National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Canada

JACK KEROUAC'S AURAL VISIONARY SENSE OF NARRATIVE:

AN EXAMINATION OF HIS SPONTANEOUS PROSE TECHNIQUE

Cathy Tsolakos

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
English

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

April 1996

ISBN 0-612-10905-4

Canada

ABSTRACT

JACK KEROUAC'S
AURAL VISIONARY SENSE OF NARRATIVE:
AN EXAMINATION OF HIS SPONTANEOUS PROSE TECHNIQUE

Cathy Tsolakos

This study explores the spontaneous prose theories and techniques of Beat writer Jack Kerouac and examines selected writings to uncover these techniques where Kerouac employed them. For Kerouac, composition and product are one process, a new order of free prose based on natural speech patterns, sacrificing conventional sentence structure. It is this supposition that led him to develop his spontaneous prose theory, which is written out in his two manifestos: "The Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" and the "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose."

My work first examines these aesthetic theories themselves for their validity, drawing not only upon these primary sources but also searching out arguments that support or contradict Kerouac's principle idea. I then analyze the texts for samples of this type of writing, and the affect it has not only on the novel as an art form but also the impact it has on the reader. This project is part of a new wave of Kerouac scholarship that is moving away from biography into the dense and difficult aesthetic material Kerouac left behind, opening up the possibility of a rediscovery of the texts themselves.

Dedication

To the memory of Professor Lawrence P. Nowicki, supervisor of my thesis and pretty much my favorite part of Concordia's English Department, whose love of American Literature was infectious, and whose friendship I dearly miss.

Adios, King. Catch you later.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PARENTHETIC TABLE

Parenthetical References for Kerouac's Works	
"The Beat Generation"	"The Beat Generation"
"Belief and Technique For Modern Prose"	"Belief..." Quoted always from Charters, *The Beat Reader.*
Big Sur	*Big Sur*
Desolation Angels	*Desolation Angels*
Dharma Bums	*Dharma Bums*
Doctor Sax	*Doctor Sax*
"Essentials of Spontaneous Prose"	"Essentials..." Quoted always from Charters, *The Beat Reader.*
Lonesome Traveler	*Lonesome Traveler*
Mexico City Blues	*MCB*
On The Road	*Road*
"The Origins of the Beat Generation"	"Origins..."
Readings by Jack Kerouac on The Beat Generation	Readings... Verve LP
Scattered Poems	*Scattered Poems*
The Subterraneans	*Subterraneans*
The Town and the City.	*TandC*
Visions of Cody	*VofC*
Vanity of Dulouz	*VofD*

CHAPTER ONE

THE TRUE BLUE SONG OF MAN

This thesis intends to explore what has traditionally been the dividing line between methodology and product within a literary context. Methodology is the process by which one composes or creates an artistic piece, and the end product is the final piece itself, most often edited, sometimes censored. While the process of composition and the final end result have normally been considered two entirely different things, Jack Kerouac considered them one and the same. A movement against such rigid structures is the prose and poetry of Jack Kerouac, reflected in his philosophy on language and literature. It is argued that as Kerouac's writings develop, they are not in any way autonomous texts that stand apart from his theories, but that text and theory are two elements that share a common creative and methodological origin.

The birth of spontaneous prose emerged as a necessary response to an otherwise inflexible age. Its origins are attributed to Kerouac's frustration with the nature of prose and poetry produced during the 1940s in America. Lofty language and laborious revisions aimed at a perfected art form managed to yield a literature that was mechanical and lifeless. Axioms emphasizing the role of rational thought and calling for careful deliberations served only to distance the field further from the creative force that is the literary process. Kerouac wanted to see literature "...returned to its origin, in the bardic child, truly ORAL...instead of gray faced Academic quibbling" (Preface to *Scattered Poems*).

Other artists of the time who were also occupied with similar thoughts became collectively known as "The Beats." Kerouac originated the term "Beat Generation" to describe a group of writers and poets that included William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, and himself. This movement was primarily a reaction against the cold, academic style that dominated the forties and early fifties. The Beats created a counter-culture, challenging the dominant, conservative literary doctrines of the time. They sought to replace conformity and precision with a style that was unpredictable, uncalculated, and liberating.

When considering literary culture to be a product of the official culture, it becomes necessary to place Kerouac and his peers within the context of the governing attitudes of a post-World War II America. The decade was dominated by a cold war ideology and gave rise to attitudes such as consumerism, racism, anti-communism, and social conformity. It was also a time of tremendous technological advances. All of these social properties materialized under the threat of nuclear annihilation. In an

article entitled "The White Negro," Norman Mailer details the emergence of the hipster during this period in American history:

> It is on this bleak scene that a phenomenon has appeared: the American existentialist - the hipster, the man who knows that if our collective condition is to live with instant death by atomic war, relatively quick death by the State as *l'univers concentrationnaire*, or with a slow death by conformity with every creative and rebellious instinct stifled (at what damage to the mind and the heart and the liver and the nerves no research foundation for cancer will discover in a hurry), if the fate of twentieth century man is to live with death from adolescence to premature senescence, why then the only life giving answer is to accept the terms of death, to live with death as immediate danger, to divorce oneself from society, to exist without roots, to set out on that unchartered journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self (Mailer 588).

The attitude of the Beat Writers to this value structure included an awareness of the decadent components of Western culture and a negation of the destructive quality in American society. Having been 'beaten' by the system, they discovered an alternative way of life. Living this lifestyle allowed them to transcend the status quo and to celebrate the common man, much in the tradition of earlier American transcendentalists, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Allen Ginsberg states that "art lies in the consciousness of doing the thing, in the attention to the happening, in the sacramentalization of everyday reality" (*VofC* viii). Kerouac's literary genealogy goes beyond the transcendentalists to include traces of Gertrude

Stein's automatic writing, James Joyce's stream of consciousness, and even William Wordsworth's declaration to use the language of ordinary men.[1] Kerouac's work contains a sense of fluidity; he created a kinetic prose in the face of a nation unwilling to change. He wrote a fiction unaltered and unadorned in an age of idealism and propaganda, recording the essence of existence in post-war America. *On The Road* chronicles Sal Paradise's frantic journey across the countryside and back. The novel is filled with impressions of the underbelly of American cities and all who dwell there:

> And Dean and I, ragged and dirty as if we had lived off locust, stumbled out of the bus in Detroit. We decided to stay up in all-night movies on Skid Row. It was too cold for parks... For thirty-five cents each we went into the beat-up old movie and sat down in the balcony till morning, when we were shooed downstairs. The people who were in that all-night movie were the end. Beat Negroes who'd come up from Alabama to work in car factories on a rumour; old white bums; young longhaired hipsters who'd reach the end of the road and were drinking wine; whores, ordinary couples, and housewives with nothing to do, nowhere to go, nobody to believe in (*Road* 201).

Ginsberg applauds Kerouac's ability to transcribe onto the written page honest images of Americana. He writes: "Mortal America's here... disappearing Elevateds, diners, iceboxes, dusty hat racks preserved from oblivion... I don't think it's possible

[1] From Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1802.

to proceed further in America without first understanding Kerouac's tender brooding compassion for bygone scene..." (*VofC* vii).

Kerouac's theories on the essence of language are set forth in his two manifestos, "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose"[2] and "The Essentials of Spontaneous Prose."[3] The basic principles behind both these essays called for a new methodology in literary writing. The conventional sentence structure needed to be sacrificed and discarded. A new order of free prose is born based on natural speech patterns, no longer laden with syntactical rules. Of primary concern was the need for diction to develop in an uncensored mode. With language one "sketches" an image-object, not unlike an artist might sketch with charcoal on a blank page. This tenet is touched upon in a passage from *Doctor Sax:*

> The other night I had a dream that I was sitting on the sidewalk on Moody Street, Pawtucketville, Lowell, Mass., with a pencil and paper in my hand saying to myself 'Describe the wrinkly tar of this sidewalk, also the iron pickets of Textile Institute, or the doorway where Lousy and you and GJ's always sittin and dont stop to think of words when you do stop, just think of the picture better - and let your mind off yourself in this work' (*Doctor Sax* 3).

Kerouac's theories, and their manifestation in his experimental prose, can be interpreted as a reaction against the conventional distinctions between content and form. His spontaneous prose technique suggests that the writing of literature be

[2] See Appendix B for a copy of this manifesto.

[3] See Appendix A for a copy of this manifesto.

considered a performance art--performance art that understands the process of the creative act as an end in and of itself. Emphasis is placed upon the physical nature of language and its texture. Words contain value for their self-reflexive quality, and are not solely vehicles for meaning. Evidence of this is found in Kerouac's most experimental novel, *Visions of Cody*. In one passage, he attempts to transcribe the actual sights and sounds associated with a Frisco jazz bar. Here, series of short, syncopated syllables in rapid succession echo the bop beat of the alto player:

> ... -three pieces, piano, drums, bass--working the hound dog to death, rattle-ty-boom, crash, the drummer was all power and muscles, his huge muscular neck held and rocked, his foot boomed in the bass, old intervals, blump, be whom, blump, boom... (*VofC* 352).

To ensure that the rhythmical quality of spontaneous prose is maintained, arbitrary grammatical impositions, like punctuation, are removed, and thereby so is their threat of interruption to the inherent melodic flow of language.[4] Kerouac suggests space dashes be employed in their place. METHOD consists of "no periods separating sentence structures already arbitrarily riddled by false colons and timid usually needless commas--but the vigorous space dash separating rhetorical breathing" ("Essentials..." 57). The dashes would serve to separate the natural pauses in our breaths similar to a jazz musician drawing for breath between riffs. Dean Moriarty's vernacular in *On the Road* illustrates how speech is fragmented with the use of

[4] By the inherent flow of melodic language I mean that if Kerouac's writings are created within the context of an oral tradition, it would follow that the confines of conventional sentence structuring would perhaps interrupt the rhythm transcending from the authorial voice recounting a chain of passages with awkward and unintended markings.

dashes: "Suddenly Dean leaned in earnestly and said, 'Sal, I have something to ask of you--very important to me--I wonder how you'll take it--we're buddies, aren't we?" (*Road* 108).

