literature* (Vol.64, No.1, March 1992), 3.

36 Leonard Thompsom and Howard Lamar, "Comparative Frontier History", *The Frontier in History: North America and South Africa Compared* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp.7-8, quoted in Kolodny, "Letting Go Our Grand Obsessions", *American Literature*, 7.   The re-definition which Kolodny proposes, as Limerick notes, brings its own problems, since this "cultural competition" definition of the frontier could be applied to "the contested group relations of, say, a late-twentieth century city". How would the "frontier" as "contact zone" be demarcated in time? Under Thompsom and Lamar's definition, the "frontier 'opens' in a given zone when the first representatives of the intrusive society arrive", and it "'closes' when a single political authority has established hegemony over the zone." Limerick questions whether it is "any easier to locate a moment of clearly 'established hegemony' than it was to locate any of the other conclusions to the frontier?" Lamar and Thompsom, *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared*, 7, quoted in Limerick, "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century", *The Frontier in American Culture*, pp. 76-7.

37 Mary Louise Pratt, "Introduction", *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp 6-7.

38 To Anzaldúa, the borderland can even be situated in the "space between" where "two individuals shrink with intimacy." Gloria Anzaldúa, "Preface", *Borderlands|La Frontera*.

39 Michael P. Malone, "Beyond the Last Frontier: Towards a New Approach to Western American History", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 153.

40 Ibid., 152.

41 Ibid.

42 Walter Nugent, "Comparing Wests and Frontiers", *The Oxford History of the American West*, pp.803-833. Nugent mentions several non-European expansionist projects, including the expansion of Islam into the Middle East and North Africa beginning in the seventh century, and the Polynesian movement into the Pacific, in the eight to the thirteenth centuries. Ibid., pp.806-7.
     Once again, what is striking about these New Western Histories, new paradigms apart, is their continuity with strands of Old Western History. The concept of the frontier as microcosm of global process began, as Nugent and Malone acknowledge, with the Texas historian Walter Prescott Webb, and his 1952 text *The Great Frontier*. Ibid., 806 and Malone, "Beyond the Last Frontier", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, pp.142-3,

43 Michael P. Malone, "Beyond the Last Frontier: Towards a New Approach to Western American History", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 152.

44 Gerald Thompsom, "Another Look at Frontier/Western Historiography", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 92.

45 Malone, "Toward A New Approach to Western American History", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 152. As Malone notes, many regionalist historians working on the American West would object to the imposition of Wallerstein's "socioeconomic jargon" into their specialist field. There is, of course, a deeper problem with such a global perspective, and that is its tendency to obliterate the careful localised distinctions that constitute regional history: questions, for example, of race, gender and class, geography and ecology. In this manner, a global analysis can repeat the pattern of imperialising global integration it is supposed to analyze. Nonetheless, as Malone points out, the wider perspective can place localised analysis in the context of a "worldwide process of global integration that is continuing to remake" the American West and "other regions." Ibid., 153.

46 Iain Finlayson, *Tangier: City of the Dream* [1992] (London: Flamingo, 1993), 71.

47 Worster, "Beyond the Agrarian Myth", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*. Ibid., 7. In his attempt to move

beyond the agrarian myth, the Turnerian notion that by returning to "the wilderness, men could be restored to the innocence of their youth, sloughing off the blemishes his age", Worster in fact replaces it with its opposite: an anti-wilderness mythology in which the "economic development of the West" becomes an "often ruthless assault on nature" and leaves behind it "much death, depletion and ruin." Ibid., 18.

48 Limerick, "The Unleashing of the Western Public Intellectual", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 70.

49 Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, [1989] (London: Routledge, 1993), 73.

50 Ibid.

51 Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 3.

52 Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* [1986] (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 10.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Limerick gives the example of the "license plates of Alaska". Alaska, which contains an "enormous amount of unpopulated land", is also contains highly populated urban areas. As Limerick notes, however, its automobiles "sport a license plate with the words "Alaska: The Last Frontier", rather than "Alaska: The Last Zone of Cultural Interpenetration and Contested Hegemony". Limerick, "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century", *The Frontier in American Culture*, 79.

57 John F. Kennedy's speech on accepting the Democratic nomination on July 15, 1960, quoted in Limerick, "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century". *The Frontier in American Culture*, 81.

58 Ibid.

59 Limerick, "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century". *The Frontier in American Culture*, 81.

60 William V.Spanos, *The Errant Art of Moby Dick: The Canon, The Cold War, and the Struggle for American Studies*, 2.

61 Ibid., pp. 2-3.

62 Ibid., 3.

63 Ibid., 24.

64 Ibid.

65 Spanos compares the idealization of the American West in Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* with the far more complex, and less comforting, mythologies presented in Slotkin's work, quoting Donald Pease's observation that Slotkin "rereads *Virgin Land* in terms that recall American imperialism - its generalized domination of nature and native cultures." Donald Pease, "New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions in the Canon", *boundary 2*, (vol. 17, Spring 1990), 14, quoted in Spanos, *The Errant Art of Moby Dick*, 312.

66 Susan Howe describes Foucault's "influence" as "problematic": "This wide-ranging philosopher and library cormorant's eloquent, restless, passionate interrogation of how we have come to be the way we are remains inside the margins of an intellectual enclosure constructed from memories, meditations, delusions, and literary or philosophical speculations of European men." Howe, *The Birth-mark*, 37.

67 Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 3.

68 Ibid. Susan Howe acknowledges in *The Birth-mark* that she is "very concerned with the idea of a distinctive American voice". She claims that Melville and Dickinson "couldn't possibly be English", and refers approvingly to Lawrence's "sense of the spirit of the place" as an influence on American writers. She wonders "how did English Lawrence understand America so well?" Howe, *The Birth-mark*, pp.155-156. Howe also refers approvingly to other Americanist critics. "Olson has been so important to me. *Call me Ishmael* enthralled me when I first read it. If he had written nothing else, he would be dear to me for that. I think that's also true of [...] William's *In the American Grain*." Ibid., 158. She describes Slotkin's *Regeneration Through American Violence* as a "crucial book for anyone interested in American literature", and Douglas' *The Feminization of American Culture* as a "seminal book." Ibid., pp. 167, 169. My purpose in referring to Howe's range of reference is to establish once again that the Americanist tradition, while "contrary to much current academic opinion", is a valid, and indeed indispensable, one. Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 3.

69 Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 3.

70 Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), 30.

71 Ibid., 32. The "true Western frontier" is linked, in Fiedler's work, to the "denial of all hierarchy and tradition.". Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, pp. 256-7.

72 Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 554.

73 Kolodny argues, using a framework of infantile psychology, that when the "gratifications implied by a landscape comprising Mother and, afterward, Mistress," were inevitably frustrated, the white male psyche responded, as a small child would, with the "single-minded destruction and pollution of the continent". Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience in American Life and Letters*, 137.

74 Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 315.

75 According to Slotkin, the basic struggle that forms the frontier mythologies is the "psychological tension" between two opposing principles: "Moira" and "Themis". Moira was, in Slotkin's description, a "prehistoric earth-goddess", who preceded the "Olympian deities of Greece", represented by Themis. Themis deposed Moira, and imposed a new order based on "the activity and responsibility of social life as opposed to passivity and absorption in the mother." The relationship between Moira and Themis, Slotkin explains, has developed into a profound conflict between "the unconscious and the conscious, the dream or impulse and the rational idea, the inchoate desire and the knowledge of responsibility," or, in its simplest terms, between the "gratification-world presided over by the mother and the world of law and reasons ruled by the father." Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 11. Slotkin takes these terms

from *Thresholds of Initiation* by J.L. Henderson (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1967).

76 Slotkin *Regeneration Through Violence*, 11

77 In constructing his archetypal "Western story", Fiedler conflates "West" and "frontier": the "West", he claims, "was always a bloody ground just over the horizon". Fiedler asks "where geographically is the elusive West?", "Can we establish the West anywhere at all, then?" Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American*, 26.

Brian Dippie, in his essay "American Wests: Historiographical Perspectives", portrays Fiedler as a culturally imperialistic Easterner patronisingly viewing the West from an urban, metropolitan perspective: "And they dismiss the yokels 'out there' in 'flyover country' with their cowboy hats, red necks and empty faces designed, as Leslie Fiedler reported years ago after escaping from the horrors of intellectual isolation in Montana back to the safety of New York, principally for squinting into the setting sun. Eastern superiority and condescension and western sensitivity, and a powerful need for approval - these are the very definition of a colonial relationship." Brian W. Dippie, "American Wests: Historiographical Perspectives", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 136.

78 In brief, in *Love and Death in the American Novel*, Fiedler expresses his contention that there is a discernible "pattern" in American fiction that has been "imposed" on American writers, by their literary predecessors and by "the very conditions of life in the United States". The American writer, Fiedler argues, cannot escape this "pattern", no matter what "philosophy he consciously adopts or what theme he thinks he pursues." Using an idiosyncratic and somewhat cavalier use of Freudian, Jungian and occasionally Marxist terminology, Fiedler presents us in *Love and Death* with what he sees as the key themes of American fiction: the "failure of the American fictionist to deal with adult heterosexual love", and the "consequent obsession with death, incest and innocent homosexuality". Fiedler, "Preface to the First Edition"*, Love and Death in the American Novel*.

79 Attempting to explain the convoluted psychological conflicts we find Herman Melville's *Pierre* (1852), for example, Fiedler argues Melville's novel concerns the "fundamental conflict of two principles, called variously heaven and earth, nature and spirit, id and superego". Fiedler further argues that "every human action is bred of a marriage of these principles, or of a union between one of them and some previous action bred of an earlier marriage", and that in "western civilization", these two opposed principles "are typically identified with the mother and father". Ibid., 392.

80 Ibid., 342. Fiedler also genders genre distinctions. For example, sentimental fiction, the work of women who had "grown too genteel for sex", is opposed to gothic fiction, the domain of men no longer genteel enough for women. Ibid., 242.

