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A Dream of Tangier: Revolution and Identity in Post-War Expatriate Literature

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

A DREAM OF TANGIER: REVOLUTION AND IDENTITY
IN POST-WAR EXPATRIATE LITERATURE

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For Mireille, who wrote her own dedication:

“To Mireille Rebeiz, for making the dishes while I wrote.”

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ABSTRACT

Few world cities can claim to have had as much of an impact on American literature as the Moroccan city of Tangier. The writers who resided in or passed through the city in the 1950s and the works of literature produced there have re-charted the course of American letters. Tangier's status as an international city, its sizable Arab population, and its location situated among the violence of Morocco's bid for independence all undoubtedly helped to inspire the radical reinvention of literature undertaken by its American literary residents. The works of the period reveal men and women struggling to come to terms with who they are, what writing is, and what their American identity means to them.

One of the earliest and most prominent of the American expatriates in Tangier, Paul Bowles, embarked on a quest to rid himself of American national and cultural identity by adopting the transnational identity of the *Tangerino*. Like Bowles, his characters don't try to become Moroccan citizens outright or wholly adopt *Tanjawi* culture; instead, they attempt to escape their American national identity by becoming residents of the international zone and embracing liminal *Tangerino* identities, products of both American and Moroccan nationalities and incorporating cultural aspects from each. William S. Burroughs has said in interviews and letters that he made the decision to live in Tangier after reading Bowles' *Let It Come Down*. With the publication of *Naked Lunch* in 1958, he expressed both his admiration for the transformative potential of revolutionary violence and his dismay that this potential went unrealized in Morocco. Jane Bowles and Brion Gysin both explore differing ways in which to "go native" and, ultimately, whether such an endeavor pays off in the end. Both her short work and his novel, *The Process*, each in some way reflects, antagonizes or responds to the influence of the international zone and the notion that Tangier represents (or potentially represents) a place set apart from the American influence. Finally, Alfred Chester and John Hopkins both wrote memoirs in Morocco during the 1960s and 1970s. Their reports reveal a concerted effort to distance themselves from the old style colonialism of the previous generation of expatriates as well as well as their ultimate inability to do so.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The lady who is never wrong
Is our best customer.
Piecemeal she purchases the town,
But she is hard to please.

—Edouard Roditi, “The Customer is Always Right”

In Tangier, everything is surreal and everything is possible.
—Mohamed Choukri, *In Tangier*

Few world cities can claim to have had as much of an impact on American literature as the Moroccan city of Tangier. The writers who resided in or passed through the city in the 1950s and the works of literature produced there have re-charted the course of American letters. Texts such as Paul Bowles’ novels, Jane Bowles’ short stories, William Burroughs’ *Naked Lunch*, Brion Gysin’s *The Process*, Alfred Chester’s later work and John Hopkins’ memoirs unquestionably carry the mark of postwar Tangier within them. Tangier’s status as an international city, its sizable Arab population, and its location situated among the violence of Morocco’s bid for independence as well as its proximity to Algeria during its revolution all undoubtedly helped to inspire the radical reinvention of literature undertaken by its American literary residents. Hugh Harter, in *Tangier and All That*, his extensive biography of the city and the literature it inspired, calls Tangier an “artistic catalyst” (3). What this means is that Tangier was impetus for and witness to one of the most intensely creative periods in American literature. The works of the period reveal men and women struggling to come to terms with who they are, what writing is, and what their American identity means to them. But what was it about Tangier that attracted these expatriates, and what did they find so inspiring about the city? Faced with the rise of Arab nationalism and Moroccan independence, how did these Americans negotiate and draw inspiration from the anti-colonial violence? In what ways were their personal and national identities reified or challenged by their encounters with the Maghreb, and to what extent did orientalist thinking and imperialist attitudes mold their creative endeavors? This study engages these questions by investigating the attraction of Tangier and analyzing the relationship of this specific part of the Maghreb to these writers’ fluid concept of national and cultural identity. It looks closely at Morocco’s history of colonization and how the multinational colonial presence

in Tangier's international zone helped to create a region set apart from the traditional concept of nation. This study also analyzes why this nationless area resonated so strongly with the American post-war psyche and, to some extent, continues to do so. This study interrogates the ways in which Tangier has shaped these writers who have done so much to reinvent American literature and molded the work they produced there.

As far back as December 1777, when Morocco officially recognized the existence of the United States of America as an independent nation—the first to do so¹— Morocco has been culturally significant for Americans, and the two countries have maintained a close if complicated relationship. This relationship was strengthened, when, in order to avert a war over the attentions of Barbary pirates preying on American shipping vessels, the United States ratified one of its first peace treaties with Morocco in 1786. Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin met with the Emperor of Morocco, and gave him \$20,000 in exchange for a “Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Ship-Signals.” As Oren writes in his history of the United States' involvement in the Middle East, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy*, “Thus began the longest-standing contract in American diplomatic history and the first one to bear an Arabic inscription and the Islamic date (‘The Ramadan Year of the Hejira 1200’). The American consulate in Tangier, established under the treaty, would become America's oldest legation building and its only national landmark abroad” (28).

A century later Mark Twain famously visited this legation building during a voyage he would chronicle in *The Innocents Abroad*. While Twain wasn't the first American writer to pass through Tangier—John Smith of Pocahontas fame was there as early as 1607—the record of his visit remains the most significant account of the city written by an American during the nineteenth century. Tangier during the 1860s was a city in a state of transition. Sultan Moulay Suliman ruled Morocco when Twain's ship, the USS *Quaker City*, made port, but within a few years Morocco had fallen under French influence, and, by the early twentieth century, Tangier had become an international city controlled by Great Britain, France, and Spain. The United States had long been aware of the Tangier's importance as a port of entry for American goods into North Africa and by the end of World War II participated in its international administration.

On June 30, 1867, when Twain met the American Consul, Jesse H. McNath, Tangier couldn't even be considered a colonial outpost. After his meeting with the American Consul-

¹ President Obama recently mentioned this fact in a June 4, 2009 speech at Cairo University in Cairo Egypt.

General, Twain wrote, “It is the completest exile that I can conceive of. I would seriously recommend to the Government of the United States that when a man commits a crime so heinous that the law provides no adequate punishment for it, they make him Consul-General to Tangier” (59). The portrait Twain paints of Tangier is one of desperate loneliness and complete cultural isolation. He tells his reader that there “are no white men visible” and that “Tangier is full of interest for one day, but after that it is a weary prison” (50; 59) By the end of his visit he complains that even though he is “glad to have seen Tangier” he is “ready to bid it good bye” (59). Twain could not have been as miserable in Tangier as he implies. Harter quotes a July 1, 1867 letter home to St. Louis, in which Twain writes, “We decided that Gibraltar and San Roque were all of Spain we wanted to see at present and are glad we came among the Africans, Moors, Arabs and Bedouins of the desert. I would not give this experience for all the balance of the trip combined” (13). Harter also mentions that Twain bought as a souvenir “a small Moorish pipe and tobacco,” which could only be kif, something that was to become a favorite of Paul Bowles and the later expatriates (14).

The Innocents Abroad is an significant contribution to Twain’s oeuvre; it signals his transition from regional newspaper columnist to the mature writer of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In addition, *The Innocents Abroad* also served to introduce 19th century Americans to exotic lands they had only read about in The Bible or in Richard Burton’s popular translation of the *One Thousand and One Nights*. Indeed, Douglas Little argues, in *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945*, that Twain’s portrayal of the region as backward and primitive, populated with dirty, brutish savages, did more to shape American perceptions of “the Arab” than anything until the arrival of American expatriates after the Second World War (13). Indeed, readers of Twain’s version of Tangier were likely to come away with only two impressions of the city: that it was uncompromisingly alien and its people reveled in brutality.

Twain’s Tangier section opens with the author mocking those of his companions who chose to stay on in Spain. He writes that Spain and Gibraltar are tired and familiar. Morocco, on the other hand, is something entirely different:

Tangier is the spot we have been longing for all the time. Elsewhere we have found foreign-looking people, but always with things and people intermixed that we were familiar with before, and so the novelty of the situation lost a deal of its

force. We wanted something thoroughly and uncompromisingly foreign—foreign inside and outside and all around—nothing any where about it to dilute its foreignness—nothing to remind us of any other people or any other land under the sun. And lo! In Tangier we have found it. Here is not the slightest thing that we have seen save in pictures—and we always mistrusted the pictures before. We can not any more. The pictures used to seem exaggerations—they seemed too weird and fanciful for reality. But behold, they were not wild enough—they were not fanciful enough—they have not told half the story. Tangier is a foreign land if ever there was one; and the true spirit of it can never be found in any book save the Arabian Nights. (50)

Twain emphasizes Tangier's exoticism because he realizes that this is what his audience wants to read: the strange amuses more than the familiar. Accordingly, they are given portraits of "stalwart Bedouins of the desert," "stately Moors," "swarthy ruffians from the mountains," "howling dervishes," and "genuine negroes, black as Moses" (51). Often, Tangier's difference is described in racial terms, as when Twain writes of Arab women: "I have caught a glimpse of the faces of several Moorish women, (for they are only human, and will expose their faces for the admiration of a Christian dog when no male Moor is by,) and I am full of veneration for the wisdom that leads them to cover up such atrocious ugliness" (57). His careful description of Muslims on pilgrimage to Mecca also slips into reporting stereotype instead of fact when he writes that "they never wash" and that they can only afford the cost of the trip by frequenting "Jewish moneychangers" (57-8).

This discussion of Islamic religious belief ultimately sends Twain into a lengthy digression on the Moroccan penal code, the specifics of which are entirely of his invention. This fabrication, while presumably entertaining to the average untraveled American reader of the nineteenth century, serves to perpetuate the stereotype of the savage and brutal Muslim. Twain recounts an anecdote he has heard reporting the execution of three murderers: "Moorish guns are not good, and neither are Moorish marksmen. In this instance, they set up the poor criminals at long range, like so many targets and practiced on them—kept them hopping about and dodging bullets for half an hour before they managed to drive the centre" (56). While this story demonstrates the humor in suffering, Twain follows it with an argument that Arabs are unnaturally insensitive to pain, rhetoric that further serves to portray the Arab as bestial and

inhuman. He describes the punishment for cattle theft as amputation of “right hand and left leg” (56). The procedure is crude and involves cutting “around the bone a little, then break[ing] off the limb” (56). Despite the rough treatment, “These criminals undergo the fearful operation without a wince, without a tremor of any kind, without a groan! No amount of suffering can bring down the pride of a Moor, or make him shame his dignity with a cry” (56).

In addition to the caustic caricature Twain draws of native Moroccans, the perceptive reader will also notice Twain’s biting criticism of Americans’ behavior abroad when confronted with the Orient’s alterity. Time and again in *The Innocents Abroad* Twain recounts some heinous impropriety performed by an American. The most stunning of these is Blucher’s blunder with the mosque in Tangier, the first the group has seen. Twain writes that “We had just mounted some mules and asses, [...] when we came upon a Moorish mosque, with tall tower, rich with checkerwork of many-colored porcelain, and every part and portion of the edifice adorned with the quaint architecture of the Alhumbra, and Blucher started to ride into the open door-way” (55). Twain tempers the ridiculousness of the American’s transgression by turning the tale on its head and using it to portray Moroccans as ignorant and unsophisticated: “we were informed that so dire a profanation is it for a Christian dog to set foot upon the sacred threshold of a Moorish mosque, that no amount of purification can ever make it fit for the faithful to pray in again” (55). Often, whenever Americans earn ridicule, Twain enthusiastically obliges; however, he is careful to couch his missive in language that redirects the attack so that it appears he is once again pointing out something especially exotic about the orient. It is here where Twain appears to be at cross-purposes. The humorist in him cannot resist the impulse to satirize Americans abroad, but the capitalist in him realizes that it doesn’t pay to criticize your audience too harshly.

Entertainment is his ultimate goal, either through accurate reporting or creative fabrication, and in many ways this indicates the direction much of the latter Tangerino literature will go. Twain’s orientalism serves a purpose. He uses these depictions—of which there are indeed many—to illuminate the absurdity of his American companions² more than to denigrate the Arabs. And while Moroccans are indeed ridiculed, their exoticism is often conveyed as an amusing spectacle intended to entertain his readers in the United States. Harter states that Twain “has hardly written a travel article that would stimulate visitors” to make the journey (21).

² Twain never misses an opportunity to mention that he cannot stand them. He thought them too pious and self-satisfied, although he did ultimately marry the sister of one of them, Charles Langdon, a few years later.

However, even if it wasn't his intention, many Americans did follow in his footsteps. Twain paved the way, becoming the first of many in a long line of American writers journeying to Tangier looking for the exotic, for alterity, and for escape from the familiar. Indeed, so many Americans traveled through Tangier within the next fifty years that Edith Wharton characterized it in 1917 as "cosmopolitan, frowsy, familiar Tangier, that every tourist has visited for the last forty years" (11). Gertrude Stein, who was responsible for recommending Tangier to Paul Bowles, visited in 1901, and the city made such an impression on her that she used it as the setting for her first novel, *Quod Erat Demonstrandum*, which wasn't published until several years after her death in 1946.

As John Carlos Rowe has suggested, it is necessary to broaden the scope of American literary studies beyond national political and cultural boundaries to include work that operates outside traditional national narratives. Much of what is now labeled American literature was once considered merely anomalous and peripheral. Rowe emphasizes those areas in American literature that are the product of "contact regions," those places where nontraditional influences come into play. Our understanding of postwar American literature is incomplete because it is still too often viewed within narrow national frames and conceptual boundaries. When one looks at Tangier and its importance to American literature since the mid-twentieth century, the extent of the globalization of American literature in the post-WWII period becomes clear, and with these writers, we see the explosion of the nation as a concept and literary frame, and the movement of writers, ideas, influences, and languages, across national boundaries in a period of rapid globalization and against a backdrop of dramatic shifts in America's place in the world.

The globalization of American literature posits multiple intersections and connections transcending traditional notions of borders and boundaries both within and outside the nation. This is a theme indirectly taken up in Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease's *Cultures of American Imperialism*. In Kaplan's introductory essay, "Left Alone with America," she interrogates the ways in which American scholars avoid mention of an American empire in their discussions of American culture and literature. She attributes this to notions of American exceptionalism as inherently anti-imperialist, which places the United States "in opposition to the empire-building of either the Old World or of communism and fascism" (12). As a nation and as a former colony itself, Kaplan argues, the United States views itself as a benevolent super power strongly opposed to manifestations of imperialism in other nations. She writes, "imperial politics at home

are visibly projected onto demonic others abroad, as something only they do and we do not” (13). She goes on to question America’s reclassification of itself as “‘World Power’ not American Empire’; ‘discovery’ not ‘imperium’; ‘global power’ not ‘imperialism’” (13). All of this serves to help widen the fissure between America’s perception of its role in world affairs and its image abroad.

Brian Edwards and Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar take this argument even further in *Globalizing American Studies*, situating the conflict around Henry Luce’s pronouncement of an American Century and its implied endorsement of American exceptionalism. They argue that, “If American exceptionalism was always implicated in American imperialism, so long as American imperialism does not come to an end, neither will some versions of American exceptionalism invoked to sustain that imperialism come to an end” (4). Accordingly, they reject the notion of a unified American experience especially when the American travels abroad. While Americans at home, writing about home, may appear unified—even in their diversity—as a result of their frequent reliance on one of the nation’s foundational narratives, “reports back home cannot have [this] unity” (15). “The experience of America abroad,” they write, “be it for a native-born American or a diasporic American or for the rest, is necessarily fragmentary” (31). Americans abroad encounter difference and have to “negotiate with other forces that are unfamiliar” (14). There is a tendency to use these encounters as an opportunity to define or even reimagine what it means to be American; however, Edwards and Gaonkar write, there is “the possibility of a different configuration” (16). They propose that America be seen as a “node,” a connection point, instead of a defined location with known boundaries (26). America should be seen as something passed through, as Jack Kerouac phrases it in *Desolation Angels*, not somewhere journeyed to.

This study participates in this recent transnational turn in American literature by investigating Americans abroad and crossings of international boundaries and national borders. Tangier was indeed a “node” in the “global circuit” and the writers living and working in the city—even Paul Bowles who lived in Tangier for nearly half a century—were reconfigured as transnational citizens (Edwards and Gaonkar 26). Their Americanness was challenged and in many instances dissolved completely. This raises the question of what replaced it. Certainly none of them swapped their American passport for Moroccan citizenship and scholars have been hesitant to classify them as anything but American. But what of their personal connection to their

homeland? In general, these writers continued to call themselves American no matter how far removed they became culturally. And what does this say about their work? Can a text written in Tangier, about Tangier, by an American expatriate, who has been living abroad for decades, be considered solely an “American” text or work of “American literature”? If it cannot, what is the nationality of the text if it can be said to have one at all? Does American culture end at its shores, and, if not, what is its relationship to the other cultures it encounters abroad? Post-war Tangier was an international city with unconventional notions of nation and national boundaries; it is only reasonable to expect literature produced within this context to reflect this ambiguity. Americans living there discovered that they benefitted from the accoutrements of French and Spanish imperialism and were exempt from many of the legal and ethical restrictions that governed them back home. Consequently, they found this enabled them to simultaneously participate in *and* condemn colonial practices, something produced as well.

Very little scholarship has been done in this area until relatively recently. However, a renewed interest in understanding “the Arab” followed the September 11 terrorist attacks, and the last several years have witnessed a small avalanche of research into Tangier’s postwar literary boom. However, little of this scholarship examines the texts from a transnational perspective. Of interest, however, is Ralph M. Coury and R. Kevin Lacey’s volume, *Writing Tangier*, which broadly covers depictions of Tangier in writing over the last four hundred years. It is an international collection by design, written in both English and Spanish, and includes Arab, Spanish, and Anglophone contributors. However, a surprising number of essays in the book are reducible to nothing more than identifying orientalist tendencies in this archive. Of those that are transnational in perspective, Greg Mullins, Michael Walonen, and Brian Edwards stand out. In *Colonial Affairs*, Greg Mullins investigates the intersections between sexuality and colonialism in the Moroccan texts of Paul Bowles, William S. Burroughs, and Alfred Chester. By analyzing the sexual politics of these three writers and their impulse toward homosexual tourism, Mullins charts the impact of the American Empire on the Maghreb and the “Orientalist notions” exhibited by these authors (15). He finds that each writer participates in colonialist discourse, and that this communication is often centered on the sexual fantasies, fetishes, and desires the writers brought to Morocco from their homeland. Michael Walonen situates his analysis of American expatriate writer’s conceptualizations of space within their representations of Tangier. In *Writing Tangier in the Postcolonial Transition: Space and Power in Expatriate*

and North African Literature, he argues that Paul and Jane Bowles, Brion Gysin, William Burroughs, and Alfred Chester reproduce similar commonalities in their depictions of colonial Morocco as foreign space. For them, place “is both what is imagined to be there and what is imagined as possible there” (5). And onto Tangier, each writer projects his or her own expectations about what *should* be there. Walonen discusses the disruptive and transformative potential of the Moroccan independence movement and its ability to dictate expatriate perceptions of the social space of Tangier.

Brian Edwards, co-editor of *Globalizing American Studies* and perhaps the most perceptive and insightful critic of “Tangerian literature,”³ wrote one of the books that may become the defining work on American representations of the Maghreb. Decidedly transnational in scope, in *Morocco Bound*, he examines the evolution of the United States’ relationship with Morocco from World War II to the middle seventies when the country became an important stop on the hippie trail through North Africa. His work includes examples of American Orientalism expressed in terms of race and nativity in General Patton’s letters to his wife from Morocco during the 1942 American landing in Casablanca during World War II and in the Warner Brothers film from the same year, *Casablanca*. As with my study, Edwards analyzes notions of national identity; however, his efforts are much broader in scope—encompassing film and cultural sources as well as literature—and center on sociopolitical manifestations of Arab otherness within the United States. In chapters on Paul Bowles and William Burroughs, Edwards consults Moroccan scholarship, written in Arabic, and contraposes this with its American equivalent to create a more accurate reflection of these writers in Tangier and their interrelation with American foreign policy.

Most recently, in a 2012 collection called *The Transnational Beat Generation*, edited by Nancy Grace and Jennie Skerl, Allen Hibbard includes an essay on William Burroughs and his conflicted relationship with the American Empire. Written as more of a historical overview of Burroughs’ sojourn abroad than a critical argument, the essay chronicles the writer’s border crossings into foreign territory both at home and abroad. Burroughs’ time in Texas and Paris are examined as well as the crucial years in Tangier in which he composed *Naked Lunch*. The piece ends with a brief discussion of one of Burroughs’ final works, the anti-imperialist novel *Cities of*

³ This is Edwards’ terminology. In *Morocco Bound*, he writes that it is his translation of Zubir Bin Bushtra’s phrase, *al-adab at-Tanji* (86).

the Red Night, and its relevance in the era of George W. Bush. Even as a survey of the international Burroughs, Hibbard's article, and, indeed, the entire collection in which it is housed, demonstrates the significance of the transnational conversation. To say that any of these expatriates composed in a vacuum of foreign influence and only wrote "American" literature ignores the existence of their border crossings, both physical and cultural.

This study is organized into four chapters. The first concerns Paul Bowles and his quest to rid himself of American national and cultural identity by adopting the transnational identity of the *Tangerino*. This is manifested in his characters. Like Bowles, they don't try to become Moroccan citizens outright or wholly adopt *Tanjawi* culture; instead, they attempt to escape their American national identity by becoming residents of the international zone and embracing liminal *Tangerino* identities, products of both American and Moroccan nationalities and incorporating cultural aspects from each. Bowles' characters arrive in Morocco searching for somewhere untainted by American cultural imperialism, but where they could get their hands on a bootlegged version of it if necessary.

Following the war, Bowles relocated to Morocco permanently. He had first visited the country in late 1931 on the advice of Gertrude Stein, and his novels, *The Sheltering Sky*, *Let It Come Down*, and *The Spider's House*, played a significant role in attracting Americans to the area. Bowles' depiction of the liberties available to American expatriates and tourists can demonstrably be shown to have drawn a significant number of visitors to the city. More than any other American expatriate in Morocco, his works have become essential reading for those interested in North Africa. *The Sheltering Sky* was a New York Times bestseller in 1950 and was made into a film in 1990 by Bernardo Bertolucci. It, along with his other Moroccan novels, has remained popular with readers.

Prominent in these texts, as well as in much of his Moroccan-set short fiction, are the themes of culture collision and flight from American influence and national identity. This becomes apparent in three ways. First, many of Bowles' protagonists are Americans who suffer terrible ends while trying to either achieve a level of understanding of the native inhabitants, as with the professor in the short story "A Distant Episode." His characters fetishize the Arab population as well as the Islamic religion, and their relationship with colonialism is complex and, at times, inconsistent. They exhibit nostalgia for a Morocco of the past, which may or may not have actually existed. John Stenham in Bowles' *The Spider's House* complains, "When I first

came here it was a pure country [...] Now it's finished, everything. Even the religion. In a few more years the whole country will be like all the other Moslem countries, just a huge European slum" (187-8). Second, is the fear of Americanization. Much of this is likely related, as Brian Edwards suggests, to Henry Luce's pronouncement in a 1941 *Life* magazine article that the twentieth century is an "American Century," a notion that certainly terrified Bowles. Port Moresby's observation in *The Sheltering Sky* that, "The people of each country get more like the people of every other country. They have no character, no beauty, no ideals, no culture—nothing, nothing" is echoed by one character or another in nearly all of Bowles' Moroccan texts (8). Tangier's international zone provides these characters with the opportunity to pursue other lives free from American influence and the demands of the American dream. Finally, as a result of the collision of cultures, Bowles' characters attempt to shed their national identities while holding on to their nation's cultural artifacts. The liberation Port experiences following the theft of his American passport and subsequent inability to demonstrate his nationality is a good indication of this. Additionally, Stenham, in *The Spider's House*, tries to distance himself from both the repressive colonial activities of the French as well as the American "Coca-Colanization" of the Maghreb. However, in the midst of trying to show his support and solidarity with the native population, Stenham continuously acts superior to every Arab he encounters and in every situation reacts in a manner consistent with colonial attitudes.

Much of this is a reflection of Bowles himself. He feared Americanization and desperately wanted Morocco to remain "pure", untarnished by the Western influence. It's no secret that Bowles longed for a return to the Morocco of 1931, the year of his first visit. Additionally, he has stated on a number of occasions that his reason for writing *The Spider's House* was to help preserve on paper what he saw as one of Morocco's last untainted cities, Fez. However, during the novel's composition, the national independence movement became impossible to ignore, and, subsequently, the book chronicles the arrival of Fez's revolutionary moment. Initially, Bowles supported Morocco's bid for independence whole-heartedly because he imagined that once the French were removed, Morocco would naturally return to its pre-colonial state. He became dismayed, however, when he realized that Moroccans wanted to modernize, and it was the French that had been responsible for preserving the country's "medieval" atmosphere.

Even though he identifies with and longs to commune with the Arab population, Bowles's actions demonstrate that he is anything but native. Michelle Green, in *The Dream at the End of the World*, writes that on one excursion into the Sahara, Bowles brought along over a dozen large trunks of luggage, one of which was entirely filled with neckties. Like the other American expatriates, Bowles enjoyed a privileged status that set him culturally separate from and socially superior to the indigenous population. Stenham and Port Moresby are the two characters that most closely reflect Bowles' outlook on life. Even though he insists that *Spider's House* isn't a *roman à clef* it certainly reads that way. Bowles' fiction doesn't stray very far from his actual life experiences in many instances. This is especially true of his political views and his fears of the Americanization of North Africa. Overall, Bowles' attitudes are highly complex and, at times, contradictory, not reducible to traditional notions of orientalism.

William S. Burroughs has said in interviews and letters that he made the decision to live in Tangier after reading Bowles' *Let It Come Down*. The second chapter interrogates this impulse by looking closely at representations of the Maghreb in his work and investigates ways in which Morocco's anticolonial revolution and the violence surrounding the independence movement inspired and influenced Burroughs' own personal literary revolution. With the publication of *Naked Lunch* in 1958, he expressed both his admiration for the transformative potential of revolutionary violence and his dismay that this potential went unrealized in Morocco. Like Bowles, Burroughs sought out the freedoms offered to Americans living in the international zone and wrote these liberties into his novels. His preference for adolescent boys and hard drugs is well documented and the availability of both in Tangier makes the reasons behind his decision to relocate to the city fairly obvious. Burroughs was a man with dangerous tastes, and these tastes are wholly represented in his tangerine writing.

Naked Lunch, Burroughs' breakthrough work, was written in scraps and fragments and is a hallucinatory tour through a realm he calls Interzone, closely modeled on the international zone of Tangier. Interzone corresponds with Tangier in many ways: geographically, culturally, and politically. Much of the book's content is inspired by or a direct transcription of events he witnessed there. In addition to his preoccupation with boy prostitutes and cheap heroin, Burroughs developed a fascination with the revolutionary aspects of the zone. Scenes in *Naked Lunch* involving Islam Inc. and lengthy descriptions of "the political parties of Interzone" serve as satirical representations of the revolutionary factions operating inside Morocco during the

writing of the novel, many of which had a tendency to fight each other as often as they fought the French. Riffing off this, and regarding Islam Inc., Burroughs writes that their “exact objectives [...] are obscure. Needless to say everyone involved has a different angle, and they all intend to cross each other up somewhere along the line” (134).

In addition to *Naked Lunch*, many of Burroughs’ other works incorporate distinctly Tangierine elements or explore the city directly. The appropriately named *Interzone*, published only a few years before the author’s death, collects many of the unpublished or out of print articles, essays, and short sketches written during his time there. Included here are several pieces exploring Burroughs’ relationships with boy prostitutes and brief sketches detailing his drug buying techniques. Burroughs’ *Red Night Trilogy* focuses on the revolutionary activities of a small group struggling against a colonizing power. The first book of the trilogy, *Cities of the Red Night* (1981), for instance, simulates what Burroughs calls “parachuting commandos behind enemy lines in history” and sets about removing the influence of the colonizing Spanish from South America at its source, the moments of creation. Additionally, the six titular cities come off like Tangier reimaged. For example, the city of Ba’dan possesses an “intergalactic zone” where anything can be had for the right price. Like Bowles’, Burroughs’ work has been profoundly influenced by his years in Tangier.