Ideally what is produced from a spontaneous method of composition is an aural-visionary sense of narrative. Kerouac's technique created a prose based on the natural rhythms of speech, compatible with the flow of perception as recorded and recollected by the writer's thoughts. The result is a post-modernist reconsideration of language whose form is borrowed from ordinary speech, littered with dashes that correspond to the writer's own exhalations. When the flow combines with the pace created by the procession of one's own involuntary thoughts, the result is what Kerouac referred to as the rhythm of experience. He believed this rhythm to have its own sound.

The creative act of a spontaneous composition releases, at the moment of writing, a rhythmical pattern determined by two basic factors: the writer's perceptions and his/her length of breath. It follows, then, that the physical manifestation of these two processes--their transcription on to the written page--remain true to the rhythms of exhalation and perception of the writer, and is not abandoned to be replaced with a more awkward, conventional narrative. To properly read the text in the manner it was meant to be experienced, the text insists upon being read aloud. Lawrence Lipton comments on the nature of the prose, explaining that, "when it is set down in writing it is merely being recorded for playback. Playback may be by eye... but it does not come fully alive again until it is played back by the human voice box... if it is written as oral language, it will play back naturally and

convincingly" (Lipton 228). The written words on the page are not to be considered as the text but rather the "score," much in the same manner that a sheet of music is not melodic in and of itself, but simply a piece awaiting performance. And so the reader of Kerouac who only considers the text with his/her eye is tempted to race through the prose, reading on an even keel and neglecting the pauses represented by the dashes. To truly acquire a sense of the rhythm Kerouac was working towards, the text must be read aloud.

The production of a purely spontaneous piece of writing ends with its transcription. Revision, or for Kerouac, the absence of revision, is crucial. He offers this:

> By not revising what you've already written you simply give the reader the actual workings of your mind during the writing itself: you confess your thoughts about events in your own unchangeable way... I spent my entire youth writing slowly with revisions and endless re-hashing speculation and deleting and got so I was writing one sentence a day and the sentence had no FEELING. Goddamn it, FEELING is what I like in art, not CRAFTINESS and the hiding of feelings (Berrigan 541).

Changes to the initial writings, if there are any to be made, are done so in accordance with specific guidelines. Interruptions to the steady stream of perception are opportunities to pause and capture the image in mind at the moment with clarity, not a chance to search for the perfect word or phrase with which to describe that image. "Don't think of words when you stop but to see picture better" ("Belief..." 59). Accommodations were also made to correct any factual errors, including

geographical locations, proper names, historical dates, etc. It should be noted, however, that editorial revisions were made in order to avoid libel suits. Because Kerouac drew upon personal experiences for his novels, the names of characters, places, and cities were altered to meet with the publisher's approval (in *The Subterraneans*, Kerouac transforms New York City into San Francisco for this purpose).

The controversy surrounding revision has led to numerous debates among Kerouac's critics. Rumours abound as to whether or not the author remained true to his convictions. The confusion begins with Kerouac: "when I typed the book for the publisher, I wouldn't type what I crossed out... now I don't cross anything out when I write" (Charters *Berg Manuscripts* 432). Later on in his career, he revealed in an interview that, "all my editors since Malcom Cowley have instructions to leave my prose exactly as I wrote it. In the days of Malcom Cowley, with *On the Road* and *The Dharma Bums*, I had no power to stand by my style for better or for worse" (Berrigan 540).

Until the novels' manuscripts become available, the accusations must remain set aside. Necessity dictates that I proceed with the hypothesis that what Kerouac wrote is, for the most part, what was published, since those are the texts we have at our disposal. I concur with Charter's conviction that "he always wrote spontaneously, but in the 1950s and early 1960's he sometimes revised for publication" (Charters *Berg Manuscripts* 433).

Kerouac's aversion to revision serves a dual function, aside from its primary role of ensuring the prose remains intact and unblemished by conscious impositions:

"the best writing is always the most painful personal wrung-out tossed from cradle warm protective mind" ("Essentials..." 57). Its secondary role proves no less vital--"never afterthink to 'improve' or defray impressions" ("Essentials... 57). The absence of revision succeeds in placing a higher value on an original sketch than on a polished novel. The underlying assumption of revision is that original thoughts worked out into words are merely a "first draft," and that if left untouched, would remain unfinished. To these ends, revision connotes improvement. What is gained by its expulsion is the inversion of such a value system. In Kerouac's estimation, initial thoughts are deemed best.

Kerouac's position on revision in writing can be understood within the larger framework of the Beat attitudes towards the socio-political situation at the time. With the suggestion of an error in need of correction, the concept of revision is antithetical to the fundamental philosophies of the Beat Generation. Their basic credo proclaims a celebration of the present, an understandable priority for Kerouac and those of his time, living in a post-war America. Just as literary revision empowers the moral censorship of one's conscious mind, so did the governing powers enforce a censorship on a grander scale. Censorship in the form of publication bans and obscenity trials were imposed to determine what people read and thought. It was precisely this active attempt by the State to manipulate truths from which the Beats disassociated themselves. John Clellon Holmes defines "Beat" as "a state of mind from which all unessentials have been stripped, leaving it receptive to everything around it, but impatient with trivial obstructions" (Holmes 117). The Beats expressed their denunciation of superimposed, confining forms through their art. Kerouac's work is a

celebration of things as they are, stripped down to its essentials, and emptied of trivial obstructions that would only serve to obscure truths. In his manifestos, Kerouac repeatedly instructs one to abandon all restrictive tools: "no pause to think of proper word; no revisions; not 'selectivity' of expression; no periods; begin not from preconceived notion of what to say; never afterthink; no fear or shame in the dignity of yr experience, language and knowledge" ("Essentials... 57). He offers something freer and open-ended in their place. Be "submissive to everything, open, listen; write in recollection and amazement for yourself; accept loss forever; write what you want bottomless from bottom of mind; be in love with yr life; something that you feel will find its own form; blow as deep as you want" ("Essentials..." 57). Stripping language of restrictions will, for Kerouac, lead to hidden truths, exposing a literature based on the writer's natural rhythms of thought. He speaks of "the discipline of pointing out things directly, purely, concretely, no abstractions or explanations, wham wham the true blue song of man" (Preface to *Scattered Poems*).

Concerns have been raised as to whether the sequence of thoughts that occur in Kerouac's mind are so personal, so subjective, that only he who experiences the series of perceptions could alone make sense of them. Charters disagrees:

> The result is not chaotic... the train of association is sufficiently detailed in image to permit our following it. But we have the pleasure of surprise, too, since, like the speaker himself, we are an audience for the experience. Like us, he cannot quite predict what will come next on the train of thought. Nor is he seeking to predict the association (Charters *Bibliography* 292).

Kerouac's faith in the coherence of the exercise is evident. No effort is made to determine or control the direction the series of thoughts will take. By recording the procession of images as they occur in the mind's eye, the writing becomes a "struggle to sketch the flow that already exists intact in mind" ("Belief..." 59). An understanding of the ordering is assured because the reader will recognize similar patterns of associative thinking in themselves. "Blow as deep as you want--write as deeply, fish as far down as you want, satisfy yourself first, then reader cannot fail to receive telepathic shock and meaning and excitement by same laws operating in his own human mind" ("Essentials..." 58).

Some might express reluctance to abandon the inhibitions that could tamper with the free-flowing stream of sensations. In order to allow this inherent flow the opportunity to present itself in its raw form, the writer must alleviate all tendencies to mask it. Composing without a conscious filter, a style of prose is produced that is truthful because it offers the actual workings of the mind itself during the moment of perception. For Kerouac, the ideal writing conditions begin with the writer's mind set:

> If possible, write "without consciousness" in semi-trance (as Yeats' later "trance writing") allowing subconscious to admit in own uninhibited interesting necessary and so "modern" language what conscious art would censor, and write excitedly, swiftly, with writing-or-typing cramps, in accordance (as from center to periphery) with laws of orgasm, Reich's "beclouding of consciousness." *Come* from within, out--to relaxed and said. ("Essentials..." 58).

One of the common accusations raised by critics concerns itself with the expansive nature of a spontaneously produced text. The complaint often centers on the consequence of a modality in writing that reflects the thoughts and images as they develop in the author's mind. The argument questions a work devoted to the movements of the mind itself, a mind which would transcribe every minute detail with equal enthusiasm, unable to discriminate. Norman Podhoretz comments on the prose: "it is all very unremarkable and commonplace, but for Kerouac it is always the greatest, the wildest, the most. What you get is a man proclaiming that he is alive and offering every trivial experience he has ever had in evidence" (Podhoretz 111).

What Podhoretz has overlooked, or perhaps misunderstood, is that acts of discrimination and revision go against the laws of spontaneous prose (the word "spontaneous" itself should have served as an adequate indication that selectivity is not a priority). As I explain later, each passage Kerouac wrote contained a "jewel center." This center is in itself a discriminatory act, but within this boundary, Kerouac's prose is spontaneous. Seymour Krim counters Podhoretz's view, pointing to the perception that:

> the unadorned strength of the prose lay in the fact that no detail was too odd or tiny or inhuman to escape Kerouac's remarkably quick and unbored eye; and because of his spontaneous method of composition, he was able to trap actuality as it happened--the literal preciousness of the moment (Preface to *Desolation Angels* 21).

Artistic satisfaction cannot be achieved through countless laborious revisions, omissions, and resubmissions. The painstaking effort of "sweating for one's art" as it were, culminates only in a form of self-deception.