81 Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American*, 24

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid., xxiv.

84 Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American*, 24.

85 Hicks, *Border Writing: The Multi-Dimensional Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. xxiv-xxv.

86 In her introduction, Hicks argues that the "poststructualist" methodologies she advocates were already being employed by "artists and writers in Latin America", who were "'appropriating' images and 'decentering' the subject", long "before French poststructualism had been imported to U.S. literature departments." Hicks provides an number of examples, including "the Brazilian concrete poets in the 1960s", and the "artists of the *neo-gráfica* movement in Mexico". D.Emily Hicks, "Introduction", *Border Writing*, xxvii.

87 Neil Larsen, "Foreword" to D. Emily Hicks, *Border Writing*, xi.

88 D. Emily Hicks, *Border Writing*, xxv.

89 Ibid., xxvi.

90 Paul de Man, "Phenomenology and Materiality in Kant", *Hermeneutics*, ed. Gary Shapiro, Alan Sica, quoted in D.Emily Hicks, *Border Writing*, xxiv.

91 Hicks, *Border Writing*, xxiv.

92 A number of critics, including Robin Lydenberg, Rob Latham and Brent Wood, have associated Burroughs with Delueze and Guattari, so Hick's observations about borders and frontiers may be seen as relevant to Burroughs' writing. Wood links the Deleuze and Guattarian notions of the "Body without Organs" and "becoming" to Burroughs. Brent Wood, "William S. Burroughs and the Language of Cyberpunk", *Science-Fiction Studies* (Greencastle, IN.: Vol.23, no.1, March 1996), pp.15, 18. Latham argues that Burroughs' use of collage represents an "anti-Oedipal dynamic". Rob Latham, "Collage as Critique and Invention in the Fiction of William S. Burroughs and Kathy Acker", *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* (Stow, OH.: Vol.5, no.3, 1993), 50.

93 In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said also approvingly discusses Delueze and Guattari's work, noting their "disciplined kind of intellectual mobility in an age of institutionalization, regimentation" and "co-optation." Said, *Culture and Imperialism* [1993] (London: Vintage, 1994), 402.

94 Said, *Representations of the Exile: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (London: Vintage, 1994), 35.

95 Ibid., 39.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid., 47.

100 Anzaldúa, "Preface", *Borderlands|La Frontera*.

101 Anzaldúa herself, as a Chicano, has Indian, Mexican and Spanish ancestry, and lives in North America.

102 Edward Said, "Media and Cultural Identity", *Information and Misinformation: Euro-Arab Relations* (The Hague: Euro-Arab Dialogue Lectures III, Lutfia Rabban Foundation, 1988), 36.

103 Melville, *Moby Dick*, 45.

104 Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 337.

105 Ibid., 361.

106 Ibid. Describing the protagonist of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Fanshawe*, for example, Fiedler evokes his "slight, pale melancholy", as if he were "afflicted by some 'blight ere maturity.'" Fanshawe, Fiedler writes, is "a Wether-like portrait of the scholar-artist as a doomed young man", the lost soul who is "not of this world." Ibid., 219.

107 Ibid., 362.

108 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 349.

109 Ibid.

110 Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 45.

111 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 349.

112 Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 126. It is Fiedler's contention that the primary form of American fiction is derived from the gothic form, which he traces from its European origins. Until American writers turned to the Gothic form, Fiedler argues, "the serious American novel could not begin". Ibid., 134. In Fiedler's definition of what constitutes the gothic form, one aspect is central; indeed, is as essential to the gothic as is "seduction to the Richardsonian novel." While a sentimental novel is devoted to the subject of love, Fiedler writes, the "primary meaning" of the "gothic romance" is its "substitution of terror for love" as the "central theme." Ibid., 126. Fiedler's thesis finds its precursor in Lawrence's observation, in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, that beneath its sentimentalist veneer, the "essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer." Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, 68. The gothic novel, Fiedler argues, was incomplete until it had "discovered and made its center the diabolic bargain." Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 126.

113 The "very act", Fiedler argues, of "devoting a long fiction to terror" rather than to love, was in itself a "Faustian commitment". Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 126. Fiedler draws attention, in this context, to Melville's famous letter to Hawthorne, in which he wrote of the "hell-fire" in which *Moby Dick* had been "broiled", and of the book's "secret motto": "Ego non baptiso te in nomine - but make out the rest for yourself." Melville, "Reviews and Letters by Melville", *Moby Dick*, 562. Letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, dated June 29, 1851. This "secret motto" is "deliriously howled" by Ahab in "The Forge" chapter, in a diabolic ceremony in which the pagan harpooners baptize Ahab's harpoon in blood and fire, the "malignant iron scorchingly" devouring "the baptismal blood." Melville, *Moby Dick*, 404. To accept Fiedler's thesis, one must take this "secret motto" of *Moby Dick* as the book's final word, its delirious "substitution of terror for love." Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 126. Fiedler himself, however, being a sensitive reader of *Moby Dick*, notes that the book's final words are in fact spoken by Ishmael, whom Fiedler describes as the book's "questing lover." Ibid., 335. As Fiedler also notes, it is the relationship between love and terror, rather than the substitution of terror for love, that gives shape to *Moby Dick*, since, in Ishmael, the "heart of Western civilization reaches out to the uncorrupted sources of natural life", while in Ahab, the "head of Western man turns to the same sources in search of power and fear." Ibid., 351. In fact, Fiedler presents a complex relationship, the struggle between love, as represented by Ishmael, and terror, represented by Ahab.

114 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [1972] (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 51.

115 Ibid., 113.

116 D. Emily Hicks, *Border Writing*, 8.

117 Robin Lydenberg, *Word Cultures: Radical Theory and Practice in William S. Burroughs' Fiction* (Urbana, IL.: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 175.

118 Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 316.

119 Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 95.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid. Douglas here is contrasting the white Americans writers in 1920s New York, who had "strongly marked, almost compulsive affinities with Freudian thought", with the African-American writers of the Harlem Renaissance, who did not, in the main, share this interest. She concludes that Freud's theories did not aid the understanding of the "psychological configuration of a people whose family patterns in their native Africa, and to a degree in the Southern plantation life to which they were transported, were those of extended kinship relations and communal resources." Ibid, pp.94-5.

122 The central thesis of *Love and Death in the American Novel*, as Fiedler acknowledges, owes a considerable debt to an earlier, pioneering work of scholarship, D.H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature*, and the observations made here about Freud's, and Fiedler's, treatment of gender, and the simultaneous attempt to exclude, and suppressed fascination with, women, also apply to Lawrence. It was in the pages of Lawrence's study that Fiedler found "confirmation" of his own "suspicions" concerning the "duplicitous" nature of American fiction. Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, "The Preface to the First Edition." Lawrence's version of the American myth is, as Douglas gently points out, "an example of the Freudian ethos of aggressive over-interpretation at its most imperial." Lawrence's purpose, Douglas argues, is to "'out', as we say today, the real America from its closet of pseudo-gentility." To do this, Douglas continues, Lawrence proposes that we must "ignore the professed concern for piety, the feminized notions of good taste, the bogus tributes to the ideals of American democracy and domesticity" that can be found on "every page of Cooper and Hawthorne and Whitman", and that "even Melville is not free of." Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 162. Having stripped away the "feminized" veneer of America, and cut back the "old emotions and consciousness", Lawrence is free to commune with the "swaddled infant of truth that America spawned some time back." The "essential American soul", Lawrence believed, was "hard, isolate, stoic", and, above all, a "killer." D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* [1923] (London: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 8, 4.

Lawrence's criticism is best understood alongside an examination of the cultural currents that formed it. If the

Victorian matriarchs had committed a decorous act of patricide on the Calvinist god, Lawrence sought to bring him back from the dead. "The next era", Lawrence proclaimed, would be the "era of the Holy Ghost." The ghost-like presence of the supposedly murdered Calvinist God was to live on "within" each individual, preaching its gospel of stoic isolation: each "isolate individual listening in isolation to the Holy Ghost within him." Ibid., 85. The purpose of Lawrence's "Holy Ghost" was to discourage the "individual" from giving up to the "root of all evil": the need for "spiritual gratification, this flow, this apparent heightening of life". Ibid., 82. Lawrence connects this need for "spiritual gratification" with "incest desire", which he characterizes as the "longing for identification, utter merging". Speaking, with characteristic immodesty, on behalf of the whole human race, Lawrence claims that everybody is susceptible to this "incest desire": we "all want" it, he urges, "*without resistance*. We want it continually." Ibid., 82. Wishing to reaffirm the stoic, isolate Calvinist father, Lawrence instead continually presents us with his opposite: the nameless, all-encompassing mother.

Lawrence, described by Douglas as a "self-confessed victim of the Oedipus complex" and a "tortured pilgrim to the sites of archaic culture", found in his highly personal selection of classic American literature a perfect mirror of his own inner struggles. Ann Douglas, in a footnote to *Terrible Honesty*, provides a partial, but telling, explanation of the genesis of *Studies in Classic American Literature*. When he began writing *Studies*, Lawrence had been staying in New Mexico with a female friend of Gertrude Stein. Lawrence found her "the archetype of 'the dominating American woman'", a type Lawrence notoriously hated, and he moved out, vowing to "*cut her throat!"*. As Douglas notes, Lawrence did symbolically cut her throat by "excluding women writers" from his study of American literature. The writing of *Studies* was, then, an "act of matricide," and, as Douglas concludes, "in this act the American canon was born." Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 544.

123 Nina Baym, "Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors", *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, ed. Elaine Showlater (London: Virago, 1986), 72. It should be noted that Baym is only seeking to widen the canon along the lines of gender, not of class or race. By her own admission, the "nineteenth century women authors" she seeks to include were "overwhelmingly white, middle class, and Anglo-Saxon in origin." Ibid., 69. While *Love and Death in the American Novel* certainly does exclude women authors, it does examine, with some critical detachment, the representations of women in American fiction.