The third chapter addresses the writings of two other American semi-permanent residents of Morocco and their attempts to “go native”: Jane Bowles and Brion Gysin, born in England, but a naturalized American. Bowles, Paul’s wife, wrote a few provocative short pieces based on her years in Morocco. “Everything is Nice” describes her introduction to the native domestic sphere through her Arab lover, Cherifa. “The Iron Table” recreates a conversation between herself and her husband regarding the nature of their life in Morocco and broaches questions of national and personal identity. Bowles’ short stories depicting failed attempts by Western women to integrate within the society of Moroccan women reveal her frustration that her own efforts were unsuccessful. Gysin, however, takes this one step further and resolves to not only become accepted by Moroccan society, but to become Moroccan himself. His *The Process* reflects this self-identification as Arab and his incredulity that this could be questioned. Gysin’s novel also complicates issues of orientalist attitudes by redefining the notion of colonial nostalgia. Both Bowles and Gysin in some way reflects, antagonizes or responds to the influence

of the international zone and the notion that Tangier represents (or potentially represents) a place set apart from the American influence.

My final chapter interrogates the Moroccan memoirs of Alfred Chester and John Hopkins written during the 1960s and 1970s. Chester's "The Foot," while not a diary in the truest sense, is written in this style and indeed provides an accurate account of his conflictive relationship with his Moroccan lover, Driss. Chester's work charts the arenas of obsession and records the implications of "compulsive fantasy." He saw himself as the inheritor of Tangier's literature, possessor of a torch that had been passed to him from Bowles through Burroughs. Hopkins moved to Tangier after reading Bowles and Burroughs and lived in Morocco during the 1960s and 1970s. His memoir, *The Tangier Diaries*, is a heavily edited reproduction of the journal he kept during the years he lived in Tangier. Both of these reports reveal a concerted effort to distance themselves from the old style colonialism of the previous generation of expatriates as well as well as their ultimate failure in this.

In addition to the several writers discussed in this study, there are many who are not included. The selection process was predicated on those American writers who wrote most extensively on Tangier in addition to the length of their stay in the city. Writers such as Tennessee Williams, Gore Vidal, Truman Capote, Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso, and Allen Ginsberg all visited the city in the capacity of tourist and, while they may have written briefly of their experiences there, their contribution to Tangerian literature, as Brian Edwards calls it, is scant. Others such as Edouard Roditi, who lived in Tangier during the 1960s and was a friend the Bowleses as far back as the early 1930s, simply contributed relatively little to the Tangerian archive.

As well as providing an outlet for some forms of American orientalist thinking, the unique status of Tangier's international zone allowed these expatriates to create a place free from their oppressive native national identities and the cultural accoutrements that accompanied these identities. Many of these writers fled the United States to escape from what they perceived as obnoxious Americanness, specifically the post-war American sensibilities of McCarthyism, consumerism, and the suburbanization of the country. The international status of Tangier, on the other hand, permitted certain sexual, social, and cultural liberties that were strictly off limits back home. Their writings reflect a Tangier that is not simply a place of orientalism and cultural imperialism but a place of individual freedom, personal exploration, and cultural connection.

CHAPTER TWO

“THE DREAM GOES ON”: PAUL BOWLES AND THE INTERROGATION OF TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY

There is drumming out there most nights. It never awakens me; I hear the drums and incorporate them into my dream, like the nightly cries of the muezzins. Even if in the dream I am in New York, the first *Allah akbar!* effaces the backdrop and carries whatever comes next to North Africa, and the dream goes on.

--Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*

Paul Bowles spent the better part of his life in Morocco and most of that in the port city of Tangier. Out of all the American expatriates living there following World War II, Bowles is the name most closely associated with the place. Until his death in November 1999, he served as a *de facto* cultural ambassador for the country, his books and short stories helping to bolster tourism, most notably attracting the beatniks and hipsters in the fifties that Kerouac complained about so bitterly in *Desolation Angels* and the hippie pilgrims in the sixties traveling the hippie trail, what Graham Nash famously referred to as the “Marrakesh Express.” Bowles became somewhat of an attraction himself; his fame and general accessibility, along with his willingness to visit with *anybody* who called on him, earned him a place in several tourist guidebooks.

He made the decision to settle permanently in Morocco after having an exceptionally vivid dream “one balmy night in May” 1947. Bowles recounts the details of this dream in his autobiography, *Without Stopping*:

This dream was distinctive because although short and with no anecdotal content beyond that of a changing succession of streets, after I awoke, it had left its essence with me in a state of enameled precision: a residue of ineffable sweetness and calm. In the late afternoon sunlight I walked slowly through complex and tunneled streets. As I reviewed it, lying there, sorry to have left the place behind, I realized with a jolt that the magic city really existed. It was Tangier. My heart accelerated, and memories of other courtyards and stairways flooded in, still fresh from sixteen years before. For the Tangier in which I had wandered had been the Tangier of 1931. (274)

The dream lingered all through the morning and by the following evening, he had decided “that Tangier must be the place I wanted to be more than anywhere else” (274).

Bowles’ first visit to Tangier in 1931 happened more or less by accident; he made the journey on a whim, following the advice of Gertrude Stein. Bowles and Stein had been engaging in a correspondence as the result of his rather brazenly writing and requesting that she submit some poems to *The Messenger*, the literary magazine of the University of Richmond, an issue of which he was editing at the time. Finding the situation at home untenable after attempting to stab his father with a carving knife, Bowles left the United States for Europe. Stein was the first person he looked up upon his arrival in France. In casual conversation one day over lunch,⁴ Stein mentioned that Bowles, who was traveling with Aaron Copland at the time, would enjoy the climate in Tangier. This was enough for Bowles: “The trip to Morocco would be a rest, a lark, a one-summer stand. The idea suited my overall desire, that of getting as far away as possible from New York. Being wholly ignorant of what I should find there, I did not care” (*Without Stopping* 124).

The question remains, what is it about Morocco that enticed Bowles to return the following winter and again in the autumn of 1932 and yet again in June 1934, before finally settling in Tangier for good in the summer of 1947 after the world had settled down following the war? Bowles himself attributes it to laziness: “I came and I stayed” (Choukri 145). In *Without Stopping* he writes, “I did not choose to live in Tangier permanently; it happened. My visit was meant to be of short duration; after that I would move on, and keep moving onward indefinitely. I grew lazy and put off departure” (366). However, in an interview with Lawrence Stewart, Bowles provides entirely different reasons for staying: “Beginning with the first day and continuing through all the years I have spent in Tangier, I have loved the white city that sits astride its hills, looking out across the Strait of Gibraltar to the mountains of Andalucia,” and in a private letter from the Bowles collection at the University of Texas, he writes, “It is a magnificent country. Still Murderous. The night I arrived bandits set fire to a busload of Arabs, and killed 37 of them” (18; 19). So which is it, lethargy or genuine affection for the impressive city and the thrill of what he refers to as the country’s “murderous” nature? The extent and frequency of his travels beyond the African coast seem to point toward the latter, and the

⁴ The suggestion may actually have come from Alice Toklas. Bowles is inconsistent when recounting the conversation in interviews. For example, Lawrence D. Stewart in *The Illumination of North Africa* cites a personal interview with Bowles attributing the suggestion to Toklas; however, in *Without Stopping* it is made by Stein.

exhilaration that permeates *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, his collection of travel essays from “the non-Christian world,” verifies this. Indeed, Bowles went so far as to buy the island of Taprobane in Weligama Bay off the South coast of Sri Lanka to use as a vacation spot. However, he always returned to Tangier, considering it home for more than half a century.

What Bowles found in Morocco and what his writing reflects is a place where he was free to escape the oppressive nature of American imperialism, what’s been called the “Coca-Colonization”⁵ of the world, and to explore the limits of his personal identity free from his native surroundings. His brief flirtation with the communist party in his youth made him wary of McCarthyism, and he was unimpressed by technological advances like the telephone and television. The suburbanization of the United States during the Eisenhower years frightened him, and the postwar culture of conformity alienated him. His homosexuality threatened to get him into trouble if he stayed in the United States, and his interest in the strange and grotesque would have gone unfulfilled.

In Morocco, Bowles discovered a land and a people he considered to be as completely unlike those he’d left behind in the United States as possible. He found the local Arabs peculiar and fascinating and on many occasions sought out native encounters that submerged him in the alien culture and, occasionally, found their way into his work. While he remained completely Westernized throughout his life and while he never tried to carry the passport of any country other than his birth country, he did locate something in Moroccan culture that appealed to him which caused him to constantly privilege the Maghreb over his native culture. John Maier describes it this way in *Desert Songs*, “[Bowles] appears to be speaking in the name of the West and writing to a Western audience. He is very rarely, though, a defender of the West. Bowles is in one sense the complete outsider, one who felt equally estranged from his own American traditions [...] and from Moroccans, whose traditions were so different from his own” (145). What he discovered in Morocco was an absence of something he calls “the negative aspects of contemporary civilization.” This includes the freedom of experience and the freedom from experience. He told interviewer Oliver Evans in 1971, “When I leave [Morocco] to go anywhere else, I feel that everywhere else is slightly dead: a certain human element is missing;” in Morocco there’s “proof that life goes on, somehow, whereas in New York there isn’t any proof.

⁵ This is a term I first encountered in Brian Edwards’ *Morocco Bound*. I’ve since seen it used everywhere.

It's all going by, nothing going on" (46). In Tangier Bowles was able to do pretty much as he wanted, when he wanted, and with whom he wanted.

Homi Bhabha discusses the relationship of national narrative to national identity in the "Dissemination" chapter of *The Location of Culture*. According to Bhabha, national identity is narrated and lived, simultaneously taught and performed. It is both something one is born with and it is a manner in which one learns to behave, a legal definition and an acquired personality trait. This is what Bowles wanted to reject: the national hegemonic discourse. He'd grown disillusioned with the homogeneity, lack of imagination, and passionless violence of American culture specifically and western culture in general. En route to the United States following his third trip to Morocco, Bowles wrote to Gertrude Stein complaining of his need to return to New York (Stewart 19). In the pages of *Without Stopping* covering these early visits, he refers to his homeland as a "prison" and considers his time in Europe and North Africa as a type of parole (165). He was in New York for the end of World War II and writes that Hiroshima and Nagasaki left him feeling "bitter about being a national of a country with a government of so little moral intelligence" (264). In contrast, Bowles describes Tangier in terms that distance the Moroccan city from most Western cities: "In defense of the city I can say that so far it has been touched by fewer of the negative aspects of contemporary civilization than most cities of its size. More important than that, I relish the idea that in the night, all around me in my sleep, sorcery is burrowing its invisible tunnels in every direction, from thousands of senders to thousands of unsuspecting recipients" (*Without Stopping* 366).

One consequence of Bowles' efforts to extricate himself from his inherited national identity by relocating to Tangier is that passages, such as the one quoted above praising Morocco's metaphysical roots, that seek to emphasize Morocco's primitive backwardness in contrast to the West's modernity often lead to charges of racism and orientalism being leveled against him. Mohamed Choukri, for example, Bowles' onetime protégé whose autobiographical novel, *For Bread Alone*, Bowles translated, says that there is something about Bowles "that is purely colonialist" (146). Additionally, he argues that, "Paul Bowles loves Morocco, but does not really like Moroccans" (147).

Accusations of orientalism are easy to make because many of Bowles' works contain passages that appear to be textbook examples of colonial mentality. "Mustapha and His Friends," first published in *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue* in 1957, is the

work most often cited by those inclined to point fingers. The essay is pretty ridiculous. In it, Bowles attempts to capture the essence of “an illiterate city-dweller” whom “all visitors to North Africa have known” (55). Mustapha is portrayed in much the way African-Americans were depicted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He is called lazy, expediently religious, unscrupulous, sexually uninhibited, thieving, indignant, prevaricating, distrustful, suspicious, foolhardy, cowardly, simple, etc. The piece is a caricature of a dehumanized other and amounts to nothing more than a list of negative stereotypes. In the introduction to the collection, Edmund White mounts a half-hearted defense of the essay, arguing that Bowles avoids applying these stereotypes to his fiction, “in *fiction* he creates individuals, not types [emphasis his]” (xvii). “Bowles,” he adds, “is not only a purveyor of cultural stereotypes but also a careful scholar of Morocco’s real culture” (xvii).

Ralph M. Coury disagrees and accuses Bowles of misrepresenting Moroccan culture. He writes, “Bowles’ work reflects many of the standard features that have characterized the representation of the Arab/Muslim since the nineteenth century” (129). Singling out “Mustapha and His Friends,” he describes the essay as “a collective portrait of a group of typical lower middle class or working class Moroccan Muslims, but it is also clear that Bowles believes that their most salient traits are one with all their coreligionists and compatriots. It is obvious that Bowles finds Mustapha and his friends repulsive in many ways” (130). Coury counters White’s defense even further, arguing that, “when we turn to the novels and short stories we find these and other Orientalist elements expressed through the explicit statements of various protagonists, or by an authorial voice, or through plot, description or the portrayal of character” (130).

In addition to providing a harsh critique of Bowles’ orientalism, Coury also takes to task contemporary Moroccan critics who see themselves reflected in the “Bowlesian mirror” (144). He blames this phenomenon on three current trends in post-colonial discourse that he sees as misguided: “an emphasis upon hybridity, ambivalence and contingency, the collapse of the nation state as a horizon of politics, and the celebration of a globalized, post-modern electronic culture” (144). He also puts the fault with the rise of intellectuals among former colonies and in doing so implies these new formerly “imperialized” academics lack the qualifications and the ability to accurately interpret the works of literature in which they are written. However, this stance creates a dilemma in which he falls victim to the same stereotyping and undervaluation of Moroccan sophistication as Bowles.

Brian Edwards writes extensively on American attitudes toward the Maghreb post-World War II, and in *Morocco Bound* he argues almost the exact opposite position from Coury. According to Edwards, Bowles' work has been adopted by Moroccan academics because Bowles himself adopted them. Edwards argues that Bowles participates in the creation of the new national literature of Morocco, what Edwards calls "Tangerine lit," and can no longer be considered a purely American author. Indeed, Edwards argues that Bowles cannot be adequately understood without consulting Moroccan criticism of his work. Following Bowles' death in November 1999, Moroccan news sources ran the obituary as front page news while Western media outlets gave the story much less attention. Addressing the substantive differences in coverage between American and Maghrebi sources, Edwards writes: "not one of the U.S. obituaries and tributes considered his half-century in Tangier in the context of the major political and social transformations in the city, in Morocco, or in the greater Maghreb, which moved from colonialism to independence through various intense struggles in the postcolonial period" (82). Edwards compares East and West, pointing out:

If American accounts had Bowles fleeing to a curious and marginal place, Moroccan accounts invariably ask about the effects of his writing on the postcolonial nation. There is a greater diversity of opinion regarding Bowles in the vibrant Moroccan media than one finds in U.S. criticism. Such a disparity reminds us that Arab interruptions to American accounts of the world extend to the realm of literary criticism. (84)

However, Edwards complains, little of this criticism is available in the West, and few conventional methods of academic research point the researcher in this direction.

Edwards demonstrates that Moroccans have been reading Bowles since the 1950s and that Moroccan critics have analyzed Bowles' works favorably in relation to Moroccan culture since at least the 1990s. He quotes / translates one such critic, Zubir Bin Bushta, writing soon after Bowles' death, as generating an entirely new category of literature in order to explain Bowles: "Paul Bowles is a writer categorized in the column of foreign literature in America. And he is esteemed as a foreign writer in Morocco. I firmly believe that he created a new literary movement / trend [*tayyar*] that can be called *al-adab at-Tanji*" (86). Edwards translates *al-adab at-Tanji* as "Tangerian Literature" and cites Bowles' first novel, *The Sheltering Sky*, as the first true example of this new literature.

Indeed, as Edwards suggests, and as evidenced by the severity of the disagreements and intensity of the discussions among other critics, Bowles' attitudes toward native North African Arabs are complex and not easily reducible to simple either/or equations of racist/non-racist, colonialist/anti-colonialist, or imperialist/nativist. Bowles consistently exhibits characteristics proving of all of these charges. In his writing, as well as in his life, it is possible to demonstrate that Bowles both operated according to stereotypes and clichés and that he was progressive and forward-thinking in his depictions of Arabs, sometimes in the same passage. In *The Sheltering Sky* for instance, Port and Kit discover two Arabs while exploring the mountains south of Boussif. Both Arabs are indifferent to presence the American couple and are emblematic of the type of encounter with the Maghreb Bowles wants to provide for his reader. The first Arab is "stark naked," carefully trimming his pubic hair with a long knife (92). The second, "a venerable Arab," sits praying on a rock completely motionless (93). In this one passage, Bowles gives his readers the two extremes of North African culture: the pious and the absurd. For Bowles, both are true and both appeal to him. Whether either of these portrayals is an accurate representation of Moroccan culture is not the issue. For Bowles, they are and there is room in his work for both.

The inspiration for *The Sheltering Sky* springs from a short story Bowles had written a year previous, "A Distant Episode." The story, as with the novel, details a collision between two cultures, the native maghrebi and the West. In both, westerners in search of "authentic" native experiences find themselves in over their heads following ill-considered attempts to commune with primitive natives of the northern Sahara. In "A Distant Episode," a linguistics professor misinterprets the intentions and underestimates the intelligence of a native Berber tribesman. Realizing too late that "These people are not primitives" the professor is taken captive, has his tongue removed, and is trained to clown for the entertainment of the tribe (43). The story ends a year later with the professor running in terror toward the setting sun following a shock to his consciousness as a result of re-encountering a language he can understand. It is interesting to note that the language that returns the professor to himself is classical Arabic, not his native English. Similarly, in *The Sheltering Sky*, a married couple and their traveling companion journey into the interior of the Sahara. Following the typhoid death of the husband as a result of his failure to inoculate himself before arriving in North Africa, the wife flees deeper into the desert where she is raped and held captive by Berber tribesmen. The novel ends when the wife disappears into the Arab quarter in Oran after reacting in horror to the sound of her surviving

traveling companion's name. Edwards argues in part that the "cultural misunderstanding" that occurs in both works is a result of miscommunication and incompatible languages, which is a small symptom of a larger issue (91). The protagonists in each are unprepared and completely ill-equipped for their encounters with the local Arab population (91). Their inability to communicate meaningfully with the local Arabs symbolizes a complete lack of understanding that proves to be their undoing.

The professor in "A Distant Episode" arrives in Aïn Tadouirt with only a vague notion of why he's there. He tells his driver that he is in the country to study variations on the Maghrebi⁶ language, but he has clearly chosen to visit the village in order to reconnect with a café owner he'd known for only a few days a decade earlier. Bowles quickly establishes that the professor places a great deal of importance on this tenuous friendship; he recites the man's name to himself during the journey into the village like it's a mantra and the sound of it obviously gives him confidence and comfort. The repetition of the name "Hassan Ramani" reminds him that he's been to the village before and makes him feel as if he's revisiting something familiar and intimate rather than exotic and unknown. The professor's link to the village is severed immediately upon arrival, however, when he learns that his friend has been dead several years and the café is now owned by someone else. The sudden loneliness the professor experiences is an indicator of just how much importance he'd placed on this connection to the village. Struggling to keep the town familiar and accessible, he grasps onto anything else that might activate the fond memories from his first visit. His choice of Camel-udder boxes is a surprising one, as Stewart points out, and only serves to emasculate him somewhat, as Bowles certainly would have known that the boxes are traditionally used by women to store make-up (31). The professor's announcement that he would like to begin collecting these boxes is evidently a spontaneous utterance, and his decision to follow the *qaouaji* into the desert at night in search of them is clearly an attempt to disguise his discomfort in being in the village without an anchor.

Even after his abduction by the Reguiba, the professor insists on underestimating both the people and his situation: "He did not doubt for a moment that the adventure would prove to be a kind of warning against such foolishness on his part—a warning which in retrospect would be half sinister, half farcical" (44). He sees the kidnapping as an "opportunity" to find out if the

⁶ Bowles uses a different spelling for this word, "moghreb." I have standardized this except for instances where I quote him directly.

tribe is as sinister and ruthless as they are rumored to be (44.) Additionally, he still anticipates being treated with a certain degree of Western civility and is “scandalized” at the “breach of etiquette” when he is set upon by two dogs after he has already been taken captive (44). When his tongue is violently removed, he’s comforted by thinking of the procedure as an “operation” (45). This redefinition is the last coherent thought the professor experiences in the story. From this moment until the final paragraphs, when he is left alone with the French calendar, he shuts off the rational portion of his mind and loses himself entirely to the simplest requirements of survival. Indeed, his loss of self-identity dramatizes the extent to which underestimating the Maghreb can imperil the incautious Westerner. Ignoring his realization that “These people are not primitives” the professor persists in descending into the desert and seriously miscalculates the danger and misinterprets his guide’s motives (43).

Deep in the Sahara near the end of *The Sheltering Sky*, Kit Moresby has a similar realization when she takes a good hard look around her, her first of the novel, and experiences a thrill: “It is rather wonderful [...] to be riding past such people in the Atomic Age” (179). Her throwaway comment, made while Port’s role as the central character is in decline and hers is in ascendancy, distills the essence of the book into a pithy observation. At its core, *The Sheltering Sky* interrogates the friction between two worlds: the selfish individual nationalism of Bowles’ American upbringing and the expansiveness limitless exploration of life in the Maghreb. Technically the bulk of the book takes place in Algeria, but it is an Algeria of the imagination. The unnamed North African country blends elements from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia; Port and Kit Moresby, accompanied by their friend Tunner, could be traveling through nearly any country in the Maghreb. The anonymous nature of the countryside is important for the novel’s stated themes of isolation, solitude, and exploration of the consequences of national identity.

Bowles has made no secret of the fact that *The Sheltering Sky*’s central male protagonist is a kind of self-portrait. In a 1998 preface, written fifty years after the publication of the novel, Bowles continuously blends his authorial identity with that of his fictional creation. Writing of his primary protagonist’s death at the end of the book’s second act, Bowles states, “I knew that the death was necessary because what I wanted, above all, was the experience of dying, not as seen by observers, but from the inside—I had to be the dying person. I found that the novel was pushed ahead by my counterfeit death” (xii). However, as eager as he is for the reader to accede the notion that the central character and the author are one, Bowles is just as insistent that the

female protagonist, who takes over all of the heavy lifting in the final act, is not his wife Jane Bowles. In fact, Bowles seems offended that anyone could think, despite basing the primary protagonist on himself, that he would model Port's wife on his own wife.⁷ According to Michelle Green's *The Dream at the End of the World*, an account of the Bowleses' life in Tangier, Jane recognized parallels between herself and the character and found the connections "unsettling" (36). Aside from the simple fact that Jane Bowles was still in the United States during the North African trips Paul fictionalizes in the novel, comparisons between the two women are difficult to ignore. Both reluctantly follow their husbands into the desert, motivated more by blind loyalty than by personal interest in their new environment, both are susceptible to the influence of superstitions and omens, and both are confounded by their husbands' desire to flee from Western civilization, a common enough argument between the Bowleses that Jane would fictionalize it in her short story, "The Iron Table."

Early in *The Sheltering Sky* Paul Bowles recounts his side of the argument, inserting it into dialogue between Port and Kit. Kit complains of the effects of World War II upon the country, primarily in an attempt to "please her husband" (7). The Maghreb has made a poor first impression, but Kit would "still a damned sight rather be here than back in the United States" (8). She says what she knows Port wants to hear, although it's pretty clear she doesn't believe half of what she's saying, "The people of each country get more like the people of every other country. They have no character, no beauty, no ideals, no culture—nothing, nothing" (8). Bowles weaves this conversation into one of the larger themes of the novel, namely the specific differences between "tourists" and "travelers," a concept he gives to Port. According to Port's theory, the difference is primarily one of duration. Tourists tend to follow carefully worked out itineraries and anticipate returning home at the end of their holiday. They belong to a class that we would associate today with Clark Griswold from the *Vacation* movies. They travel to a destination, consumes the sights, and return home with souvenirs and trophies carefully stowed in their luggage. The traveler, on the other hand, "belonging no more to one place than to the next, moves slowly, over periods of years, from one part of the earth to another" (6). Port insists that his temperament is so closely aligned with that of the traveler that he only becomes self-aware on the road. Only while in motion was he "able to look at his life with a little more

⁷ Bowles reacts this way in many of his interviews from the time of Bertolucci's film adaptation of *The Sheltering Sky*. However, he does concede in an interview with Soledad Alameda "that [he] used Jane as a model the same way a painter would" (222).

objectivity than usual. It was often on trips that he thought most clearly, and made the decisions that he could not reach when he was stationary” (98). The problem with Port’s highly romanticized notion of the traveler is exclusively one of class. The middle and lower classes cannot afford to be travelers. Most cannot access the type of wealth that Port inherits following the death of his father several years earlier. In reality, the ability to travel is strictly limited to the idle rich and itinerant drifters. And the Moresbys unquestionably fall in the first category. Many of the luxury items they bring along with them are completely useless on an excursion into the desert. At one point Port enters Kit’s hotel room during preparations to cross the Sahara’s edge and sees “rows of shoes,” “evening gowns spread out,” “and bottles of cosmetics and perfumes” on display (155). Kit’s extensive wardrobe echoes Paul Bowles’ legendary luggage excesses. Michelle Green reports that “he took with him vast amounts of luggage—most of which contained a wardrobe more suitable for a sojourn in London than an excursion in rural Spain and North Africa. Tweed jackets, silk ties and dressing gowns, oxford-cloth shirts, cashmere vests and pullovers” (21).⁸

There is, however, another aspect of traveling that appeals to Port, and consequently Bowles, much more. Port believes that the tourist “accepts his own civilization without question,” whereas the traveler studies his against “the others, and rejects those elements he finds not to his liking” (6). Essentially, travelers create their own culture piecemeal, generating it over time throughout their journey. However, for this type of manufactured culture to succeed, the traveler would have to move from one area of the world to another, with all areas equally uncontaminated by outside civilizations. This is, of course, unrealistic, especially following a world war in which troops of many nations crossed the borders of many other nations. But this is what Port hopes to find in the Sahara, a place that will “withstand the malady” of imminent Americanization (8).

The theme of anti-Westernization emerges time and again in *The Sheltering Sky*. During a conversation concerning the nature of humanity, Port suddenly shouts out, “Europe has destroyed the whole world” (88). He is responding to Kit’s nervous rambling about the state of Europe, post-war, and he takes issue with her mention of humanity: “Humanity is everyone but one’s self. So of what interest can it possibly be to anybody?” (88). Port doesn’t believe that

⁸ There’s also an apocryphal story that on one of his expeditions into the Sahara, Paul brought with him a trunk completely filled with only neckties.

humanity is of any relevance to the individual and therefore should never be taken into consideration under any circumstances. Indeed, he perceives humanity as a threat to the individual self: “I don’t have to justify my existence by any such primitive means. The fact that I breathe is my justification. If humanity doesn’t consider that a justification, it can do what it likes to me. I’m not going to carry a passport to existence around with me, to prove I have the right to be here! I’m here! I’m in the world! But my world’s not humanity’s world. It’s the world as *I* see it” (88-9). Port’s views of the world and his role in it are just as complicated as Bowles’. On the one hand, throughout the novel, Port constantly condemns colonialism and its effects on the Maghreb, but on the other hand, he privileges the individual (himself, in most cases) over the rest of humanity, even going so far as to exempt the individual from inclusion in humanity. The only way to reconcile these two opinions is to argue that Port—and, indeed, Bowles as well—condemns colonialism only insofar as it hinders his ability to appreciate an unmediated North Africa. This is evident in the flashback passage describing Port’s encounter with the “immigration authorities at his disembarkation” in Oran (192). Port grows upset when the officials insist that he must provide a profession on their entry form. The idea of defining himself in such a way with a label is odious. After Kit volunteers that he is a writer, Port becomes excited by the prospect. He imagines publishing an account of his time in North Africa: “the idea of his actually writing a book had amused him. A journal, filled in each evening with the day’s thoughts, carefully seasoned with local color” (193). Notice, however, that the journal cannot be confused with a travelogue; it is not to be about the day’s events or his impressions of the terrain. Instead the journal will be filled entirely with his “thoughts,” and, only occasionally, will amusing anecdotes pulled from his travels be featured. Port’s book about the Maghreb will instead be almost exclusively about him.

Port struggles with his identity throughout the novel. Like Bowles, he works to abandon his native identity in exchange for a carefully constructed, ambiguously international one; however, when his passport is stolen, Port comes closer to achieving his goals than Bowles ever did. Initially Port is terrified: “It’s strange,” he confesses to Lieutenant d’Armagnac, “how, ever since I discovered that my passport was gone, I’ve felt only half alive. But it’s a very depressing thing in a place like this to have no proof of who you are, you know” (154). But, just a day later, Port has romanticized the whole thing and “he realized now that it rather suited his fancy to be going off with no proof of his identity to a hidden desert town about which no one could tell him

anything” (163). The sudden reversal in Port’s attitude infuriates Kit, who sees the emotional distance growing ever greater between herself and her husband as his inconsistencies increase.