Composing without a conscious filter, a prose is produced that lacks intention, offering the actual workings of the mind itself during the moment of perception. The successful creation of a spontaneously composed work relies upon the absence of editorial deceit to intrude upon what is otherwise an affirmation of the instinctual immediacy of the free-form response. The dismissal of preconceived notions of a perfected art form produces a liberating effect. Once the subject matter becomes the creative act itself, everything within the writer's scope is fair game. Stating that "life is my art" (*Scattered Poems* 1), Kerouac offers the reader nothing less than details that compile to add up to his vision of reality:

> My work comprises one vast book like Proust's except that my remembrances are written on the run instead of afterwards in a sickbed... The whole thing forms one enormous comedy, seen through the eyes of poor Ti Jean (me), otherwise known as Jack Duluoz, the world of raging action and folly and also of gentle sweetness seen through the keyhole of his eye (*Big Sur* viii).

Kerouac captures the essence of an existence stripped of empty euphemisms and elaborate embellishments to give us the true renderings of his perceptions "Which is after all the only thing I've got to offer: the true story of what I saw and how I saw it" (*Big Sur* 83). The desire for truth in art led Kerouac to preserve his writings intact in the hopes of offering a sincere or honest rendering of the relationship

between mind and emotion. To revise the instantaneous transcriptions in any way would only serve to alter the work and distance it from his ideals. Kerouac states: "I was originating... a new way of writing about life, no fiction, no craft, no revising afterthoughts... all of it innocent go-ahead confession, the discipline of making the mind the slave of the tongue with no chance to lie or re-elaborate..." (*Desolation Angels* 238).

Drawing upon recollections and mental conjurings as the foundations for writing takes on such personal overtones that critics often confuse Kerouac's novels as autobiographical. Perhaps this can help to explain why for every one critique of his fiction there are two biographies. The tendency to mistake author for narrator has plagued Kerouac, distorting a great deal of the existing criticism. Podhoretz states: "Solipsism is precisely what characterizes Kerouac's fiction. *On the Road* and *The Subterraneans* are so patently autobiographical in content that they become almost impossible to discuss as novels" (Podhoretz 210).

By blurring what distinguishes Kerouac from his narrators, critics can no longer lay claim to any objectivity. If the writing seems unpolished or fragmented, it is perceived as such within the context of autobiography. The assumptions carried with labelling the novels as such include the fundamental misconception that Jack Kerouac and Sal Paradise, the narrator in *On the Road,* are interchangeable. Initial impressions could easily reach similar conclusions. The novel does borrow greatly from life and the central characters can be quickly recognized as key Beat figures. However, upon further examination, to conclude that the two (Kerouac and Paradise) are one and the same, would be short-sighted. *On the Road* is a work of fiction,

complete with characters and plot. While events in Kerouac's life do initiate the writing, they are not recorded as a memoir, listed in chronological order. What separates author from narrator is the deferral of knowledge. Simply stated, Kerouac knows more than Sal Paradise does. It is Kerouac, as author, who controls what direction the novel will follow. Sal's obligation as narrator is the telling of the tale.

It should be noted that although Kerouac employs personal experiences in his novels, these experiences are a point of departure and not content for conventional linear plot development. Despite the confessional nature of his prose and the easily recognized set of characters, Kerouac qualifies his work as "remembrances," reminding us that the emphasis is not so much on events, but on his perception and impressions of those events, "seen through the keyhole of his eye" (*Big Sur* viii). *Visions of Cody* is an exercise in spontaneous prose unequalled in any other of Kerouac's novels. Here, conventional plot development is replaced by a series of vignettes, visual impressions based on a given image or memory. The writing becomes a visual art form, following the tenets of spontaneous prose closely, beginning with SET-UP:

> The object is set before the mind, either in reality, as in sketching (before a landscape or teacup or old face) or set in the memory wherein it becomes the sketching from memory of a definite image object... begin not from preconceived notion of what to say about image but from jewel center of interest in subject of image at moment of writing ("Essentials..." 57-8).

The mind is encouraged to move freely from the "jewel center," out towards the periphery of his/her scope of reference, including repetitions, word play and

memories, and returns back to the principle study. Part Two of *Visions of Cody* begins with the image of a young Cody Pomeray milling about in the poolrooms of Denver. The first four paragraphs devote themselves to that "jewel center." The opening sentences of each of the four paragraphs centers on the image: "AROUND THE POOLHALLS OF DENVER during World War II a strange looking boy began to be noticeable... Have you seen anyone like Cody Pomeray? The appearance of Cody Pomeray on the poolroom scene in Denver at a very early age... The first to notice him was Tom Watson" (*VofC* 47-9). The prose following the initial "jewel center" moves freely and rapidly over other related images, returning each time full circle, back to its original subject.

The "jewel center" acts as an impetus, propelling the writing forward. Its direction is not limited to linear movement, but can include various branches or levels of thought. Scattered as the details and sensations may seem, they are compiled to create a complete mind picture. Timothy Hunt accurately describes the mental processes at work in Kerouac's prose:

> This is not stream of consciousness, something written to suggest the mental processes of a character, but what might be termed stream of attention since the passage records a process which is conscious, directed, and focused on the physical world. Details pile up in the order they strike the sketcher's senses, and the passage is emphatically present tense, moving from the immediate scene, through association, to a recognition and release from the initial interest (Hunt 173).

Kerouac summarized his theory of spontaneous artistic expression at the request of his peers. Having read his manuscripts, they were eager to learn more about his innovative literary technique. Ironically, most major studies since then have passed over the literature to focus on his life. Media attention after the publication of *On the Road* was instant and extreme. Kerouac was baptized "King of the Beats," and was considered more of a pop icon than a serious writer:

> I haven't seen a review, or an article, or piece of gossip, about my own writing which has attempted to evaluate my specific prose method (is anyone aware that I have a specific prose method?) which showed my knowledge of recent problems of prose composition ("The Beat Generation" 6).

The lack of academic interest in his writings was in part due to the sensational reception given to *On the Road*. In September 1957, Gilbert Millstein's review for *The New York Times* hailed the publication of the novel an "historic occasion... an authentic work of art" (Charters Biography 288). Credited as the author of a book that would turn on an entire generation, Kerouac found himself dedicating a significant amount of his personal and professional life recovering from his celebrity status.

CHAPTER TWO

NO DIRECTION TO GO BUT INWARD

Compositional theories, even those heralding the use of spontaneity, are not themselves spontaneously created. Their existence can be traced back to an earlier school of thought that helped trigger their emergence. Merit is measured in part by the impact these earlier theories had on the movements which followed. They are rarely isolated events that emerge only to return quickly to obscurity, but are linked to a chain of related modes of thought. It is not uncommon to find these theoretical movements labelled as either pre-, post-, anti-, or neo-.

In this vein, Kerouac's work is not so much a reaction against the prevalent modes of literature, but an attempt to reach beyond their scope. In contrast to the conservatism that dominated the decade, Beat literature was considered dark and broody; negative to the point of becoming un-American. Kerouac laments of his accusors:

> ...woe unto those who think that the Beat Generation means crime, delinquency, immorality, amorality... woe unto those who don't realize that America must, will, is, changing now, for the better I say. Woe unto those who believe in the atom bomb... in conflict and horror and violence and fill our books and screens and livingrooms with all that crap, woe in fact unto those who make evil movies about the Beat Generation where innocent housewives are raped by beatniks! Woe unto those who are the real dreary sinners that even God finds room to forgive... woe unto those who spit on the Beat Generation, the wind'll blow it back ("Origins..." 76)

While the general population found comfort in preserving the status quo, anything considered as fringe was deemed delinquent.

But if the Beats were depicted as a threat to the American values and ideologies held dear during the 1950s, it was a distorted portrait. John Clellon Holmes' description of "beat" includes an affirmation and celebration of life. That the "specific object of their quest was spiritual...if they seem to trespass most boundaries, legal or moral, it was only in the hope of finding a belief on the other side" (Charters *Beat Reader* 6). Kerouac's road novels can be understood as an extension of this quest. All Sal Paradise's travels serve to make one allegorical journey, embarked upon in hopes of discovering an alternative and favourable existence.

Sal begins the narrative with the compulsion to leave his present situation, and complains "I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about, except that it had something to do with the miserable weary split-up and my feeling that everything was dead" (*Road* 6). He begins his adventures on the road naively

enough, yet despite, or perhaps because of, all he encounters along the way, he does not conclude the voyage with any cynicism or disillusionment. In retrospect, Sal's final impressions of the countryside are not of pessimism but of promise. The novel ends with a poetic testament to a hopeful future, culminating in a nostalgic image wherein the hobos of earlier passages are replaced with children:

> So in America when the sun goes down and I sit on the old broken down river pier watching the long, long skies over New Jersey and sense all that raw land that rolls in one unbelievable huge bulge over to the West Coast, and all that road going, all the people dreaming in the immensity of it, and in Iowa I know by now the children must be crying in the land where they let the children cry, and tonight the stars'll be out, and don't you know that God is Pooh Bear? the evening star must be drooping and shedding her sparkler dims on the prairie, which is just before the coming of complete night that blesses the earth, darkens all rivers, cups the peaks and folds the final shore in, and nobody, nobody knows what's going to happen to anybody besides the forlorn rags of growing old, I think of Dean Moriarty, I even think of Old Dean Moriarty the father we never found, I think of Dean Moriarty (*Road* 253-4).

In examining Kerouac's experimental prose as a whole, some consideration should be given to the number of influences that factor into the creation of his technique. Kerouac's style of prose can be examined in light of the culmination of various traditions and concepts he had experienced or was exposed to throughout his

life, spanning from the earliest of childhood teachings to ideas introduced to him by other Beat writers.

Predictably, the more conventional aspects of influence, from the pages of Proust and Woolf to the traditional doctrines of Catholicism, are derived from Kerouac's earliest experiences. Those that are characteristically more experimental, from elements of Zen Buddhism to Neal Cassady's energetic vernacular, occurred much later. Without oversimplifying matters too much, a dichotomy has resulted between the small town values of Kerouac's childhood in Lowell, Massachusetts and the exposure to colourful characters and adventures contained within his experiences in New York City and beyond. While such a diverse assortment of elements lends itself to debate on how much emphasis is to be placed where, its complexity lays to rest any accusations that Kerouac's theory is nothing more than an exercise in improvisation.