124 Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 237.

125 Ibid., 231.

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid., 230.

129 Ibid., 231.

130 By presenting a male-centred myth of origin, Freud is repeating in psychoanalysis the pattern that has dominated Western myth: the suppression of the female gods, and thereby the suppression of female involvement in the dominant culture. In *Totem and Taboo*, as in Genesis, the story begins with the father: "In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate [...]""The Story of Creation", Genesis 1.1, The Old Testament, Good News Bible: Today's English Version (New York: Collins and Fontana, 1977).

131 Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 11.

132 Ibid., 46.

133 Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 233. Douglas argues that *Totem and Taboo* "offers the tale of the murdered father as a front behind which Freud" could "accomplish the murder of the mother." The "matricidal script" which *Totem and Taboo* concealed was, according to Douglas, "left behind not" in a "single coherent" narrative, but "strewn at different spots, at separate sites, in his work." Ibid., 230.

134 Ibid., 234.

135 Ibid., 233. After this act of patricide, engineered by the mother, the initial patriarchy gives way to a matriarchy. The matriarchy then mysteriously gives way to another patriarchy, which "marks the start of known and recordable human civilization." In Aeschylus' play, the first father's wife is Clytemnestra, who betrays her husband Agamemnon by taking as a lover Aegisthus. Aegisthus is "very much a youngest-son figure," completely in Clytemnestra's sway, but it is Clytemnestra who commits the act of patricide, "stabbing" her husband, then marrying Aegisthus and establishing herself as ruler. A decade later, however, Clytemnestra is murdered by her son, Orestes, who, "spurred on" by his sister, Electra, "feel honor-bound to avenge his father's death." The conclusion to the *Oresteia* is the trial of Orestes, in which he is "exonerated". His accusers, the "Furies", "fierce mother goddesses" who "are hell-bent on avenging Clytemnestra's death" have their power suppressed, and they are renamed the "Eumenides" or "The Kindly Ones." While this patriarchal conclusion to the *Oresteia* mirrored his own conclusion to *Totem and Taboo*, Freud seemed reluctant to examine the *Oresteia* cycle in detail. When Otto Rank "presented a paper on the *Oresteia*" in Vienna in 1906, Freud insisted that "all that was important about Aeschylus' play was its culminating representation of the transfer of power from the matriarchy to the patriarchy", and that Rank could have "omitted without loss" Orestes and Clytemnestra from his account. Ibid., pp. 233-5.

136 Ibid., 233. In the essay "The Question of a Weltanschauung", in *New Introductory Lectures On Psychoanalysis* (1932), Freud briefly mentions the important presence of "female deities" in creation mythologies, and notes that some creation myths begin with a "male god getting rid of a female deity, who is degraded into being a monster." "Here", Freud concedes, the "most interesting problems of detail open out", but they are not developed. We "must hurry on", Freud insists, returning us to the story of the male "god-creator" who is "undisguisedly called 'father'." Sigmund Freud, "Lecture 35: The Question of a Weltanschauung", *New Introductory Lectures On Psychoanalysis* [1932] The Pelican Freud Library Volume 2, (London: Penguin Books, 1981), 198.

137 According to Douglas, Freud "never discussed the *Orestia*", and when Otto Rank gave a paper on the trilogy in

1906, Freud insisted that "all that was important about the play was its culminating representation of the transfer of power from the matriarchy to the patriarchy." Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 235.

138 Ibid., 232. As Douglas notes, in fact Orestes and Oedipus are both matricidal sons, rather than the patricidal sons presented in *Totem and Taboo*. Oedipus accidentally kills his father, and bitterly laments the act, but having learnt "the truth about his parentage and his crime", Oedipus goes off to kill Jocasta, only to find that she has already killed herself. Ibid., pp. 237-8.

139 Jane Flax, *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), 80.

140 Flax, *Thinking Fragments*, 87.

141 Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents" (1930), *Civilization, Society and Religion* , Penguin Freud Library, Volume 12 [1985] (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 260. Also quoted in Flax, *Thinking Fragments*, 80.

142 Flax, *Thinking Fragments*, 80. Flax also notes Freud's profound ambivalence towards pre-oedipal experience, implicit in his discussion of "oceanic" feelings in the opening chapter of "Civilization and Its Discontents". Initially, Freud claims that he "cannot discover this 'oceanic' feeling" in himself, before explaining the feeling as a symptom of "limitless narcissism." The feeling is also described as the "shrunken residue" of a "much more inclusive - indeed, an all embracing - feeling which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it. As Flax notes, in Freud's own reading, the first intimate bond is between mother and child. Flax therefore concludes that the "oceanic feeling" is the "residue" of a pre-oedipal relationship with the mother, hence Freud's ambivalence. "Freud, "Civilization and Its Discontents", *Civilization, Society and Religion*, pp. 253, 252, 260, 255. Also quoted in Flax, *Thinking Fragments*, 80. According to Ann Douglas, Freud continued his own insistence on the "patriarchal and patricidal origins of human culture" right up to his "final retelling" of the myth of origin in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939). Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 239. Freud did go on, however, in his lecture on "Femininity", to argue that "psychoanalysis needed to shift its emphasis from the oedipal to the pre-oedipal period in its theory of female psychosexual development." Susan Stanford Friedman, *Penelope's Web: Gender, Modernity, H.D.'s Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 290. Freud, "Femininity", *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* [1933] (London: Pelican Books, 1973). More detailed investigations into the pre-oedipal stage of development, however, linked to both males and females, have only begun in earnest with the work of feminist revisionists, such as Julia Kristeva.

143 Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 143.

144 Ibid., pp. 239-40.

145 Ibid., 239.

146 In *Beneath the American Renaissance* (1989), David S. Reynolds questions Fiedler's assertion that the "cult of domesticity", by "stressing woman's motherly role", created a "widening gap between distinct male and female spheres." Reynolds argues that this "standard view" is "misleading and simplistic". By incorporating into his research literature not written by white middle class women, especially pamphlet material and materials written by radical-democrat novelists, Reynolds successfully extends the understanding of nineteenth century American culture and literature. However, the important exceptions to the rule of distinct spheres that Reynolds finds within the contemporary literature, such as the "feminist criminal" and the "adventure feminist", lie outside the middle-class world described by Fiedler and Douglas. This is not to suggest that these exceptions are not important, but rather to suggest that Fiedler and Douglas remain useful, if the limitations of their analyses are acknowledged. David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 338, 340, 345.

147 Ibid., 240.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid. Douglas views this transition with some evident unease, though not with a nostalgic eye towards Calvinist values. Calvinism, she argues, was a "great faith, with great limitations: it was repressive, authoritarian, dogmatic, patriarchal to an extreme." Its demise was "inevitable, and in some real sense, welcome." The "tragedy" of the transition was not, then, the demise of Calvinism, but rather "the failure of a viable, sexually diversified culture" with which to replace it. Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, pp. 12-13.

150 Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 313.

151 Ibid., 6.

152 Ibid.

153 For example, Douglas notes the attempts to "control the still-proliferating [...] ratio of women to men among grade-school teachers, even to reverse the tide of co-education at the university level." Related was the return of violent sports, and enforced, self-improving outdoor pursuits. Social Darwinism became dominant in "political practice and sociological theory", and Naturalism, with its "emphasis on brute instinct and force", was an importance influence on the literature of the period. Ibid., 327.

154 Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 241.

155 Freud, "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis" (1937), quoted in Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 144.

156 Ibid.

157 Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 147.

158 Ibid., 253.

159 Ibid., 8.

160 T.S Eliot's "The Waste Land", (1922) for example, considered one of the "central masculinzing documents of the era", was, in Douglas' description, the "unmistakable product of a long feminine gynophobic and gynophiliac tradition of overwrought poetry, hysteria and Spiritualist séances." Ibid., 7.

161 A central problem in reading *Love and Death in the American Novel* is understanding Fiedler's claustrophobic attachment to that which he is supposedly objectively criticising. In the chapter of *Love and Death* titled "The Revenge on Women: From Lucy to Lolita", for example, Fiedler provides an excellent summary of the violence done to women in American fiction: the splitting of the female psyche into the "Fair Maiden" and the "Dark Lady", the male novelist's inability to "portray sexual passion", and the resulting failure to draw "convincing portraits of women." Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 272.

Fiedler, however, seems unsure about who exactly is to blame for this failure. At one level, he seems to blame the male novelists, who have made America a "nation of mama's boys", and whose "self-pitying whine" is heard throughout American fiction: it's "all mama's fault." Fiedler detects within his own generation a "demand" that the "Devil-Mom replace the Saint-Mom", but no demand that "real women replace allegorical lay figures in the maternal role." Ibid., 309. On the other hand, Fiedler begins "The Revenge on Women" by claiming that it is the "reign of sentimentalism" that has made it "exceedingly difficult" for American writers to "portray sexual passion." Ibid., 272. Since the "reign of sentimentalism" is closely connected, in Fiedler and elsewhere, to the world of pious womanhood, it would seem that Fiedler is here, in a distinct echo of his whining male novelists, blaming mama.

Fiedler's two explanations are not, of course, mutually exclusive. The problem with Fiedler's criticism is that they often seem mutually exclusive, as if a profoundly divided self is viewing the same situation from two radically different perspectives.

162 Again, the same observation applies to Lawrence and Freud. Lawrence, for example, is alive to the "hum of destruction", the "diabolical undertone" of American fiction. The "American", Lawrence claims, "has got to destroy. It is his destiny." D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, 90. Ahab himself is testament to this destructive impulse, and Lawrence's reading of *Moby Dick* has Ahab at its centre: the "White Whale", symbol of the "deepest blood-being of the white race", hunted down by the "maniacal fanaticism of our white mental consciousness." Ibid., 169. Lawrence would later note, as if in horrified recognition, the terrible emotional cost of this "brutal" hunt, which involved the "breaking" of the "sympathetic heart". Lawrence, Review of "Bottom Dogs" by Edward Dahlberg, *Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. Anthony Beal [1956] (London, Heinemann, 1967), 408. Yet in *Studies in Classic American Literature* he seems to be fixated by it, unable to escape its pull. He sees the finale of *Moby Dick*, the sinking of the Pequod, as the "doom of our white day." Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, 169. "The *Pequod* went down", he writes, and "the *Pequod* was the ship of the white American soul." The Pequod took down not only white America, but the "negro and Indian and Polynesian, Asiatic and Quaker and good, business-like Yankees and Ishmael: she sank the lot of them." Ibid., 170.