In the second act of the novel, as Port’s personality begins to fracture and disintegrate, Bowles introduces a new character to provide the reader with a point of reference. The French Lieutenant d’Armagnac serves as Port’s double, reminding the reader how far Port has come and what his life might have been like if he’d chosen to operate within the colonial system. The lieutenant is introduced in the opening lines of book two, momentarily disorienting the reader. As the relevant details of his story are revealed, the reader begins to realize that the lieutenant is the governing officer of the desert town where Port and Kit have recently arrived. However, as the officer’s personal history unfolds, it becomes clear that he is meant to act as a mirror for Port. Both men believe they are progressive in their attitudes toward the native Arabs, but in reality they are regressive. The lieutenant’s belief that the natives are “an accessible part of a great, mysterious tribe from whom the French could learn a great deal if they would only take the trouble” echoes an earlier sentiment of Port’s, made while strolling through the native quarter of the casbah,

it had been one of his superstitions that reality and true perception were to be found in the conversation of the laboring classes. Even though now he saw clearly that their formulas of thought and speech are as strict and as patterned, and thus as far removed from any profound expression of truth as those of any other class, often he found himself still in the act of waiting, with the unreasoning belief that gems of wisdom might yet issue from their mouths. (15)

The primitivism espoused by the two men remains a theory only. In practice, both are much more inclined to mistreat the native population. The lieutenant prides himself on understanding “native psychology” and regrets the death of a native woman who murdered her own child. The death of the baby doesn’t bother him, for “it was only an infant,” but the mother’s death requires him to spend time involved in the unpleasant task of filling out paperwork (143). And when Port accuses Abdelkader of stealing his passport, because “he’s absolutely the only native who had access to the passport,” and only a native would steal, the lieutenant insists that the thief couldn’t be the hotel manager because, while the native Arab is known for being a thief, he “takes only money or an object he wants for himself. He would never take anything so complicated as a passport” (151-2). The lieutenant’s nonchalant and condescending view of Arab life reflects

Port's view. This can best be seen when Port and Kit bribe the ticket agent for seats on the sold out bus: "Out of courtesy he did not suggest that the persuasion be used on two natives although he knew that would be the case" (167). When Kit protests the unfairness of making the dispossessed ticketholders wait a week for the next bus, Port replies, "What's a week to them? Time doesn't exist for them" (171).

Bowles also makes it clear that Lieutenant d'Armagnac is Port's double due to the similarity of their relationship to women. Neither man consults his wife before making the decision to migrate to North Africa. The lieutenant briefly wonders if his wife likes the Maghreb and whether it matches with her "preconceived notions" (142). Kit is bored by maps, whereas Port has "only to see a map to begin studying it passionately" and "begin to plan some new, impossible trip which sometimes eventually became a reality" (6). And both Port and the lieutenant have a sexual predilection for women they perceive as victims. The lieutenant entertains thoughts of seducing the woman who murdered her baby. The woman comes across as unconcerned during his interrogation of her and "this primitive insouciance amused him," and caused him to "consider how he could best arrange to spend the night with her" (144). Port has a similar reaction in the café Mohammed takes him to. When he realizes that the girl he's been watching dance is blind, it arouses him: "The knowledge hit him like an electric shock; he felt his heart leap ahead and his head grow suddenly hot" (132). What's more, Port entertains himself, while waiting for word from Mohammed concerning the blind woman's availability, by imagining different ways he can torture her by pretending to abandon her, leaving her "a prisoner," and then make her feel gratitude toward him when she realized he was still there (134). Even Kit features in the lieutenant's fantasies. After Port's death, when the lieutenant learns that Kit has fled into the desert, he wishes more than once that he could have met her while she was in the town.

In addition to doubling Port and Lieutenant d'Armagnac, Bowles also pairs off the Moresbys as a couple with the mother and son team, the Lyles. When Port first encounters Eric Lyle in the hotel bar, he assumes that since the young man and his mother have been traveling through North Africa for some time that they will have some insight into the region and be able facilitate his quest for the "authentic" native experience. Instead what happens is that Port attaches himself to two of the most vile individuals in all of Africa. Michelle Green explains that the Lyles were based on a real life British mother and son, the Powells. According to Green, the

portrayal of the couple in *The Sheltering Sky* is pretty faithful to the original. Mrs. Powell was a complainer, and in addition to complaining about the country, the weather, and the natives, her favorite object of scorn was her grown son. In an episode that makes an appearance in the novel, the mother “lectured” Paul about her son’s failings, especially that he had “caught some terrible disease from a ‘filthy Arab woman’” (22). Bowles believed he saw something unhealthy in their relationship, and when the son jokingly asked, “Isn’t married life wonderful?,” Bowles saw an opportunity to make the imagined incestual relationship a reality in fiction, if not in fact (23). Bowles later wrote of the couple’s role in his novel: “Their inclusion now seems unfortunate, not because I used them, but because they turned out to be caricatures” (*Without Stopping* 277).

Where the lieutenant is intended to be a reflection of Port, the Lyles are worked into the text to function as opposites for Port and Kit. According to the first part of Port’s definition, Eric and Mrs. Lyle are fellow travelers: they have been traveling for many years and they have no intention of returning home to Australia. However, the mother and son fall far short of qualifying as “travelers” with regard to the second aspect of the definition. The Lyles most definitely privilege their own civilization above all others. Upon arriving at the hotel in Boussif with Port and Eric, Mrs. Lyle begins giving orders to her son: “I want you to attend to the rooms. I shall go directly to the kitchen and set about showing them how to make tea” (68). Later, Port overhears her shouting the word “Mosh!” to the Arabs in the street:

“What is that strange word you’re calling out the window, Mrs. Lyle?”

“I’m driving those thieving little niggers away from my car.”

“But what are you saying to them? Is it Arabic?”

“It’s French,” she said, “and it means get out.”

“I see. Do they understand it?”

“They’d jolly well better.” (111)

Unlike the Moresbys who appreciate interactions with locals, and specifically in Port’s case, try to manufacture them if they can, the Lyles abhor any kind of social situation that puts them in proximity to the natives. In almost every respect, Bowles uses them as a counterpoint for the Moresbys. Indeed, their role in the novel, apart from one or two small narrative points, is one of absurd caricature, as Bowles says. It is almost as if the Lyles are the author’s way of saying to the reader, “You think Port and Kit are bad? Here are some real imperialists.” He drives this point home during Port’s first conversation with Eric in the hotel bar when Lyle fabricates a long

list of his colonial accomplishments. These include statements such as: “The government put me in charge of three thousand Zulus” and “We were the only whites ever to have penetrated into the region” (51).

Just in case the reader misses the point that the Moresbys’ actions are supposed to be compared to the actions of the Lyles, Bowles sets up moments where a situation will repeat an earlier one, but in an entirely new context. For example, early in the novel, after Kit’s one night stand with Tunner, Port catches him leaving her room and misinterprets the situation. Believing the hotel got the room assignments wrong, Port asks Tunner if he minds switching rooms with Kit. Much later in the book, when Tunner is waiting in Bou Noura for word on Kit’s disappearance, the Lyles arrive in town and take the last two rooms at the hotel. The manager asks Tunner if he wouldn’t mind changing rooms, “An English lady has arrived with her son, and she wants him in the room next to her. She’s afraid to be alone” (253). The little scene echoes the earlier scene and helps to solidify the Moresby / Lyle association in the reader’s mind.

One critical difference between the two couples is their nationality. Eric and his mother are Australian—though they’re often referred to as British—and Port and Kit, along with their traveling companion, Tunner, are American. This is an important distinction for Bowles to make. For while Port attempts to shed his national identity, Kit and Tunner do not. Indeed, both of them individually and separately confirm their Americanness. Tunner’s squeamishness toward the Maghreb’s dirt and grime is challenged when Kit mockingly refers to him as “a real American;” he proudly responds with, “You’re damned right” (105). However, later, when Kit experiences a bout of homesickness and Port teases her about it, she tells him, “It’d be abnormal if I were able to adapt myself too quickly to all this. After all, I’m still an American, you know. And I’m not even trying to be anything else” (155). Port, on the other hand, is trying to be something else, and Kit calls him on it, although he refuses to take the bait.

Neither Port nor Kit are willing to admit responsibility for encouraging Tunner to accompany them on the trip, but it’s strongly implied that the invitation came from Port as a way of avoiding being alone with Kit and delaying a marital confrontation with her. It is ironic that Tunner was brought along by Port since Port spends most of the novel trying to ditch him in the way he tries to leave behind his American identity. It’s therefore appropriate that Tunner is portrayed as very much the typical American. As Johannes Willem Bertens points out, even some of the language Bowles employs to describe Tunner is obviously applicable to the

homeland as well as the man (51). At the very least, the Bowles' descriptions reflect some of his own views of the United States. During Tunner's introduction, for instance, Bowles writes that Tunner "was accustomed to imposing his will without meeting opposition" and that he'd decided to join Port and Kit on the trip because "with them as with no one else he felt a definite resistance to his unceasing attempts at moral domination, at which he was forced, when with them, to work much harder" (58-9). Tunner exhibits some of the overt racism of his countrymen, referring to Arabs as "monkeys," "absurd," and "not to be counted seriously among the earth's inhabitant" (88; 251). It is also significant that Tunner is the one who is able to recover the stolen American passports and therefore is able to avoid the trauma of lost national and personal identity that plagues Port at the end of his life.

Unlike Port, Tunner does not attempt to manufacture "authentic" native encounters and is content to enjoy experiences that remain compatible with his American expectations and Western concepts of luxury. Port, however, cannot accept a vision of North Africa that doesn't conform to his notions of an authentic native one. Indeed, as he seeks out the untamed parts of the Maghreb, seating himself at a hotel bar and looking around reminds him just how far removed he is from the "wilderness" he seeks (156). The bar's "stuffy and melancholy" appearance and the desperate way it seems to cling to an exaggerated notion of European pub-ness overwhelms and saddens him:

It was full of the sadness inherent in all deracinated things. [...] The happiness, if there still was any, existed elsewhere: in sequestered rooms that looked onto bright alleys where the cats gnawed fishheads; in shaded cafés hung with reed matting, where the hashish smoke mingled with the fumes of mint from the hot tea; down on the docks, out at the edge of the sebkha in the tents [...]; beyond the mountains in the great Sahara, in the endless regions that were all of Africa. But not here in this sad colonial room where each invocation of Europe was merely one more squalid touch, one more visible proof of isolation; the mother country seemed farthest in such a room. (49-50)

He reacts to the sham Western atmosphere of the place and also reacts against the place's very existence. Imitation European-ness unsettles him and fuels his search for something local, untainted by Western imperialism. The enclaves of happiness he imagines exist far from the hotel bar, if they exist at all.

Very early in the novel, Port sets off by himself, ostensibly to take a walk, but really to find something “pure” enough to justify his trip to Africa. He bemoans the dilution of the local culture, wondering to himself, “They have no religion left. Are they Moslems or Christians? They don’t know” (14). Very quickly Port is befriended by a native, Smaïl, and accompanies him to a native café where he is surprised to find that he is the only Westerner in the place. This small joy seems to support his assertion that happiness can be found in native spaces free of European influence. Port’s assumption is that the war reshaped North Africa to such an extent that cafés such as this had been wiped out. The realization that some native places remain untouched encourages Port to accept Smaïl’s invitation into the tent community outside the city for a visit with the dancer / prostitute, Marhnia. However, his hopes for an authentic native encounter are dashed almost as soon as he steps into the tent. He’s dismayed by the realization that he cannot communicate with the woman with Smaïl’s interpretations and “even more irritated by the fact that Smaïl and she could converse together in his presence” (28). Port doesn’t like being left out of the conversation, and he’s particularly annoyed about being treated like an outsider. He almost feels like they’re reminding him that he’s an American. Marhnia’s attempted theft of his wallet and his frantic flight up the stairs by the Turkish fortress simply solidify his disappointment with the encounter.

Later in the novel, when Port arranges for Tunner to journey on ahead to the next town with the Lyles, giving the Moresbys time alone, Port makes arrangements to meet an Arab for tea. Kit is annoyed by his insistence that they must not be late: “It was typical of him to insist upon punctuality in the case of an anonymous shopkeeper in Aïn Krorfa, when with his friends and with her he behaved in a most cavalier fashion, arriving at his appointments indifferently anywhere from a half-hour to two hours after the specified time” (120). Some of Kit’s annoyance is a result of Port’s privileging the “anonymous shopkeeper” over her, but most of her irritation comes from the realization that Port’s quest for authentic experiences in North Africa is harming their chances at reconciliation. At one point, Port asks her if she could ever be happy living in North Africa. Immediately, she knows what he’s really asking her and replies, “How can I tell? It’s impossible to get into their lives, and know what they’re really thinking” (113). And when he says that’s not what he asked, she says, “You should have. That’s what’s important here” (113). Kit knows that Port’s true question asks whether they will ever be able to access any of the native’s untainted happiness that has so far eluded them. He tells her, “I feel that this

town, this river, this sky, all belong to me as much as to them” (113). He cannot understand why he is unable to have unmediated native encounters. Every attempt he makes to insert himself into maghrebi culture or to manufacture a situation in which an authentic native experience should logically follow falls flat and leaves him even more frustrated.

Bowles does, however, sprinkle the text with little incidents illustrating that Port is unable to obtain what he wants because he is oblivious. Authenticity seems to happen when he is not paying attention or when he’s too preoccupied to notice. The bus ride to Aïn Krorfa is an example of one of these moments. Port is bored by the journey, and “if he had not been journeying into regions he did not know, he would have found it insufferable” (102). However, he falls asleep just before dawn: “In this way he missed the night’s grand finale: the shifting colors that played on the sky from behind the earth before the rising of the sun” (103).

Kit is just the opposite from Port with regard to authentic native encounters. She never actively tries to make one happen and in some cases goes out of her way to avoid them; however, the entire final third of the novel consists of Kit stumbling in to the authentic native experiences that Port tries so hard to manufacture. In the end she flees Tunner and his Americanness and surpasses Port by disappearing into the casbah’s native quarter and becoming “native” herself.

The common perception that Kit’s flight into the desert and transformation into a sexual possession happens all at once with Port’s death is not entirely accurate. The ascent of Kit’s interest and fascination with the region coincides with the decline of Port’s health and eventual death. From the moment they board the bus and Kit is forced to assume responsibility, she experiences a different North Africa than she has seen up to this point. The landscape shifts from merely scenic to completely breathtaking: “Outside in the dust was the disorder of Africa, but for the first time without any visible sign of European influence, so that the scene had a purity which had been lacking in the other towns, an unexpected quality of being complete which dissipated the feeling of chaos” (181) And the native Arabs’ appearance changes from filthy and oppressed to noble and dignified; she experiences a “thrill of excitement” when the bus passes indigenous Berbers: ““It is rather wonderful,’ she thought, ‘to be riding past such people in the atomic age’” (179). Additionally, the handsome Arab who assists her when Port is ill attracts her in a way that no one has anywhere else in the novel: “Kit could not help noticing how unusually tall he was, what an admirable figure he cut when he stood erect in his flowing white garment. To efface her feeling of guilt at having thought anything at all about him, she felt impelled to

bring him to Port's attention" (178). Indeed, it is this guilt over her longing for the Arab that ultimately causes her to abandon him and ignore his pleas as he runs after the truck. Unlike Port, Kit is emotionally unable to act on her sexual desire until after she is widowed and flees into the Sahara.

Whether or not the reader believes that Kit's love for Belqassim is authentic, it is evident that Bowles wants us to think so. During the initial rape, once Kit stops struggling and kicking, she decides that her attacker is handsome and immediately falls in love with him:

Then she realized her helplessness and accepted it. Straightway she was conscious only of his lips and the breath coming from between them, sweet and fresh as a spring morning in childhood. There was an animal-like quality in the firmness with which he held her, affectionate, sensuous, wholly irrational—gentle but of a determination that only death could gainsay. She was alone in a vast and unrecognizable world, but alone only for a moment; then she understood that this friendly carnal presence was there with her. Little by little she found herself considering him with affection: everything he did, all his overpowering little attentions were for her. In his behavior there was a perfect balance between gentleness and violence that gave her particular delight. The moon came up but she did not see it. (266-7)

Kit's journey from rape victim to passionate and willing participant happens in an instant. Surprisingly, Belqassim undergoes a similar transformation. Following this first sexual encounter, Belqassim's older traveling partner takes his turn with Kit, which annoys her, not because she is raped twice in an afternoon, but because her new lover shares her with another man. She glares at him throughout the ordeal, and he mollifies her by stroking her cheek and calling her *habibi* (268).

By transforming an act of violence into a loving act of seduction, Bowles provides Kit with the type of "authentic" native encounter that Port tried so desperately to experience. Even her subsequent captivity in Belqassim's attic avoids coming across as threatening and instead becomes a continuation of that initial authentic encounter. Only after Kit realizes that Belqassim is neither the source nor the object of her love and that "any creature even remotely resembling Belqassim would please her quite as much," does she undertake an escape from his house and fall into her next native encounter with Amar and Atallah (287-8).

It is ironic that the only item the two men left her with is her identification. By this point in the novel, Kit's attempts to outrun her identity exceed even Port's. For most of the book she functions as a type of bridge between the American-and-proud Tunner and Port, the nationless traveler. However, Kit overtakes Port following his death and now does whatever she can to sever all connection with the woman she was, Kit Moresby. Miss Ferry unwittingly gives her the tools for making her escape into the Maghreb permanent when she tells Kit that nothing stays lost in the desert for long; it always turns up: "The Sahara's a small place, really, when you come right down to it. People just don't disappear there. It's not like it is here in the city, in the Casbah . . ." (312). And of course, *The Sheltering Sky* ends with Kit's escape onto a passing streetcar and her disappearance into the Arab quarter of the city. Port's method of looking for authenticity and evading the encroachment of Western civilization by journeying deeper into the desert is ultimately revealed to be a failure. Kit fails in her attempt as well until she exchanges flight into the desert for flight into the Casbah. Her successful disappearance into the Arab quarter is Bowles' way of rationalizing his own decision of settling in the international zone of Tangier with only sporadic excursions into the deep Sahara instead of wholeheartedly embracing the desert lifestyle. Life among the Tanjavis affords him the best of both worlds: Bowles has access to many of the advantages of Western civilization as well as the benefit of maintaining some distance between himself and the source of those advantages.

Bowles' second novel approaches the Maghreb from an alternate perspective. Whereas *The Sheltering Sky* follows three Americans journeying unprepared into the depths of the northern Sahara, *Let it Come Down* reveals the excesses of expatriate life in Tangier's international zone. And, like the previous novel, the inspiration for it springs from Bowles own experiences. According to Stewart, Bowles wrote what would become chapter eight, the sexual encounter between Dyar and Hadija, in a fit of nostalgia for Tangier and crafted the rest of the novel around that:

We were sailing past Tangier [...] and I suddenly felt a terrible longing to be in Tangier, but I had to sail past it. So I started right in writing, *bang!* I decided to write about the very part of the land that I was going by at that second—the nearest part—and it was the beach, the grotto, the cave . . . It was one of my favorite places there, this cave. So I started writing *Let It Come Down* by writing that scene when they're standing at the top of the steps [...] That night I guess I

wrote the whole thing, the whole chapter [...] Then I began at the beginning, and I used much of the trip for planning the book. (87)

The text required more planning than any other novel Bowles wrote, and he labored over the characters' "alliances" and motivations, using "as models actual residents of Tangier" (*Let It Come Down*, preface 9). The idea for the crime caper at the heart of the novel is a retelling of a story he heard second-hand involving "the son of a famous English writer." In the novel's preface, written in 1980, Bowles writes, "The theft of the money as it actually occurred was so improbable that I had to modify it to give it credibility" (9).

Bowles asserts that a relatively minor character, Richard Holland, who is introduced at the Beidaouis' party midway through the novel and only hangs around for a dozen or so pages, is based on himself. Holland and his wife are described as New York natives who feel a closer connection to Tangier than to the United States. As a character, Holland's purpose seems to be merely to provide local color for the party and to scandalize the other guests by announcing the death of religion: "I'm sorry, but in most parts of the world today, professing a religion is purely a matter of politics, and has practically nothing to do with faith" (128). Indeed, after his brief conversation with Daisy and Dyar, he disappears into the background and drops out of the narrative altogether. Mitzi Berger Hamovitch, however, insists the claim that Holland is modeled on Bowles is misleading, arguing instead that Dyar is Bowles' double in the novel. He writes, "Through a fragmented double—his protagonist, Dyar, who enacts his hidden rage, aggression, and covert lust, and Dyar's companion, Thami, who is made to bear the brunt of these feelings—Bowles exorcises his demons for a time" (442). Hamovitch's argument is based on similarities between Bowles and Dyar's backgrounds which could result in antisocial behavior. Hamovitch discusses at length Bowles' memories of physical and mental abuse at his father's hands as well as a specific incident where his mother became unrecognizable to him during the bedtime reading of a Poe story. Similarly, Dyar has overbearing parents who send him letters in Tangier belittling his new home and occupation working at the travel agency for Jack Wilcox. For Hamovitch, Bowles uses Dyar's theft of the money as well as Thami's murder in order to experience the illicit acts himself, much as Bowles killed off Port, his double in *The Sheltering Sky*, in order to experience death first-hand.

At times, Hamovitch's argument feels like a bit of a stretch, but at its core, it makes sense. Dyar is the character in the novel who strives to exchange one identity for another, much

as Port does in the earlier book; however, in Dyar's case, the identity he pursues is that of Tangerino, a label referring to the European inhabitants of the city. Unlike Port, who attempts to shrug off his American identity completely in exchange for that of a traveler, someone not specifically associated with any one nation or geographic location, Dyar seeks to assume an expatriate identity, one which allows his native nationality to remain intact but become secondary to the newer hybridized one. Port's identity swap is essentially national and geopolitical; Dyar's is personal. He doesn't relinquish his American identity so much as lay another overtop of it. With this change of approach, Bowles suggests that Port's attempt is misguided and an impossibility.

Bowles establishes early on that Dyar is the quintessential American, and the other expatriates, the established ones, the Tangerinos, treat him as such. Daisy, the Marquesa de Valverde, becomes absolutely effluent in anticipation of their first meeting, echoing Henry Luce's call for an American Century: "The Americans are the nation of the future [...] Here's to 'em. God bless their gadgets, great and small. God bless Frigidaire, Tampax and Coca-Cola. Yes, even Coca-Cola, darling" (26). She has a special dining routine she's devised especially for American guests and she employs it for Dyar. Even though she has "a Swiss butler and an Italian footman," Daisy chooses to "let old Ali serve at table because he owned a magnificent Moorish costume; although he was not very competent she thought his appearance impressed [Americans] more than the superior service the two Europeans could provide" (26). Even the local Arabs have specific reactions to his nationality. In the opening paragraphs of the novel, Dyar steps off the ferry and is immediately assaulted by Moroccan cab drivers who have no trouble discerning his citizenship: "It was as if he had held up his American passport for them to see" (17). During his first encounter with Thami, the Moroccan asks him if he's British and upon discovering that no, he is American, looks him over nervously: "Appraisingly Thami looked at him and asked if he were from a boat: he was a little afraid the American was going to ask to be directed to a bordel" (45). However, Thami quickly becomes fascinated with Dyar, who, despite fulfilling the role of the average American in the novel, manages to avoid behaving like one toward Thami. However, later in the novel, when Dyar insists on hiring a taxi, which Thami considers a waste of money, Thami thinks, "At last the American was behaving like an American" (196).

Despite his desire to join the expatriate community, Dyar refuses to suppress his Americanness. When Thami mentions that it must be wonderful to be American, Dyar agrees “never having given much thought to what it would be like not to be American. It seemed somehow the natural thing to be” (46). He also likes “the idea of being able to see Europe across the way while knowing he was in Africa” (96). The duality of Tangier’s location pleases him; he enjoys knowing that he has one foot in each. Despite telling Thami during their conversation over White Horse scotch that he prefers Tangier to the United States, he continually finds fault in Moroccan culture when he compares it to his own. He tells himself that he will never understand the locals because they are all “maniacs,” and when Hadija becomes embarrassed by the antics of the naked boys, he longs to tell her that American boys would never behave so crudely (263).

If Dyar’s decision to relocate to Tangier is not based on a desire to become someone else, it is founded on a desire to be *something* else. In the preface to the novel, Bowles writes, “The hero is a nonentity, a ‘victim,’ as he describes himself, whose personality, defined solely in terms of situation, elicits sympathy only to the extent to which he is victimized” (8). In his homeland, he was a victim, and in Tangier he hopes to redefine himself by occupations, continents, and personalities, becoming an expatriate travel agent working for Jack Wilcox. As Wendy Lesser argues, “the only way that Dyar can cease to be a victim is to cease being himself” (405). He works throughout the novel to establish a new identity as someone other than who he is.

As the narrative progresses Dyar sheds more and more of the old life he left behind in the United States. His attempts to construct a new one are continually thwarted, however, and he remains a victim for much of the novel: he quickly realizes that his position with Wilcox’s company is a fraud and that Jack intends to use him to launder money, he’s competing with Eunice Goode for the attentions of Hadija, a local prostitute who is really only interested in what he can buy for her, and he’s down to his last few traveler’s checks and consequently the last of his money. All of this leaves him without any clear sense of personal identity at all. His life in Morocco finds him full of “despair and loneliness,” contemplating the end of his old life, and waiting for his new one to begin: “it was almost as though he did not exist. He had renounced all security in favor of what everyone had assured him, and what he himself suspected, was a wild goose chase. The old thing was gone beyond recall, the new thing had not yet begun” (19). He’d fled the United States over feeling empty and caged in by life and those impressions persist in Tangier.

By ridding himself of his past without having anything substantial to replace it with and serve as the foundation for his future leaves Dyar (Die-er) with less and less. By the time he commits his theft, he's practically nonexistent. Daisy foresees just such a result, predicting his doom, when she attempts to tell his fortune by reading his palm: "I've never seen such an empty hand. [...] you have an empty life. No Pattern. And nothing in you to give you any purpose. Most people can't help following some kind of design. They do it automatically because it's in their nature. It's that that saves them, pulls them up short. They can't help themselves. But you're safe from being saved" (34). Dyar declares himself an exile during his first conversation with Thami: "Jesus! [...] I'm glad to be here! [...] God knows where this is, but I'd rather be here than there!" (47). Indeed, he develops the habit of sitting alone in his hotel room and announcing to himself "Here I am" (116). His break with his past is so complete that he forgets to check for letters from home until he's been in the city for some time. He even attempts to lose himself in Tangier's slums as a way of further erasing the man he used to be: "He was trying to lose himself. Which meant, he realized, that his great problem right now was to escape from his cage, to discover the way out of the fly-trap, to strike the chord inside himself which would liberate those qualities capable of transforming him from a victim into a winner" (169). He further attempts to lose himself on the beach the day of the theft: "It was a long time since he had lain naked in the sun. He remembered that if you stayed long enough the rays drew every thought out of your head. That was what he wanted, to be baked dry and hard . . ." (182). By the time he successfully steals the money from Wilcox, Dyar is empty as Daisy predicted he would become.

The theft itself initiates the process that will eventually lead to the creation of a new sense of identity for Dyar. "I wanted to do this," he thinks to himself during the escape to the Spanish controlled portion of the country.

It had been his choice. He was responsible for the fact that at this moment he was where he was and could not be elsewhere. There was even a savage pleasure to be had in reflecting that he could do nothing else but go on and see what would happen, and that this impossibility of finding any other solution was a direct result of his own decision. He sniffed the wet air, and said to himself that at last he was living, that whatever the reason for his doubt a moment ago, the spasm which had shaken him had been only an instant's return of his old state of mind, when he had been anonymous, a victim. (203)

However, his new-found self-assurance doesn't remain unchallenged. His isolated existence at Thami's family cabin is continuously disrupted by the return of his previous mental state, what he refers to as "the old fear of not being sure he was really there" (253). Throughout the novel, Dyar associates the quest for a new identity with the sensation of feeling alive. During Daisy's palm reading session, she asks him what he wants out of life. He replies that he only wants to feel alive. Later, on the night he flees Tangier, Daisy revisits the issue, telling him, "You said those very words. And of course, you know, you're so right. Because you're *not* really alive, in some strange way. You're dead" (221). These doubts haunt him to such an extent that he has difficulty establishing whether he is indeed alive. During one of the majoun induced reveries at the cabin, he thinks, "living meant first of all knowing one was alive, and life without that certainty was equal to no life at all. Which was surely why he kept asking himself: am I really here? It was only natural to want reassurance, to need it desperately. The touchstone of any life was to be able at all times to answer unhesitatingly: 'Yes.' There must never be an iota of doubt" (255).

It's not until he hammers the nail into the sleeping Thami's ear, that Dyar completes his self-discovery, affirms his existence, and establishes the long sought after new identity. The unwarranted violent act completes the severance from his old life and ensures that there is no chance of returning to it. He tells himself: "I must remember that I exist [...] I must remember that I am alive" (284). Daisy's reaction to the Moroccan's murder verifies Dyar's existence and solidifies his identity. He knows now who he is, as does Daisy, who has until this moment seen him as "unreal" (221). Dyar knows that he has "A place in the world, a definite status, a precise relationship with the rest of men. Even if it had to be one of open hostility, it was his, created by him" (292).