Sketching

The concept of sketching was first introduced to Kerouac in the autumn of 1951. Ed White suggested that to describe what he saw on the streets, Kerouac approach writing not unlike an artist would a painting.[1] This signified a turning point in Kerouac's identity as a writer and his relationship to his work. He would later refer to White's recommendation as "the great moment of discovering my soul" (*VofC* 93). The initial concept of sketching developed into the foundations of spontaneous prose, affecting Kerouac's art from that point on. *The Town and the*

[1] Ed White was a student from Denver, Colorado with whom Kerouac began to associate. They met through a mutual friend, Neil Cassady. White is referred to in *On The Road* as Tim Gray.

City, written between 1946-9 was the only novel completed prior to this discovery. Kerouac had hoped his first novel, written in a conventional prose style, would earn him the reputation as a "serious" writer. His dissatisfaction with the end result was evident: "*The Town and the City* was written according to what they told you at Columbia University. Fiction. But I told you, the novel's dead. Then I broke lose from all that and wrote picaresque narratives. That's what my books are" (Charters *Bibliography* 4). Along with the revelation of sketching came the freedom for Kerouac to break loose from traditional linear novel writing and concentrate instead on taking his art in a new direction.

Kerouac's sketching has its roots in the action painting of the expressionist artist Jackson Pollock. Pollock originated the concept of "Action Painting" as a reaction against the representational art form. Uninterested in mirroring images already fixed in reality, he relied on physical spontaneous movement to determine the shape his paintings would eventually take. The similarities between the two genres are clear. They share a common methodology and objective in their work--only their tools differ. With the need for calculation lacking from their vision of reality, action painting attempts to achieve a greater sense of creative freedom using unpremeditated, trance-like methods. The subject matter finds its source not in fantasy, but in concrete pictorial sensations. This methodology is mirrored in Kerouac's description of SET-UP:

> The object is set before the mind, either in reality, as in sketching (before a landscape or teacup or old face) or is set in the memory wherein it

becomes the sketching from memory of a definite image-object ("Essentials..." 57).

Pollock's aim was to get inside his painting, literally, by standing on an unstretched canvas placed on the floor from where he would begin to paint in any direction desired. Filling the canvas with paint dripping from either a brush or a paint can, Pollock found the freedom to capture the emotion and intensity of a given moment. He considered preconceived notions of subject matter along with careful illustrations of accurate representations to be lacking in any genuine artistic expression and creativity. Kerouac's presence is slightly more metaphorical. Timothy Hunt makes reference to writing "as the process of recording the artist's act of perception or interpretation of that experience. It is in this sense that Kerouac puts himself inside his fictional world in sketching" (Hunt 124).

Through sketching, the writer transcribes his reaction to the image and uses that as the starting point for the prose to develop without prior notions concerning scheme or content. Passages begin with a specific object as a "jewel center" and travel outwards, detailing the associative process in words. In one excerpt from *Visions of Cody*, Kerouac begins with the initial scene of a B-movie marquee as the set-up. "THE CAPRICIO B-MOVIE: the glass facings on the marquee, over which the moveable letters are slid, are in places broken so that you can see bulbs inside and some of the bulbs are broken; further away the letters always misspell..." (*VofC* 4-5). Kerouac details the image primarily with the skill of a photographer using a full-zoom lens. The scene pans gradually to incorporate peripheral content to create a larger picture. From exposed lightbulbs the image moves further to a marquee that is

illegible from a distance, and pans out farther still to include banana peels on the front sidewalk. His field of vision continues to expand, with him noting "across the street is an old beat gas station--diner on the other corner" (*VofC* 4). The scene culminates with the recognition that the movie house is the "bottom of the world" in contrast to the magnitude of "gleaming plastic auditoriums and soaring glass fronts on Park Avenue, and the rich districts of Denver and the world" (*VofC* 5).

Neal Cassady

> "Hello, do you remember me--Dean Moriarty? I've come to ask you to show me how to write" (*Road* 5).

Early in *On the Road*, his desire to become a writer leads Dean Moriarty directly to Sal Paradise's doorstep in search of guidance. In truth, it was Kerouac who became somewhat of a student of Cassady's unique writing style. He was so deeply affected by Neal Cassady that he devotes two central characters, Dean Moriarty in *On the Road* and Cody Pomeray in *Visions of Cody*, as a portrait of his peer.

Cassady's spontaneous narratives gained notoriety among the Beats. His letters, volumes of correspondence circulated among the group and received favourable reviews. His manuscripts, an autobiography posthumously published as *The First Third*, did not fare as well. One critic, N. L. Eddy acknowledges that "Cassady was never the writer that Kerouac was" (20). In a letter, Neal Cassady's wife, Carolyn, describes Neal as "more a 'man of letters' than a 'writer'" (Eddy 20). Cassady himself vents his frustration in a letter to Kerouac, dated 1948:

> ...my prose has no individual style as such, but rather an unspoken and still unexpressed groping toward the personal. There is something that wants to come out; something of my own that must be said. Yet, perhaps, words are not the way for me. I have found myself looking to others for the answer to my soul... (Eddy 20).

His struggle, I believe, is one that also plagued Kerouac: the question of whether the sum of the parts is indeed greater than the whole. But Cassady, unlike Kerouac, could not find the means to overcome the obstacle of combining powerful fragments of spontaneous prose into a unified text.

In the winter of 1951, Kerouac was especially impressed with a 40,000 word frenzied account of Cassady's relationship with a Denver woman. The letter, referred to as "The Great Joan Anderson Letter," has become somewhat legendary, known for the intensity and energy of a prose filled with sensory and sensual descriptives. The letter chronicles Cassady's adventures in having loved and lost the affections of one Joan Anderson, in a fury of uninhibited, intricately detailed images faithfully penned according to his streetwise speech patterns, circa 1950. In a memorable passage, he recounts the humorous position he finds himself in during one of his sexual exploits. When interrupted, he is forced to hide in a bathroom:

> let this be a lesson to you, man, never become separated from your clothes, at least keep your trousers handy when doing this sort of thing in a strange house--oops, my goodness, I forgot for a second that some of you are out of circulation and certainly not in any need of "Lord Chesterfield's" counselling--don't show this to your wives, or tell them that I only offer

> this advice to pass on to your sons, or if that's too harsh, to your dilettante friends, whew! got out of that (Charters *Beat Reader* 203).

Taken with Cassady's energetic vernacular, Kerouac considered the letter "the greatest piece of writing I ever saw" (Charters *Beat Reader* 203). He was not alone in his opinion. Allen Ginsberg recounts, "it read with speed and rush, without halt, all unified, one molten flow; no boring moments, everything significant and interesting, sometimes breathtaking in speed and brilliance" (Ginsberg 102).

Cassady's letters contained an intensity Kerouac felt absent in his own work. Cassady's writing, complete with dashes, parentheses, and meticulous details, inspired Kerouac in the developing of his spontaneous prose aesthetic. Kerouac credits him as the impetus behind the prose method of *On the Road:*

> I got the idea for the spontaneous style of *On the Road* from seeing how good old Neal Cassady wrote his letters to me, all first person, mad, confessional, completely serious, all detailed, with real names in his case however (being letters) (Berrigan 541).

Most critics concur that Neal Cassady played a crucial role in the creation of Kerouac's methodology on modern prose. N. L. Eddy puts forth the argument depicting Cassady as progenitor to Kerouac's tenets detailed in "The Essentials of Spontaneous Prose." In his letters, Cassady makes references to his writing style that Kerouac would eventually mould into the nine principles of spontaneous prose: SET UP, PROCEDURE, METHOD, SCOPING, LAG IN PROCEDURE, TIMING, CENTER OF INTEREST, STRUCTURE OF WORK, and MENTAL STATE.

In a letter to Kerouac dated July 1949, Cassady touches upon elements that will be echoed in the first two tenets, SET UP and PROCEDURE:

> I have a million images, all personal and torn they last but an intense moment, but reoccurring the second time they lead to new ones. And so I rush on from one new discovery to the next, telling myself I'll return and play with this or that. Of course, I never do indulge in this play for when I return the first image is past and with it the power to grasp with enthusiasm. I am a blundering image-seeker who thrives on the ironic tricks my thoughts find on every side (Cassady in Eddy 17).

Jazz

In his essay, "The White Negro," Norman Mailer asserts that "it is impossible to conceive a new philosophy until one creates a new language" (Mailer 603). With the advent of a new vision came the need for a new form of expression through which ideas could be communicated. What the Beats needed was a language of their own. And so came the birth of bop.

As conventional English could not adequately express the vitality and the immediacy of what the Beat credo entailed, they created a jargon that swung with the rhythm found in jazz clubs. Monosyllabic, energetic words such as *hip, bop, dig, cool, hot, go,* and *blow* all became an integral part of their vocabulary. Adjectives used to describe their diction could be carried over and used to describe the Beat movement itself. All these words share a common sense of intensity, emotion, and continuity. They demand a call for action--*go, swing, dig, blow*--to counter what they perceived as a stagnancy around them.

Beyond its lexicon, Kerouac's interest in jazz becomes apparent with the understanding that jazz is fundamentally a collective improvisation on a given theme. "Jazz... can be a spontaneous, swinging poem in which the group first creates the shape, the musical metrics of a given moment. Then individuals begin to improvise... or the talented soloist to move his sound out into the possibilities of the moment" (Tallman 218).

The influence of jazz performed by artists like Charlie "Bird" Parker, Lester Young, and Thelonious Monk fill Kerouac's art throughout. Musical references can be traced back to his method of composition as well as within the prose, where allusions to jazz clubs and musicians abound. The tonality is carried through as Kerouac's distinctive sound on the page, and emerges, to borrow from Ginsberg, as "spontaneous bop prosody."