It is a compelling argument, dramatically presented, but it makes a single, important mistake. Ishmael did not sink with the Pequod: he was "*floating on the margin of the scene*" when the "*half spent section of the sunk ship*" reached him. He was then "*slowly [...] drawn towards the closing vortex*" left by the disappearing Pequod. At the "*vital centre*" of that "*slowly wheeling circle*", Ishmael was shot upwards, along with the "*coffin life-buoy*" made earlier for Queequeg, the Polynesian harpoonist. "*Buoyed up by that coffin*", Ishmael survived on the "*soft and dirge-like main*" for "*almost one whole day and night*", until he was finally rescued. Melville, *Moby Dick*, 470. As survivor, Ishmael surely demands our attention as much as Ahab, and it is that balance that this thesis seeks to restore.

163 Roland Barthes, "The death of the author", *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader* (London and New York: Longman, 1988), 169. First published in Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

164 Ibid., 170.

165 Foucault, "What is an author?" (1969), *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, 198.

166 Ibid., pp. 197-8.

167 Ibid., 200. A further line of questioning suggested by Foucault is: "'What is a work? [...] Of what elements is it composed? Is it not what an author has written?'" Ibid., 198. In this thesis, the discussion of William Burroughs' "work" will cover a variety of different forms: published novels, essays, introductions, prefaces, and correspondence, unpublished correspondence and manuscripts, marginal notes, deleted material. These various materials were all written, in so far as it can be certified, by William Burroughs, but do they all have the status of "a work?" Would, as Foucault asks, a "laundry list" by William Burroughs be a part of his "work?" Ibid., 199.

168 Ibid., 202.

169 Paul Auster, "Interview with Larry McCaffrey and Sinda Gregory", *The Red Notebook and other writings* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 137.

170 Ibid. Auster's first published novel was a detective fiction, published under an assumed name: Paul Benjamin, *Squeeze Play* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), first published (New York: Avon Books, 1984).

171 Paul Auster, "Interview with Larry McCaffrey and Sinda Gregory", *The Red Notebook*, 137.

172 An early manuscript version of *Junkie* titled "Junk", now held at Stanford University, was attributed, on its now tatty frontispiece, to "William Dennison". In this latter example, matters become even more complex, since "William Dennison", a temporary pen-name based on Jack Kerouac's fictionalised version of Burroughs as "Dennison" in *The Town and the City*, was never legally registered as the "author" of "Junk." Does "William Dennison", the non-author of "Junk", therefore disappear?

173 Auster, "Interview with Larry McCaffrey and Sinda Gregory", *The Red Notebook*, 137.

174 Foucault, "What is an author?", *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, 202.

175 Ibid.

176 Ibid.

177 Oliver Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 19.

178 Susan Howe, *The Birth-mark*, 46.

179 Burroughs, *Letters*, 53. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated Sept.26, 1949. Harris notes that Burroughs, in 1951, began using "invented names" on his envelopes, to avoid further legal tangles. Harris, footnote 25, *Letters*, 97.

180 Burroughs, *Letters*, 235. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Early Oct.1954.

181 Sylvere Lotringer, "professor of French Literature at Columbia University", quoted in Victor Bockris, *With William Burroughs: A Report from the Bunker* (New York: Seaver Books, 1981), 198.

182 Robert A.Sobieszek, *Ports of Entry: William S. Burroughs and the Arts* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 151.

183 Ibid.

184 Burroughs, "Remembering Jack Kerouac", *The Adding Machine*, 177.

185 Ibid., 181.

186 Foucault, "What is an author?", *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, 200.

187 Ibid.

188 Dellamora, "Queer Apocalypse: Framing William Burroughs", *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End* ed. Richard Dellamora (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 163.

189 Ibid. In *Ports of Entry: William S. Burroughs and the Arts*, Robert A.Sobieszek traces Burroughs' history in image, from early photographs by Brion Gysin, Ian Sommerville and Allen Ginsberg, to 1970s portraits by Robert Mapplethorpe, Andy Warhol, fashion photographer Richard Avedon and conceptual artist Les Levine, to his appearance on group shots in John Giorno's *Dial-a-Poem Poets* series, to the 1984 Howard Brookner television documentary "William Burroughs", to 1990s portraits by David Hockney, Gottfried Helnwien, Kate Simon and Annie Leibovitz, and advertisements for denim shirts, athletic shoes and chino pants. Robert A. Sobieszek, *Ports of Entry: William S. Burroughs and the Arts*, 152.

Burroughs' face has also appeared in works of art by Cozette de Charmoy and François Lagarde, David Wojnarowicz, Rick McKee, Walter Dahn, Christof Kohlhofer, Frances Swigart. Alison Van Pelt, Humerto Jardón, and Ralph Steadman.

de Charmoy and Lagarde, *Poste Vaticane* (1976), presents a "suite of fictive, international postage stamps with Burroughs' portrait replacing the likenesses of Boy Scouts or the Statue of Liberty, or included along with Gysin's as some heroes of Moroccan history", David Wojnarowicz, *Bill Burroughs' Recurring Dream* (1978), is a "photo-mechanical portrait of Burroughs in a collage". In Rick McKee's *Codex(Burroughs)* (1987), Burroughs' "likeness" appears "among portraits of famous males in history in a series of hand-altered Polaroid SX-70 prints". Walter Dahn, *William Burroughs* (1989), features Burroughs' face "screenprinted across a large canvas and overpainted". Christof Kohlhofer, *W.S. Burroughs and G.I.'s at the Persian Gulf Getting Ready for Take Off, News of the Day: Mark Twain's Lost Manuscript Found, Mixed Media on Shopping Bags* (1991), contains a "vaguely recognizable likeness of Burroughs amid references to a missing Mark Twain manuscript and the U.S. involvement in the Gulf War." Alison Van Pelt, *William Burroughs* (1992). Frances Swigart, *Ursulines* (1993). Humerto Jardón, *Feliz Cumpleaños* (1994). Ralph Steadman, *Something New Has Been Added* (1995). Robert A. Sobieszek, *Ports of Entry: William S. Burroughs and the Arts*, pp.152-8. Burroughs' face has also appeared in works of art by Cozette de Charmoy and François Lagarde, David Wojnarowicz, Rick McKee, Walter Dahn, Christof Kohlhofer, Frances Swigart. Alison Van Pelt, Humerto Jardón, and Ralph Steadman.

190 Dellamora, "Queer Apocalypse: Framing William Burroughs", *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End*, 163.

191 Ward, "William Burroughs: A Literary Outlaw?", *The Cambridge Quarterly* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, vol. XXII, no.4, 1993), 340.

192 Dellamora, "Queer Apocalypse: Framing William Burroughs", *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End*, 137.

193 Robin Lydenberg, "'El Hombre Invisible'" (review of *The Western Lands*), *William S. Burroughs at the Front: Critical Reception 1959-1989* ed. Jennie Skerl and Robin Lydenberg (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 234.

194 Lydenberg, *Word Cultures: Radical Theory and Practice in William S. Burroughs' Fiction*, ix.

195 Indeed, with each new phase of his "literary production", Burroughs seems to shift the conventional understanding of what an "author" is. Burroughs begins with the formally relatively traditional *Junkie*. By *Naked Lunch*, however, with its juxtaposition of literary materials explicitly influenced by collage technique, and its final composition determined by the order in which it arrived at the printers, the role of the "author" had shifted. The cut-ups further shifted that role, with the "author" acting as the selector and re-arranger of materials. With his scrapbook and tape recorder experiments in the 1960s, the materials employed were no longer only "literary". Was Burroughs still the "author" of these works?

Another problematic element in definitions of the "author", which again is particularly relevant to Burroughs, is the notion of the "author" as performer, reading his own work. As Nicholas Zurbrugg notes in his essay on Barthes and Burroughs, there is a "revealing tension" in Barthes' work between creating "more or less scientific analytical systems that deny the existence of the author and dismantle texts into as many codes as he had currently invented", and locating "loopholes within these systems for symptoms of authorial presence. "Nicholas Zurbrugg, "Burroughs, Barthes, and the Limits of Intertextuality", *Review of Contemporary Fiction* (Elmwood Park, IL., Spring 1984), 86. Zurbrugg finds one such loophole in Barthes' essay on the relationship between a listener and a musical performer, "The Grain of the Voice". In "The Grain of the Text" Barthes attempts to formulate the experience of a listener hearing the "materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue", and suggests that this experience requires "a new scheme of evaluation [...] made outside of any law", "not only the law of culture but equally that of anti-culture." Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice", *Image-Music-Text*, pp.182, 188. While, as Zurbrugg acknowledges, Barthes "never explicitly

concedes that this new relationship between the listener and the performer approximates to the reader-author relationship", both Zurbrugg and Wayne Pounds suggest that Barthes prepares the ground for a reinterpretation of the author as the performer of his own text. Such a reinterpretation, as Zurbrugg and Pounds note, would be particularly apposite to Burroughs, who has performed his texts in public readings, and in a variety of multi-media contexts. According to Wayne Pounds, Burroughs has even made "nightclub appearances". Pounds presents the "crucified and dead author of the novels" being "resurrected in the authorial performance of the text." Wayne Pounds, "The Postmodern Anus: Parody and Utopia in Two Recent Novels by William Burroughs", *William S. Burroughs at the Front*, 229.

196 Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 154.