When Bowles published *The Spider's House* in 1955, he had been living in Morocco almost a decade. Politically, however, it was not the same country in 1955 as it was in 1947. Bloody riots and anti-colonial violence had been escalating all over the country since the early fifties and would eventually culminate in Morocco achieving its independence from both France and Spain in the year following the book's release.

Bowles himself was torn on the issue of independence. In a 1981 preface to *The Spider's House*, he writes,

For more than two decades I had been waiting to see the end of French rule in Morocco. Ingenuously I had imagined that after Independence the old manner of life would be resumed and the country would return to being more or less what it had been before the French presence. The detestation on the part of the populace of all that was European seemed to guarantee such a result. What I failed to understand was that if Morocco was still a largely medieval land, it was because the French themselves, and not the Moroccans, wanted it that way. (x)

Bowles was disturbed to realize that much of what he cherished about the country existed as a *result* of the French occupation and not *despite* it. Everything he saw as charmingly “backward” and authentic about Moroccan culture was due to a primitiveness forced upon the people by the colonizers (Evans 45). He expected the Arabs to regress back to the foundations of their cultural traditions, in essence, to become even more primitive and exotic. Instead, Moroccans fought for progress and rioted for modernization. The revolutionary movement’s goal was more than mere independence; they wanted to be allowed to join the rest of the world technologically and culturally. In effect, they wanted to grow up. Speaking in an interview with Harvey Breit, conducted around the time of the first anti-French violence, Bowles predicts calamity if the rest of the world allows this modernization to happen: “I don’t think we’re likely to get to know the Moslems very well, and I suspect that if we should we’d find them less sympathetic than we do at present [...] Their culture is essentially barbarous, their mentality that of a purely predatory people. It seems to me that their political aspirations, while emotionally understandable, are absurd, and any realization of them will have a disastrous effect on the rest of the world” (4). The revolutionary movement and its eventual success inspires him to reminisce often of Tangier’s past, the “doll’s metropolis” with its “enforced status quo,” when “no one yet thought of not respecting the European, whose presence was considered an asset to the community” (WS 129).

Indeed, it was this ambivalence about the independence movement that inspired the composition of *The Spider’s House* in the summer of 1954. His sympathy for the “terrorists”’ endeavor to end France’s oppressive occupation mixed with his “fear that the country would cease to be habitable for foreigners” produced a novel that was much more political than the one he had originally planned to write (WS 322). Initially, *The Spider’s House* was intended to be a love letter to the city he considered to be the most “pure” in the country, Fez. As Stewart, Green,

and others carefully document, Fez was Bowles' favorite city. He saw it as the most charming and most authentic of all Morocco's major cities. However, as the violence tore the city apart, Bowles found that what was planned as a tribute to Morocco's traditions became, instead, a eulogy for their passing. "It's true that it's a sort of *apologia*," he says of the novel in 1971, "Not for anything that one can ever do again. It's simply an evocation of that which has been lost. We'll never have it again. It's finished, it's smashed, it's broken. We've killed God and that's the end of it. There won't ever be that again" (Evans 55).

Into this cauldron of political unrest, Bowles inserts John Stenham, another one of his surrogates. Stenham represents the matured Bowles, the Bowles with the expatriate identity who considers himself somewhat of an authority on "native psychology." He has become firmly entrenched among the international expatriate community in Tangier, and his sense of national identity has evolved to reflect his new place in the world, growing from an American abroad into a Tangerino at home in the city's international zone. Bowles no longer considers his world in terms of travelers and tourists, but as residents and tourists, with Moroccans exempt from consideration. Exempt that is until their daily riots and the momentum of the Moroccan revolutionary movement become impossible to ignore. "Everyone is in a foul temper," Bowles writes in a 1954 letter to Oliver Evans, "people are throwing stones at my house and screaming, Nazarene!" (Green 138).

What soon becomes apparent in *The Spider's House*, is that, in addition to concern about being asked to leave, Bowles worries that even if he's allowed to remain, in a liberated Morocco his expatriate identity would become unsustainable. Throughout the novel, Stenham is confronted again and again with the reality that the Moroccans group all Westerners together. For all of his protestations that Americans are not French, the reality is that Moroccans don't care. "America has not helped us" is a phrase that he hears repeated often: "That was only the first sentence of a long and fearful indictment whose final import was, to him at least, terrifying" (155). Amar, the Muslim boy he "adopts" for a time, tries to explain it to him like this, "You came with the French and you live with the French. What difference does it make whether you like them or not? If they weren't here you couldn't be here" (260). Complicating things even further is Stenham's habit of considering himself a resident of Tangier and not an American at all. And although he realizes that he'll never be Moroccan, he has lived in the country long enough to identify more with it than to his homeland. This is the cost of expatriation; he is a

product of two worlds, a true transnational. Midway through the novel he has a conversation with a young Moroccan who suggests that he place himself under the protection of the French. Stenham becomes angry and insists that he's not French and questions why Christians are being targeted. He is told that the resistance is "directed above all against the French imperialists. Likewise it is against all those who assist the French [...] the arms used against the Moroccan people were largely supplied by your government" (227). Stenham continuously grows frustrated that he is no longer able to avoid the consequences of the United States' imperialism and is confronted with growing American interference in Morocco. His irritation mirrors Bowles' irritation and this is made clear in several examples of dialogue between Moulay Ali and Amar detailing the extent of the United States' support, both financial and political, for the French occupation of Morocco: "France would like to leave Morocco, but America insists on her staying, because of the bases. Without America there would be no France" (385).

Even as Stenham believes that his native citizenship should give him some immunity from the violence, so too he believes that his status as an expatriate should provide him some protection as well. He would like for the Moroccans to realize that he is not a foreign occupier; he is a resident. Like Bowles, as a good expatriate Stenham refuses to choose sides in the conflict: "He did not want the French to keep Morocco, nor did he want to see the Nationalists take it" (342). He has faced up to the brutal realities of colonial oppression and has witnessed scenes of torture and oppression first-hand. He cannot in good conscience support the French, but he cannot support the opposition either. Arab violence disturbs him just as thoroughly: "Sometimes the senselessness of their violence paralyzed him" (199). Additionally, and, perhaps for Stenham, most importantly, he could not support the nationalists because they threatened to modernize the country, which would forever destroy what he loved about it. Indeed, the idea of a Westernized Morocco bothers him far more than the violence that accompanies its creation: "If, for instance, he deplored the violence that resulted in the daily bombings and shootings in the streets of Casablanca, it obviously was not because he felt pity for the victims, who, however pathetic, were still anonymous, but because he knew that each sanguinary incident, by awakening the political consciousness of the survivors, brought the moribund culture nearer to its end" (218). This is particularly true with regard to Fez, the city he loves: the locals "wanted to blast the walls that closed it in, and run wide avenues out through the olive groves that surrounded it, and along the avenues they wanted to run bus lines and build huge apartment

houses. Fortunately the French, having declared the entire city a *monument historique*, had made their aims temporarily unattainable” (168). Stenham’s indecisiveness is indicative of Bowles vacillation. He sympathized with the Moroccan revolutionaries and understood their position, but he also feared their ultimate victory knowing that their success would irrevocably change the Morocco he called home.

He prides himself on how well-versed he is in Moroccan culture and in the people’s particular brand of Islam. He tells Lee Burroughs⁹ in one of their many discussions concerning the native outlook on life to think of Moroccan culture as

a culture of ‘and then’ rather than one of ‘because’ [...] in their minds one thing doesn’t come from another thing. Nothing is a result of anything. Everything merely *is*, and no questions asked. Even the language they speak is constructed around that. Each fact is separate, and one never depends on the other.

Everything’s explained by the constant intervention of Allah. And whatever happens had to happen, and was decreed at the beginning of time, and there’s no way even of imagining how anything could have been different from what it is.

(187)

Additionally, he has developed an entire philosophy surrounding the Arabs and their view of the world. This philosophy informs his every interaction:

They did what they did; he found it all touching and wholly ridiculous. The only ones he judged, and therefore hated, were those who showed an inclination to ally themselves with the course of Western thought. Those renegades who prated of education and progress, who had forsaken the concept of a static world to embrace that of a dynamic one—he would gladly have seen them all quietly executed, so that the power of Islam might continue without danger of interruption. (216)

Whenever he encounters a Moroccan that doesn’t conform to his philosophy, he becomes uncomfortable and does his best to steer the situation back into more familiar territory. When a young man approaches him speaking French, Stenham quickly becomes annoyed and insists that he prefers it when Moroccans use their own language. Aside from making him more

⁹ The name Lee Burroughs is an interesting choice for Bowles. He’d met William S. Burroughs a few months before beginning work on *The Spider’s House*, and during their first meeting they’d discussed Burroughs’ first novel, *Junky*, which he’d published the previous year under the pseudonym William Lee.

comfortable with the dynamics of the situation, this serves two purposes: it demonstrates that he can communicate without using French as an intermediary, and it shows that he is more than simply a tourist.

Much of *The Spider's House* involves Stenham simultaneously attempting to seduce Burroughs and escort her around the parts of Morocco he feels she should see before they're changed irrevocably by the revolution. Indeed, her expressed purpose for visiting the country is to experience it before it's gone: "I'd better come now or I'd miss it altogether" (177). This sets up the essential difference between the two Americans. Stenham is the experienced expatriate, and Burroughs is the neophyte tourist. She wants to *see* Morocco, and he has been *living* in Morocco for years. She is continually amazed to be among such "primitive" people, as she refers to them, while New Yorkers "are standing in line at the information booth in Grand Central Station asking about trains to New Haven" (185). He, on the other hand, considers himself somewhat of an expert on Moroccans, saying, "I've watched them for years. I know what they're like" (251). She goes through much of the novel unconcerned by the threat of violence implicit in the conflict between the French and the Nationals unless it impedes her travel in some way. Stenham, however, follows the confrontations closely for fear that some part of Moroccan traditional culture might be lost without his noticing.

If the primary role of Burroughs in the novel is one of antagonist and foil for Stenham, she fulfills this duty by providing a counterpoint to challenge his notions of the area and the people. Bowles employs the opposing views of these characters to give voice to his indecisiveness. He, like Burroughs, empathizes with the oppressed native population, but also, like Stenham, mourns the passing of an era which meant so much to him. Whenever Stenham makes an observation concerning the present state of Arab affairs, Burroughs contradicts him providing both the novice tourist opinion and that of the average American. However, Burroughs' views often prove to be rather astute and compassionate when compared to Stenham's. During one of his standard lectures praising Morocco's traditional culture and the poverty inherent in the traditional system, Burroughs criticizes him heavily, hitting him where it hurts: "I think that's the point of view of an outsider, a tourist who puts picturesqueness above everything else" (188). She argues that the Arabs may not feel so kindly toward the traditional system, and that, if he were one of them, Stenham would "welcome the hospitals and electric lights and buses" (188). Against the irrefutable logic of her argument, his only response is to

quietly dismiss her as naive: “This was certainly the remark of a tourist, and an ignorant tourist, too” (188). This argument persists off and on through much of the book, and, quite often, Burroughs comes out on top: “Will you please tell me what makes you think those helpless serfs are *happy*? Or haven’t you ever given it a thought? [...] They’re slaves, living in ignorance and superstition and sickness and filth, and you can sit there and calmly tell me they’re happy?” (238). The shape of the running disagreement conforms to the outlines of Stenham’s philosophy of native psychology. He prefers that natives remain unchanged and undeveloped and supports any organization, movement, or force that promises to keep them that way. Burroughs, however, encountering Morocco already well along the road to modernization, manages to avoid experiencing the country through a lens of nostalgia. All she knows is what’s repeated among tourists and expatriates in the streets, and what she hears are examples of torture and violent suppression of the native population by the French. “I just hope the Arabs raise holy hell with them, and make them wish they’d never set foot here,” she tells Stenham, “Why if I spoke the language I’d be down there day and night working for independence” (308). However, she talks tough only until the violence gets too close.

By the end of the novel both Stenham and Burroughs have softened in their positions, and their coming together further signals the division within Bowles’ own views. Burroughs eventually succumbs to the persistence of his sexual advances, while simultaneously revising her opinion of Moroccans. She gives in on both accounts; when they flee Fez to escape the native violence, Burroughs tells him, “They can come and murder me in my bed, but at least it’ll be a *bed*, and not a pile of rocks” (352). Also, by this time she’s realized that expatriate life is not for her. The violence and uncertainty of living in a colonized country have her fantasizing about the moment when she’s safe back in Europe:

She was in the train with the new issue of *Time* and a copy of the *Paris Herald* on her lap; she was on the Algeciras ferry watching the gray, lumpy mountains of the African coast slowly fade into the distance; she was eating shrimps under an awning in a waterfront café, being brushed against by newsboys passing among the tables; she was sitting with the Stuarts at Horcher’s in Madrid with the treasure of her Moroccan trip stored away in her memory, a treasure which would seem richer for being kept hidden, with only a piquant detail divulged here and there—just enough to suggest the solid mass beneath the surface. (319)

Burroughs demonstrates to both Stenham and the reader that she really is just a tourist hoping to see the exotic before it fades. All of her protestations and pronouncements concerning the Arab cause fall to pieces when she's forced to examine the reality of revolutionary violence too closely. For his part, Stenham realizes that his tendency to think of the Arabs as one monolithic force of nature ("they were something almost as basic as the sun or the wind") instead of as individuals is flawed (335). Surprisingly, it's the boy Amar who influences this reevaluation of his philosophy:

The fact that such a person as Amar could be produced by this society rather upset Stenham's calculations. For Stenham, the exception invalidated the rule instead of proving it: if there were one Amar, there could be others. Then the Moroccans were not the known quantity he had thought they were, inexorably conditioned by the pressure of their own rigid society; his entire construction was false in consequence, because it was too simple and did not make allowances for individual variations. But in that case the Moroccans were much like anyone else, and very little of value would be lost in the destruction of their present culture, because its design would be worth less than the sum of the individuals who composed it—the same as any Western country. (336)

This realization, which happens during the Aïd el Kebir, is quickly dismissed as a product of the festival environment, but by the end of the novel, Stenham comes to admit that his entire philosophy needs to be modified to include an independent and developed Morocco.

Each of his three North African novels reflects a stage in the development of Bowles' liberated national identity from American in flight from his native culture to Tangerino, at home in Morocco, but not quite Moroccan. The books also demonstrate how his quest for freedom from American imperialism becomes manifested in his work. *The Sheltering Sky* portrays a directionless character desperately searching for independence from the Americanness that's interfered with what he wants from life. The second novel, *Let It Come Down*, depicts a variation on the search in the first novel. Whereas Port's quest led him to seek out solitude and emptiness, in this work Bowles' alter ego sticks close to civilization and looks for a place among the expatriate community of Tangier. Stenham is the advanced version of the surrogate character, showing the author coming to terms with the idea of a modernized Morocco, one that deviates from the one he has fallen in love with and chosen as his adoptive home.

CHAPTER THREE

“A FRONTIER BETWEEN DREAM AND REALITY”: TRANSFORMATIVE SEX AND REVOLUTION IN WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS’ “INTERZONE”

Tanger is the prognostic pulse of the world, like a dream extending from past into the future, a frontier between dream and reality—the “reality” of both called into question.

--William S. Burroughs, letter to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, November 1955

In late February 1957, after a storm-plagued two week sea voyage, Jack Kerouac knocked on William Burroughs’ door in the European Quarter of Tangier and barely recognized his old friend. The last time the two men had seen each other was several years earlier in New Orleans, a meeting Kerouac recounts in detail in *On the Road*. The man standing before him in Morocco had undergone a physical transformation that distanced him in almost every way from the man Kerouac had known in the U.S. Tangier had been good to Burroughs, and Kerouac was “amazed to see him strong and healthy, no longer skinny from drugs, all tanned and muscular and vigorous” (Kerouac, *Desolation Angels* 341). Not only had Burroughs successfully completed treatment for his heroin addiction the previous summer, but he had begun a daily health and fitness regimen that included rowing in the bay soon after sunrise and taking modest meals in one of the inexpensive French restaurants in the neighborhood. Afternoons, he devoted to working on sections of his Tangier novel, tentatively called *Interzone*, but soon to be renamed *Naked Lunch*. And, as Kerouac discovered, it wasn’t just his personal appearance that had changed, but his entire approach to life.

More than anything else, Burroughs’ transformation was a result of his sojourn in Tangier. He found life in the International Zone so much to his liking and so inspirational that its presence reverberated throughout all of his work for the remainder of his life. Burroughs arrival in Tangier coincided with the height of Morocco’s struggle for independence and this, in coordination with the personal liberties offered by the International status of Tangier, attracted him greatly. The transformative potential of both of these particulars—political revolution and

individual freedom—directly inspired the majority of *Naked Lunch* and strongly impacted his later work, specifically the anti-colonial impulses of his final trilogy of novels: *Cities of the Red Night*, *The Place of Dead Roads*, and *The Western Lands*. While *Naked Lunch* is not overtly anti-colonial in the way the later novels are, it does have moments of political and narrative disruption that closely correspond to the riots, violence, socio-political uncertainty rising in the streets outside his window.

Burroughs had been globe-trotting for almost a decade, ever since he left East Texas for Mexico on the advice of his lawyer to escape a drug charge. After residing for a time in Mexico City and exploring the South American jungle in search of yagé, Burroughs arrived in Tangier in January 1954. He'd hoped to discover a "writer's colony" with whom he could develop a sense of camaraderie and companionship to compensate for the loneliness he experienced following the notorious accidental shooting death of his wife, Joan, two years earlier, the failure of his relationship with Lewis Marker, with whom he'd traveled to Ecuador and for whom he'd written *Queer*, and Allen Ginsberg's recent and humiliating rejection of him as a lover (Harris, *Letters* 195). Instead, Burroughs encountered a gossipy, cliquy expatriate community of Tangerinos and found the experience distasteful. As an alternative, he turned to young hustlers and refocused his energies on writing and feeding his addictions. The ready availability of both boys and junk in Tangier facilitated a long hibernation in his room. Kerouac reports in *Desolation Angels*: "I learn later he's spent a whole year in the little town sitting in his room on huge overdoses of morfina and other drugs staring at the tip of his shoe too scared to take one shuddering bath in eight months" (343). But things did improve and by the time Burroughs completed the apomorphine cure with Dr. Dent in London in the summer of 1956, he had become enthralled by the city he'd previously walked through like a somnambulist. He found that his whole approach to Tangier's residents had changed; Tangier itself became his dream city. In language that echoes Paul Bowles' claim that Tangier called to him in a dream, Burroughs wrote to Ginsberg in October 1956: "Tanger is my dream town. I did have a dream ten years ago of coming into a harbor and knowing that this was the place where I desired to be . . . Just the other day, rowing around in the harbor I recognized it as my dream bay" (Harris 330). Additionally, he had completed much of the novel that was to become *Naked Lunch*.

Appropriately, the sea change in Burroughs' life is echoed in his writing. Indeed, this literary metamorphosis can be charted in his letters to Ginsberg and by examining the dramatic

turn his work takes as it veers away from the linear narrative styles of his early novels—*Junky*, the hardboiled crime novel; *Queer*, the lurid confessional; *The Yagé Letters*, his epistolary novel—to the fractured, experimental routines¹⁰ of *Naked Lunch*. His whole philosophy of composition had evolved, been retooled to match his new theories of existence; as he told Kerouac during that 1957 visit: “I’m shitting out my educated Midwest background for once and for all. It’s a matter of catharsis where I say the most horrible thing I can think of—Realize that, the most *horrible* dirty slimy awful niggardliest posture possible—By the time I finish this book I’ll be as pure as an angel, my dear” (*Desolation Angels* 347). As this passage implies, Burroughs used the composition of the *Naked Lunch* manuscript as an occasion to explore every fantasy, hallucination, and desire he’d ever harbored, no matter how transgressive, scatological or extreme. Indeed, many of these visions came directly from his first-hand encounters with the International Zone itself. *Interzone*, a 1989 collection of much of the Moroccan material excised from *Naked Lunch* thirty years earlier, states:

I will simply transcribe Lee’s impressions of Interzone. The fragmentary quality of the work is inherent in the method and will resolve itself so far as necessary. That is, I include the author, Lee, in the novel, and by so doing separate myself from him so that he becomes another character, central to be sure, occupying a special position, but not myself at all. This could go on in an endless serial arrangement, but I would always be the observer and not the participant by the very act of writing about a figure who represents myself. (82)

Burroughs wants to be clear; as he wrote to Ginsberg, it was the international zone itself that facilitated this catharsis: “I will simply transcribe Lee’s impressions . . . [...] Tanger novel will be Lee’s impressions of Tanger”¹¹ (Harris 251).

Even while the *Naked Lunch* was being written, Burroughs himself emphasized the connection between his stylistically fragmented, voluminous output and his time in Tangier. “I used to complain that I lacked material to write about,” Burroughs writes Ginsberg in 1955,

¹⁰ In a December 13, 1954 letter to Ginsberg, Burroughs described routines like this: “Routines are completely spontaneous and proceed from whatever fragmentary knowledge you have. In fact a routine is by nature fragmentary, inaccurate. There is no such thing as an exhaustive routine, nor does the scholarly-type mind run to routines” (Harris 244).

¹¹ The origin of this passage is a January 6, 1955 letter from Tangier, which in itself is a revelation. Burroughs’ heading gives the date and location, followed by a set of instructions: “Start anyplace you want. Start in the middle and read your way out. In short, start anywhere” (Harris 251).

“Mother of God! Now I’m swamped with material. I could write 50 pages on that walk” (Harris 295). A year later he informs Ginsberg, “What I am writing now supersedes, in fact makes obsolete, anything I have written hitherto. [...] I am really writing *Interzone* now, not writing about it . . .” (Harris 339). And in yet another letter, he writes,

I have entered a period of change more drastic than adolescence or early childhood. I live in a constant state of routine. I am getting so far out one day I won’t come back at all. I can’t take time to go into all my mystic experiences which I have whenever I walk out the door. There is something special about Tangier. It is the only place when I am there I don’t want to be any place else. No stasis horrors here. And the beauty of this town that consists in changing combinations. (Harris 329)

James Grauerholz, Burroughs’ secretary and editor from the mid-seventies until the author’s death in 1997, also sees Burroughs’ time in Tangier as pivotal to his development as a writer, “In these crucial years, 1954-57, Burroughs had been transformed into a writer” (*Interzone* xiii). Allen Hibbard takes this a step further with the bold declaration that “There would be no *Naked Lunch*, at least not in the form we know it, without Burroughs’ sojourn in Tangier from 1954-1958” (56). Hugh Harter makes a similar assertion, claiming, “It was Tangier, primarily, that was the catalyst and the focal point of the writings that were to introduce a new literary style and consciousness” (113).

A survey of *Burroughs Live*, Burroughs’ collected interviews spanning the years between the publication of *Naked Lunch* and his death forty years later, reveals that interviewers made little of his life in Tangier beyond classifying it as just another curious fact in an already scandalous biography. Burroughs was far more likely to be asked his opinion about United States politics than his views on Moroccan politics. This proved true even in the 1960s, when he still spent much of his time in Tangier. Critics, such as Mary McCarthy and Robin Lydenberg, have long argued that Burroughs’ work frames a reaction against the American political climate of the time: the cold war, suburbanization, McCarthyism, etc. While this is indeed a component of his oeuvre, its primacy has tended to overshadow the much more significant influence of Tangier and the international zone on Burroughs’ work, beginning with *Naked Lunch*, his most famous and influential work. Indeed, even Burroughs’ biographers have typically underemphasized the influence of the city on Burroughs’ creative output. Both Barry Miles and Ted Morgan separate

context from composition and content here. It is only recently, through the work of Brian Edwards, Michael Walonen, Greg Mullins, and a few others, that the critical discourse on Burroughs' work has begun to acknowledge Tangier's impact on his writing.

But what was it about Tangier that Burroughs found so transformative? As he claimed repeatedly in his letters home¹² and additionally what is manifested in the pages of his manuscript was that Tangier was a "town that consists in changing combinations" (Harris 329). It "seems to exist on several dimensions. You are always finding streets, squares, parks you never saw before" (*Interzone* 58). By its very nature Tangier was a town in motion. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari argue in *A Thousand Plateaus* that the phenomenon of deterritorialization removes boundaries and decontextualizes an individual's relationship to his or her environment. This concept is reified by the very nature of Tangier's international zone. The Zone fell under the jurisdiction of several countries, and the regulations governing it could vary wildly from one area to the next creating a sort of liminal area. The International Zone was a lawless place that existed outside of conventional boundaries and national borders. Its residents were truly transnational in that they remained citizens of their own country living in this nebulous collective space. Documents were required to move between the French and Spanish sections. David Woolman, writing in his exhaustive history of the city under the anagram "Lawdom Vaidon," says that during the "Boom Years," when Burroughs first arrived in Tangier, the scene changed drastically from one street to the next (297). On one corner would be a café that catered primarily to the expatriate Tangerino crowd, on the next may be Tanjawi corner boys or fishmarket vendors hawking merchandise covered in flies or roaches, and on a third would be Barbara Hutton's palatial mansion. Tangerinos too were a varied and capricious bunch. Many were in Tangier because they were on the run or in hiding from somewhere else. Smuggling was rampant and anything could be purchased, overlooked, or forgiven for a price. Fortunes could be made or lost in an afternoon, as Paul Bowles demonstrates in *Let It Come Down*. In its prime, Tangier looked more like Hollywood's version of Morocco than Casablanca ever did.

In addition to the vagaries of excesses exhibited by the International Zone's expatriate class, the exploits of which are detailed at length in Michelle Green's book on Bowles and

¹² Burroughs' letters to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac must be read alongside *Naked Lunch*. This is true for two reasons. First, a significant portion of the published text of the novel is either derived or directly lifted from the letters to Ginsberg. Second, the material published under the title, *Naked Lunch*, has continuously evolved in the fifty odd years it has been in print. There are substantial differences between the 1959 Olympia Press edition, the 1962 Grove Press edition, and the 2001 "Restored Text" version edited by Grauerholz and Miles.

Morocco, *The Dream at the End of the World*, Tangier also boasted a volatile political climate that peaked during Burroughs' time there that attracted him greatly. When he arrived in 1954, Morocco was in the midst of a struggle for independence that resulted, not only in Morocco's liberation in 1956, but, more importantly for Burroughs and the other Tangerinos, an end to the International Zone's special status. In August of 1954 the French, hoping to defuse growing anti-colonial sentiment, "kidnapped" Sultan Mohamed V, dragging the sultan from the palace "clad only in his pajamas," and exiling him along with his family to Madagascar (264). Moroccan nationalists subsequently responded with bombs and terrorism, attacking foreign residents and tourists throughout the country. There was an accompanying wave of Arabs running amok through Tangier, slashing their way through midday crowds. By autumn of the following year demonstrations and riots calling for the return of Mohamed V and the ouster of the French had become a regular occurrence. France caved, and in November 1955 Sultan Mohamed V returned to the country, and Morocco officially gained its independence March 2, 1956. On October 29, 1956 Tangier's international zone was formally reabsorbed into the greater city.

When Burroughs first arrived in 1954, he was disappointed that the reality of the International Zone didn't completely match the portrait painted by Bowles in *The Sheltering Sky* and *Let It Come Down*, which Burroughs had read and enjoyed. Arabs in particular disappointed him. In one of the first letters written after his arrival, he complains, "What's all this old Moslem culture shit? One thing I have learned. I know what Arabs do all day and all night. They sit around smoking cut weed and playing some silly card game. And don't ever fall for this inscrutable oriental shit like Bowles puts down (that shameless faker). They are just a gabby, gossipy simple-minded, lazy crew of citizens" (Harris 195). Indeed, it is easy to argue, as critics have, that Burroughs exhibits typical imperialist tendencies, much as critics have argued about Bowles. Kurt Hemmer writes that Burroughs failed in his anti-imperialist obligations and actively engaged in decidedly pro-imperialist discourse. Greg Mullins, interrogating the relationship between imperialism and Burroughs' role as a sexual tourist in *Colonial Affairs*, argues that, as a result of his American nationality, Burroughs was able "to exist outside social boundaries" and exploit the colonial situation (69). Ted Morgan, Burroughs' biographer, states that Burroughs was drawn to Tangier primarily because the colonial environment allowed Westerners to do whatever they wished; Burroughs "felt that he could be completely himself, and disregard all social forms" (262). At times, especially during his first year, Burroughs'

behavior seems to bear this out. In his “New Yorker piece,” “International Zone,” Burroughs says that Tangier’s “special attraction” is attributable to the word “exemption”: “Exemption from interference, legal or otherwise” (*Interzone* 59). He writes of being interrupted by an Arab boy knocking on his window asking for a cigarette: “I told him to shove off, and he continued banging on the window until I picked up a cane and started out the door. I would have hit him with the cane if I caught him” (Harris 282). In another incident, he boasts of paying two Arab boys sixty cents to have sex in front of him: “we demanded semen too, no half-assed screwing” (Harris 293).¹³ However, even in examples as extreme as these, Burroughs gives indications that he is uncomfortable in his role of Western imperialist. He admits that paying to watch the boys copulate made him “feel sorta like a dirty old man” (293). In the short narrative essay “Lee and the Boys,” Burroughs writes of another encounter with a boy at his window.