Kerouac opens *Mexico City Blues* with the proclamation: "I want to be considered a jazz poet blowing a long blues in an afternoon jam session" (Author's note to *MCB*). Elements of jazz serve to structure the writer's sense of measure. Kerouac explains that "jazz and bop, in the sense of a, say, a tenor man drawing for a breath, and when he does, his sentence, his statement's been made... that's how I therefore separate my sentences, as breath separations of the mind..." (Berrigan 555).

References to jazz are incorporated into the tenets of "The Essentials of Spontaneous Prose." Both PROCEDURE and METHOD allude to jazz in its summaries. Having selected an image-object from which to sketch, you are to *blow*, with the depth and immediacy of a skilled jazz artist:

PROCEDURE: Time being of the essence in the parts of speech, sketching language is undisturbed flow from mind of a personal secret idea-words, blowing (as per jazz musician) on subject of image.

METHOD: No periods separating sentence structures... but the vigorous space dash separating rhetorical breathing (as jazz musician drawing breath between outblown phrases) ("Essentials..." 58).

Kerouac's method of composition considers sentences and paragraphs musical constructs. If produced faithfully to one's own speech rhythms, the resulting prose is inherently melodic. He writes: "the sound in your mind is the first sound that you could sing..." (*MCB* 244).

In depicting prose writer as horn player, Kerouac echoes the jazz musician improvising on a theme. Periods are replaced by space dashes to correspond with the artist's natural pauses for breath between riffs. Like jazz, the prose possesses the freedom to ignore linear development and veer off in new directions.

The sound of jazz permeates the prose. Aside from the descriptive dimension, the prose contains an added one of a rhythmic motif offering acoustics to what was formerly visual. Scenes recounting the bustle of jazz clubs are enhanced with a sound of their own. In the following excerpt from *Desolation Angels*, Kerouac details the sense at a North Beach jazz bar, The Cellar. The passage is typical of Kerouac's all-encompassing vision. Details from the crowd to the band are noted, and as the

narrative focuses in on the drummer on stage, the passage becomes somewhat of an extended onomatopoeia:

> ...and the heavenly drummer who looks up in the sky with blue eyes, with a beard, is wailing beer caps of bottles and jamming on the cash register and everything is gone to the beat--It's the beat generation, it's <u>béat</u>, it's the beat to keep, it's the beat of the heat, it's being beat and down in the world and like old time lowdown and like in ancient civilizations the slave boatmen rowing galleys to a beat and servant spinning pottery to a beat" (*Desolation Angels* 140).

The jazz sentiment is carried through to the reader, whose task is to listen to the performance.. The excerpt swings on a natural rhythm, a classic jazz riff played on high-hat on a second and fourth beat. The refrain of *beat*, repeated throughout the piece, emulates a drum beat, marking the end of each phrase.

Jazz's merit is better understood in relation to the allusive "IT" sought after in *On The Road* and again in *Visions of Cody*. The narrator's drive for new experience leads repeatedly to jazz clubs. While translation into language proves impossible, "It" can be expressed musically:

> 'Now man, that alto man last night had IT--he held it once he found it; I've never seen a guy who could hold so long. I wanted to know what 'IT' meant. 'Ah well'--Dean laughed--'now you're asking me imponderables--ahem! Here's a guy and everybody's there, right? Up to him to put down what's on everybody's mind. He starts the first chorus, then lines up his ideas, people, yeah, yeah, but get it, and then he rises to his fate and has to

> blow equal to it. All of a sudden somewhere in the middle of the chorus he *gets it*--everybody looks up and knows; they listen; he picks it up and carries. Time stops. He's filling empty space with the substance of our lives, confessions of his bellybottom strain, remembrance of ideas, rehashes of old blowing. He has to blow across bridges and come back and do it with such infinite feeling soul-exploratory for the tune of the moment that everybody knows it's not the tune that counts but IT--" (*Road* 170).

"IT" can be understood as the moment of illumination filled with "the unspeakable visions of the individual" ("Belief..." 59). Dean's soliloquy on the merits of jazz parallel Kerouac's own manifesto on spontaneous prose. The jazz musician adheres to the same measures in his music that the writer follows in producing a spontaneous piece of narrative. The message conveyed through Dean's speech is ultimately the necessity for prose to be musical in nature. Beyond the belief that prose must be rhythmic to propel it forward, Kerouac suggests that the rhythm can and does add another dimension of meaning to prose. As Duke Ellington reminds us, "it don't mean a thing, if it ain't got that swing" (Young 122).

Catholicism

> "--Always considered writing my duty on earth. Also the preachment of universal kindness... Am actually not "beat" but strange solitary Catholic majestic..." (Introduction to *Lonesome Traveller).*

Kerouac's French-Catholic upbringing remained a dominant force throughout his life, despite extensive dabbling in Eastern philosophies and religious teachings.

While other influences serve to explore the way Kerouac approached writing, Catholicism addresses why. Jack states "...I settled down to write, in solitude, in pain, writing hymns and prayers even at dawn, thinking 'when this book is finished, which is going to be the sum and substance and crap of everything I've been through throughout this whole goddamn life. I shall be redeemed'" (*VofD* 213).

The son of French Canadians from Rivière du Loup, Kerouac's family migrated from Québec to the mill town of Lowell, Massachussets where he was raised speaking the dialect *Joual*. Like Joseph Conrad before him, Kerouac's first language was not English. It was taught to him at the age of five by the nuns of St. Joseph's Parochial School. Reminiscences of a small-town francophone community are brought to life in *Doctor Sax*, a novel where "memory and dream are intermixed" (*Doctor Sax* 5). Essentially, *Doctor Sax* concerns itself with childhood fantasies and mysteries, and within the realm of a child's imagination, the Church can prove a generous subject:

> ...in the early Catholic childhood of Centralville--deaths, funerals, the shroud of that, the dark figure in the corner when you look at the dead man coffin in the dolorous parlour of the greenhouse with a horrible purple wreath on the door... We had a statue of St. Thérèse in my house--on West Street I saw it turn its head at me--in the dark. Earlier too, horrors of the Jesus Christ of passion plays in his shrouds and vestments of saddest doom mankind in the Cross Weep for Thieves and Poverty--he was at the foot of my bed pushing it one dark Saturday night... (*Doctor Sax* 4).

Childhood impressions of the Church lingered, and eventually manifested into a reverence for religion that would stay with Kerouac throughout his life. He acknowledged that the impact of his traditional religious upbringing would invariably shape his work to some degree. In reference to his first novel, *The Town and the City*, he concedes: "I was only a kid but the church was moving my thoughts" (Letter to Ellen Lucy, January 1961, Special Collections, Columbia University). This sentiment is reiterated in his last novel, *Vanity of Dulouz*. "Yet I saw the cross just then when I closed my eyes after writing all this. I can't escape it's mysterious penetration into ll this brutality. I just simply SEE it all the time..." (*VofD* 211).

In addition to the perception of writing as his "duty on earth," Kerouac alludes to his art as a holy ritual of sorts, saying: "I devised the idea of burning most of what I wrote so my art would not appear (to myself as well as to others) to be done for ulterior, or practical motives, but just as a function, a daily duty, a daily scatological 'heap' for the sake of purgation. So I'd burn what I wrote, with the candle flame, and watch the paper curl up and squirm, and smile madly. The way writers are born, I guess. A holy idea..." (*VofD* 204).

Because spontaneous prose technique dictates that the material originates, to some degree, from personal images and ideas, Kerouac construes the act of narration as analogous to confession. Distinctions between the two are blurred continually in *Desolation Angels*. Part Two begins "BUT NOW THE STORY, the confession..." (*Desolation Angels* 87). The writing is driven by altruistic motives, and thoughts of fame and fortune are out of place:

> Nothing could stop me from writing big books of prose and poetry for nothing, that is, with no hope of ever having them published... the heartbreaking discipline of the veritable fire ordeal where you can't go back but made the vow of 'speak now or forever hold your tongue' and all of it innocent go-ahead confession... I work those manuscripts as I'm writing this one in cheap nickel notebooks by candlelight in poverty and fame--Fame of the self" (*Desolation Angels* 238).

Buddhism

As the Beat movement grew in popularity and strength, its members began renouncing the material demands of Western culture and turned to Eastern philosophies for spiritual sustenance. Buddhism, and more particularly Zen Buddhism, quickly became catchwords associated with a growing alternative lifestyle. However, the Zen sect of traditional Japanese Buddhism is a most elusive animal--a concrete definition of all it entails is difficult to propose. Its inclusion would lead to the assumption that the Beat writers embraced every aspect of traditional Zen and preserved the original teachings. To say they did this would say they failed to do this. For the purposes of this definition, what will be referred to in the Beat's own interpretation and adaptation of Zen is what came to be known as "Beat Zen."

Much of Kerouac's theory of prose is rooted in Zen spirit. His interest is clearly discernable given Alan Watt's piece on the four principle activities of man in Buddhism:

> ...walking, standing, sitting, and lying--are called the four 'dignities,' since they are the postures assumed by the Buddha nature in its human

(nirmanakaya) body. The ritualistic style of conducting one's everyday activities is therefore a celebration of the fact that 'the ordinary man is a Buddha' and is, furthermore, a style that comes almost naturally to a person who is doing everything with total presence of mind. Thus if in something so simple and trivial as lighting a cigarette one is fully aware, seeing the flame, the curling smoke, and the regulation of breath as the most important thing in the universe, it will seem to an observer that the action has a ritualistic style" (Watt in Lipton 238).

Kerouac maintains similar truths concerning the sanctification of each moment of existence. The basic Zen principle that each individual moment is to be recognized to its fullest surfaces in the "List of Essentials" that constitute "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose." The writer is urged to be "submissive to everything, open, listening; write for the world to read and see yr [sic] exact pictures of it; no fear or shame in the dignity of yr [sic] experience, language and knowledge" ("Belief..." 59).