197 Ibid.

198 Ibid.

199 Henry A. Murray quoted in Ann Charters' notes to Kerouac, *Selected Letters: 1940-1956*, 310.

200 Ibid. Burroughs read an early version of *Visions of Cody*, and told Kerouac it sounded "mighty fine". Burroughs, *Letters*, 109. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated April 3, 1952. Burroughs was also influenced, as Oliver Harris notes, by Kerouac's "sketching" technique. Oliver Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 106.

201 Auster, *The Red Notebook*, 137.

202 Burroughs, "Remembering Jack Kerouac", *The Adding Machine*, 177.

203 Burroughs, *Letters*, 111. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 5, 1952.

204 Ibid.

205 Ibid., 105. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 20, 1952.

206 Ibid., 121. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 22, 1952. Even in his retrospective Introduction to *Queer*, Burroughs claims that it was "Lee", the fictional protagonist, rather than "Burroughs" the author, who was being "pressed into the world of fiction" in his search for an "adequate observer". Burroughs, *Queer*, 13.

207 Burroughs, *With William Burroughs*, 28.

208 The extent to which *Junky* and *Queer* were formed out of Burroughs' correspondence is not clear, although Allen Ginsberg claims that *Junky*, along with *The Yage Letters*, were "composed from" Burroughs' "half of the previous three years' epistles". Ginsberg, "Recollections of Burroughs Letters", *Letters to Allen Ginsberg, 1953-1957*, 6. Burroughs' surviving correspondence from this period does not contain any important traces of Burroughs' fiction, though Burroughs does clarify, in a letter to Ginsberg, that he was also writing intensively to Marker, the 'real-life' model for Allerton in *Queer*. "I have written five or six letters to him with fantasies and routines in my best vein but he doesn't answer [...] I told him I didn't expect him to answer all my letters, I just wrote because it was as near as I could come to contact with him like I was talking to him and I hoped at least he would be amused by the letters because they were funny [...] " Burroughs, *Letters*, 129. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated June 4, 1952. These letters to Marker may have been used in the composition of *Queer*.

209 Burroughs, "Un Homme de Lettres. Un Poème Moderne", *Letters to Allen Ginsberg, 1953-1957*, 2.

210 Ibid.

211 Susan Howe, misquoting Foucault. Ibid., 20. In "What is an Author?", Foucault speculates about the possible disappearance or reconfiguration of the "author function", whereby the "polysemic texts will once again function according to another mode, but with still a system of constraint - one which will no longer be the author, but which will have to be determined or, perhaps, experienced." Foucault, "What is an Author?", *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, 210. Given his experiments with montage, cut-up, photomontage and sound recordings, these observations are obviously relevant to William Burroughs. However, to argue for a shift in the "author-function" is not to resolve the issue of authorial involvement. A "printed book", as Susan Howe notes, "enters social and economic networks of distribution", and so does a cut-up text, or even an unpublished manuscript, or a recording of an author's performance of his work. Susan Howe, *The Birth-mark: unsettling the wilderness in American literary history*, 46. The processes of printing, editing, storing and collating may subtly alter the work. Minute details, such as "blots, dashes, smudged letters, gaps, interruptions, aborted sketches, 'textually irrelevant' numbers, uncanceled or canceled alternatives in the manuscript", are a "profitless counteraction" in the process of "sensible partitioning" that is editing. Ibid., 8. In Howe's reading, such minutiae, "consigned to the immature margins", and "feminized - with mothers", can be resistant, "antinominian" gestures against the "dark wall rule of rule" which "supports the structure of every letter, record, transcript". Ibid., pp. 17, 12, 4. These "records", Howe argues, "are compiled by winners", and certain voices, those of the losers, are therefore excluded altogether. Ibid.

212 Howe, *The Birth-mark*, xi.

213 Ibid., 142.

214 Ibid., 156. Howe stresses that there is "an *amazing* difference between the history of upper New York State and the history of Massachusetts."

215 Ibid., 163.

216 Burroughs, *With William Burroughs*, pp 16-17.

217 Burroughs, "Remembering Jack Kerouac", *The Adding Machine*, 180.

218 Burroughs, *With William Burroughs*, 17.

219 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 14.

220 Barry Miles, *William Burroughs: El Hombre Invisible* (London: Virgin Books, 1993), 24.

221 Much of the prose from the Prologue reappears in a later account of Burroughs' childhood, "A Passport for William Burroughs", in *With William Burroughs*. This account in this text of Burroughs' childhood intercuts quotes from *Junky* with quotes from contemporary Burroughs interviews, and does so without questioning the collage of fiction and interview. The effect of this collage is to, in retrospect, lend the fictional sections the status of documentary evidence.

Burroughs, "A Passport for William Burroughs", *With William Burroughs: A Report from the Bunker*, pp. xii-xx

222 Howe, *The Birth-mark: unsettling the wilderness in American literary theory*, 163.

223 Ibid.

224 Michael Paul Rogin, *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville*, 21.

225 Ibid., 18.

226 Ibid.

227 Ibid.

228 Ibid., 21.

229 Jennie Skerl, *William S. Burroughs*, Twayne's United States Author Series, 438 (Boston: Hall, 1985), 2.

230 Ibid. Morgan notes that "Lee" is "one of the most common family names in the South", and "that thousands of the clan claims kinship to Robert E. Lee." Morgan adds that there was "nothing very grand about these particular Lees, who traced their origins back to dispossessed eighteenth century tenant farmers", only a "jump ahead of being sharecroppers." Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 20.

231 Ibid.

232 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 20.

233 Ibid., 20.

234 Skerl, *William S. Burroughs*, 3.

235 Ray Eldon Heibert, *Courtier to the Crowd: The Story of Ivy Lee and the Development of Public Relations* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1966), quoted by Skerl, *William S. Burroughs*, 3.

236 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 21.

237 Ibid.

238 Ibid., 23. "Ivy Lee", Burroughs writes in *My Education*, "hated me at first sight His son James still refers to me as "*that* son of a bitch!" in the same tone the Israelis speak of Dr. Mengele because they never succeeded in finding him." Burroughs, *My Education*, 6.

239 Ibid., 22.

240 Ibid.

241 Ibid., 15.

242 Ibid., 19.

243 Rogin, *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville*, 41. The importance of the "rising business culture" on family life, and the attendant "shift away" from the "patriarchal father" is also noted in Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 117.

244 Kathleen Neils Conzen, "A Saga of Families", *The Oxford History of the American West*, pp. 315-357. Conzen notes a minor pattern developing in genealogical records from the mid nineteenth century onwards: "the feckless or adventuresome quest of the young man who cuts loose from the family and lights out for the territory, on his own or with others of his kind." Ibid., 339.

245 Rogin, *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville*, 162.

246 Ibid.

247 Ibid.

248 Gregory Woods, "William Seward Burroughs II (1914-)", *Contemporary Gay American Novelists: A Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook* ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson (Westport, CT.: Greenwood, 1993), 38.

249 Barry Miles, *William Burroughs: El Hombre Invisible*, 25.

250 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 42.

251 Ibid., 44.

252 Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 327.

253 Ibid., 42. In fact, the initiation of the white Americans and the native Indians were as diametrically opposed as their respective belief systems. The young Indians were sent out "into the wilderness to dwell in free solitude", to "undergo a trial by hunger" and to "receive a dream vision" which would reveal his "true character and personal destiny." Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, pp. 55, 53. The initiation, then, was into the wilderness and the unconscious.

254 Ibid., pp. 46, 53.

255 Richard Dellamora, "Queer Apocalypse: Framing William Burroughs", *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End*, 137.

256 David Lodge, "Objections to William Burroughs", *The Novelist at the Crossroads and Other Essays on Fiction and Criticism* [1971] (London and New York: Ark Paperbacks, 1986), 161.

257 Ibid., pp. 163, 167

258 Ibid., 168. Burroughs' cut-ups are a described as a "lazy short-cut", and, Lodge concludes, Burroughs' work as a whole lacks the "integral guarantee of integrity" of previous "revolutionary works". Ibid., pp. 171, 170. Lodge cites "*Madame Bovary*" and "*Ulysses*" as Burroughs' more worthy precursors. Ibid., 171.

259 Ibid., pp. 171, 170.

260 Richard Dellamora, "Queer Apocalypse: Framing William Burroughs", *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End*, 137.

261 Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 464. In *The Return of the Vanishing American*, Fiedler expressed his interest in Burroughs' intention to write in the Western genre.

262 Fiedler here obscures Burroughs' own literary achievements by presenting Ginsberg as the driving force behind them: the "poet Ginsberg, master of his own destiny and expert in public relations", was, Fiedler insists, the rescuer of

Burroughs' "crumpled notes", and the formulator of a "theory to justify both Burroughs' work and his own". Ibid., 164. Without Ginsberg to "put the semblance of a book together for him", Burroughs was, in Fiedler's reading, after *Naked Lunch* "thrown back on his own largely mechanical and magical devices". Fiedler, *Waiting for the End: The American Literary Scene from Hemingway to Baldwin* [1964] (London: Jonathan Cape, 1965), 170.

263 Ibid., pp 168-9.

264 Frank D. McConnell, "William S. Burroughs and the Literature of Addiction", *William S. Burroughs at the Front*, 92. Indeed, Fiedler's work as a whole tends to construct a golden age, located at the safe distance of one hundred years, of homoeroticism and the flight from conventional sexuality, whilst disparaging contemporary novelists and poets who seemed engaged in parallel projects. Implicit to *Love and Death in the American Novel* is notion of the entropic decay of great culture, and this notion is represented in the status of Fiedler's pioneer-protagonist: Cooper's Natty Bumppo soon "gives way to the bounty-hunter, to Buffalo Bill; and Buffalo Bill, in a "comic anti-climax" is replaced by "the dude with pack animal and guide and whisky bottle, playing Indian and fleeing his wife". Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 335.