Somebody rapped on the outside shutter. Lee opened the shutter and looked out. An Arab boy of fourteen or so—they always look younger than they are—was standing there, smiling in a way that could only mean one thing. He said something in Spanish that Lee did not catch. Lee shook his head and started to close the shutter. The boy, still smiling, held the shutter open. Lee gave a jerk and slammed the shutter closed. He could feel the rough wood catch and tear the boy’s hand. The boy turned without a word and walked away, his shoulders drooping, holding his hand. At the corner the small figure caught a patch of light.

I didn’t mean to hurt him, Lee thought. He wished he had given the boy some money, a smile at least. He felt crude and detestable” (*Interzone* 33).

The language here betrays a much more compassionate Burroughs, miserable and full of remorse over his sudden violence. By the end of his second year in Morocco, his assessment of the town and its Arab population had changed completely: “Tangiers is looking up” (Harris 292). He writes that Arabs “do *not* attack people for kicks or fight for kicks like Americans. Riots are the accumulated, just resentment of a people subjected to outrageous brutalities by the French cops used to strew blood and teeth over a city block in the Southern Zone” (Harris 349). He even argues that “it is sheer provincialism to be afraid of them as if they was something special, sinister and Eastern and un-American” (Harris 345). The specific wording of this accusation—that fear of Arabs is akin to an irrational fear of the strange and unfamiliar—is not something the

¹³ This incident is recycled in the “Hospital” section of *Naked Lunch*.

Burroughs of a year previous would have written. Andrew Hussey notes that “during his years in Tangier, Burroughs slowly shed the prejudices he had brought with him to the city” (76). The most significant of these, Hussey notes, is the idea that Tangier represents an orientalist utopia. Indeed, he’d become much more interested in native Moroccan culture. The Arabic word *Insh’allah*¹⁴ began to appear in his writing, specifically in *Naked Lunch*, where Benway uses the word to thank God that he’s not living in a matriarchy. But more than this, Burroughs tells Ginsberg in early 1957 that he’s made a “connection” to God through Islam and that it is all revealed in the text of *Naked Lunch*:

My religious conversion now complete. I am neither a Moslem nor a Christian, but I owe a great debt to Islam and could never have made my connection with God ANYWHERE EXCEPT HERE. And I realize how much of Islam I have absorbed by osmosis [...] I have never even glimpsed peace of mind before I learn the real meaning of “It is As Allah Wills.” Relax, you make it or you don’t, and since realizing that, whatever I want comes to me. If I want a boy, he knocks on my door, etc. I can’t go into all this, and [it’s] all in the MS. (Harris 349-50)

Burroughs’ claim to a religious epiphany about the necessity for infinite patience is made explicit in both the structure of *Naked Lunch* and in the aftermath of Lee’s climactic shootout with Hauser and O’Brien near the end of the novel. Both junkies and Arabs, according to Burroughs, have “no sense of time” and, for Arabs, this is reflected in the “drug of Islam,” hashish, and in their music (*Interzone* 58). In his “International Zone” essay, he writes that “Arab music has neither beginning nor end. It is timeless. Heard for the first time, it may appear meaningless to a Westerner, because he is listening for a time structure that isn’t there” (*Interzone* 58). Essentially, Burroughs is able to draw parallels between this quality represented in Arabic music and the novel’s innovative structure: “A novel that consists of the facts as I see and feel them. How can it have a beginning or an end? It just runs along for a while and then stops, like Arab music” (73). In his “Atrophied Preface” Burroughs reinforces this concept, telling the reader: “You were not there for *The Beginning*. You will not be there for *The End* . . . Your knowledge of what is going on can only be superficial and relative . . .” (184). The “Hauser and O’Brien” routine features Lee, returned to New York from his *Interzone* sojourn, exhibiting

¹⁴ In an October 23, 1955 letter to Ginsberg and Kerouac, Burroughs introduces this word for the first time. He mispronounces it as “Imshay Allah” but correctly translates it as “God willing.”

a distinctly Arab understanding of time. He needs time to consider his next move after the shootout and relies on his Eastern training in order to do this properly:

I sat back letting my mind work without pushing it. Push your mind too hard and it will fuck up like an overloaded switchboard, or turn on you with sabotage . . . And I had no margin for error. Americans have a special horror of giving up control, of letting things happen in their own way without interference. They would like to jump down into their stomachs and digest the food and shovel the shit out.

Your mind will answer most questions if you learn to relax and wait for the answer. Like one of those thinking machines, you feed in your question, sit back, and wait . . . (179-80)

However, because he is a Westerner, Lee can only access this capacity for waiting through a reliance on heroin, something Burroughs describes as running on “junk Time.” Lee’s junkie body dictates the passage of time for him: “Time has meaning for him only with reference to his need” (180). Indeed, in *Naked Lunch* junkies have become so adept at time modulation that time itself becomes a commodity for them. The Sailor routine spanning the “Coke Bugs” and “The Exterminator Does a Good Job” sections is a particularly striking example of this phenomenon: “I don’t want your money, Honey: I want your Time” (168).

As intrigued as he was by the international zone’s hybrid Moroccan-European culture, it was the instability caused by the political upheavals in the zone and greater Morocco that excited and inspired Burroughs more than anything else. He’d missed by a decade the “Golden Age” that Paul Bowles lamented so often, and the Moroccan bid for national independence was well underway when he first crossed into Tangier from Gibraltar. Specifically opposing himself to Bowles, he wrote Ginsberg on October 29, 1956, “I have no nostalgia for the old days in Morocco, which I never saw. Right now is for me” (Harris 337). His presence during the promise of revolution stimulated him and activated his own anti-authoritarian impulse, a desire to dismantle all manifestation of “control”—his term for any mechanism or process that interfered with or placed limitations on personal freedoms, something he saw as endemic in the United States. Accordingly, Burroughs saw a meaningful connection between Morocco’s social fragmentation and his new fragmented style of writing:

I can't explain all this. It's like the sight of someone about to flip or someone full of paranoid hate excites me. I want to see what will happen if they really wig. I want to crack them wide open and feed on the wonderful soft stuff that will ooze out. When an Arab looks at me with insane hate, I hope maybe he will come apart for me, I can see the bare bones of human process spill right out under the Moroccan blue sky . . . (Harris 338)

Since the tangerino community was so small and tight knit, everyone knew practically everyone else, and Burroughs knew a number of the Europeans injured or killed during the anti-colonial demonstrations. When a riot threatened or an act of violence occurred close to home, Burroughs excitedly wrote of it to Ginsberg. On February 17, 1956 he tells of a series of incidents that had the city on edge and that affected him personally: "A friend of mine waylaid and stabbed in the back for no reason, not even robbery. [...] The old Dutch pimp who runs the place where I used to live set upon by five Arabs and beaten to a pulp. An Argentinian queer severely beaten by a gang of youths" (Harris 307). Perhaps, the episode that impressed him the most involved someone he knew, an Arab, running amok and killing several people. In Burroughs' retelling of the incident, the man, Marnissi, feigned friendly acquaintanceship and asked to borrow money from him. Burroughs declined and in subsequent encounters, his "communications" grew "progressively more cryptic" (Harris 278). Marnissi accused Burroughs of being "an agent, a creature of the Embassy" and asked him, "Why does the American Embassy have wires in my head?" (278; Green 158). Burroughs tells Ginsberg that despite Marnissi's obvious capacity for violence, "there is something curiously sweet about him, a strange, sinister jocularly, as if we knew each other from somewhere, and his words referred to private jokes from this period of intimacy" (Harris 278). However, when Marnissi finally snapped and hacked his way through the noon-day crowds, Burroughs couldn't help but think that maybe he was after him: "If I had followed my usual routine, I would have been right where he started [...] Not to be paranoid, but I felt that in some ways this was aimed at me" (Green 158).

Episodes such as these fed his fantasies and found their way into the *Naked Lunch* manuscript in various forms. Early in the "Benway" section during the jail break at the Reconditioning Center, Burroughs imagines a scenario where an Amok¹⁵ uses a flame thrower in Grand Central Station and later, in imitation of the "sweetness" of Marnissi, has "Amoks trot

¹⁵ This is Burroughs' word. He often referred to individuals who run amok through crowds as "Amoks."

along cutting off heads, faces sweet and remote with a dreamy half smile” (32-3). In an outtake from the same section, Burroughs, through the personae of Dr. Benway,¹⁶ explores the entire phenomenon in greater detail, and it is quite easy to see Burroughs struggling to work out the Amok phenomenon for himself via his characters. Benway interviews a young doctor and attempts to clear up some misconceptions the young man may have concerning Amoks: “Why do Amoks always use knives? Why not a gun or a flame thrower? Is their predilection for knives merely a result of their general backwardness—Amoks are not a phenomenon of eighteenth-century drawing rooms, over civilized urban environments—or does it have a deeper root?” (264). Benway then wonders what “finally activates the deeply repressed killing reflex” and hypothesizes that it takes more than simple bad manners to jump start an Amok’s murderous rampage; however, as he begins to work himself up into a really good allocution explaining the precise relationship between environmental factors and anxiety that precipitate an attack, the text is abruptly cut off and the reader is forced into intimate contact with an emergent Amok: “Spilling out in ambiguous dancing and sudden electric outbursts of violence, a young man leapt to his feet—thrusting out a knife and spinning around, his knife vibrating with a sort of electric life scream . . .” (264-5). The passage ends with the following authorial revelation about Benway himself: “In fact he is an incipient Amok of the most insidious and treacherous type . . . Don’t ever press him too hard . . .” (266). What is intriguing here is that much of the work on the “Interzone Hospital” routines was done within months of the August 1, 1955 Marnissi attack. The Benway routines in particular, received a lot of work during this time, demonstrating a correlation between recent political events and Burroughs’ creative output. He was deeply affected by an Amok’s spontaneity and unpredictability and expressed this in his work. The Benway routine that begins “The lavatory has been locked for three hours solid . . . I think they are using it for an operating room . . .” was generated on or about October 23, 1955¹⁷ (51). Burroughs’ November 2, 1955 letter shows him still working on it: he describes the “mad doctor Benway” (an “incipient Amok,” as mentioned above) “operating with a can opener and tin snips, massaging patient’s heart with a vacuum cup, toilet cleaner” (Harris 303). In another routine from the “Hospital” section we see the doctor defending himself against an Amok while

¹⁶ In a letter dated October 28, 1957, Burroughs writes that “there is only one main character: Benway and Carl [...] and Lee are, of course, one person” (Harris 375).

¹⁷ In a letter to Kerouac and Ginsberg dated October 23, 1955: “Just went to the head again. Still locked. Locked for six solid hours. I think they are using it as an operating room” (Harris 293).

performing a procedure that “has absolutely no medical value,” an operation that is “a pure artistic creation” (52). Benway is elbows deep in the patient when he is interrupted by the sudden emergence of an Amok: “A young man leaps down into the operating theater and, whipping out a scalpel, advances on the patient” (52). The Amok is subdued before he can cause much harm, but Benway’s performance—something the Amok cannot comprehend—is ruined. In the routine’s conclusion, the anesthetist profits on the chaos by stealing one of the patient’s gold fillings while everyone is distracted.¹⁸

In addition to these specific episodes drawn from Burroughs’ experience of the Moroccan revolution, *Naked Lunch* also includes passages infused with anxiety and fear, something the deadly riots and political uncertainty inspired in Burroughs, despite his protestations to the contrary in letters home. The riots in particular affected Burroughs. In one especially jocular letter that exults in recent examples of Arab violence against foreigners while earnestly attempting to reassure Ginsberg that he and Kerouac will be safe during their impending visit to Tangier, Burroughs writes “really rioting must be the greatest, like snap, *wow*. I mean I dug it watching them Arabs jumping around yelling and laughing, and they laugh in serious riots. We laugh when anxiety is aroused and then abruptly relieved. Now a riot is, for participants a classical anxiety situation: that is the complete surrender of control to the id” (Harris 341). This is particularly reminiscent of the riot in *Naked Lunch* near the end of the “Ordinary Men and Women” section; the “Party Leader” and his “Lieutenant” orchestrate a “spontaneous” expression of the people’s anger. The two discuss the possibility of setting off a riot “like a football play” (117). The importation of latahs¹⁹ from Asia is mentioned; one of the benefits being that the Nationalists can just set them off like toppling dominoes and then go home for dinner. However, while the leaders are plotting, a true riot is ignited by the appearance of Clem and Jody, double agents of Interzone, dressed as “The Capitalist in a Communist mural” (119). Acting the role of imperialist, the two brazenly foment unrest: “we have come to feed on your backwardness” (119). The subsequent riot quickly becomes a Boschian spectacle with Burroughs describing the violence staccato fashion. However, intercut with the specific scenes of

¹⁸ Also mentioned in the November 2, 1955 letter is Dr. Anker who steals “gold filling out of the patient’s mouth on the operating table, and performing other acts of incredible meanness . . .” (Harris 303).

¹⁹ In one of *Naked Lunch*’s parenthetical asides, Burroughs informs the reader that “Latah is a condition occurring in Southeast Asia. Otherwise sane, Latahs compulsively imitate every motion once their attention is attracted by snapping the fingers or calling sharply. A form of compulsive involuntary hypnosis. They sometimes injure themselves trying to imitate the motions of several people at once” (25).

surrealist violence afflicting Interzone are echoes of the real riots Burroughs witnessed in Tangier. In this instance, the tension builds slowly: “Riot noises in the distance—a thousand hysterical Pomeranians.²⁰ Shop shutters slam like guillotines. Drinks and trays hang in the air as the patrons are whisked inside by the suction of panic” (120). The Party Leader tries to assume responsibility for and control of the situation and announces that the mob is the “voice of the people” (120). Anticipating impending violence, the town’s “ordinary men and women,” mentioned in the section’s title, flee: “The Market is empty except for an old drunkard of indeterminate nationality passed out with his head in a pissoir. The rioters erupt into the Market yipping and screaming ‘Death to the French!’ and tear the drunkard to pieces” (120). The riot is quickly suppressed and order is restored: “Squads of police with thin lips, big noses and cold grey eyes move into the Market from every entrance street. They club and kick the rioters with cold, methodical brutality” (121). Burroughs uses graphic imagery to illustrate the horror left behind in the riot’s aftermath: “The rioters have been carted away in trucks. The shutters go up and the citizens of Interzone step out into the square littered with teeth and sandals and slippery with blood” (121). The section concludes with the reader catching snatches of conversation as life in Interzone returns to normal.

Burroughs’ extensive use of latak imagery at the beginning of this section demonstrates his view that relatively little of the energy released during a political riot is legitimate anger or frustration. The imitative latakhs represent ineffective reaction, not proactive political action. Throughout *Naked Lunch*, anti-colonial sentiment tends to be manufactured and orchestrated by native elites rather than occurring as a result of genuine populist response to colonialism. However, Burroughs does recognize the injustice and lack of dignity inherent in Morocco’s colonial situation and demonstrates this sympathy in a routine satirizing the colonial arrangement between France and Morocco. In this routine, he imagines an island off the coast of Interzone under British control:

England holds the Island on yearly rent-free lease, and every year the Lease and Permit of Residency is formally renewed. The entire population turns out—attendance is compulsory—and gathers at the municipal dump. The President of the Island is required by custom to crawl across the garbage on his stomach and

²⁰ Throughout *Naked Lunch* rioters are described as yipping. Kurt Hemmer contends that “Burroughs chose Pomeranians because of their ridiculous appearance and annoying bark;” however, it is much more likely that Burroughs’ description is an aural consideration more than it is a deliberate insult (70).

deliver the Permit of Residence and Renewal of the Lease, signed by every citizen of the Island, to The Resident Governor who stands resplendent in dress uniform. The Governor takes the permit and shoves it into his coat pocket:

“Well,” he says with a tight smile, “so you’ve decided to let us stay another year have you? Very good of you. And everyone is happy about it? . . . Is there anyone who isn’t happy about it?”

Soldiers in jeeps sweep mounted machine guns back and forth across the crowd with a slow, searching movement. (152-3)

Morocco’s colonial grievances may be legitimate and the imperial system corrupt and dehumanizing to the colonized; however, Burroughs doesn’t feel that much of what’s happening outside his front door in the International Zone is an authentic reaction to them. Indeed, he contends that one mechanism of control (ie. the colonial French) will simply be replaced by another (Moroccan Nationalist ideology), just as odious, and the native population will be no better off than they were before, especially since each of the revolutionary groups only strives for what is in its own interest. Burroughs’ criticism of both the colonial power and the anti-colonial movement becomes evident in *Naked Lunch* in the lengthy section detailing the various political organizations at play in Interzone: the Liquifactionists are a party of dupes, easily led; Senders remain ignorant of nearly everything important; the Divisionists are moderates who try to populate the world with replicas of themselves; the Factualists vehemently oppose all of the other organizations; Islam Inc., while comprised almost entirely of Arabs, seems to be a Western creation that can’t get its act together enough to decide on an objective. Meetings of Islam Inc., however, are so unbelievably disruptive and anarchic that Interzone has prohibited a gathering “within five miles of the city limits” (122).

Burroughs’ fascination with mechanisms of control in Moroccan politics mirrors the concerns voiced by Frantz Fanon in neighboring Algeria during its own struggle for independence during roughly the same period. Interestingly, Fanon’s investigation into the phenomenon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, was published in 1961, only two years after *Naked Lunch* was released. In his work, Fanon worried that “class aggressiveness” would cause “the native bourgeoisie” to assume the role previously fulfilled by “foreigners” (155). He warns that for “the national middle class,” “nationalization quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period” (152). When a colonial

power grooms an entire class of natives to mediate between it and the people as a body, the mediary class moves in to fill the vacuum left after the colonial power vacates its position of dominance. For Burroughs, there is little difference between the reality of French rule and the promises offered by the Nationalists. Despite the appearance it may take, government in any form translates into regulation and control. As Brian Edwards argues in *Morocco Bound*, Burroughs' "disapproval of the nation form extends to the Maghrebi nationalists' projected imposition of a new nation and culture of control to substitute for French colonialism" (171).

Burroughs' most damning condemnation of the Moroccan political environment comes in the routines utilizing the aforementioned Party Leader and the Lieutenant. In addition to their orchestration of spontaneous riots, members of the Nationalist Party are shown planning strategy. The Party Leader is described in overtly hypocritical terms; he is a bad Muslim who "strides about in a djellaba smoking a cigar and drinking scotch. He wears expensive shoes, loud socks, garters, muscular hairy legs—overall effect of successful gangster in drag" (101-2). The nationalist leader is more Western than Moroccan, indicating political motives that are more self-serving than patriotic. In addition, the street boy's answers to the Party Leader's questions demonstrate just how far removed from the country's "ordinary men and women" the party actually is. When the Party Leader informs the boy the French are vampiric, the boy tells him: "Look mister. It cost two hundred francs to suck my corpuscle" (102). The boy responds with "You mean like Friendly Finance?" when he's told the French have "dispossessed" him of his "birthright" (102). When he's asked if he hates the French, the boy says that he hates everyone, just like all Arabs and Americans do; it is a "condition of the blood" (103). The Party Leader becomes nonplussed at the boy's responses and "wonder[s] if this will go down. You never know how primitive they are . . ." (103). Failing in his efforts to educate one of the "ordinary" people, the Party Leader ascribes it to their base nature, equating himself with the French he so vehemently opposes. The boy fails to recognize the Party Leader's hypocrisy, but does decide that the men on the balcony are pathetic and gracefully makes his exit, citing a previous engagement with "a high-type American client" (103). The Nationalists make one more effort to persuade the young hustler that "it's shameful to peddle your ass to the unbelieving pricks" (103). The boy blows them off and disappears back over the railing. Of course, part of Burroughs' motivation for writing the scene this way is to justify his pursuit of local boys, but it is more than

that. The party has pretty rhetoric and performs²¹ as they feel they're expected to, but they are completely out of touch with the reality on the ground. The conversation that resumes after the boy's exit concerns Benway and worries over a serum the boy mentions that the Doctor's designing to reduce the hatred flowing through the Arab and American bloodstreams:

P.L.: [...] "The man's not to be trusted. Might do almost anything . . . Turn a massacre into a sex orgy . . ."

LT. 1: "Or a joke."

P.L.: "Precisely. Arty type . . . No principles . . ." (104)

They're upset that Dr. Benway might be subverting their machinations for surrealist purposes. In another of the Nationalist Party routines a "dignified old man" in an act of pure devotion and fealty throws himself before the wheels of the Party Leader's convertible (114). The Party Leader is unable to recognize patriotic allegiance when he sees it and accuses the old man of petty Soviet jealousies: "Don't sacrifice your old dried-up person under the wheels of my brand new Buick Roadmaster Convertible with white-walled tires, hydraulic windows and all the trimmings. It's a chip Arab trick—look to thy accent, Ivan—save it for fertilizer . . ." (114). The Nationalist Party is as much a part of the bourgeois capitalist mechanism governing the country as the colonizing French are.

Still, Burroughs continued to find the instability of the political situation inspiring. He writes to Ginsberg on October 29, 1956 that "The chaos in Morocco is beautiful" (Harris 339). It's not the violence Burroughs cherishes as much as it is the potential for change. Edwards argues that Burroughs is drawn to "the possibility for disrupting the established order that rioting and chaos present" (171). But, again, he is frustrated by the Moroccan peoples' inability to resist simply replacing one repressive form of control with another. To his mind, Moroccans have merely swapped political oppression by a colonial power with social oppression by a medieval moral code. Indeed, Burroughs is offended when a Moroccan nationalist group known as "The Red Hand" leaves ominous messages for many of the International Zone's homosexuals warning them to get out: "As usual Puritanism and Nationalism come on together in a most disagreeable mélange" (Harris 312).

²¹ While most of the routines in *Naked lunch* have overtly cinematic elements, this is one of the few that is written as a one act, one scene play, complete with stage directions, ie. "Exit boy" (103).

As focused as *Naked Lunch* is on disruption and chaos, it is not until the late 1970s that Burroughs fully explores the transformative potential that political revolution represents. The Red Night trilogy is billed as Burroughs' grand return to the narrative form after pushing the boundaries of the genre in his experimental cut-up novels and contains more linear storytelling than anything Burroughs had published since *Junky* in 1953. In the intervening years between the publication of *Naked Lunch* in 1959 and the first volume of the series in 1981, Burroughs wrote several novels that explored more completely the experiment with form he'd begun in Tangier. The Nova Trilogy pushed these experiments about as far as they could go by utilizing the cut-up method Burroughs had pioneered in Paris with fellow Moroccan alum, Brion Gysin. Upon his return to his homeland in 1975 Burroughs decided that a novel needs a narrative to hold it together: "so far as writing goes, you can't get away from a narrative style altogether because [readers] won't read it. Nor does it, in my opinion, convey very much" (Skerl "Interview" 11). However, even a stylistically straight narrative by Burroughs isn't very linear. The three novels that comprise his final trilogy all tell complex stories that are frequently disrupted and redirected. The fragmentation in this instance is much more intentional than random, as was the case with *Naked Lunch* and the cut-up trilogy. Barry Miles describes the labor Grauerholz put into organizing the *Cities of the Red Night* manuscript into a presentable draft: "the man who uncut the cut-ups" (213). The subsequent "sequels," *Place of Dead Roads* and *The Western Lands*, are even more developed and the disruptions even more directed.

It is striking that the novels where Burroughs explores the implications of political revolution and anti-colonial violence the most are the novels that are the least chaotic. *Naked Lunch* was a visceral reaction to the revolutionary fervor he encountered on the streets of Tangier while he worked on the manuscript. He takes a different approach in the Red Night trilogy, although it features many of the same motifs that Burroughs explored in *Naked Lunch*. A distance of twenty years had given him perspective and allowed him to think through what worked in Morocco and what had not. *Naked Lunch* successfully reflected the turmoil and instability of Morocco's transition to independence, but it failed, as did Morocco itself, to follow through on the promise of real change. And while it contained passages of anti-colonial commentary and parodies of imperialism, it is not an outright anti-colonial novel. The Red Night trilogy is staunchly anti-colonial and much of its inspiration derives from Burroughs' crucial years in Morocco.

The impact of Burroughs' North African sojourn on his later novels has been ignored even more flagrantly than its impact on *Naked Lunch*. Of the critics that explore the connection between Tangier and *Naked Lunch*, only Greg Mullins extends this exploration to include two later works, *Port of Saints* and *The Wild Boys*. And while there is indeed a relationship between the city and these novels, it is primarily, as Mullins suggests, in Burroughs' treatment of language and sexuality. As a reflection of Burroughs' complex political investments and attitudes, the Red Night Trilogy is much more a product of the Tangier years.

Taken together, the three novels demonstrate the consequences—political, cultural, and personal—of a successful removal of governmental oppression and interference. Each of the novels focuses on a different aspect of control: colonial, bureaucratic, and bodily. The first novel deals almost entirely with de-colonizing the western hemisphere, an idea that almost certainly occurred to Burroughs during his excursions into the South American jungle in the early fifties, and an idea that must have been driven home by the conditions in Morocco while he lived there. Burroughs says about *Cities*, “What happened there was like commandos were parachuted behind enemy lines in time and they sort of cleaned up and drastically altered South and Central America” (Bohn 573). He uses the device of time traveling “commandos” to move the invention of the exploding projectile forward by a century or so, thereby influencing the course of history. The only way to effectively eliminate all traces of colonialism from the new world is to fight off the Spanish before they can get a foothold—in other words, attacking them in the early 1700s. *Dead Roads* does the same for “North America and the protestant ethic and the Bible Belt . . .” by fostering the development of “a takeover by the Johnson Family,²² by those who actually do the work, the creative thinkers and artists and technicians” (Bohn 573, *Dead Roads* 104). The novel is set in the Old West and is modeled on the dime novels of the era. *The Western Lands* is a bit different from the other two novels in that it functions as a sort of Burroughsian Book of the Dead and attempts to counteract the tyranny of mortality.

Whereas, as Burroughs confesses, “whole sections of *Naked Lunch* certainly come from Tangier,” in *Cities* it is primarily the final third of the novel that channels the city (Malanga 289). After the narrative begins to fracture and sputter following the successful defeat of the Spanish in the 18th century and the action is taken even further back in time to the ancient Cities of the Red

²² Burroughs uses this term, “a turn-of-the-century expression” which originally referred to honorable criminals and tramps, to identify those who operate outside the influence of a corrupt society.

Night, the reader encounters a number of parallels to both Tangier and the International Zone. Initially, Burroughs uses language reminiscent of that used to report on the Moroccan riots to Ginsberg to describe the chaos in Tamaghis. Similar to the Nationalist Party's machinations during the Interzone riots, the Tamaghis riots are manufactured and not spontaneous at all. Audrey notices that "there is more here than just a spontaneous explosion of overcrowded poverty-ridden slums. The whole scene has been staged from above to point up the need for a strong police force, and some of the mob ringleaders turn out to be agents of big money" (227). To emphasize this, Burroughs quotes entire passages from other works to use as supportive evidence and incorporates them into his own. One of these, Herbert Ashbury's *Gangs of New York*, describes the discovery of an obviously aristocratic young man dressed as a laborer (227). Additionally, Tamaghis and Tangier of the late fifties share some of the same physical characteristics: they are both walled cities with relatively small populations but with the capacity to hold a much larger one.

However, it is the city of Ba'dan, situated on the river across from its mortal enemy, the city of Yass-Waddah, that reflects Tangier during Moroccan Independence the most. In a description that mirrors Mark Twain's claim that Tangier is the oldest city in the world, Burroughs calls Ba'dan "the oldest spaceport on planet Earth" (274). And like Tangier, Ba'dan has an area roughly corresponding to the International Zone: "an international and intergalactic zone known as Portland. Portland has its own administration, customs, and police" (277). Much of the scenery used to describe Ba'dan is almost verbatim from the descriptions of Interzone in *Naked Lunch*. The city is also subject to control by a much stronger power across the water, which Burroughs wants us to associate with France or Spain.