The constant, urgent need for movement depicted in *On The Road* illustrates the Zen concept of self-realization. The desire to search out new experiences is centralized in Dean's endless enthusiasm for exploring the possibilities of each moment. "'Sal, we gotta go and never stop till we get there...' 'Where are we going, man?' 'I don't know but we gotta go'" (*Road* 238). Dean exemplifies the notion of Zen as a lifestyle; a way of life in which "every thought, every action, every aspect of life is based upon the realization of one's complete being, through both physical and mental experience. Daily living and self-realization are inseparable; each moment of one's life is of the greatest importance" (Ashida 200).

Watt's proclamation that 'the ordinary man is a Buddha,' is applicable not only to the general slew of characters that fill Kerouac's novels, but also especially to Dean, in his never-ending quest for kicks. Sal recognizes this quality in his companion, stating simply: "That's what Dean was, the HOLY GOOF" (*Road* 194). Kerouac also touches upon the sacramentalization of the moment in "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose," instructing the writer to "be in love with your life; and believe in the holy contour of life" ("Belief..." 59).

"Tathata" in Buddhism denotes viewing things as they are. For Kerouac, perception is equated with reality: "All the stories I wrote are true because I believed in what I saw" (Readings Verve LP). No detail is deemed too trivial to be discarded as such. Every speculation that passes through the writer's mind is not filtered or categorized as either "'good'--or 'bad'--always honest, ('ludicrous'), spontaneous, 'confessional,' interesting, because not 'crafted'" ("Essentials..." 58). Nothing is to be excluded on the basis of insignificance, as is evident in the scene from *On the Road* in which Sal, Dean, and a few others are about to go for a car ride. "As we were going out to the car Babe slipped and fell flat on her face. Poor girl was overwrought. Her brother and Tim and I helped her up. We got in the car; Major and Betty joined us" (*Road* 56). While the events cited are in no way crucial to the novel's vision, Kerouac is compelled to include it in order to authentically and completely transcribe his vision of reality.

CHAPTER THREE

WAVES RIPPLING OUTWARD

Despite its genesis from autobiographical facts, Kerouac's novels, collectively referred to as the "Dulouz Legend," resemble visionary truths more than chronicled tales. According to the grand vision Kerouac had imagined for his works, each individual novel is part of a greater whole. The "Dulouz Legend" is the nomenclature given to the collection of works that, when placed into chronological order, fit together to cover significant periods in the writer's, Dulouz or Kerouac's, life span (See Appendix C). As touched upon earlier in chapter one, it is understood that Kerouac's method does not necessarily concern itself with the events that unfold before the "keyhole of his eye" (Preface to *Big Sur*). It is the process of perceiving those events and his responses to them that become the subject matter of his work.

Published posthumously, *Visions of Cody*, Kerouac's most experimental novel, remains the epitome of spontaneous prose composition. The novel was written in 1951, at the same time he was first introduced to the concept of sketching. Equipped

with a new perspective on prose technique, Kerouac set out to re-examine material covered in *On the Road* from a new perspective. He writes:

> *Visions of Cody* is a 600 page character study of the hero of *On the Road*... I wanted to put my hand to an enormous paean which would unite my vision of America with words spilled out in the modern spontaneous method. Instead of just a horizontal account of travels on the road, I wanted a vertical, metaphysical study of Cody's character in its relationship to the general America" (Hunt 120).

Originally entitled *Visions of Neal*, the finished product was massive in both length and intent. Finding a publisher willing to accept the volume in its entirety proved to be an impossible task. Kerouac eventually permitted New Directions to publish fragments of the novel entitled *Excerpts from Visions of Cody*. However, he quickly rose above any feelings of defeat with feelings of defiance. During an appearance of the Steve Allen Show, where Kerouac was scheduled to read excerpts from *On the Road*, he slipped passages of *Visions of Cody* inside the *Road* copy and read those instead.

The tenet CENTER OF INTEREST focuses on the expansive nature of spontaneous prose. Given the initial image, the prose then moves outward in a series of associated thoughts linking the narrative together. He writes: "Begin not from preconceived idea of what to say about image but from "jewel center" of interest in subject of image at moment of writing, and write outwards swimming in sea of language to peripheral release and exhaustion" ("Essentials..." 58).

Traditional tools of theme and plot are replaced with passages dedicated to recording the writer's perceptions as they occur. In the following excerpt, Kerouac begins with a 'vision of Cody' as the "jewel center" and proceeds to record other thoughts stemming from the initial image:

> ...the vision I had of Cody as he showed me one drowsy afternoon in January, on the sidewalks of workaday San Francisco, just like the workaday afternoon on Moody Street in Lowell when boyhood buddy funnyguy G.J. and I played zombie piggybacks in mill employment offices and workmen's saloons (the Silver Star it was), what and how the Three Stooges are like when they go staggering and knocking each other down the street, Moe, Curly (who's actually the bald domed one, big husky) and meaningless goof (though somewhat mysterious as though he was a saint in disguise, a masquerading supderduper witch doctor with good intentions actually)--can't think of his name, Cody knows his name, the bushy feathery haired one" (*VofC* 300-301).

Here Kerouac successfully employs the original image of Cody as a point of departure. The particulars stipulated in scoping provide the writer with the freedom to veer off into other avenues of thought. "Not 'selectivity' of expression but following free deviation (association) of mind into limitless blow on subject seas of thought, swimming in sea of English..." ("Essentials..." 57). Noteworthy is Kerouac's use of a water reference in his manifestoes as a way of describing actions. The choice perhaps is not an accidental one; water images and thoughts are not unlike

the rippling of waves extending outward from a central point.

The passages from *Vision of Cody* catalogue the writer's train of thought from the initial "jewel center" to a series of related clauses. While the process may appear random, the prose remains faithful to its purpose of documenting the writer's response to the original image-object. Kerouac states "Write as deeply, fish as far down as you want, satisfy yourself first, then reader cannot fail to receive telepathic shock and meaning--excitement by the same law operating in his own human mind" ("Essentials..." 57). At its best, spontaneous prose is a fusing of imagination, recollection, and perception. Just as our minds do not follow a chronologically sequential path in thinking, neither does Kerouac's prose. The leaps, interruptions, and digressions all play a part in "telling the true story of the world in interior monologue" ("Belief..." 59).

The "jewel center" in the above excerpt is introduced as a 'vision of Cody,' specifically one in which Cody imitates the Three Stooges. Immediately following this introduction, Kerouac provides some basic information, establishing time and place (San Francisco in January). The scenario is reminiscent of a childhood memory and triggers a diversion. In the following segment, Cody is replaced with boyhood friend, G.J. and San Francisco becomes Lowell. The proceeding clause builds on the memory, intensifying the image by adding specifics, mentioning office buildings and bars by name. It then reverts back to the original image and continues on with the Three Stooges. The writing lingers on the Stooges, mentioning each one individually until Kerouac stumbles and cannot remember Larry's name. The clause is then tied

to the "jewel center," returning the image of Cody with the statement "can't think of his name; Cody knows his name" (*VofC* 301).

By temporarily forgetting the name of one of the Three Stooges, Kerouac is reinforcing what is proposed in CENTER OF INTEREST. "Do not afterthink except for poetic or P.S. reasons. Never afterthink to 'improve' or defray impressions, your way is your only way--'good'--or 'bad'--always honest, ('ludicrous'), spontaneous, 'confessional' interesting, because it is not 'crafted.' Craft *is* craft" ("Essentials..." 58). The passage cited from *Visions of Cody* is automatically perceived as authentically spontaneous because of the simplicity of an ordinary mental block. Rather than revising the prose at a later date to include Larry's name, Kerouac chooses instead to continue the narrative for another three pages until a moment of illumination where he remembers Larry's name, triggered by further meditation on the "jewel center." "Supposing the Three Stooges were real? (and so I saw them spring into being at the side of Cody in the street right there front of the Station, Curly, Moe and Larry, that's his bloody name, Larry" (*VofC* 304). Exhibiting relief that his frustration over Larry's name has ended makes Kerouac's prose that much more genuine.

Passages labelled as 'visions of Cody' within a novel by the same name exemplify spontaneous prose in its purest form. There is no room allotted to plot formation, dialogue, or any such techniques associated with traditional fiction. On the description of Cody, Hunt writes: "The passage has no narrative action and little or no 'horizontal' or linear motion from one point to another. Rather, it relies on the

associational logic of the speaker to build up the implications of the initial image. The passage's motion is 'vertical,' a demonstration of Burrough's 'factualist' argument that a single 'fact' exists simultaneously on more than one level" (Hunt 129).

This particular vision of Cody ends with an exercise in word play. The prose culminates with a series of sounds:

> I knew that long ago when the mist was raw Cody saw the Three Stooges he just stood outside a pawnshop, or hardware store, or in that perennial poolhall door but maybe more likely on the pavings of the city under tragic rainy telephone poles, and thought of the Three Stooges, suddenly realizing--that life is strange and the Three Stooges exist--that in 10,000 years--that... all the goofs he felt in him were justified in the outside world and he had nothing to reproach himself for, bonk, boing, crash, skittely boom, pow, slam, bang, boom, wham, blam, crack, frap, kerplunk, clatter, clap, blap, fag, slapmap, splat, crunch, crowsh, bong, splat, splat, *BONG!*" (*VofC* 306).

Having reached the moment of illumination, the narrative extends "outwards swimming in sea of languages to peripheral release and exhaustion" ("Essentials..." 58). With the moment of recognition--that life is strange and the Three Stooges exist, the prose alters in accordance with the tenet STRUCTURE OF WORK.

> Follow roughly outlines in out-fanning movement over subject, as river rock, so mind flow over jewel center need (run your mind over it, *once)*

arriving at pivot, where what was dim-formed 'beginning' becomes sharp-necessitating 'ending' and language shortens in race to wire of time--race of work, following laws of Deep Form, to conclusion, last words, last trickle--Night is the End ("Essentials..." 58).

The sounds seem to echo the nonsensical expressions characteristic of the Three Stooges themselves. The "language shortens" gradually, into a succession of monosyllabic, onomatopoeic utterances that concludes with an emphatic *BONG!* Kerouac cites this technique in SCOPING, comparing it to "a fist coming down on a table with each complete utterance, bang!" ("Essentials..." 57).