265 Fiedler, "The New Mutants", *Partisan Review* (Fall 1965, 32.4), pp. 505, 509. In the opening paragraph, Fiedler presents a binary opposition between critic and poet: "A realization that the legitimate functions of literature are bewilderingly, almost inexhaustibly various has always exhilarated poets and dismayed critics." Fiedler then sets himself up, in somewhat melancholy and weary fashion, in the role of the critic, who must "legislate limits to literature - legitimizing certain of its functions and disavowing others - in hope of insuring to themselves the exhilaration of which they have felt unjustly deprived, and providing for poets the dismay which the critics at least have thought good for them." Ibid., 505.

266 Fiedler, *Waiting for the End*, 162.

267 Fiedler, "The New Mutants", *Partisan Review*, 516.

268 Ibid., 522.

269 Ibid., 517.

270 William L. Stull, "The Quest and the Question: Cosmology and Myth in the Work of William S. Burroughs, 1953-1960", *The Beats: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Lee Bartlett (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1981), 14.

271 Ibid.

272 Ibid., 28.

273 Burroughs, quoted in Eric Mottram, *The Algebra of Need*, 78.

274 Eric Mottram, *The Algebra of Need*, 78.

275 Ibid., pp.79, 48.

276 Ibid., 84.

277 Indeed, Dellamora's article on Burroughs, though very interesting, suggests this failure to resolve, or indeed to confront, the tensions in Burroughs' writing. Dellamora notes, at the close of his article, that "what remains unaddressed", in contemporary constructions of Burroughs, "is the significance of Burroughs' queerness to the history of sexual minorities." However, his own article concentrates on the constructions of Burroughs by Frank Kermode and David Cronenberg, and Burroughs himself remains curiously invisible. Dellamora's focus on Cronenberg allows him to conduct a convincing critique of Cronenberg's heterosexualisation of Burroughs' work in his film of *Naked Lunch*, but he does not address the curious process of hetereosexualisation that Burroughs himself undertakes in his Introduction to *Queer*. Criticising the cod psychology implicit in Cronenberg's ponderings of the shooting of Joan Vollmer ("Is he killing the heterosexual part of himself to realize himself? Is he killing female part of himself, or is he killing the creative part?"), Dellamora responds with 'factual' details derived from Morgan's *Literary Outlaw*: "The answer to these questions is 'No': he is killing Joan Vollmer, who, shortly before this incident had left Mexico City to file for a divorce in Cuernavca." Why choose those facts as the pertinent ones? He goes on to replace Cronenberg's cod psychology with somewhat crass historical determinism when he foregrounds the importance of Mexico as a location where "women were radically devalued", and which was the "murder capital of the world", and suggests that these observations form a possible basis for an examination of "race, class and gender relations" that might reveal the "conditions of violence and abuse". Of course, this is a potentially useful approach, but it is not the only possible approach, and it is a potentially problematic one, unless Burroughs' own white middle class American perspective on Mexico is questioned. Dellamora, "Queer Apocalypse: Framing William Burroughs", *Postmodern Apocalypse*, pp.136-165.

278 Geoff Ward, "William Burroughs: A Literary Outlaw?", *The Cambridge Quarterly* (1993), pp. 348, 352, 351

279 Ibid., 349.

280 The context for this remark is Burroughs' observation that Morgan's biography "starts with a basic misconception." Burroughs claims to have "never had such a base. I never had a place I could call home that meant any more than a key to a house, apartment or hotel room." Again, Burroughs denies he has an origin. Burroughs, *My Education: A Book of Dreams*, 7.

281 Ward, "William Burroughs: A Literary Outlaw?", *The Cambridge Quarterly* (1993), 348. The notion of the "outlaw" as "American archetype" is in itself ambivalent as a signal for radicalism. In his essay titled "Violence", included in *The Oxford History of the American West*, Richard Maxwell Brown illustrates how the "Western Civil War of Incorporation" caused the "emergence of a cognitive split in the mythology of the western hero." On one side is the "conservative" hero, representing the "winning side" in the war of incorporation: "the mythic versions of the real-life Wild Bill Hicklock and Wyatt Earp". On the other side, came the losers of the war, the anti-incorporation side, who "generated a dissident social-bandit myth", prime examples of which were "real-life outlaws like Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Joaquin Murrieta and Gregorio Cortez." Both sides of the "western hero" myth have retained popular appeal in America, a fact which suggests, as Brown points out, a deep ambivalence "about established power and dissident protest. Richard Maxwell Brown, "Violence", *The Oxford History of the American West*, 421.

282 Nicholas Zurbrugg, "Burroughs, Barthes and Limits of Intertextuality", *Review of Contemporary Fiction* (No.4, Spring 1984), pp. 88, 97, 100.

283 Ibid., 97. Burroughs quotation from William Burroughs, "An Introductory Text for Henri Chopin's Book on 'Poésie Sonore'", in Henri Chopin, *Poésie sonore internationale* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1979), 9.

284 Nicholas Zurbrugg, "Burroughs, Barthes and Limits of Intertextuality", *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 99.

285 Alan Ansen, "Anyone Who Can Pick Up A Frying Pan Owns Death", *The Burroughs File*, 23.

286 Robin Lydenberg, *Word Cultures: Radical Theory and Practice in William S. Burroughs' Fiction*, 121.

287 Burroughs, *The Job*, 49.

288 Ibid.

289 Ibid.

290 Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 124. Both Lydenberg and Zurbrugg make reference to Roland Barthes' essay "The Third Meaning", in which Barthes makes reference to what he terms an "obtuse" or "third" meaning he finds embedded in an Eisenstein film still. This "third meaning", writes Barthes, "seems to open the field of meaning totally, that is infinitely." It "appears to extend beyond outside culture, knowledge, information". Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning", *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 54-5.

291 Frederick M. Nolan, "The Poetics of Postmodern Subversion: The Politics of Writing in William Burroughs' *The Western Lands*", *Contemporary Literature* (Madison, WI: Winter 1991, 32:4), 541.

292 Ibid., 541.

293 Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands | La Frontera*, 3.

294 Ibid.

295 Ibid.

296 Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 175.

297 Ibid., 176.

298 Fiedler, *Waiting for the End*, 169.

299 Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 171.

300 Fiedler, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* [1978] (London: Penguin Books, 24).

301 Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 176.

302 Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands|La Frontera*, 3.

303 Alice A. Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 25.

304 Ibid.

305 Kristeva, "Woman Can Never Be Defined" (1974), *New French Feminsims*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle Courtivron (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), pp.137-8, quoted in Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 171. Lydenberg acknowledges that her description of Julia Kristeva and Helene Cixous as "radical feminist theorists" is problematic, given Alice Jardine's notion of "gynesis": the use of "the concept of 'woman' or 'the feminine' as both a metaphor of reading and topography of writing for confronting the breakdown of the paternal metaphor". However, in her essay "Woman in Limbo: Deleuze and his Br(others)", Jardine responds to Deluze and Guattari's call for everyone to "become woman", so as to "resist the dominant mode of representation represented by any majority", by arguing that "woman is never a subject but a limit". Jardine, "Woman in Limbo: Deleuze and his Br(others)", quoted in Hicks, *Border Writing: The Multi-Dimensional Text*, 109.

306 Catharine R. Simpsom, "The Beat Generation and the Trials of Homosexual Liberation", *Salmagundi* (1982-3, vol. 58-59), 378.

307 The first reference to the writing of *Junky*, as Oliver Harris notes, came in a letter to Jack Kerouac written in March, 1950. "I have been writing a novel about junk" he informed Kerouac. "Maybe we can get together on something when you get here." William Burroughs, *The Letters of William S. Burroughs*, 65. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated March 10, 1950. *Junky* was not Burroughs' first attempt to write. In 1945 Burroughs had collaborated with Jack Kerouac on a novel titled *And the Hippos Boiled in Their Tanks*. It is with the writing of *Junky*, however, that Burroughs' career as a writer began in earnest.

308 Harris, "Introduction", *Letters*, xx.

309 It should be noted that Burroughs was, to his New York friends Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, a human library, a resource centre for an, admittedly somewhat idiosyncratic, Western literary tradition. Ted Morgan, in *Literary Outlaw*, lists some of the books Burroughs put out on loan: "Kafka, Blake, Cocteau's *Opium*, the cyclical historians Vico and Pareto," and "Hart Crane's *Collected Works*." Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 112. It should also be noted that neither *Decline of the West* nor *Science and Sanity* are conventionally literary texts, though Charles Atkinson's elegant translation of Spengler's work was acknowledged as an influence by Jack Kerouac. Gerald Nicosia, *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac*, 87.

310 For example, Morgan records that Burroughs had given Jack Kerouac a "two volume edition" of *The Decline of the West*, allegedly telling its recipient to "Edify your mind, my boy, with the grand actuality of fact." Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 91. Later, Burroughs had pointed out to Kerouac a passage from the book's preface, which advised the reader, bearing in mind the imminent collapse of the "imperial culture", to "take to the slide rule rather than the pen, take to the microscope rather than the brush." Ibid., 112.

311 Oswald Spengler, *Decline of the West: Perspectives of World-History*, Volume Two, authorised translation with notes by Charles Francis Atkinson, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1928), 169. I am indebted, in this discussion of Spengler, to Robert Holton's summary of *The Decline of the West* in his essay on Jack Kerouac, "Kerouac Among the Fellahin: *On the Road* to the Postmodern" , *Modern Fiction Studies* (John Hopkins University Press: Volume 41, number 2, Summer 1995).