Ba'dan's bid for independence is a copy of the one undertaken by Morocco in 1956. In a passage that echoes Fanon, Burroughs writes that the middle class is ignorantly working against the interests of the city by supporting a movement that calls for "a crackdown on the Casbah, and an end to the international status of Portland" (282). Audrey Carson's unease over the freedom fighter's fomentation of the riots reflects Burroughs' discomfort at co-opting a strategy he satirized so effectively in *Naked Lunch*; however, in this case, as opposed to the situations in Interzone and Tamaghis, the revolutionary leaders have goals more noble than selfish, and after several days of rioting and strategic violence, Ba'dan gains its independence from Yass-Waddah.

Ultimately, however, the various revolutionary groups in the different dimensions of *Cities* fail. Spain is indeed utterly destroyed, but unintended consequences arise. As Fanon predicts and Burroughs fears, another form of government takes over exactly where the previous left off. In one scene, the train carrying Audrey Carsons across North America passes through a tip of French Canada. The train is boarded by customs agents who confiscate the American passports of all on board: “Documents purportedly issued by a government which ceased to exist two hundred years ago . . .” (253). The history of the United States was rewritten when Spain was destroyed, and the subsequent power vacuum was quickly filled by the French. And if not the French, then some other power. Audrey is similarly appalled by the historical change occasioned by a revision of the infamous shoot-out at the OK Corral when drunken cowboys begin hanging women. The novel ends with regret. The final chapter depicts Audrey strolling through the compound at Port Roger, empty as a ghost town, full of memories:

I didn't want to write about this or what followed. [...] The easiest victories are the most costly in the end.

I have blown a hole in time with a firecracker. Let others step through. Into what bigger and bigger firecrackers? Better weapons lead to better and better weapons, until the earth is a grenade with the fuse burning.

[...] A nightmare feeling of foreboding and desolation comes over me as a great mushroom-shaped cloud darkens the earth. A few may get through the gate in time. Like Spain, I am bound to the past. (332)

Noah Blake's inspiration to combine the principle of an exploding firecracker with a cannon ball allowed the boys to defeat the Spanish, but it also jump started an arms race that reverberated through history, culminating in the atomic explosions that destroy the Cities of the Red Night and unleash Virus B-23. Additionally, Audrey finds that by winning the war with Spain, he has written himself out of history, echoing Lee's dilemma in the culminating chapters of *Naked Lunch* when he discovers that he's been “occluded from space-time” (181). And, as with the Moroccan anti-colonial revolution, political independence does not guarantee social liberty or personal freedom from control.

The Tangier chapter of *Dead Roads* is much less revolutionary than the Moroccan portions of *Cities* and does more to replicate Burroughs' life in the city than it does to depict anything revelatory about the city itself. The way Kim Carsons stalks through the city is in direct

imitation of the Burroughs method that Kerouac found so amusing during his 1957 visit. Burroughs was given the nickname “El Hombre Invisible” by the locals because of his ability to go unnoticed and Kim does the same: “Brushing aside a horde of beggars, guides, and procurers [...] and wrapping himself in a cloak of invisibility, he went for an evening stroll. He loved the narrow twisting streets, the smell of sewage, the tiny cafés where natives sit on stone benches drinking mint tea and smoking their kief pipes” (215). Kim’s purpose for exploring Tangier relates to an undercover mission that requires learning the Moroccan dialect via a language injection. The artificiality of this method reflects Burroughs’ own disappointment that he never took the time to learn the language himself, as he’d written to Ginsberg that he’d intended to (Edwards 182). Kim’s intuitive understanding of reality shifts and his comprehension of Arabic culture improves as the new language rewires his brain circuitry: “Kim can feel the language stirring in his throat with a taste of blood and mint tea and greasy lamb. [...] The words are eroding English like acid . . . later . . . time sense is not segmented into hours, but laid out spatially like a road . . .” (209). Burroughs draws a connection between Kim’s newfound awareness of time and Lee’s same discovery in *Naked Lunch*; both epiphanies occur as a result of contact with Arabic culture and for both, as Westerners, understanding can only be achieved through artificial means.

Even though *Dead Roads* doesn’t deal with the Moroccan independence movement nearly as much as *Cities* does, Kim still learns from watching the anti-colonial demonstrations in the streets: “Military operations of one kind or another were always in progress, most of them totally senseless, or rather making a different kind of sense that means nothing to a Westerner. Thought about in Arabic, however, Kim could make out some sort of design” (239). Insight gleaned from watching these maneuvers through Arabian eyes is subsequently added to the Johnson Family repertoire. However, Kim’s death at the hands of Joe the Dead in the final sentence of the novel ultimately renders these insights meaningless as he is killed within time. Like Audrey and Lee, Kim becomes decentered outside of time; however, unlike the previous two men, Kim does this by design, a necessary step in order to perform many of the delicate assignments he’s undertaken for the Johnson Family. During his sojourn in Tangier, Kim’s understanding of time reaches such an extent that he becomes an adept in time manipulation, even going so far as learning to control time as a weapon, which involves cutting off your opponent’s access to his or her own time. In the end, this is the tactic that Joe the Dead uses to

assassinate Kim, whose death sends him to the afterlife, which takes place in the Egyptian land of the dead.

The imagery used to describe the land of the dead's urban landscape is eerily reminiscent of Burroughs' descriptions of Interzone. Indeed, many of the passages could have been lifted directly from *Naked Lunch*: "A word about conditions in the Land of the Dead: quarters are precarious and difficult to find one's way back to, and privacy is fleeting. Doors are flimsy, often absent, leaving your quarters open to corridors, passageways, streets, and there are always other means of access, so one is subject to find anybody or anything in one's digs, if one is lucky enough to have digs" (213). Tellingly, since the Land of the Dead is an Arabic landscape, Burroughs returns to the only suitable locale he knows, namely Tangier. And as Tangier is the model for Interzone, it is only appropriate that it serve as the model for *The Western Lands* as well.

However, anachronistically, Tangier is itself manifested in the Land of the Dead. Early in *Western Lands* Kim journeys back to Tangier looking for Nazi war criminals posing as Jewish refugees, a cover story that Morgan asserts, in his biography of Burroughs, was a fairly common rumor attached to several German expatriates during Burroughs' time there. Like Audrey in *Cities*, Kim stages a riot in Tangier in order to demonstrate to several prominent Tangerinos that the city is unsafe and they should invest their money elsewhere, ideally back in Swiss banks since they are responsible for financing the enterprise. The riot is set off when Kim threatens to unleash a pack of hogs inside a mosque. Kim doesn't use actual hogs; he simply plays recordings of previous riots intercut with hog noises. The riot is another return to the events that excited Burroughs so much in Tangier. His descriptions of the events are derived from experiences he witnessed thirty years previous and echo those in both *Naked Lunch* and *Cities*. In this instance, however, the important difference is that the event is told from the point of view of one of the riot's twenty-three victims: "Oh Christ, it's happening! They SEE him! Someone pushes him hard from behind. He stumbles forward and falls" (22). This shift in perspective from thrilled spectator to brutalized victim reflects a shift in Burroughs' thinking about riots themselves. In *Naked Lunch* he was still very much enthralled by the Moroccan revolution's potential for disrupting the established order and creating meaningful change. However, by the time he writes the Red Night Trilogy, the last novels he will ever write, his thinking has changed. He has

become aware that a revolution's potential for failure and disillusionment is far greater than the potential for positive change.

The ending of *The Western Lands* is similar to the endings of the other two novels in the trilogy; there is an air of futility and a hollow nostalgia that radiates off the page. The Parade Bar was Kim's first stop in the Tangier of the Land of the Dead, and it is also where the novel ends. In the early novels, *Junkie*, *Queer*, and *Naked Lunch* Burroughs was hesitant about including real people in the work; here he has no such qualms. The bartender Kim encounters is the bartender Burroughs regularly ordered from. The bar is accurately described and in the reader's first encounter, the place is active and full of life. It is where Kim contracts the job to stage the riot. In the novel's final sentences, it has been recast to reflect the decline of the Old Writer who the reader knows to be a manifestation of all the writers in the books: Kim, Audrey, Clem Snide, Mike Chase. The reader also knows that each of these writers are merely avatars for Burroughs himself, in much the way Lee is in *Naked Lunch*. And, beginning with *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs spends the rest of his writing career trying to recapture the transformative potential of the early days of the Moroccan revolution and redirect its energies away from simple reproduction of authoritarian oppression into new and untried.

By concluding his final novel with an undisguised reference to Tangier, Burroughs comes full circle. The city is where he became a writer, and the city is where the writing stops: "The old writer couldn't write anymore because he had reached the end of words, the end of what can be done with words. And then? [...] In Tangier the Parade Bar is closed. Shadows are falling on the Mountain. 'Hurry up, please. It's time'" (258).

CHAPTER FOUR

A DREAM IN FUTURE TIME: JANE BOWLES, BRION GYSIN AND THE NEGOTIATION OF NATIVE IDENTITY

I'll chance boring you with the dream I dreamt that night,
because in future time it came to be realized in almost
every detail.

--Truman Capote, *Answered Prayers*

Nothing is true. Everything is permitted.

--Hassan-i Sabbah

Probably the single most famous soundbite about post-World War II Tangier appears at the beginning of a gossipy 1950 travel piece by Truman Capote: “Before coming here you should do three things: be inoculated for typhoid, withdraw your savings from the bank, say goodbye to your friends—heaven knows you may never see them again” (88). However, a much more revealing and insightful passage can be found near the end of the same essay when Capote recounts an adventure driving out to a beach during *Eid el Fotr* to celebrate the end of Ramadan. He writes that his group of friends was quickly separated from one another: “in the surge and sway it was impossible to stay together, and after the first few frightened moments we never bothered looking for them; the night caught us in its hand and there was nothing to do but become another of the masked, ecstatic faces flashing in the torch-flare” (96). After a brief moment of dislocation and panic, Capote succumbed and surrendered himself to the writhing mass. This latter passage illustrates something the previous, more famous passage only hints at: the allure of Morocco’s native culture and its special attraction for Western Tangerinos. Even Capote, who found the anonymity of Tangier distasteful, was tempted to stay by an Islamic celebration.

For the most part, Western visitors to Tangier confined themselves to either the European areas or to the International Zone. Occasionally, some lived in native areas and entertained regular interaction with the local Arabs. A very few took this one step further and coveted a closeness and cultural intermingling that transcended mere physical or spatial proximity. Of these that wanted to be absorbed into Moroccan culture, there are two types. The first maintained their Western identity while seeking access to the world of the other. The second type attempted

to suppress their Western identity in an effort to adopt a wholly new, Eastern one. Jane Bowles is an example of the former condition and Brion Gysin exemplifies the latter. Bowles made a concerted effort to interact with and become accepted by the Arab women's community in Tangier. She courted their friendship and sought their companionship. Gysin's efforts attempted to go well beyond simply being accepted by the native community; he endeavored to become *part of* the native community. Like Paul Bowles, both Jane Bowles and Gysin found themselves reevaluating the manner in which their individual identities were contingent upon their national identities, and soon after arriving in Tangier, both writers discovered that their national identities evolved into transnational identities.

Gysin and the Bowleses were friendly years before arriving in Morocco. Jane first introduced her husband Paul to Gysin as someone he would find interesting, and in turn, Paul introduced Gysin to William Burroughs, who became a life-long companion of Gysin's. The Bowleses and Gysin even shared a house in Tangier for a time, and for many years they traveled North Africa together and ran in the same social circles. However, as close as Jane and Brion were personally, ideologically they were at opposite ends of the spectrum. Both coveted relationships with Morocco's native Arabs; however, their approaches couldn't have differed more. Bowles felt a kinship with Arab culture in general and with the Moroccan women's community specifically. Even so, she never tried to replace her American identity with a Moroccan one. Conversely, Gysin strongly identified with Arabs and considered himself one of them, dressing in Arab clothing even after he'd left Morocco for Paris in the 1960s. He expressed shock and dismay whenever others noted that he was a blond haired blue eyed American.

Bowles was one of Capote's companions the night of his temporary cultural conversion and her enthusiasm for Moroccan culture was as long lived as his was brief. He writes of her interest in native Morocco and Moroccan women on several occasions. In a biographical sketch that was later rewritten to serve as the introduction for her collected works, *My Sister's Hand in Mine*, Capote describes her as "an authoritative linguist," speaking French, Spanish, and Arabic (the three dominant languages of colonized Morocco) "with the greatest precision" ("Jane Bowles" 382). He calls both her and Paul "permanent Tangerinos" opposing them to seasonal Tangerinos or to those who stick solely to the European areas. Capote provides a lavish description of the exotic "Moorish cushions spilling over Moorish-patterned carpets, all cozy as a raspberry tart" that decorate Bowles' apartment located in the "darker Arab neighborhood"

(383). Likewise, when she is mentioned in *Answered Prayers*, the great unfinished novel that ruined Capote's career, Bowles is described as one of "the five reigning queens of the Casbah" (76). Capote revisits his earlier portrait of the "infinitesimal Casbah house" but goes further by emphasizing that she lives there with her "Moorish lover, the famous Cherifa," whom he describes as exceedingly strange, even for an Arab: "an abrasive personality only a genius as witty and dedicated to extreme oddity as Mrs. Bowles could have abided" (76-7). In each of these pieces Capote carefully links Bowles with Morocco's native culture. Indeed, he only mentions the remaining female "queens of the Casbah"²³ (Barbara Hutton and Eugenia Bankhead) as a means of emphasizing the extent to which Bowles has gone native.

From the moment she laid eyes on the town, Bowles immediately fell in love with Tangier. She told Paul: "the view of the Arab town from my window is a source of endless pleasure to me. I cannot stop looking and it is perhaps the first time in my life that I have felt joyous as a result of a purely visual experience" (Dillon 161). Paul compares his wife's attraction to Tangier with his own affection for the medieval city of Fez. Each learned the local dialect of their preferred city, but her affinity for the Tangier dialect was so intense that he found himself forced to learn it as well. He writes in his autobiography that these preferences extended beyond local languages: "We had the same divergencies in our appreciation of Morocco itself. She loved the hybrid, seedy quality of Tangier. [...] My taste for Fez was a touristic one, but Tangier fascinated Jane because that was where she had Moslem friends to whose houses she could go" (*Without Stopping* 284). Indeed, Tangier's primary attraction for Bowles was the native friends she had made and the access they gave her—limited as it was—to the Arab community. In an early letter to her husband, she writes: "I continue loving Tangier—maybe because I have the feeling of being on the edge of something that I will someday enter. [...] It is hard for me to separate the place from the romantic possibilities that I have found in it. I cannot separate the two for the first time in my life. Perhaps I shall be perpetually on the edge of this civilization of theirs" (Dillon 163).

Bowles never tried to adopt an Arab identity herself, but she did do her utmost to be accepted by the native women's community and struggled to translate her understanding of American domesticity into a comprehension of Moroccan domesticity. She placed so much emphasis on this translation because Tangier seemed so familiar to her, and she identified with

²³ Two were Englishmen.

the Moroccan women much more than she did her fellow expatriates. Bowles' biographer, Millicent Dillon, writes that within weeks of her arrival in the country

Jane began to see similarities between the life among the Moroccan women and her own early life with her mother and her mother's sisters. She saw how the Moroccan women would wrangle with each other, how they would shout and make sardonic jokes. In the focus on their daily life, in the repetitions, in their bitter humor she found what seemed entirely natural to her. (157)

The women's world seemed familiar to her in ways that the Tangerino world did not. Others, too, noticed this kinship between Bowles and Arab women and commented on it. Alice B. Toklas, who may or may not have had a hand in instigating Paul Bowles' first trip to Tangier, observed that what she at first considered to be a peculiar aspect of Bowles' personality resolved itself when placed in a North African context: "Jane is strange as an American but not as an oriental [...] If accepting this makes her more foreign it at least relieves the strain—that morbidity—she originally seemed at first to be consumed by..." (Dillon 211). Two of Bowles' friends visiting from the United States, Katherine Hamill and Natasha von Hoershelman, "saw a different Jane" in Tangier, "always trying to get on with the Arab women" (Dillon 236). They "remember that Jane's main interest in Tangier was the daily life of the native women" (Dillon 237).

Even though many critics, such as Michael Walonen, Millicent Dillon, Michelle Green, and even Paul Bowles himself, hold Tangier responsible for her diminished output, Bowles was indeed productive, albeit at a much slower pace, and this theme of cross-cultural association is present in much of the work produced during her years in Morocco. Always a meticulous perfectionist, she became even more so in Tangier. Paul Bowles relates a story in *Without Stopping* illustrating Jane's struggle to write. While working on "Camp Cataract," Jane asked Paul about the construction of a cantilever bridge. A few mornings later he realized that she was still struggling to describe the bridge. She confessed, "If I don't know how it was built, I can't see it" (287).

Two pieces in particular, written and set in Morocco, revolve around her relationship with Arabic culture. The first, "Everything is Nice," directly addresses a Western woman's attempt to gain access to Moroccan women's domestic space, and the second, "The Iron Table," portrays a conversation between a husband and wife concerning the extent to which Moroccan

culture has been diluted by Western influence. Both stories are written to reflect Bowles' affection for Tangier and her longing to be near her Moroccan women friends. And both show her struggling to come to terms with conflicts between her cultural identity and that of her friends.

"Everything is Nice" first appeared as "East Side: North Africa" in a 1951 issue of *Mademoiselle*. Charged with compiling the disparate texts to be collected in the 1966 anthology *My Sister's Hand in Mine*, Paul re-edited the nonfiction essay into a short story.²⁴ Most of his alterations involve removing much of the original commentary about Moroccan women and culture and shifting the narration from first to third person. Even with the edits, the story remains clearly autobiographical, depicting a fictionalized version of an early encounter with Cherifa, the "Moorish lover" Capote mentioned in his novel. As John Maier rightly points out in "Jane Bowles and the Semi-Oriental Woman," Jeanie is but one letter away from "Janie," and the story incorporates "names of people Jane knew in Tangier" (87). Tetum, Zodelia, and Betsoul are all based on real Moroccan women.

It becomes apparent right away that the language Bowles uses to represent the women's dialogue is not written in standard English. In the original *Mademoiselle* version of the story, Bowles mentions that she speaks a "smattering of Arabic" (Edwards 224). However, in the revised text, this phrase has been edited out, leaving the reader to decide whether the women are speaking Maghrebi translated into English for the reader's benefit or if the Moroccan women are speaking a stunted form of English with Jeanie capitulating in order to facilitate communication. Edouard Roditi, who was familiar with Bowles in Tangier during the 1960s, comments that at times it seems "as if she were translating from Arabic with the aid of a cheap conversational dictionary" (191). Capote states that "the dialogue of her stories sounds, or sounds to me, as though it has been translated into English from some delightful combination of other tongues" ("Jane Bowles" 382). Brian Edwards argues that the story "translates conversation that takes place in Arabic" (224). If the story is as autobiographical as it appears to be, then the dialogue would necessarily be a translation from Arabic as most of the Moroccan women Bowles befriended were "monolingual" (Sawyer-Lauçanno 276). Indeed, Bowles translates the Arabic word *inshallah*—meaning "if god wills it"—into English, something Paul Bowles, William

²⁴ This is according to Edwards and Dillon; in *Without Stopping* Paul claims that Jane reworked the essay herself: "I scratched around and unearthed the tear sheets of an old *Mademoiselle* article which she had done many years before, insisting that she rewrite it, making it fiction" (357).

Burroughs, or Brion Gysin would not have done. Her effort to reproduce the patterns and rhythms of the women's discourse exhibits a desire to remain in their proximity, even when writing in her own language.

The story begins with a "thick protecting wall," an obvious symbol of division, separating Jeanie from a view of the rocky shore and the many Arabs moving about near the water (313). Just as her reverie is disrupted by Zodelia, she sees a small dog portentously slip off a rock and into water over its head. Once Zodelia succeeds in getting Jeanie's attention they notice a woman at the water's edge below them. Zodelia proclaims that the woman is looking out over the ocean; Jeanie disagrees, telling Zodelia's that she's wrong, that the woman is washing her legs. Jeanie studies the woman's posture and decides that with the *haik* piled in her lap, she could not have seen the ocean, but Zodelia insists. This disagreement right at the outset of the story can be read, as Carol Shloss suggests in "Jane Bowles in Uninhabitable Places," as an indication of the inherent difference of perspective between cultures (116). Jeanie relies on a logical analysis of the scene while Zodelia decides what she would be doing in the woman's place and projects this onto her. What is at stake in the story is a reflection of Bowles primary concern: whether or not this disparity between cultural viewpoints can be breached. It quickly becomes clear that Jeanie longs for a breakthrough of this sort as well.

There are several indications early on that this may be possible. When Jeanie takes her first look at the other woman, she sees that Zodelia is "dressed in a haik and the white cloth covering the lower half of her face was loose, about to fall down" (313-4). After introducing herself and indicating that she knows who Jeanie is as well—"And you are Betsoul's friend"—Zodelia lets her covering slip and leaves it down, revealing her face (314). By showing Jeanie her face, she effectively allows her access to certain hidden aspects of the world of Moroccan women. The lowered veil at this moment signifies that Zodelia recognizes Jeanie as a fellow woman, something belied by her Western appearance. In this instance, gender trumps culture. Zodelia presents Jeanie with an opportunity to step outside the role of colonizing foreigner and experience something typically forbidden.

This opportunity is cemented when Jeanie accepts Zodelia's invitation to a wedding, although it soon becomes clear that the invitation is simply a pretext to get Jeanie to follow her. When the women arrive in front of a Moroccan home, Jeanie asks about the wedding; Zodelia "looked grave" and responds: "There is no wedding here" (316). The simple directness of

Zodelia's response tends to deflate Jeanie's expectations for the event and, as Michael Walonen argues, "this will not, evidently, be the site of a union, namely the sort of cross-cultural rapprochement Jeanie seeks in attempting to connect with the Moroccan Other" (71).

Throughout all of this Zodelia has been the assertive one; she initiated first contact and it was her empty invitation that brought Jeanie to the Moroccan house. When she steps through the doorway after Zodelia, Jeanie still finds herself at a disadvantage and off-balance. Zodelia persists in dictating the situation as she has been doing up to now. Though Jeanie is now allowed through the portal into the women's inner sanctum, she must assume a subordinate position in order to do it. This is where the relationship between the two women becomes sexualized, with the native woman performing the dominant role in the dynamic, something relatively unusual in the colonized country, especially for women.

While critics such as Joseph Massad in his exhaustive *Desiring Arabs* and Joseph Boone in his influential "Vacation Cruises; Or, the Homoerotics of Orientalism" have studied the sexual dimensions of male colonial contact, specifically with regard to sexual tourism, not much work has been done on queer female encounters in the colonized world. Dillon argues in her biography of Bowles that this is because such arrangements were without precedent:

For a Moroccan woman to enter into an arrangement with a European or American woman, as Cherifa did with Jane, was unusual, even unprecedented in Tangier. (Or, if there were precedents, they were kept secret.) [...] A young Moroccan man was not condemned by the society for such a relationship as long as he made it clear to other Moroccans that he was doing it for money and for security. [...] But that was between a man and a man. Between a Moroccan woman and a Western woman there were no rules or even expectations. It is true that Cherifa had had lesbian relationships with other Moroccan women. But those relationships, though regarded with contempt by the men, were not judged finally and severely. She was still a member of society and not ostracized. But for a Moroccan woman to be with a European woman, that was something else again. (252)

Bowles depicts early overtures between the two women using coded language and imagery traditionally associated with seduction. Zodelia removes her slippers in the doorway and then stands over Jeanie while she labors to unlace her own shoes. She takes Jeanie by the hand and

escorts her into the dim room over to a mattress on the floor and tells her to “sit” (316). Once Zodelia has disappeared into a back room for a change of clothes—from the outfit she wears in public to a dress more suited to the intimacy of women’s space—Jeanie notices the “brass bars of a bed, glowing weakly in the darkness” (316). While the room inside the house is a communal space, occupied by many women of disparate ages, and the act of seduction is never completed, there remains an aura of courtship between the two. Walonen argues that this courtship is manifest in two ways: first, Jeanie buys Zodelia some cakes, which may indicate a romantic interest; second, Jeanie experiences an intense longing after leaving Zodelia and the other women (75). Walonen is quick to explain away the significance of the cakes as mere generosity and a sign of Jeanie’s “recognition of their unequal material circumstances;” however, what Walonen misses and what remains paramount here is that neither woman actually wants the cakes, they just infer that the other one does. Instead of functioning as a kind of charity induced, class-based border crossing, as Walonen argues, the cakes operate as tokens of courtship and demonstrate a desire on behalf of both women to bridge the boundaries separating them. Jeanie finds the “dusty” cakes unappetizing, but believing Zodelia wants them, buys them for her after the Moroccan asks if they are “nice [...] or not nice?” (316). Zodelia for her part offers the cakes to Jeanie during the tea-time conversation with the other women, and when Jeanie leaves the house, Zodelia presses “two of the dry Spanish cakes into her hand,” giving them to her (320). The cakes simultaneously represent a misreading of social cues by both women as well as a romantic overture.

The cultural differences and social misunderstandings mount, however, and despite Zodelia’s efforts, the other women aren’t as taken with Jeanie as she is. They only welcome her into their sphere grudgingly. Right away, the child who answers the door sees Jeanie and immediately hides her face behind the door, providing a clear contrast with Zodelia’s loose veil in the first paragraphs. She has been taught to hide her face from Westerners and has not yet realized that Zodelia has rendered Jeanie exempt from this. When the other women are told that Jeanie spends half of the week “in a Moslem house with Moslem friends and the other half in a Nazarene hotel with other Nazarenes” they are unimpressed and politely respond with “That’s nice” (317). However, Tetum’s reaction is much more hostile and it is telling that she is the oldest of the group and has endured the effects of colonialism longer than the others. She demands to know why Jeanie divides her time this way; “Is she crazy?” she asks (317). The old

woman wants to know why Jeanie doesn't stay within her own ethnic group. She asks after Jeanie's husband and, upon learning that he is traveling through the desert, wants to know why she doesn't "go and sit with [her] mother in her own house" in her own country (318). The woman condemns Jeanie's expatriatism, saying that it is wasteful to stay in a hotel that "costs a lot of money," and derides her longing for inclusion as a symptom of imperialism (318). This is a real fear on Bowles' part—that she will be rejected by the group, not because of who she is, but based on what she represents: an outsider and Westerner, on par with the colonizing French.

Jeanie's failure to explain to the women why she's in the country, her efforts to outrun industrialization—something Bowles addresses directly in "The Iron table"—is emblematic of the failure of the entire enterprise. Jeanie ultimately is unable to establish the connection she so long for. She tells the women, "In the city where I was born [...] there are many, many automobiles and many, many trucks" (318). The women don't understand her and think "trucks are nice" (318). Jeanie grows frustrated, insisting: "I hate trucks" (318). She feels even more isolated when even Zodelia won't support her on this point. Realizing that her endeavor to make contact with the women's community has become a humiliation, Jeanie struggles to leave. Her attempts to make a graceful exit only serve to humiliate her further. Her manufactured lies have no chance of being believed: "The Nazarenes will be angry if I'm late. [...] They will hit me!" (319). Tetum speaks to her as to a troublesome child: "Drink tea. They will not hit you [...] Sit down and drink tea" (319). After fleeing the house, Jeanie's decision not to ask Zodelia, who has followed her to the door, about the promised wedding signals her defeat and understanding that the hoped for union will not take place. She has thoroughly given up all attempts to ingratiate herself to the women and concedes that the entire undertaking has failed.

Instead of ending the story with Jeanie exacerbating the social rift, Bowles allows Zodelia to mend it a little by making vague plans to meet the following day. Walonen implies that Zodelia does this in order to adhere to the conventions of hospitality; however, it is clear that Zodelia schedules the rendezvous for two reasons. The first is to allow Jeanie to save face and leave with a bit of pride still intact. The second reason is more complex and involves the sexual component in the women's relationship. Taken by themselves, Zodelia's closing comments that she will see Jeanie "tomorrow, if God wills it"²⁵ is fairly innocuous; however, when they are coupled with the earlier sexual subtext as well as the regifting of the cakes they demonstrate that

²⁵ *Inshallah*

Zodelia experiences a longing similar to that which Jeanie explicates when she returns to the blue wall (320).

Throughout the story, Zodelia is more difficult to read than Jeanie, but she is not impenetrable. Her longing for Jeanie's company becomes apparent when placed alongside Jeanie's own longing. Sexual desire is present in both women, but the longing to be a part of the other's community is only experienced by Jeanie. Zodelia is willing to accept Jeanie into her world, but only on her terms. She has no desire to join Jeanie's world. For her part, Jeanie experiences a profound sense of isolation in this story that is only somewhat mitigated at the story's close. Her husband is away, traveling in the desert, her mother is far and in another country, whose culture she dislikes, and the community of women she longs to join reacts to her as more of a curiosity than as an initiate. "Everything is Nice" demonstrates that inclusion and acceptance is ultimately unlikely. The chasm between Jeanie and Zodelia is too vast and their common ground too minute. However, for Jeanie, unlikely doesn't mean impossible, and she intends to make the attempt again another day. Jeanie's view here clearly reflects Bowles' attitude toward Cherifa. She confides to Paul in a letter, "Perhaps I shall be perpetually on the edge of this civilization of theirs. When I am in Cherifa's house I am still on the edge of it, and when I come out I can't believe I was really in it" (Dillon 163).