The novel as a whole dedicates itself to the study of Neal Cassady' ♦barely disguised character: Cody Pomeray. If the function of spontaneous prose is to reveal the writer's response and reaction to the given image-object, so does the image or 'vision' of Cody act as the "jewel center" throughout the text. The impressions of Cody which Kerouac offers are in a state of flux. He constantly rediscovers and redefines the image of Cody and how his relation to the image changes, saying "Cody can't possibly be average because I've never seen him before. I myself am a stranger to this 'average' world. Well, we'll all meet in hell and hatch another plot" (*VofC* 330). He goes on to say: "I thought of Cody immediately as a lion tamer, he looked a little like Clyde Beatty had looked to me in the great circus in Boston, from a distance, stiff and strong, the visiting Ringling of thunderous May nights. I didn't think of Cody as a friend" (*VofC* 339).

So intense is Kerouac's fixation on Cody that he loses sight of him. In the

struggle to articulate his impressions of Cody. Kerouac's initial speculations are larger than life. Almost mythic in grandeur, Cody is described primarily as an American hero. Having exhausted every possible avenue of Cody's character, Kerouac comes to the realization that "Cody is blank at last" (*VofC* 397). Any knowledge Kerouac possesses about Cody ultimately comes from within. The novel does not concern itself, as *On The Road* does, with chronicling the adventures of Cody Pomeray. *Visions of Cody* is more about the seer than the doer. These are quite simply Kerouac's *visions* of Cody. As the novel comes to a close Kerouac reflects on the realization that what he understands about Cody has more to say about himself than his friend. "...I not only accept loss forever, I am made of loss--I am made of Cody, too" (*VofC* 397). The novel ends with an eloquent eulogy of sorts as Kerouac bids farewell to the myth he created:

> Good bye Cody--your lips in your moments of self-possessed thought and new found responsible goodness are as silent... as silent and all this, as a bird crossing the dawn in search of the mountain cross and the sea beyond the city at the end of the land.
>
> Adios, you who watched the sun go down, at the rail, by my side, smiling--
>
> Adios, King" (*VofC* 398).

As a foil to all the myth-making narrative in the text is a section entitled "The Tape." Placed in the center of the novel, "The Tape" segment is comprised of the actual transcriptions of taped conversations primarily between Jack Kerouac and Neal

Cassady, over a span of five days. Allen Ginsberg considered the tapes a medium in which

> ...these souls explored the mind blanks impressions that tea creates: that the subject; unaltered, unadorned--halts, switches, emptiness, quixotic chatters, summary piths, exactly reproduces, significant because:
>
> 1) Vocal familiar friendly teahead lifetalk had never been transcribed and examined consciously (like Warhol 20 years later examined Campbell's Soup cans) (Introduction to *VofC* viii).

"The Tape" is not without its downfalls. However, they are only downfalls to a reader with expectations of a continuation into the spontaneous narrative that precedes and follows the chapter. Kerouac never professes them to be anything other than two individuals carrying on a conversation; while it may be spontaneous chatter, he does not try to present it as prose. Kerouac expressed disappointment with the project:

> I typed up a segment of taped conversation with Neal Cassady, or Cody, talking about his early adventures in L.A. It's four chapters. I haven't used this method since; it really doesn't come out right, well, with Neal and with myself, when all written down and with all the Ahs and the Ohs and the Ahums and the fearful act that the damn thing is turning and you're forced not to waste electricity or tape.... (Berrigan 543-544).

The tapes were purely a project in experimentation. A chapter comprised solely of a transcribed discourse between two individuals is the first and last of its

kind to be found in any of Kerouac's works. Perhaps one reason for the discontinuation of the experiment lies in the end result and the knowledge that although spontaneous prose strives to emulate speech, speech is not spontaneous prose.

One of the motives behind the creation of a spontaneous prose technique is to construct a prose removed from rhetoric and placed instead within the genre of actual speech. The dashes strewn across the written page represent "measured pauses which are the essentials of our speech" ("Essentials..." 57). Phrased after one's own natural patterns of breathing, the prose is filled with the rhythm of motionally charged talk. An idiom of spoken Americana, Kerouac's prose is characterized by intense fragments of thought complete with digressions. The rhythm is interrupted as with speech, with the intrusion of new thoughts. The end result is ultimately insight and the notion that the way we talk reveals something about the way we think.

The tapes focus on revealing truths, connecting recollections by taking what is past and bringing it to the present. Memory is combined with imagination to not only recreate experiences, but to alter them. Cody alludes to this concept during a speech one evening on the tape:

> ...what it actually was, was a recalling right now on my part, a recalling of me having either told about or thought about the bed concretely before, see, so therefore, I, all I did now was re--go back to that memory and bring up a little rehash of, ah, pertinent things, as far as I can remember, in little structure lines a skeletonized thing of the--what I thought earlier,

> and that's what one does you know, you know when you go back and remember about a thing that you clearly thought out and went around before, you knew what I'm saying, the second or third or fourth time you tell about it or say anything like that why it comes out different and it becomes more and more modified... (*VofC* 145).

The tape is a confirmation of Kerouac's consideration of personal idea-images as subject matter in his work. Hunt reflects that the "...image, even though seemingly static, maybe more successful in catching the nature of process than narrative which is seemingly dynamic. If this is the case, it may be a factor in Kerouac's sense of finally locating the action of his fiction in the process of recording and speculating about images..." (Hunt 220-221).

As memories surface to merge with immediate pictorial sensations, what was recounted becomes recreated. In the retelling of earlier experiences, present conditions serve only to alter what was past. To "follow roughly outlines in outfanning movement over subject, as river rock... (run your mind over it, *once*)..." ("Essentials... 58"), the narrator can manipulate a single subject for a multitude of treatises. Every study will yield different results, offering a different perspective. This equation is evident in the sketch of Cody throughout *Visions of Cody*. As stated previously, the portrait of Cody Pomeray in the novel changes repeatedly; he is different things at different times. For the narrator, the idea of Cody is multi-dimensional. Kerouac's interpretation of Cody fluctuates continuously. Cody is

> ...a reader of Schopenhauer in reform schools, a Nietzschean hero of the

> pure snowy Wild West; a champion... but he also at that time bobbed his head, prided himself on always looking dov n, bobbing, nodding, like a young boxer... or a saint, an American young saint, one who might even be boring and eventually turn to some strange Seventh Day Adventist type religion, like you meet in bus stations in Minneapolis... not only a thief, maybe a real angry murderer in the night... I thought of Cody immediately as a lion tamer, he looked a little like Clyde Beatty had looked to me in the great circus in Boston (*VofC* 338-339).

The countless roles Kerouac's narrator invests in his "jewel center" are so diverse they border on comical. The eclectic cluster of character traits listed in the passage appears unlikely, if not absurd, to represent a realistic description of Cody's persona. However, the reader is equipped with the knowledge that Cody is ultimately a vision, a product of the narrator's perceptions at a given moment, and as such, malleable enough to conform to these conceptions.

What is intriguing about the list of attributes projected on to Cody is the manner in which they unfold. The series of associated images from saint to thief to lion tamer are in no way predictable. The sequence offers insight into the operations of the mind itself as it delineates the narrator's logic concerning pattern of thought. The gaps in thinking, the leaps that link the image of a saint to that of a thief, are a part of Kerouac's effort to examine the texture of consciousness. As prescribed in

MENTAL-STATE:

> "If possible write 'without consciousness' in semi-trance (as

> Yeats' later 'trance writing') allowing subconscious to admit in own uninhibited interesting necessary and so 'modern' language what conscious art would censor, and write excitedly, swiftly..." ("Essentials..." 58).

Kerouac acknowledges the value of ellipses in spontaneous prose, and by doing so preserves the jumps in thought as evidence that the mind receives information in flashes. He states that "the reason why there are so many things is that the mind breaks it up" (*MCB* 176). The resulting prose completes the sequence of thought created while in a 'trance-like state.' This provides the writer with the freedom to create a prose with minimal manipulation. The more a piece is worked over, the farther it is distanced from the self. "Never afterthink to 'improve' or defray impressions, as best writing is always the most painful personal wrung-out tossed from cradle warm protective mind--tap from yourself the song of yourself" ("Essentials..." 58).

In the midst of a novel dedicated to the personal renderings of a single "jewel center," the tape section intrudes upon the representation of the image with the reality of the man. No longer is the reader courted with romantic meditations on the visionary but is instead supplied with the factual The chapter is pure Cody from start to finish. Dialogue replaces remembrances, adding to the contrast between the tape and the other chapters in the text.

JACK: California?

CODY: --the latter half of the year I was... coming *from* California; I know

'forty-four backwards and forwards

JACK: Let's see, I was twenty-two, and you were... eighteen, seventeen

CODY: (figuring) Eighteen... just turned eighteen February

JACK: And Irwin was there and he was eighteen too

CODY: Oh yeah, he's the same year as I am three months younger

JACK: But this was even before Irwin showed up (*Visions of Cody* 182).

If plot development seemed minimal in the rest of the novel, even less transpires in the tapes. The section deviates significantly from Kerouac's methodology in which he aspires to provide the reader with tales of all he has seen--visions rather than events seen through the 'keyhole of his eye.'

The narrating voice of the previous chapters is replaced by the tape recorder. Ironically, as the narrator is reduced to a machine, the chapter is automatically destined to be void of any personal input. And so the tape becomes an anomaly for what Kerouac had been struggling against with his writings. His frustration was borne out of a tradition of prose which he considered lifeless and lacking in feeling and consequently led to the tapes as an exercise in the extreme.

CHAPTER FOUR

TALES OF AN UNSELF-CONFIDENT MAN

Kerouac's third published novel, *The Subterraneans*, was written in a burst of creative energy in just three days. The plot centers around the intense, albeit short-lived, love affair between the narrator, Leo Pecepied, and an African-American bohemian named Mardou Fox. As with Kerouac's other novels, the central characters portrayed in *The Subterraneans* can be easily recognized as actual members of the Beat Generation.