312 Spengler, *Decline of the West*, 170

313 Ibid.

314 Ibid.

315 Ibid., 171.

316 Ibid.

317 Ibid., 170

318 Ibid.

319 Ibid., 171.

320 Ibid., 178.

321 Ibid., 179.

322 Ibid.

323 Ibid.

324 Ibid.

325 Ibid.

326 Ibid., 105.

327 Ibid.

328 Ibid.

329 Ibid.

330 Ibid.

331 Ibid., pp. 170-1.

332 Ibid., 171.

333 Ibid., 170.

334 Ibid., 184.

335 Ibid., 185.

336 Ibid., 186.

337 Ibid., 181.

338 John L. O'Sullivan, the "editor of the widely circulated *Democratic Review*", placed the words "manifest destiny" into print in July 1845. O'Sullivan quoted in Clyde A. Milner II, "National Initiatives", *The Oxford History of the American West*, 166.

339 Clyde A. Milner II, "National Initiatives", *The Oxford History of the American West*, 166.

340 Ibid.

341 Spengler, *Decline of the West*, 119.

342 Ibid., 119. Distinct echoes of this panic are voiced by Tom Buchanan in F.Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. "Civilization's going to pieces." he announces, and "if we don't look out the white race will be - will be utterly submerged." F.Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatbsy* (London: Penguin Books, 1950), 18.

343 Oliver Harris, footnote 37, *Letters*, 227. The only explicit reference to Spengler in Burroughs' published correspondence is in a letter to Jack Kerouac, written in Tangiers in 1954. Burroughs, who is arguing against the Buddhist retreat from the world, insists that "human life has *direction*": even if "we accept some Spenglerian Cycle routine, the cycle never comes back to exactly the same place, nor does it ever exactly repeat itself." Burroughs then parodies himself as a "long-winded German with some philosophy about the direction of life arising the from the potentials inherent in the cellular structure of the human space-time traveler. When the potentials of any species are exhausted, the species becomes static (like all animals, reptiles and other so-called lower forms of life). What distinguished Man from all other species is that he *can not become static*. '*Er muss streben oder untergehen*.' (quotation is from myself in character of German Philosopher) - 'He must continue to develop or perish.'" Burroughs, *Letters*, 227. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated Aug.18, 1954. Burroughs has often returned to a number of the themes parodied here: the reconfiguration of a relationship to space-time, the evolutionary necessity to avoid stasis. See, for example, the essays "Immortality" and "'It is Necessary to Travel...'" in *The Adding Machine*, pp. 127-137.

344 W.T. Lhamon, Jr., *Deliberate Speed: The Origins of a Cultural Style in the American 1950s* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 147.

345 Ibid.

346 Lhamon is thinking of "such long-running television series originating in the mid-fifties as 'Father Knows Best', 'Ozzie and Harriet', 'Leave it to Beaver', 'Bonanza' and 'Gunsmoke'", and of Edward Steichen's photographic show, "*The Family of Man*". Ibid.

347 Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*, 310.

348 Lhamon, *Deliberate Speed*, 149.

349 Melville, "Reviews and Letters by Melville", *Moby Dick*, 566. Letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, dated Nov.17, 1851.

350 Allen Ginsberg, "The Great Remember", introduction to Jack Kerouac, *Visions of Cody* [1972] (London: Flamingo, 1992), 14.

351 Harris, "The Last Words of William Burroughs", 20.

352 Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 105.

353 Kerouac, *On the Road*, 280.

354 Ibid., 180.

355 Ibid.

356 Oliver Harris, footnote 37, *Letters*, 227.

357 "It had all begun", Morgan continues, "in the year of his birth, 1914, when Berlin Avenue had been changed to Pershing, and it culminated with the explosion of the bomb." Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 55.

358 Burroughs, "W.S.Burroughs Interview", *Re/Search #4/5, A Special Book Issue: William S.Burroughs, Throbbing Gristle, Brion Gysin* (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1982), 25.

359 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 53.

360 Ibid., 55. I am assuming that this quote can be accredited to Burroughs, given Morgan's introductory explanation that when he "quotes from the author's work without identifying it, those passages are rendered in italics." Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, "Note on Method".

361 Ibid., pp. 54-5.

362 Ibid., 54.

363 Ibid., pp. 54-5. It was a parable that had been predicted by the native Indians. Having been forced, in 1855, to surrender his tribe's land as part of the Port Elliot Treaty, Chief Seattle gave an address to Governor Isaac Stevens. Chief Seattle promised that after the "last Red Man" had "perished", the continent would "swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe". When "your children's children think themselves alone", he told Stevens, "in the field, the store, the shop, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone ..." "At night", he continued, "when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled them and still love this beautiful land. The White Man will never be alone." Chief Seattle, *Touch the Earth: A Self Portrait of Indian Existence* compiled by T.C. McLuhan [1971] (London: Abacus Books, 1994), 30.

   In Freudian terms, Chief Seattle promised the return of the repressed. "Gods deposed become demons", Freud had reminded us, and the natural world, as the Great Spirit, the god and goddess of the native Indians, had been ruthlessly repressed by white America. Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 253. This, to some, horrifying, possibility, the return of the dead and the forgotten, haunts much white American literature. It finds its most dramatic expression at the finale of *Moby Dick*: as the doomed Pequod sunk below the watery surface, the "great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago." Melville, *Moby Dick*, 469.

364 Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 55.

365 Ibid., 114.

366 Ibid., 115.

367 "Every young man", Burroughs continued, with more than a hint of condescension, "should get the principles of Semantics clear in his mind *before* he goes to college (or anywhere else for that matter.)" Burroughs, *Letters*, 44. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 18, 1948.

368 Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* [1933], Third Edition, (Lakeville, Connecticut, The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company, 1948). *Science and Sanity* is structured around the construction of "a scientific non-aristotelian system", an ambitious meta-narrative based on the latest "scientific developments", that "will, perhaps, guide our lives sometime in the future." Ibid., "Introduction to the Second Edition", xxv. Its ambitious breadth is suggested by its range of reference, incorporating such figures as Einstein, Bridgman and Planck (physics), Whitehead (mathematics), Malinowski (anthropolgy) and George Santayana (philosophy).

   In his Introduction to the Second Edition of *Science and Sanity*, Korzybski produces a table of fifty two points, partially reproduced here, that guides the reader through the "more outstanding point of difference" between his new system, and the "aristotelian system as it shapes our lives today."

OLD ARISTOTELIAN ORIENTATIONS

(circa 350 B.C)

NEW GENERAL SEMANTIC NON-ARISTOTELIAN ORIENTATIONS (1941 A.C)

5. Two valued , 'either-or', inflexible, dogmatic orientations.
   Infinite-valued flexibility, degree orientations.

6. Static, finalistic '*allness*'; finite number of characteristic attitudes
   Dynamic *non-allness*; infinite number of characteristic attitudes

7. *By definition*, 'absolute sameness in "all" respects' ('identity')
   Empirical non-identity, a natural law as universal as gravitation

9. Static absolutism
   Dynamic relativism

11. *By definition*, 'absolute time'
   Empirical space-time

13. Additive ('and'), linear.
       Functional, non-linear

14. (3+1)-dimensional 'space' and 'time'
       4-dimensional space-time

15. Euclidean system
       Non-eucledian systems

16. Newtonian system
       Einsteinian or non-newtonian systems

19. Methods of magic (self-deception)
       Elimination of self-deception

23. 'Emotion' *and* 'Intellect', etc.
       Semantic reactions

24. 'Body' *and* 'Mind', etc.
       Psychosomatic integration

25. Tendency to split 'personality'
       Integrating 'personality'

36. Adjusting empirical facts to verbal patterns
       Adjusting verbal patterns to empirical facts

44. *Disregarded*
       Self-reflexiveness of language

46. *Disregarded*
       Over/Under defined character of terms

52. Antiquated
       Modern, 1941.

369 Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, 2.
370 Ibid., "Introduction to the Second Edition", xxv.
371 Ibid.
372 Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 185.
373 Ibid., 327.
374 Ibid., 328.
375 Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, "Preface to the Third Edition", vi.
376 Ibid., "Introduction to the Second Edition", xxv. Korzybski was careful to express his praise for Aristotle, describing him as "undoubtedly one of the most gifted men mankind has ever known". He also acknowledged that Aristotelian logic had been "perhaps satisfactory 2,300 years ago, when conditions of life were relatively so simple, when orientations were on the macroscopic level only, and knowledge of scientific facts was practically nil." However, as *Science and Sanity* continually stresses, there has been a vast amount of scientific work since Aristotle, and that work had undermined Aristotle's position. "For instance," writes Korzybski, "only since Einstein and Minkowski" had we discovered "that 'space' *and* 'time' cannot be split empirically". In separating space and time, "we create for ourselves delusional worlds." Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, "Introduction to the Second Edition", xxiii.
377 Burroughs, "On Coincidence", *The Adding Machine*, 98.
378 Ibid., pp. 98-9.

379 Ibid., 98.   In his Introduction to the Second Edition of *Science and Sanity*, Korzybski gives the following list of what he terms over/under defined terms, that is words that are over-used, but are "underdefined", and have a "merely hypothetical" relation to "facts": "*learning, frustration, education, needs, intelligence, instincts, genius, teacher, leadership, love, hate, fear, sex, man, woman* [...] *democracy, totalitarianism, dollar, god, war, peace* [...]" Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, Introduction to the Second Edition, xi. Everyone who uses such words, as Burroughs points out in his essay "On Coincidence", "has a different definition" of them, which ensures, at best, that we talk at "cross purposes", and at worst, that language is used to distort and manipulate. Burroughs, "On Coincidence", *The Adding Machine*, 99.

380 Korzybski, "Foreword" to Dr. Irving J.Lee, *Language Habits in Human Affairs: An Introduction to General Semantics* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1941), x. Given his reference, in the same Foreword, to "present-day abnormal 'Führers'", it is clear that Korzybski was thinking in part of Nazi Germany. Korzybski, who was a Polish aristocrat, had predicted that Hitler would "invade" Poland, but would "not call it a war", a verbal distortion that would enable German expansion to continue without hindrance. Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 72. Indeed, *Science and Sanity*, and Korzybski's formulation of "General Semantics", were clearly a response to an increasing sense of political confusion and horror. Korzybski claimed that "General Semantics" was being "applied" by psychiatrists on "the battlefields of World War II" to treat "[pathological] reactive patterns" caused by exposure to combat. Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, "Preface to the Third Edition", pp. v-vi. General Semantics, then, had a therapeutic purpose, to heal the damage done by "verbal distortions". "No matter who wins the war", Korzybski wrote, "we will have to talk things over, which means the use of language." Korzybski, "Foreword" to Dr.Irving J. Lee, *Language Habits in Human Affairs*, x.