The ending for the original *Mademoiselle* version doesn't differ very much from the latter version except for one significant detail. The earlier text includes one extra line in the final paragraph—just before Jeanie's memory of the clown—that deepens and expands the entire meaning of the ending: "no matter how often I walked through these streets reaching out to touch the chalky blue wash on the houses . . . on the walls, I could never satisfy my longing for the town" (Dillon 211). In a letter to her husband dating from the late forties, Bowles writes,

I can't bear to be continually hurled *out* of the Arab World [...] Perhaps you have never been in this inferior position vis-à-vis the Arabs. I can understand how if one could get all one wanted here—and were admired—courted—and feted—that one would *never never* leave. Even so—without all that—and you've had it—I have never felt so strongly about a place in my life, and it is just so maddening not to be able to get *more* of it. (Dillon 166)

Her return to the blue wall—the origin of the encounter—at the end of the story and the attendant memory of reaching "out to touch the face of a clown because it had awakened some longing"

signify exactly how much she has at stake here and how important the establishment of an eventual friendship is for her (320).

The sentimentality permeating the end of “Everything is Nice” is investigated further in “The Iron Table” fragment. Though both texts come from the same notebooks and may have been part of the same project, it is difficult to say which comes first chronologically. Edwards explicitly links the two texts, arguing that the smaller fragment is an excised portion of the “East Side: North Africa” essay removed before publication (226). He writes that “Differing versions of a deleted conversation between husband and wife—one version later published as the fragment ‘The Iron Table’—reveal that within the thinking associated with the ‘Everything Is Nice’ project was Jane’s meditation on Paul’s dismay at Moroccans’ embrace of the cultural forms of European modernity” (328). Dillon takes this further and mines the notebooks for more backstory than is provided in the published fragment and her explication reveals the extent to which the fragment is related to “Everything is Nice”: “In the fragment the husband and wife are seated at a little iron table in front of a hotel. A washout in the mountains has prevented their continuing on their journey. Mr. Copperfield, anxious because of the extra money the delay will cost them, becomes suddenly irate at the sight of the ‘jumble of Oriental and Western costume’ the villagers are wearing” (256). Both the story and the fragment address Western women feeling isolated in North Africa—Jeanie and the unnamed wife, respectively—and their attempts to remedy this. Additionally, there are hints in the fragment that the wife may be befriending native women just as Jeanie attempts to do and that she may be hiding it from her husband. She tells him that her friends “don’t feel there’s any way of escaping” Western civilization, and “it’s not interesting to sit around talking about industrialization” (467). These statements seem to echo the disagreement over trucks that takes place between Jeanie and Tetum in “Everything is Nice.” However, when the husband asks which friends she means, hoping to make her “feel isolated,” she replies by saying “our friends,” referring to their American friends back in the States, although clearly this cannot be who she meant as “she had not seen” them “in many years” (467).

Their discussion of the imminent contamination of North Africa by Western culture and the possibility of escaping into the desert is an old one and they quickly fall into their familiar conversational formulas: the husband advocating pushing forward into ever more remote areas and the wife feeling that flight merely delays the inevitable. The husband and wife are divided throughout the piece, both physically and emotionally, and their subsequent conversation does

little to heal or improve the situation. They are physically separated by the “old iron table” that’s been dragged from “the other side of the hotel” and placed “on the cement near a half-empty flower bed” for their benefit (465). Emotionally, their relationship is as devoid of life as the flower bed at their feet and by the end of the story, the reader learns that this emotional division is an essential part of their dynamic: “She was as bitter as he about the changes, but she felt it would be indelicate for them both to reflect the same sorrow. It would happen some day, surely. A serious grief would silence their argument. They would share it and not be able to look into each other’s eyes. But as long as she could she would hold off that moment” (467).

Dillon writes that the fragment is “the most directly autobiographical rendering of a conversation between herself and Paul that she was ever to write” (256). And, indeed, “The Iron Table” operates like a scene from *The Sheltering Sky*, Paul Bowles’ novel written during the same period, and echoes the novel’s obsession with flight from encroaching Westernization, something the Bowleses discussed often with their friends.²⁶

While Jane Bowles may have courted the attention of Arab women and longed to become a part of their circle, she did not try to adopt Islam nor did she consider herself Arab. She never changed her manner of dress or tried to be anything other than a Westerner in an Eastern country with native friends. This is something Brion Gysin could not claim. From the moment he first set foot in Tangier, he felt himself on familiar territory. Where Jane Bowles considered herself happily living in a foreign land, Gysin found Tangier to be more like a home than anywhere he had ever lived. Their entire approach to Morocco was different. Gysin’s impulse to assume an Arab identity speaks of a desire to abandon his Western one. And while one is justified in claiming that Jane Bowles’ efforts at integration within the native community demonstrate a sincere form of expatriation, the same cannot be said of Gysin. His activities are more nuanced. Indeed, while it is fair to argue that cultural assimilation is a dominant attribute of successful immigration, it is important to remember that Gysin wanted to assimilate with an imagined medieval Morocco, not the contemporary Morocco in which he lived. Like Paul Bowles, Gysin looked at Morocco’s colonial past as an Edenic paradise. But Bowles wanted to reclaim a lost expatriate lifestyle. Gysin’s colonial nostalgia was more complicated than this. The Morocco he longed for was the same medieval, undeveloped country as Bowles, but Gysin wanted to be one

²⁶ Maier calls it their “long-standing argument” (97).

of the natives. Or, to be more precise, he wanted to be one of the colonizers accepted by the natives as one of their own.

Morgan argues in *Literary Outlaw* that the death of Gysin's father during World War I left a lasting impact on his sense of identity: "The early loss of his father in war gave him an inability to commit himself to any national purpose. What after all was the true nationality of this Swiss-Canadian hybrid? Was it the language he spoke? He spoke four. Was it the country he lived in? He lived in so many. Brion was a man without predetermined allegiances. What he would become he would choose to become" (300). The truth in this statement can easily be seen in the life Gysin led before he immigrated to Morocco in 1950. Born in England to a Swiss father and a Scotch-Irish mother, he was raised in New York City, Kansas City, and Canada, and studied literature at the Sorbonne.²⁷ The onset of World War II sent him back to the United States. There, he worked on Broadway plays and as a welder in a New Jersey shipyard; he joined the United States' Army and studied Japanese for the CIA before eventually becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen (Harter 103).

The instability of Gysin's personal and national identities is readily apparent in his only published novel. Set in North Africa, *The Process* (1969) serves as Gysin's attempt to synthesize everything that mattered to him about the Maghreb into one long winding narrative. Michelle Green refers to the novel as a "surreal *roman à clef*," noting that many of its passages come straight from Gysin's life (320). She notes that much of the description of the Sahara that colors Hanson's journal in the first portion of the text derives directly from Gysin's own notebooks dating from a 1952 excursion into the desert (118). Robert Palmer also asserts that Gysin mined his own life for inspiration and that many aspects of the novel "are drawn directly from life" (viii). He cautions that Gysin should not be confused with his "central character," but that there is "a lot of the one in the other" (xvii). "Ulysses O. Hanson isn't Brion Gysin," Palmer writes, "*The Process* itself is Brion Gysin" (xvii).

Even heeding Palmer's warning not to conflate Hanson and Gysin, it is difficult to discuss the fictional creation without referencing the real life expatriate. Brion Gysin received one of the first Fulbright Fellowships in 1949 after writing a biography of Josiah Henson, the original Uncle Tom, whose great-grandson he met in the army, and publishing another book

²⁷ Gysin was part of the 1935 Surrealist exhibition in Paris, but André Breton removed Gysin's paintings at the last minute over a disagreement about "his irreverence and his unabashed homosexuality;" however, "Brion retrieved his pictures and showed them on the sidewalk instead" (Green 77).

called *The History of Slavery in Canada*, although he was later told by “a gay professor who was one of the judges” that he was given the award based on his photograph (Morgan 301). In the novel, Hanson narrates that he could have been an academic, having taught and published a work called *History of Slavery in Canada*. Additionally he states that he received his Fulbright based on a sexualized photo submission: “When I applied for my Fulbright Fellowship, I sent them this very white photograph of myself. When we all passed muster at a cocktail party before sailing, I thought some members of the board were surprised to see me in the flesh, as we call it. It was not a nude photograph; of course not!” (15). Later in the novel, he claims that some of his cousins, who “spell their name different,” are direct descendants of Josiah Henson (197).

Gysin bequeaths to Hanson his own personal history and in the process²⁸ reimagines his life as a black man. According to the various biographers, anyone who was even casually acquainted with Gysin was well aware that he despised his own skin color and would have preferred to be born into a darker race. Morgan writes that Gysin considered the white race to be “albino freaks”²⁹ (302). Palmer quotes him as complaining: “Just look at all this lousy oatmeal skin. Not enough melanin. I’ve lived the best years of my life in Morocco and it can’t take the sun. When I’m with Africans, I forget that I’m white. But they can’t forget it. I stick out like a sore thumb” (xvii).

Gysin was enchanted by Morocco and not being able to completely “go native” was a special torment, but, unlike Jane Bowles, this didn’t stop him from trying his best to disappear within the culture. Burroughs is quoted as saying that during their first meeting, Gysin had little time for him: “He thought I was incompatible with this Arab-oriented life he’d set up” (Sawyer-Lauçanno 329). Gysin buried himself in the Arab culture to such an extent that other members of the expatriate community became uncomfortable around him. Paul Bowles continued to socialize with Gysin but thought “Brion had gone native with a vengeance,” writes Morgan:

He dressed like a Moroccan, he ate like a Moroccan, he lived with Moroccans. [...] Paul thought the whole process was false. Since he was not Moroccan and had nothing to do with Moroccans, to try to be like them was absurd. Paul’s attitude was that of an outsider, a tourist who had taken root but was still a tourist. He didn’t think of himself as Moroccan, but as a New Yorker who happened to be

²⁸ No pun intended.

²⁹ This is essentially the plot of William Burroughs’ *Cities of the Red Night*. Much of Burroughs’ final three novels reflect Gysin’s strong influence.

living in Tangier. What, he wondered, was the urge that prompted people to disguise themselves? Perhaps Brion was suffering from identity diffusion, having already had four nationalities—English, then Swiss, then Canadian, then American. Having no idea who he was, he had decided to be Moroccan. (302-3)

Like an inversion of Homi Bhabha's concept of native mimicry, writing *The Process* allowed Gysin to explore what his life would have been like had he been born as he wished. As Hanson, Gysin is able to do in fiction what he was not capable of in real life, namely merging his western identity with the identity of the Other. Since Hanson is African-American, he is in essence an amalgamation of the two and a perfect representation of Gysin's desires. However, as an African-American Hanson struggles with his identity as well. Westerners see him as more African than American whereas Moroccans see his Americanness as dominant. Hamid, Hanson's lover and native informant, who shows him how to eat and bathe as a Muslim, sees "all Blacks as the natural slaves to the Arabs," but exempts Hanson because he is American: "You're not Black, you're American!" (9).

Throughout the text, Hanson looks for some sort of equilibrium between his "American cultural color" and his racial affiliation with Africa (78). The majority of the first portion of the novel depicts Hanson's journey deep into the Sahara in an attempt to reach sub-Saharan Africa and the origin of Blackness. His trip ends in frustration midway through the desert, however, when he discovers that the French have canceled his visa and forbid him to travel any further due to their country's nuclear tests in the area. Even so, Hanson's trek is a personal revelation and allows him to diminish the distance between who he was and who he longs to become. He travels without luggage and rejoices whenever he is mistaken for a Moroccan. Before beginning the journey into the desert, he'd traded his Western clothes for native clothes. This allows him to trade one identity for another and travel with a certain anonymity. However this disguise will only carry him so far. When he arrives at a desert outpost, he discovers that his American passport betrays him as "all Americans of whatever color must sleep under roofs" and he is forced to accept a room in the hotel (28). Additionally, when he tries to claim this room, he is accosted by the drunken proprietor: "When he saw the color of my face in front of him, he suddenly hurled at me a hunting knife with a six inch blade" (28). Even after Hanson produces his passport for identification, the man "looked through it dubiously for quite a long time, trying to run a dirty thumbnail under my photograph; flicking at it for several minutes before he barked

to one of the ‘boys’ to show me a room” (28-9). Later, on the return train to Tangier, Hanson offends a group of Arabs by greeting them with a traditional Arabic Muslim greeting: “‘*Salaam aleikoum,*’ I mumbled, conscious that Muslims do not like to hear these holy words of greeting from other than Muslim lips. ‘Why doesn’t the Merikani take a plane?’ shouted one rough voice. ‘Because he is Black!’ answered another. Roars of laughter. ‘The white Merikanis won’t let him, so he has to travel like us!’” (62).

Toward the end of the novel, after he has thrown in with the Himmers, Hanson begins to feel some trepidation concerning the imminent loss of his American identity and personal history. When Thay announces that all documentation of Hanson’s existence is being destroyed, Hanson becomes more distressed by this than he anticipated. “There in front of me,” he narrates, “was my birth certificate. I was pained to see that my parents’ papers were attached but I realized they were bound to go, too, if I was really going to succeed in what I had always thought of doing—changing my skin but from the inside out, as it were” (255). In the final pages of the book, Hanson reneges completely on his earlier ambitions and accepts a position as new assistant headmaster at the Independent American School of Algut in Europe: “What a relief to be back again at my own station in life” (300).

At first blush this reversal may seem incongruous with Gysin’s expressed intent in the book, namely rectifying his designation as “an accidental Occidental” (78). However, again, the Morocco that he is eulogizing in *The Process* is not the postcolonial Morocco of 1969. Gysin’s Morocco, much like Paul Bowles’ Morocco in *The Spider’s House*, is the pre-revolution, colonized Morocco of the 1930s. Though it is expressed by most of the novel’s narrators, colonial nostalgia is primarily manifested through two of its non-white secondary characters: Hamid and Dr. Francis-X Fard. It is important to note, however, that Gysin does give Thay Himmer a significant passage advocating for a prerevolutionary Morocco. While he is still trying to convince Hanson to participate in Mya’s scheme, Thay reveals an immense desire to be black. After bemoaning the ineffectiveness of melanin injections on his “worm white skin,” Thay recounts an experience modeled on one of Gysin’s own experiences from his time in Harlem: “I caught sight of one pasty–white face. ‘How did that whitey get in here?’ I asked indignantly. It was my own reflection in a mirror over the mantelpiece” (129). Thay follows this longing for blackness and subsequent shock of recognition with another attempt at native mimicry, this time in Tangier, when “Tanja was really Tanja,” that is, before independence: “Well, I did try again,

later, to get into some skin other than my own; right here in North Africa where the problem is not, essentially, color” (129). Thay’s failure, again, is because of his whiteness, which made him stick out “like a cop” (129).

Gysin is much less explicit in his use of Fard. The author of texts called *Paleface and Ebony Mask* and *Awake Mother Africa*,³⁰ Fard is a thinly veiled caricature of Frantz Fanon, the supporter of Algerian independence. However, while Fanon died of cancer less than a year before France pulled out of Algeria, Fard is shown operating in a decolonized Algeria. As Walonen argues, “the basic act of imagining an alternative history speaks to a nostalgia for the colonial era” (103). Just as imagining himself as a black Fulbright scholar exploring the Maghreb allowed Gysin to interrogate an alternate personal history in “present time,” so too does inventing a Fanon-like character, who survived through independence, enable him to revenge himself upon one of those chiefly responsible for the dissolution of an idyllic North Africa. In Gysin’s potential history, Fard is a failure, imprisoned following the second revolution when Boumédiène took control of the country. Algerians mistrust him because he isn’t Muslim and “Black Africa” finds him “too white” as a result of his marriage to a Moroccan Jew named Affrica “Freeky” Africanus. Additionally, Gysin portrays Fard as successfully seducing his wife’s fourteen year old sister but unable to perform with his wife with any frequency due to his age. Gysin also ridicules Fard’s disavowal of Trinidadian transvestites—similar to Fanon’s claim that homosexuality is exclusive to whites—calling it “the most preposterously and absurdly unscientific statement I have ever read in my life. One must presume, therefore, that Francis is a great deal less bright than he looks” (176). Fanon’s pronouncement is, of course, offensive to Gysin, not only because of his homosexuality, but also because the open sexuality of prerevolutionary Tangier is one of the reasons Morocco resonated so strongly for him.

The other representation of colonial nostalgia takes the form of Hamid, Hanson’s native informant. It is in the section narrated by Hamid that the longest sustained passage lamenting the disappearance of colonial Morocco occurs. In his analysis of this scene, Walonen encapsulates the situation wonderfully, arguing that “the placing of this regret on the lips of a postcolonial Moroccan character has an aspect similar to the representational logic of postbellum Southern writers who had their ex-slave characters issue laments for the lost plantation system—in both instances there is an effort to redeem a discredited lost order by claiming that it was embraced by

³⁰ These are obviously references to Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*.

members of the group which was socially and economically disadvantaged by its basic structure” (111). By giving this speech to Hamid instead of Hanson, Gysin attempts to justify his own personal desire for a return to the colonial era. In effect, he is arguing that Moroccans benefitted from the colonial system as much as Westerners did. And while he doesn’t quite become an apologist for colonialism, he does try to soften its legacy.

Gysin has Hamid provide an extended metaphor pulled straight out of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in which he refers to Tangier as a “slut” (113). Hamid recounts how he has always been able to have his way with the city, which nurtured as well as submitted to him. But all of that has changed “since the day the whole city of Tanja was swallowed alive by the whale” (114). He recalls the moment when he realized that the riots and push for independence would destroy the city. What soon becomes clear in his tale is that more than the physical destruction and loss of property and life, the true cost of independence was the loss of Tangier’s foreign benefactors:

Rich Christians and Jews ran out of hotels with their hair in the air, screaming for taxis to take them to the airport. Other men and even some women with pistols ran to the banks, backing up trucks, station-wagons, taxis, anything on wheels. They loaded the gold into handcarts and pushcarts and go-carts and baby buggies, to run with it out to the airport where planes swarmed out of the skies like bees to suck all the honey from Tanja and never come back. (116)

Hamid’s narration concludes by explaining that that was when he knew it was time for Hanson to return from his journey in the Sahara. His uncles, the Master Magicians of Jajouka tell him: “That Merikani must come back soon” (117). It is Hanson’s Americanness that is important here, and not his Africanness.

And the novel ends in a similar vein. In a scene of stunning betrayal, Hanson sells Hamid to the Himners for the price of a train ticket to the university in Algut. To add insult to injury, as the train pulls away from the station, Hanson sees Hamid arrested by two plainclothes police officers; however, he is unmoved by the scene: “Hamid was bawling like a calf at the killing until the rumble of the moving train drowned him out and he was drawn away into the mysterious past” (315). Moments later, Hanson realizes that Hamid will be executed and thinks, “Oh, well; are we not all condemned? I wouldn’t put it past old Hamid to dodge even death” (316). Far from claiming a lost African heritage, *The Process* ends with Hanson condemning all

of North Africa to its colonial past. Decolonized Morocco is not worth his time. Walonen quotes Gysin as mourning the colonial past, “what luck I lived before that whole magic world dissolved and disappeared like a morning mist and the magnificent Middle Ages were gone forever” (112).

Gysin’s native conversion was much more complete than Bowles’, but it was also more fickle. Bowles made attempts to join the local women’s community on their terms. She was attracted to their world for what it was, not for what she thought it could be. Conversely, Gysin wanted North Africa to welcome him as he saw fit and to exist as he wanted it to be. He wasn’t interested in its reality, just its capacity to encompass his fantasies. Bowles confronted the realities of Moroccan culture, while Gysin dealt in illusion and myth. Still, both of these writers become involved with the Moroccan native population to a much greater extent than many of the other expatriate writers, including Paul Bowles and William Burroughs. There is an aphorism that Ulysses O. Hanson wrote out multiple times in his journal during the journey through the desert that seems to fit here as well as anything: “As no two people see the same view along the Way, all trips from here to there are imaginary: all truth is a tale I am telling myself” (13).

CHAPTER FIVE

ABANDONED DREAMS: THE MOROCCAN MEMOIRS OF ALFRED CHESTER AND JOHN HOPKINS

Looking at the world through the sunset in your eyes
Traveling the train through clear Moroccan skies
Ducks and pigs and chickens call
Animal carpet wall to wall
American ladies five-foot tall in blue
—Graham Nash, “Marrakesh Express”

But he is too rich, too successful now to abandon anything
but his dreams.
—Alfred Chester, “Ismael”

With the onset of the 1960s, a different type of expatriate began to appear on the streets of Tangier. Beatniks, hippies, and aspiring artists flocked to the country, many of them drawn to Morocco after reading about the expatriate lifestyle in Paul Bowles’ fiction and in William Burroughs’ *Naked Lunch*, which was finally published in the United States in 1962 after surviving a much publicized obscenity trial. They entered the country hoping to experience some of the shadier adventures recounted in Bowles’ novels and looking for the real-life manifestation of Burroughs’ *Interzone*, but, instead, they discovered a country that had little interest in indulging their fantasies. Morocco was a favorite stop on the hippie trail that began in Europe and ran through North Africa and Turkey before reaching destinations in India and Nepal. Communes were established in the Moroccan countryside.³¹ Even so, Moroccan authorities were unimpressed with the new arrivals and required haircuts and rigorous customs inspections before allowing them across the border, and those that successfully made it into the country were routinely arrested and expelled for drug use,³² a vice that was tolerated and even encouraged in the previous generation of expatriates (Edwards 252). Additionally, many longtime Tangerinos resented having to put up with this influx from the West and left the country as a result.

³¹ The most well-known of these communes was one outside Essaouira that Jimi Hendrix famously visited in August of 1969, just before his death the following year (Bauer).

³² Often, this involved experimenting with *majoun*, a local candy made from nuts, dates, honey, and marijuana. Paul Bowles, William Burroughs, and Brion Gysin each had their own preferred method for making the candy. Gysin published his recipe in Alice B. Toklas’ 1954 cookbook.

Burroughs and Brion Gysin relocated to Paris and established residences at 9, rue Git-le-Coeur, in what came to be known as “The Beat Hotel.”³³ Bowles spent more time away from Tangier at Taprobane, his island retreat in Ceylon. As early as 1957, Jack Kerouac was commenting on the hipster presence inundating Tangier’s streets as early as 1957: “And just like in New York or Frisco or anywhere there they are all hunching around in marijuana smoke, talking, the cool girls with long thin legs in slacks, the men with goatees, all an enormous drag after all and at the time [...] not even started yet officially with the name of ‘Beat Generation’” (358). He booked passage to France and then home to New York shortly after.

Two American writers, Alfred Chester and John Hopkins, arrived in the midst of these invading hordes, and, like so many of the others, journeyed to Tangier hoping to become writers. Both men kept memoirs of their Moroccan experiences from the 1960s through the mid-1970s. Hopkins’ *The Tangier Diaries* recounts his exploits in the city, undertaking excursions into the desert, attending parties given by Malcolm Forbes, and socializing with the city’s expatriate literary and cultural elite. Despite a closing epigraph in the book’s “Epilogue” emphasizing how much Westerners have to learn from native Moroccans, Arabs scarcely appear in the text except as incidentals or the subject of amusing anecdotes. Chester takes the opposite approach and focuses nearly all of his energies on representations of connection between gay male Tangerinos and their beloved street boys. The full implication of these connections is the primary focus of two of Chester’s most significant works: “The Glory Hole” and “The Foot.” The first is a short story written in Tangier, consisting of brief vignettes culled from daily observations of East / West homosexual interactions. “The Foot” is written as a memoir, or, more precisely, a diary of memories, covering the month of February—running January 31 through February 28—in an unnamed year;³⁴ its structure is loose, its dramatizations hesitant, and its tone lovesick. In both of these texts Chester shows the reader how “Nazarenes” and “Moslems” exploit one another for individual gain.

What unites Hopkins’ *The Tangier Diaries* and Chester’s two short pieces is that both blend fictional elements with representations pulled from the authors’ life to create complicated depictions of orientalist attitudes. The memoirs often vacillate between sympathetic, anti-imperialist views and outright orientalist exploitation, something that’s been seen in the earlier

³³ The best account of these years in Paris can be found in Barry Miles *The Beat Hotel* (Grove, 2000).

³⁴ Edward Field, Chester’s friend and editor of the anthology, *Head of a Sad Angel: Stories 1953-1966*, suggests February of 1966 in New York.

writing by Tangerino writers. But in this instance, their slippage into orientalism is especially troubling as they profess themselves to be staunchly orientalist. Both men are quick to chastise the previous generation of expatriates for their colonialist attitudes, but then casually fall into the same habits they have just criticized. As Greg Mullins notes in *Colonial Affairs*, Chester arrived in Morocco under the assumption that the Maghreb before him was the Maghreb of Bowles' fiction. However, he decided early on that Bowles was "an old fashioned colonial type" and he wanted nothing to do with Bowles' reality (90). But, Mullins writes, "Chester struggled with the fact that his love for Morocco—and especially for Dris—was constituted within racial, Orientalist terms" (90). As much as Chester wanted his relationship with the Arab street hustler, Dris, to become an affair between equals, he could not escape the preconceptions he had brought with him to North Africa. Hopkins, too, suffered from inner conflict surrounding his simultaneous condemnation and embrace of the colonial lifestyle, although to a much lesser extent and his idolization of Bowles, Burroughs, and Gysin endured for several years longer than Chester's.

The two men could not have been more different, in appearance, sexuality, and class. Chester was born in Brooklyn into a working class Jewish Russian immigrant family. A case of scarlet fever when he was a child left him completely hairless, something he struggled to come to terms with throughout his life. Edward Field, Chester's close friend, writes that Chester's "wig was not to be mentioned, no matter how startlingly obvious it was" (303). He first relocated to Morocco in 1963 and lived in the country for only a few years before he was asked to leave by the government for erratic behavior that ultimately resulted in the first of his mental breakdowns. He briefly returned in 1966, but was again asked to leave permanently the next year. Chester ultimately died of alcoholism in Jerusalem in August 1971. Conversely, Hopkins was a Princeton graduate, handsome, and independently wealthy. Morgan, Burroughs' biographer, writes that Hopkins once told Gysin, "The nice thing about money is that you can shit on anybody and tell them to fuck off" (449). He moved to Morocco in 1962 and lived there until he married another Tangerino, Ellen Ann Ragsdale; they moved to London in 1979 to start a family. Hopkins is most often mentioned in biographies of more prominent Tangerinos as the one responsible for the motorcycle accident that almost lost Gysin his left foot and resulted in the amputation of one of his toes.

Chester was encouraged to relocate to Tangier by Paul Bowles, who also set him up with Dris, who quickly became his lover. The new location suited Chester perfectly. Bowles later said that he had never seen “anyone adapt to Moroccan life as fast” as Chester (Field 307). Field called Chester’s years in Morocco “the high point of his life” and Gore Vidal wrote that Chester was “happiest in Tangier” (307; 8). Reading through his output from those years, it is easy to see what drew Chester to the Maghreb and pleased him so greatly: an abundance of opportunities for homosexual encounters. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said writes that “the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe” (190). The prevailing perception is that Arabs practice “a different type of sexuality, perhaps more libertine and less guilt-ridden” (190). This view is certainly held by Chester, who devotes considerable attention to the power dynamics surrounding male prostitution in “The Glory Hole”:

It is traditional in Morocco to pay for sex. There are nicer, but not truer, ways of putting it. The lover gives a gift to the beloved: food, clothing, cash. The older pays the younger. The man pays the woman. The active partner pays the passive partner. The husband buys then feeds and clothes his wife. The wanter pays the wanted—which could mean, after all, that money need never change hands. (225)

Chester twists in all directions in order to make the arrangement sound innocuous, especially when he adds, “To the Nazarene, the Moslem’s price is nominal. To the Moslem it can be enough to live on—and when it is, there is no escaping the fact that, however gilded it is by tradition, prostitution is taking place. What makes it adorable to the people at either end of the banknote is that, though the Moslem is an employee, he really and truly loves his work” (225). However, as Joseph Boone has argued in “Vacation Cruises: Or, the Homoerotics of Orientalism,” whether the Arab “loves his work” or not “does not erase the dynamics of power that many employers would rather believe their employees consider mere technicalities of the trade” (100).

As one who made no effort to obscure his homosexuality in an era when it was common to do so and several years before the Stonewall riots helped ignite the gay rights movement, Chester saw Morocco as a type of sexual proving ground. Speaking through one of the unnamed “Nazarenes” in “The Glory Hole,” he writes that “Morocco has been the great sexual liberation” (217). To emphasize this sentiment, in “The Glory Hole,” Chester views all of Tangier through the sodadic hole of the title, thereby repositioning all of the city’s inhabitants as sexual objects.

Written early in his Moroccan sojourn, this snapshot of Tangier is not simply sexualized, but, more accurately, homosexualized. The glory hole is usually associated with illicit gay encounters and is an opening in the wall separating viewing booths in an erotic theater or stalls in a public restroom. Body parts may be inserted into the hole, or it may be used voyeuristically, allowing individuals to watch one another masturbate. The parenthetical subtitle—“(Nickel views of the infidel in Tangiers)” —centered on the page immediately after the provocative title, reinforces the association with adult sex shops and ensures that there are no misunderstandings by the reader. The “infidel” here becomes the queer infidel, and every one of the “nickel views” illuminating an interpersonal connection becomes a commentary on a queer connection. This queering of the text, right from the outset, has the effect of infusing even non-sexualized passages with gay subtext. In one vignette, Chester provides a small description of an elderly Spanish woman, born in Tangier, denigrating the local Arabs: “I can call them donkeys to their faces and get away with it, can you?” (223). As with the other vignettes in the work, this passage contains a dual meaning. Taken by itself the passage shows a woman believing she has earned the right to abuse Moroccans due to her age and colonial birth; however when placed in context with the other vignettes and filtered through the title’s carnal aperture, the passage gives the reader a portrait of a woman disparaging the sexual proclivities of Westerner and Easterner alike.

The duality featured in this vignette is indicative of the entirety of the “The Glory Hole.” As a work interrogating the conflict inherent in the unequal relationships between Tanjawi hustlers and their Tangerino patrons, Chester is careful to depict both sides of these relationships and takes pains to demonstrate that betrayals occur on both sides. However, his argument labeling both groups equally exploitive is fallacious. When Michael Walonen writes that Moroccan hustlers’ and European patrons’ interaction in Chester’s work “is generally a case of mutual exploitation, of using the other as a means to satisfying some need, rather than a situation of heartfelt communion,” he overlooks the hierarchy implicit in Chester’s writing (118). The hustlers are always at the disadvantage and the Westerners are always in control of the situation. To be sure, Chester attempts to even the score by showing Moroccans employing psychological manipulation on their European benefactors, but their machinations are never entirely successful.

The eroticism of Chester’s investigation into the sexual liaisons between Westerners and Arabs is perhaps only matched by William Burroughs’ *Naked Lunch*. There is a marked difference in the two writer’s approach, however. Chester struggles to justify and excuse the

sexual tourism engaged in by Tangerinos when he writes that oriental and occidental are equally exploitive. Burroughs, conversely, lets his work speak for itself; he doesn't attempt to qualify or explain away the actions of his characters. Throughout the entirety of the work, the reader is aware that what they are reading is comprised of Burroughs' fantasies and desires and the sexuality on the page is presented as such.

Chester opens "The Glory Hole" with a cynical vignette reproducing a conversation between two Moroccan street hustlers playing a game of one-upmanship based on the stature of their patrons. One claims his Nazarene bought him new clothes, and the other counters that his Nazarene bought him a Cadillac. By opening with this rather childish exchange, Chester makes clear that, for their part, Moroccans only participate in these romances for financial gain. This notion is furthered and restated in several of the vignettes, most notably one in which tourists, like "crusaders," descend on Tangier beach. A boy asks a fat European if he finds him handsome, but just as the foreigner is on the verge of agreeing and soliciting the boy, another Moroccan intervenes and tells the boy not to go with the man "for his lousy five hundred francs" (223). The boy innocently asks if the Nazarene belongs to him, and the Moroccan responds, "I'd never have anything to do with them, any of them. You come with me and I'll give you two thousand" (223). Chester demonstrates that Moroccans exploit each other as well; however, this does not erase the fact that the game in the first vignette is played in terms of Western materialism that can only be supplied by the patrons. The boys brag of financial profit, but the source of that profit can be easily cut off.

Chester argues that Moroccans are able to control their patrons through emotional manipulation. This is evident in several vignettes. In one, a Nazarene tries to end his relationship with his Moroccan lover. The piece begins with the Arab defensive and demanding money: "Don't think you can get rid of me that easily [...] I've worked for you for more than three months. The strength is drained of me. You'd better pay me ten billion francs" (223). After attempting to blackmail the European by threatening to report illegal kif use, the Arab changes tactics and threatens suicide. By the end of the short exchange, the European begs the Arab to stay: "Oh, please, oh, please, don't leave me" (224). But these vignettes demonstrating Moroccan agency are countered by just as many illustrating the opposite. Another vignette recounts a Tangerino laying a trap for his lover in order to destroy the Arab before the Arab can betray him emotionally. The entire piece consists of one brief statement heavy with colonial overtones:

You know what I'm waiting for? [...] I'm waiting for him to get married. I passed the word along through his friends that if he got married I would give him my house and my shop for a wedding present and leave Morocco. He'll be married in a month, you watch and see. He's my third in twelve years; I know them like I know the palm of my hand. And when he gets married, I'll give him nothing, nothing at all. He'll be back in a torn djellaba and shoeless feet, just the way I found him. And he'll have a wife he despises and a new shoeless baby every year. And then I'll never touch another Moor as long as I live. I'll have my revenge. I'll get even with Morocco. (229-30)

The Westerner resents that his lovers see him as little more than financial security, although he himself has been complicit in maintaining that perception. By vowing to have his revenge upon the people he has been exploiting, Chester's unnamed character acknowledges participation in the imperialist cycle. Joseph A. Massad, in *Desiring Arabs*, an investigation into Arab responses to Western gay sexual tourism, quotes Khalid Duran, a Moroccan social scientist, as arguing, "To sodomize a Westerner provides a kind of psychological relief for some people from among the former 'subject races' who now have a chance to take it out on their oppressors [...] to do it to a white man is like taking revenge, along with a source of income" (177). However, even if the Arab were able to inflict an emotional wound, it would pale in comparison with the damage the benefactor is able to wreck in his life.

Chester's claim that both Moroccans and Westerners see the other as hopelessly polluted and are therefore complicit in the other's corruption is equally suspect. One short vignette features a "Moslem" arguing that "The Nazarenes are sick with a plague that is taking away all their strength. They are getting weak and old. [...] They come here to buy our strength and our youth. Without us, they would wither and die" (220). Tangerinos are drawn as parasites feeding on Arab vitality like psychic vampires. Another vignette reveals a Tangerino bemoaning the encroachment of Western modernity upon the streets of Tangier. The loss of Morocco's primitive innocence distresses him much as it concerned Bowles earlier. Cultural imperialism is described as a contagion, infecting everything in the city. The speaker complains that veiled women are being replaced on the streets by school girls in "blue skirts," that cafés are overcrowded and the roads full of automobiles, and, most distressingly, traditional "trance music and trance cults" are disappearing from daily life and are produced only to entertain Europeans

(228). The Westerner turns to Islam for comfort—meaning nativity in this instance—as the one constant in Morocco but finds its consolation is denied him as this indigenous purity is also contaminated. The Tangerino begins to lament his personal culpability in Morocco’s loss. However, by the end of the passage, the speaker repositions himself as the victim of the Moroccans themselves. It is difficult to maintain moral perspective in a place like Tangier:

You cannot remember good and evil, those provincial, arbitrary judgments. You repeal the antiquated laws of your flesh and forget about legislation altogether. Your spirit, your mind, your body are no longer the familiar baggage you embarked with. You open, you open, like a hand, like a cocoon, like a volcano. You start going mad. At last you are not afraid of giving yourself up to your madness. You are afraid of nothing now, not of the smiler with the knife in your bed, not of bronze Prometheus spraying fire across your life. You are afraid of nothing but the loss of Islam. (228)

The Westerner succumbs to Tangier’s madness, which is the true contagion. It is not he who has corrupted the Arabs, it is the Arabs who endanger him! Tangier has polluted the “bodily cells” and the “soul” of the speaker so thoroughly that he can no longer judge the peril he is in (228). The street boy he has invited to share his bed in the quoted passage is not as amenable as he believed him to be; indeed, the boy is treacherously armed. Additionally, the Arab youth assumes the role of Prometheus, irrevocably initiating the speaker into the passion and experience of homosexual liaisons and igniting his passions.

Ultimately, “The Glory Hole” ends with a study of whether love is possible between Moroccans and Westerners. Chester saves this inquiry for last, having first pursued an investigation into the dynamics of power which factor into the romances. Despite his protestations to the contrary, the balance of power is not spread uniformly between the participants; instead, the Westerners maintain the advantage. This holds true for the final vignette which features two post-coital men, a Moroccan and Westerner, lying in bed. Upon hearing the Moroccan “ecstatically” cry out “I love you,” the expatriate’s first reaction is to ask his lover, “What is it you want me to buy you now?” (231) The Moroccan insists that he is sincere and attempts to initiate another round of sex. The vignette, and, indeed, the entire story, ends with the final unanswered question: “Is it possible, wonders the Nazarene” (231). Based on evidence gathered from previous vignettes, Chester argues such love is not possible. The sexual unions in

the story reflect the glory hole through which they are viewed: they are encounters predicated on the use of raw sex to commodify and de-authenticate all meaningful connections between participants. Most of the vignettes' speakers remain nameless and anonymous. Even long term commitments are rendered vacant by the lack of any real sentiment within the couple.

“The Glory Hole” reveals a queer Tangier, inhabited by homosexual tourists—Westerners soliciting Moroccan male prostitutes—making empty connections. Chester’s Maghreb is a space only indicative of gay sexual desire, lacking all sustenance beyond erotic fulfillment. Even Burroughs’ *Naked Lunch*, a work once outlawed in the United States for obscenity, drew inspiration from Tangier in areas beyond the erotic. However, by the time the Moroccan government first expelled him from the country, Chester had grown weary of these liaisons and sought out something deeper and more complex. The result of this search was his romance with Dris. “The Foot” offers a glimpse into this relationship and explores what it means when physical connections are replaced with emotional connections.

Like the earlier work, “The Foot” utilizes a sexual element as its central unifying motif. Whereas the previous text benefitted from employing a glory hole through which to view the action, “The Foot” uses a fetish object—namely, Dris’ foot—as its central metaphor. The unnamed narrator directs all of his love and tenderness for his lover—called Larbi in the text—onto the lover’s foot, which, as the reader quickly learns, becomes a symbol of the entire relationship. Chester credits the moment he kissed the foot as the beginning of the romance. The kiss precipitates a shift in the two men’s thinking, redirecting their energies from the physical encounters that populated the beginning of the relationship to the emotional union that endures until the end. In order to ensure the success of this transformation, Chester attempts to reverse the power dynamics in the relationship. By kneeling in the *medina* and kissing Larbi’s foot, Chester declares that he is subordinate to the other’s dominance. The hierarchy displayed in this moment is a reversal of the power structure portrayed in “The Glory Hole.” Unfortunately, it does not last.

Concurrent with the introduction of the foot as the relationship’s representative symbol, Chester supplies the reader with an image of the foot corrupted and decaying from disease. Both the love affair and the red, ugly lump on Larbi’s heel are attributable to the four a.m. kiss in the *medina*. Chester’s symbolic act of humility accomplishes the opposite of what was expected. Instead of granting Larbi agency in the relationship, the kiss proves corrosive. Chester writes,

“My kiss was slowly but surely eating the bone away” (263). The toxicity of a moment that was meant to be sincere is emblematic of Chester’s inability to shrug off the orientalist preconceptions he brought with him to Morocco and negates the possibility of meaningful cross-cultural contact. By combining these two results—submission and infection—Chester indicates an understanding that it is not possible for a co-equal Western and Eastern relationship without corruption of one by the other. Indeed, a majority of the conflicts the couple encounters are created by Chester’s inability to fully bridge the gap between cultures without damage to either his or Larbi’s well-being. When Chester accompanies Larbi to his father’s funeral, even though he doesn’t quite believe that the father is actually dead, Larbi prevents him from viewing the body. Chester complies because he assumes that he “would be cracking up some Moslem custom if [he] went in” (297). He becomes offended, though, when he is forbidden from entering the cemetery and sent back to Tangier. Even though Chester suspects Larbi and his family of lying to him—“Did Ahmed die? I don’t believe it”—a motive is never provided (300). The reader is left to believe that Chester’s distrust is a product of difference: “Larbi made me feel I wouldn’t be too welcome at his house. He didn’t like me coming into Islam too closely” (283-4).

Chester’s inability to abandon his orientalist baggage becomes apparent when the reader is first introduced to Larbi in a memory that highlights the fundamental differences in their perceptions of Morocco. Chester explains that, “When we traveled around Morocco, Larbi saw (without love or tears) poor people and ancient houses crumbling. I saw magic. I saw the life I lived a thousand, two thousand years ago” (247). Larbi sees his homeland through the eyes of a native, and Chester sees primitive exoticism. This same difference is embodied in Larbi as well. Chester tells the reader that “Larbi” is not his lover’s real name, but that he calls him this because it “means the Arab” (248). Repeatedly throughout the text, Chester conflates Larbi and all Moroccans. He sees them all as manifestations of the same individual: “I suddenly realized they were one and the same [...] Because it came to me that I was in a world where there was one other person only” (261). Later, Chester refers to Larbi as “the other who in his varied disguises has played the parts of all my lovers” (271). The deeper Chester delves into the relationship, the more Larbi’s individuality erodes until, at one point in the text, Chester struggles to know Larbi at all, confusing him with “the Devil, or the Other, or a dream of myself” (281). Of these several options, none are representative of individuals; all are fantasies, lifted, to one degree or another, straight from Said’s definition of Orientalism. Chester’s erasure

of his lover's individuality climaxes when he beds another Arab and realizes that he is again with Larbi, recognizable because of his "shit-colored" skin (278). Despite his efforts to create equality within the relationship, Chester demonstrates time and again that he is unable to conceive of Larbi as anything but a representative of otherness rendered in orientalist language, thereby perpetuating the orientalist attitudes he attempts to disavow.

Larbi's artificiality also becomes intermingled with notions of Morocco as a whole and greater Africa as well. Not only is his lover indicative of all potential (Arab) lovers, but Chester, echoing the passage in "The Glory Hole" discussed above, considers Larbi a surrogate for his entire North African experience. As Chester notes during the initial recitation of the foot-kissing scene, "When I speak of Larbi, I am also speaking of Morocco. And when I speak of Morocco I am also speaking of Larbi. They are one and the same. As when Anthony says to Cleopatra, 'I am dying, Egypt, dying'" (263). The inclusion of the Shakespeare reference indicates that Chester is aware of his participation in orientalist discourse; however, he attempts to justify his usage by claiming that, since these sentiments are couched within terms of endearment, the transgression is forgivable and benign. This is further demonstrated in passages such as the one in which Larbi kisses Chester's forearm, inspiring in Chester an urge to "run [his] fingers through the hair of Morocco. Or of all Africa" (252). Again, Chester substitutes Larbi for all of the Maghreb, feminizing not just his lover but the entire continent. This assignation of gender is yet another of the defining characteristics of orientalist attitudes as outlined by Said in references to a passive orient able to be ravished (311). Boone, however, notes that "that which appears alluringly feminine is not always, or necessarily, female" (92). Chester's feminization of the continent is also a queering of the continent.

Despite Chester's attempts to move beyond the exploitative queer Tangier he offered in "The Glory Hole," he doesn't quite succeed. Indeed, the scope of his gaze has expanded beyond that visible through the sodadic opening in the short story to encompass all of Africa. Ultimately, this culminates in the passage in which Chester turns his eye to the entire "primitive" world:

I want freedom. Even more than Morocco I want to sniff every green and barren corner of this earth. I want to make love in seven hundred languages to seven million Africans—South Americans and Asians too, perhaps, though they do seem a bit over refined, already too much like porcelain and martini glasses. I want to make love with those of the hot regions where water is drunk out of the

palm of the hand. And where drums beat. I want a magic carpet to visit the unfactoryed corners of the world, the places that are not New York. If there are any left. (275)

The freedom Chester yearns for is the freedom of the colonizer. He does not seek liberation for others, for Larbi least of all. When he is forced to leave the country at the end of “The Foot,” he complains that he has lost a kingdom. He writes that “It couldn’t be harder to lose a real kingdom. Land and power and money. But to be robbed of that which is not merely your own living heart but geography of paradise and your dream of the perfect” (297). Chester’s kingdom, that is Morocco, is again represented as a manifestation of dream, much like Larbi, who is himself simultaneously a surrogate for the dream lover and the dream land. Elsewhere, Chester elaborates on the true nature of his notion of freedom by writing that “It’s better to be an old queen in Morocco than King of New York, of all America, Europe, Mexico—provided, of course, that you’re free” (249). The use of the term “queen” implies a freedom to be queer found only in Morocco and not elsewhere.

Chester’s insistence that sovereignty and freedom in the occident is less desirable than its oriental equivalent is simply a return to the perspective of “The Glory Hole.” The orient is still sexualized in “the Foot,” although its scope has expanded beyond the borders espoused in the earlier story. However, whereas in the earlier story Chester portrays the city of Tangier as interchangeable with the bodies of its population of male hustlers, in the latter text he uses the body of his lover to represent all of the Maghreb. Read together, the two works offer a complete glimpse into the vagaries of sexual tourism in Morocco. If the one asks the question, the other supplies the answer, although it’s not the answer Chester intends. His premature disavowal of Bowles as an “old fashioned colonial type” might as well be a self-indictment, as he falls into a more complete form of orientalism that Bowles manages to avoid.

Early in “The Glory Hole,” Chester writes of Tangier’s allure and of the sheer exoticism it represents for the Westerner: “Tanjah. Tingis. Tanger. Tangier. Who is immune to the magic of the name?” (218). He writes that even experienced Tangerinos “will tell you that the very sight or sound of the name still throws enchantment over the mind” (218). Enchantment is certainly what drew Chester’s compatriot, John Hopkins, to Tangier. Like Chester, Hopkins obsesses over the city’s name. Throughout *The Tangier Diaries* he provides a location for each of his diary entries, and, as with Chester, the rendering of Tangier’s name follows a progression.

The first entry for July 12, 1962 gives the name in its conventional Western form: Tangier. By August of the following year, he is calling the city by its Arabic name, Tanja, although he is still using the Western alphabet. Within a few years, Hopkins has taken Arabic classes and now writes the name using the Arabic alphabet: طنجة. It quickly becomes apparent in *The Tangier Diaries* that the city represents more than a physical location for Hopkins. His attraction is centered on the city's colonial history and his fascination rests on the shoulders of the Westerners who arrived before him and the Tangerinos living around him.

Hopkins is clearly a name dropper chasing a literary construction of Tangier. He's attracted to Tangier because of its romantic literary associations. The diary's first entry, written the morning after his arrival in town, mentions that "The Zocco Chico, apparently is the square that inspired Tennessee Williams to write *Camino Real*" (25). In the second entry he triumphantly claims that he has found the tree "where Samuel Pepys wrote his Tangier diary back in 1683, when England ruled this city" (25). The diary continues on like this throughout the nearly two decades it records. Hopkins devotes a considerable amount of space to excited announcements that he has met Paul and Jane Bowles, Tennessee Williams, William Burroughs, or Brion Gysin, or that he has attended parties thrown by Barbara Hutton and Malcolm Forbes, who is a family "friend and neighbor" in New Jersey (141). In a passage dated New Year's Day, 1968, he describes meeting the Beatles in Marrakesh: "John Lennon and Paul McCartney were there, flat on their backs. They couldn't get off the floor let alone talk" (94). The sheer number of famous names Hopkins mentions indicates that he is doing more than simply recording his day to day life. He uses the celebrity encounters to embrace the previous generation of expatriates and situate himself among them. From the beginning Hopkins reveals that he is uninterested in discovering a Morocco that exists outside of the books he's read and beyond the impressions of the expatriates who wrote those books.

Not all of these encounters were successful. It is clear from a comparison of the two memoirs that Chester and Hopkins could not stand one another. Hopkins doesn't pull any punches when he describes Chester as looking like "an enormous baby" with "fat blubbery hairless flesh," who "must be treated like one to be happy" (97). Chester seems to be speaking directly of Hopkins when he writes of his disdain for Tangier's recent arrivals: "They seem untouched by Morocco, as they seemed untouched by Mexico, by France, by the world. They are like the old British colonialists; they don't like to mix with the natives; they have a horror of

assimilation” (226). Whether or not Chester had Hopkins in mind in this passage, he certainly seems to have Hopkins’ number. Throughout *The Tangier Diaries* Hopkins maintains his distance from Arabs, even when he is interacting with them directly. He has an idealized view of Moroccans that remains unspoiled by contrary evidence. During a 1964 journey into the Sahara, accompanied by Berbers, he argues that they are “wiser and happier” than Westerners (51). “The Berber is a kind of ideal among men,” he writes, “He is generous, polite, curious, modest and hospitable” (53). Throughout the entire journey, however, which takes more than a month, none of the Berbers are mentioned individually. Hopkins refers to them collectively and neglects to record a single significant interaction between himself and one of them.

This collective generalization on his part holds true for Morocco and Africa as well. Whenever his travels to a specific city are recounted, the location is portrayed as an outpost of colonization, and if nativity is considered, it is discussed in the language of difference. For Hopkins, there is a distinction between native Morocco and his Morocco, and his Morocco is a decidedly colonial country. In one of the rare instances where he crafts a portrait of an individual native, Hopkins uses the opportunity to justify his division:

The Tanjaouis consider themselves different from other Moroccans. For Mina, our maid, ‘Morocco’ begins on the outskirts of town. She regards the rest of the country as a vast, hazy plain, burning with heat and swept by violent storms, where unwashed and half-naked people wander about, babbling an incomprehensible tongue. When it comes right down to it, her view of Morocco doesn’t differ much from that of most Americans. (82)

The distinction between the Tangier of his experiences and the Morocco as experienced by natives expands as the diary progresses. Early in his expatriation, he flirts with the notion of going native in a manner similar to Gysin’s method of total immersion by assuming the cultural identity of the Arab. During his 1964 journey through the Sahara, Hopkins writes that he “felt sublimely free and can see the point of going native” (54). Within a few years he complains of only being “comfortable in Moroccan robes” (86). Soon he is declaring his “full allegiance” to the “landscape and the Moroccans in it” which, for him, “represent something totally human, something harmoniously timeless” (103). However, even as he declares his devotion to the country and its people, he still assiduously avoids any direct mention of particular Moroccans. Reading through the diary, one gets the impression that Hopkins falls deeply in love with his

idea of what Morocco represents, but that he can't really tolerate Moroccans themselves. The only significant exception to this takes place when Hopkins has an affair with an African woman while touring the American school in Ghana. Even this love affair is couched in orientalist language. He writes of "a soft sucking kiss from full African lips" and "her strong grip" (130). When they meet again the following night, he describes her as "so black that, at times, in the gloom of the club, she seemed to fade from sight altogether" (130). A month later Hopkins has another liaison with a pair of women in a river in Swaziland, and he writes with delight of "Black bellies and free, bobbing breasts" (138). The women Hopkins meets during this tour can only be described in racial language, their blackness emphasized and their primitive behavior marveled at. Even when he is joined by his white mistress, a fellow Tangerino, in Mozambique, he cannot avoid referencing those other sexual encounters in order to contextualize his night with her: "And so I move through yet another exotic landscape, drawing cosmic and minute conclusions, with my lover whom, in another corner of Africa, I had missed so poignantly. No more can I be lonely, for she is close and tender, admitting that the proximity of these wild animals arouses her sexually" (137).

By the time Hopkins marries Ellen Ann Rigsdale in June 1977 he has begun to distance himself even from other Tangerinos, who he now sees as aging colonialists. Although he has lived among them for fifteen years, he refuses to see parallels between their actions and his. He seems almost angry when he writes, "Boul de Breteuil, Marguerite McBey, Paul Bowles, David Herbert—all these long-term residents are utterly dependant [sic] on their Moroccan servants. With them they are able to lead comfortable, creative lives; without them they might all be in nursing homes somewhere" (235). Additionally, he obsesses over the number of expatriates left in the city and doesn't want to be counted among them: "Another person disappears, another house closes, and there is nothing and nobody to replace them" (220-1). This is a far cry from the boredom he complained of in 1966 when Paul Bowles was away from Tangier in Bangkok (73).

Ultimately Hopkins leaves Tangier when his wife convinces him that Morocco is unclean: "A stretch of ugly black rocks [...] repelled her" (225). Though he lived in Tangier for nearly two decades, he never really lived in Morocco. The city he describes in his diary is eerily similar to Bowles' constructions of Tangier in *The Sheltering Sky* and *Let It Come Down* even though it had experienced a complete transformation from international sanctuary to thriving metropolis in the twenty-five years since the dissolution of the International Zone in 1956. The

diary includes an epilogue in which he reflects back on his years in the country. He gushes over the friendships he made within the expatriate community, “the unique concentration of artists and writers who lived there,” and provides some final thoughts on the Moroccans themselves (243). However, Hopkins is nothing if not consistent. His comments are as nuanced and insightful as a travel brochure: “how I miss the zany lifestyle, the warm weather and Mediterranean diet of Tangier. Many of the oldest residents have died, their beautiful homes are closed, but one vital ingredient remains: the ever-tolerant and welcoming Moroccans whose friendship, religion and culture make Tangier the amazing place it still is” (243).

Though Hopkins and Chester arrived in Tangier within months of one another, Hopkins outlasted Chester by more than a decade. And during that decade Hopkins saw much of Morocco, exploring its landscape and investigating its cities; however, its people remained a mystery to him—willfully so. Chester, too, struggled to truly know the Arabs he fetishized so completely. Although both men considered themselves free of the colonial prejudices of the previous generation of expatriates, a consideration of their memoirs demonstrates that their lifestyles were mere repetitions of what came before. They were unable to escape their preconceptions: Chester’s attempts to love Dris as an equal were unsuccessful, and Hopkins’ desire to live among the Arabs and go native were marred by his refusal to get to know them at all.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: TWILIGHT OF DREAMS

Where are the hands that surged
from darkness in the dismal twilight of my dreams?
Where are the feet
that trampled the writhing paths of night?
—Edouard Roditi, “The Prophet Delivered”

Morocco was used up.
—James A. Michener, *The Drifters*

Paul Bowles died in Tangier’s Italian Hospital in late November 1999, and many around the world saw his passing as the end of one of the last vestiges of Morocco’s colonial era. More than any other expatriate, Bowles came to be identified with the city’s golden years. This is partly because, unlike many of the other Tangerinos, Bowles remained in Tangier long after the others had given up hope that the city would regain its former glory. However, there’s more to it than this. Bowles was one of the first Americans to become internationally known for relocating to Morocco and his presence is one of the primary reasons so many other Americans were attracted to North Africa. Additionally, his novels and stories about the Maghreb shaped and influenced American perceptions of Arabs in general and Muslims in particular for years to come: a glance at the numerous articles and essays published after September 11 that turn to Bowles’ work for context and explanation provide evidence of this.

For this reason it is necessary to note that Bowles’ last significant work dealing with Morocco, *The Spider’s House*, a novel set during the revolution, was also his last major book. Following this novel, Bowles primarily turned his attention to translating and recording the oral narratives of his Moroccan friends. The short stories and novels produced by these collaborations explore and preserve many of the qualities of Morocco’s pre-independence past that Bowles found so appealing. This late in life preoccupation of Bowles—the publication of illiterate Moroccans’ pre-revolutionary narratives and memories—demonstrates the enduring legacy of Tangier’s heyday in the 1950s. Bowles decision to focus on documentation over composition allows him to participate in the creation of authentic Tangerian literature, something he was previously only able to approximate through the rendering of his Arab characters.

William Burroughs, too, as this project has demonstrated, carried his sojourn in Tangier with him and continued to write about it throughout his life by returning time and again to the themes of political and cultural disruption that he first witnessed during Morocco's independence. Beginning with the vast metropolis he referred to as "Interzone" in *Naked Lunch* and continuing through the six cities of the Red Night he tours in his final trilogy of novels, Burroughs wrote and rewrote the Moroccan revolution, imagining alternate strategies and crafting more desirable outcomes in a quest to fulfill the unrealized potential inherent in the original event.

This project began with a series of inquiries into the relationship between literature and national identity with regard to Tangier's international status following World War II and the community of writers that took up residence there during these years. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, these writers were profoundly affected by their adopted home. Tangier's unique international composition combined with its political volatility during the years they spent there caused these writers to reevaluate their national allegiances, cultural affiliations, and concepts of liberty. Many of these writers fled the United States to escape from the spreading side-effects of the American Century, specifically the implications of Sen. McCarthy's anti-communist hearings and the increasing homogeneity of the country's suburbs. Tangier and its international make-up provided an antidote to all of this and allowed these writers to explore their personal relationship to nationality and cultural location.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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