  Given their radically different approaches, it is unsurprising that Korzybski had a low opinion of Spengler. In a footnote to the Preface to the Third Edition of *Science and Sanity*, Korzybski acknowledges Spengler's "erudition", but maintains that Spengler gave 'a great description of the *childhood of humanity*' which he himself did not outgrow." Noting that the "Nazis had joined hands" with Spengler, Korzybski dismissed *The Decline of the West* as an expression of the "prevailing outworn, now pathological doctrines" that had created the "terror and horror" of the war. Such horror, Korzybski hoped, represented the "deathbed agonies of a passing epoch." Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, "Preface to the Third Edition", vi.

  Equally, Spengler, it is clear from *The Decline of the West*, would have had little sympathy with Korzybski's grand project. "The practical result of world-improving theories" he wrote "is consistently a *formless and therefore historyless mass*." Spengler, *Decline of the West*, 185. "All world-improvers", he continued "stand for fellaheen ideals, whether they know it or not." Ibid., 186.

381 Ibid., 44.

382 Ibid.

383 Ibid.

384 Burroughs, *Letters*, 11. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Feb.19, 1947.

385 Ibid., 11.

386 Ibid., 24. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.9, 1948.

387 Ibid.

388 Ginsberg, as Burroughs saw it, was being "herded around by a lot of old women": principally, the American liberal establishment, as represented by Ginsberg's father, and the Columbia professor, Mark Van Doren. Ibid., 51. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated June 24, 1949. By contrast, Louis Ginsberg wrote the following to his son warning him against Burroughs' influence: "He's dangerous, not because he rationalizes but because his end product of thought and attitude results, eventually, if carried out in action, in danger and disharmony and chaos .." Miles, *Ginsberg: A Biography*, 58. Letter from Louis Ginsberg to Allen Ginsberg, dated January 1945.

389 Burroughs, *Letters*, 24. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.9, 1948.

390 Ibid. Burroughs' advocacy of factualism did not contradict his interest in "magical truth". The "fact on all levels", he told Ginsberg firmly, could include "mystical experiences", "universal forces", or "telepathy", so long as their existence was certified by "concrete examples and operations." Ibid., 45. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 18, 1949.

391 Korzybski, "Preface to the Third Edition", *Science and Sanity*, ix.

392 Ibid., "Preface to the Third Edition", ix.

393 Ibid., "Introduction to the Second Edition", xvi.

394 Ibid.

395 Ibid., "Introduction to the Second Edition", xi.

396 Burroughs, *Letters*, pp. 44-5. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 18, 1948.

397 Ibid., 67. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated May 1, 1950.

398 Ibid., pp. 67-8.

399 Ibid., 68. One little biographical nugget suggests Burroughs' apprehension of the moral vacuum in post-war America. On V.J Day, only eight days after the dropping of "Little Boy", Kerouac and Burroughs went out to celebrate what Kerouac termed "surrender night." Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 114. Burroughs advised Keroauc to wear his "merchant seaman uniform so that he would have an easier time seducing women." When Kerouac replied that he wouldn't do such a "finkish thing", Burroughs rejoined that it was a "finkish world". Nicosia, *Memory Babe*, 119.

400 Burroughs, *Letters*, 67. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated May 1, 1950.

401 Ibid.

402 Ibid.

403 Ibid.

404 Ibid., 42. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated March 15, 1949.

405 Ibid.

406 Burroughs, *Letters*, 42. Letter to Jack Kerouac. dated March 15, 1949.

407 Spengler wrote, for example, of the "resolve to be the subject and not the object of evolution (for one or the other it has to be)" Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 185.

408 Ibid., 51. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated June 24, 1949.

409 Ibid.

410 For example, in "Word" in *Interzone*: "Orgone service is terrible around here," said the rectal cancer case." Burroughs, *Interzone*, 185. And in a footnote in *Nova Express*: "Doctor Reich claims that the basic charge of life is this blue orgone-like electrical charge - Orgones form a sphere around the earth and charge the human machine". Burroughs, *Nova Express* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 136.

411 As Patricia Limerick notes, the "power of the atom" had a considerable influence on the American West, with the region being the site for atom bomb tests, missile storage, plutonium processing and uranium mining. Alamogordo, New Mexico was the location in which the bomb was first tested. Throughout the 1950s, the remote and arid land of Neveda was the site for a series of tests, with the wind carrying "the fallout around the planet." After 1963, the tests were conducted underground, but with "occasional leaks and accidents." "Remote Western sites" were home to "Minuteman missile silos" and for "the mobile MX system." Hidden within the Cheyenne Mountain, near Colorado Springs, was "NORAD (the North American Aerospace Defense Command), the command post for an actual war." Limerick terms these developments, which she claims were headed towards the "final mastery of nature in the West", the "nuclear frontier." Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* [1987] (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1988), pp.159-62.

412 Burroughs, *Letters*, 70. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated May 1, 1950.

413 Harris, footnote 11, *Letters*, 70.

414 Burroughs, *Letters*, 70. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated May 1, 1950.

415 Harris, footnote 14, *Letters*, 72.

416 Ibid.

417 Ted Morgan, *Literary Outlaw*, 142.

418 Ibid.

419 Jonathan Paul Eburne, "Trafficking in the Void: Burroughs, Kerouac, and the Consumption of Otherness", *Modern Fiction Studies* (Purdue University: John Hopkins University Press, Volume 43, number 1, Spring 1997), 60.

420 Ibid.

421 Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York, Routledge, 1989), 45, quoted in Eburne, "Trafficking the Void", 60-1.

422 Limerick, "The Trail to Santa Fe: The Unleashing of the Western Public Intellectual", *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, 62.

423 David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity*, 165.

424 Ibid., pp. 165, 25. Latter quotations from the National Security document number sixty-eight (NSC-68), which, according to Campbell, is "widely regarded as having established the parameters and rationale for post-war United States foreign policy." Ibid., 25. Quoted by Campbell from NSC-68, "United States objectives and programs for national security, April 14, 1950", *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, ed. Thomas H.Etzold and John Lesis Gaddis (New York: 1978), 385.

425 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: 1984), 122, quoted in Campbell, *Writing Security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity*, 92.

426 Campbell, *Writing Security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity*, 164.

427 Ibid., 205.

428 Ibid.

429 Ibid., 176.

430 Ibid.

431 Jonathan Paul Eburne, "Trafficking in the Void: Burroughs, Kerouac, and the Consumption of Otherness", *Modern Fiction Studies* (Spring 1997), 60.

432 Burroughs, *Letters*, 48. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated April 16, 1949.

433 Ibid., 52. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated June 24, 1949.

434 Ibid., 86. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated May 5, 1951. Burroughs wrote to Ginsberg suggesting that the "problems and difficulties" Ginsberg had experienced in "queer relationships" were "social rather than inherent - resulting from the social environment (to my mind one of the worst in Space-Time) of middle class U.S.A." Ibid., 97. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Dec. 20, 1951.

435 Frederick Nolan, "The Poetics of Postmodern Subversion: The Politics of Writing in William S. Burroughs' *The Western Lands*", *Contemporary Literature* (1991), 548.

436 Burroughs, *Letters*, 42. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated March 15, 1949.

437 Ibid., 66. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated May 1, 1950.

438 Ibid., 61. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated Jan.1, 1950.

439 Ibid., 51. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated June 24, 1949.

440 Ibid., 51.

441 Ibid., 44. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated March 18, 1949. Burroughs, however, was careful to distinguish his own position from the "consistently selfish position" to which his Korzybskian scepticism seemingly pointed. Ibid., 67. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated May 1, 1950. Discussing the behavior of the infamous Neal Cassady in a letter to Jack

Kerouac, for example, Burroughs affirmed that he could not "see anything out of the way" in Neal lack's of responsibility towards others, with the proviso that he could "not *claim* anything from others under the conditions he himself has created." That is, complete selfishness is inevitably linked to complete independence. Alongside Burroughs' repeated declaration in his letters that "the only *possible* ethic is to do what one *wants* to do" is the expression of his need for other people. Ibid., 42. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated March 15, 1949. "There seems to be no one of any interest around", Burroughs writes from Louisiana, "or if such people exist, I can not find them." Ibid., 23. Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated Nov.9, 1948. Again and again, Burroughs would express this need for company, a need which complicates the adoption of "a consistently selfish position."

Korzybski and Burroughs also differed on their respective approaches to the limits of rationality. Korzybski, no doubt wishing to establish a strong scientific basis for his work, filled his text with references to the latest scientific developments. He is especially keen to differentiate his own non-aristotelian system from the irrational delusions of the past. The "aristotelian" era is dismissed as being primitive and childlike. The use of either-or logic, he argues, has "built for us a *fictitious, animistic world* not much more advanced than that of the primitives". Korzybski, "Introduction to the Second Edition", *Science and Sanity*, xxxv. Korzybski contrasts the primitive belief in "magic", with the scientific, non-aristotelian, elimination of such "self deception". Ibid., "Introduction to the Second Edition", xxvi. Burroughs, by contrast, has often written of his interest in "magical truth". Burroughs, "On Coincidence", *The Adding Machine*, 99. As will be later suggested, this interest in magical truth is as important to Burroughs' writing as his Korzybskian scepticism about language.

442 Burroughs, *Letters*, 61. Letter to Jack Kerouac, dated Jan.1, 1950.
443 Ibid.
444 Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* [1989] (London: Routledge, 1993), 69.
445 Ibid.
446 Ibid.