In *Kerouac: A Biography*, Ann Charters produces an identity key matching the individuals with their respective counterparts in eight of Kerouac's novels. The poet Allen Ginsberg, for example, becomes Carlo Marx in *On the Road*, Alvah Goldbrook in *Dharma Bums*, and Irwin Garden in *Desolation Angels*, *Big Sur*, and *Book of Dreams*. In *The Subterraneans*, Ginsberg is Adam Moorad. As for the others

mentioned in the novel, Gregory Corso becomes Yuri Gligoric, Gore Vidal is Arial Lavalina, Lucien Carr is Julien Alexander, and William Burroughs is Frank Carmody. Originally created to placate publishers nervous over potential libel suits, the alias inclusions were not a part of Kerouac's grand vision: "because of the objections of my early publishers I was not allowed to use the same personal names in each work... In my old age I intend to collect all my work and re-insert my pantheon of uniform names, leave the long shelf full of books there, and die happy" (Introduction to *Big Sur*).

Although the proverbial dust has settled, the individual for whom Mardou Fox was modelled has yet to reveal her true identity. With the onslaught of biographers in recent years, writers have spent endless hours in an attempt to demystify much of Kerouac's life. Researchers have sought Mardou Fox out, asking for her insights into Kerouac and their relationship. More than twenty-five years have passed since their affair; Mardou still prefers to maintain her anonymity, choosing to go by the pseudonym "Irene May," the name give to her by Kerouac in *Book of Dreams*.[1]

Beyond its primary purpose, that of formulating Kerouac's experimental spontaneous prose technique into a comprehensive novel, *The Subterraneans* contains a second, yet no less important, literary contribution. Historically speaking, in the context of the bibliographical chronology of Kerouac's writing (see Appendix C), Kerouac's two manifestos on his theory of prose came into being immediately following the completion of *The Subterraneans*. This was not an accidental act by

[1] In reality, it's been about 42 years since their affair, it's been 25 years since *Jack's Book* was published and they asked her for some input; she did comply but kept the name secret.

any means. Once Kerouac finished writing the novel he passed the manuscript along to his peers in search of input. They were, in turn, favourably impressed by the spontaneous tonality at work within the text. Both Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs made the request for Kerouac to draw up his literary technique and explain the innovating methodology employed in the novel.

The novel is a departure from some of Kerouac's previous writings, and remains one of the finer examples of spontaneous prose theory at work. Aside from *Visions of Cody*, Kerouac's most experimental work, it is with *The Subterraneans* that Kerouac successfully employs the basic credo of his literary theory while staying within the general framework of the literary form of the novel. Aside from the usual slew of characters, the novel is invested with dialogue, themes, and even plot development for the benefit of the reader partial to conventional narrative tools in his/her books. That is not to say the novel remains relatively traditional. It is first and foremost an exercise in spontaneity. In a letter to his publishers, Kerouac explains:

> The book is modelled after Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*, a full confession of one's most wretched and hidden agonies after an 'affair' of any kind. The prose is what I believe to be the prose of the future, from both the conscious top and the unconscious bottom of the mind, limited only by the limitations of time and flying by as our mind flies by with it" (Charters *Biography* 194).

Kerouac's consideration of the novel as "confessional madness" (Berrigan 543) guarantees the novel's inclusion in the scheme of the "Duluoz Legend." However,

others at the time expressed an interest in Kerouac's use of language as an extension of an alternative lifestyle emerging during the 50s in places such as Greenwich Village. When the novel was first introduced in paperback, Henry Miller wrote its foreword. In it he comments:

> Jack Kerouac has done something to our immaculate prose from which it may never recover... The good poet, or in this case the 'spontaneous Bop prosodist,' is always alive to the idiomatic lingo of his time--the swing, the beat, the disjunctive metaphoric rhythm which comes so fast, so wild, so scrimmaged, so unbelievably albeit delectably mad, that when transmitted to paper no one recognizes it. None but the poets, that is. He 'invented it,' people will say. Insinuating that it was souped up. What they should say is: 'He *got* it.' He got it, he dug it, he put it down (Miller Foreword to *The Subterraneans*).

The narrator is likened to a tenor man blowing on a melody, spontaneously deviating off a given theme. The melody is noted for its jazz-like improvisational motif. The freedom in prose is likened to the performance of a soloist, and can be quite an astonishing feat, as is evident in the following sentence from *The Subterraneans*. It reads:

> I was coming down the street with Larry O'Hara old drinking buddy of mine from all the times in San Francisco in my long and nervous and mad careers I've gotten drunk and in fact cadged drinks off friends with such 'genial' regularity nobody really cared to notice or announce that I am developing or was developing, in my youth, such bad freeloading habits

> though of course they did notice but liked me and as Sam said 'Everybody comes to you for your gasoline boy, that's some filling station you got there' or say words to that effect--old Larry O'Hara always nice to me, a crazy Irish young businessman of San Francisco with Balzacian backroom in his bookstore where they'd smoke tea and talk of the old days of the great Basie band or the days of the great Chu Berry--of whom more anon since she got involved with him too as she had to get involved with everyone because of knowing me who am nervous and many leveled and not in the least one-souled--not a piece of my pain has showed yet--or suffering--Angels, bear with me--I'm not even looking at the page but straight ahead into the sadglint of my wallroom and at Sarah Vaughan Gerry Mulligan Radio KROW show on the desk in the form of a radio, in other words, they were sitting on the fender of a car in front of the Black Mask bar on Montgomery Street, Julien Alexander the Christ-like unshaved thin youthful quiet strange almost as you or as Adam might say apocalyptic angel or saint of the subterraneans, certainly star (now), and she, Mardou Fox, whose face when first I saw it in Dante's bar around the corner made me think, 'By God, I've got to get involved with that little woman' and maybe too because she was Negro (*The Subterraneans* 9-10).

The novel begins much in the manner prescribed by Kerouac's technique and the stipulation of SET-UP. Leo tells himself "just to start at the beginning and let the truth seep out, that's what'll do---." (*The Subterraneans* 9). He goes on to focus on the "jewel center:" "It began on a warm summernight--ah, she was sitting on a

fender with Julien Alexander who is... let me begin with the history of the subterraneans of San Francisco..." (9). Interestingly enough, the narrator makes an artistic judgement midway into setting up the image-object, that of "she (Mardou Fox) sitting on a fender," to change the image. Similar to a slide show presentation, the image of the woman is taken off the screen and is replaced by one of "Julien Alexander, who 'is the angel of the subterraneans.' The switch in images is not so much done through indecision but rather because the narrator reveals that the two "jewel centers," Mardou and Julien, will intertwine throughout the passage, as they do in the narrator's jealous if not paranoid thoughts.

The shift in "jewel center" from the original "Mardou Fox" to "Julien Alexander" serves as well to reinforce Kerouac's belief in beginning "not from pre-conceived idea of what to say about image but from "jewel center" of interest in subject of image at moment of writing..." ("Essentials..." 58). Faithful to his theory, Kerouac does not force the narrative to remain committed to the first image introduced in keeping with any pre-determined mandate on how the prose will develop. What shape the writing will eventually take is dependent upon what the mind chooses to focus on at that *instant*. Were the image to change in mid-thought, the prose would not only reflect it, but record its path.

The image of Julien Alexander as "jewel center" repeats itself several times in the opening passages of the novel. The writing commences from this point and extends outward to peripheral thoughts only to return eventually back to the central image still in mind. The narrative begins with only the basics, informing the reader that "Julien Alexander is the angel of the subterraneans" (*The Subterraneans* 9).

Additional information is introduced to qualify that statement. The prose then returns to the original image, but this time, the something has been added, the picture becomes clearer: "Julien certainly is Christlike" (*The Subterraneans* 9).

Also of interest in this passage in particular is Kerouac's fondness for word games; a form of word tag is played in which the ending of one clause is repeated to begin the next segment:

> Julien Alexander is the angel of the subterraneans. The subterraneans is a name invented by Adam Moorad who is a poet and friend of mine who said "They are hip without being slick, they are intelligent without being corny,... they are very quiet, they are very Christlike. Julien certainly is Christlike" (9).

Following this in the text is a passage in which the narrator establishes the scenario leading up to the "jewel center:" "I was coming down the street with Larry O'Hara..." This section then breaks off into a number of clauses, digressions mostly, consisting of the narrator pondering how others view him as a "jewel center" in their own minds. "...I've gotten drunk and in fact cadged drinks off friends with such 'genial' regularity nobody really cared to notice... that I am developing or was developing, in my youth, such bad freeloading habits though of course they did notice but liked me" (*The Subterraneans* 9).

One digression is interrupted by another. This time the digression is one of dramatic irony: "Angels, bear with me--I'm not even looking at the page but straight ahead" (9). Kerouac acknowledges the technique he's engaged in to create the prose, making reference to the writer's MENTAL STATE--"if possible write 'without

consciousness' in semi-trance (as Yeats' later 'trance writing') allowing subconscious to admit in own uninhibited interesting necessary..." ("Essentials..." 58). With that, the prose returns immediately to the original "jewel center," except now he provides the reader with the whole picture: "They were sitting on the fender of a car in front of the Black Mask bar on Montgomery Street, Julien Alexander the Christ-like unshaved thin youthful quick strange almost as you or as Adam might say apocalyptic angel or saint of the subterraneans, certainly star" (*The Subterraneans* 10).

This description differs greatly from the one in which the reader was first introduced to the image: "she was sitting on a fender with Julien Alexander" (9), and with subsequent descriptions in which the information was processed in fragments. In the latest image, the fender is now attached to a car, which is parked in front of a certain building, which in turn is located on a specified street. As for Julien, the reader has followed his rise in stature from angel to Christlike to saint and to star. Physical features are also provided to complete the image: "unshaved thin youthful quick strange" (10).

Having exhausted the image for the moment, the narrative turns to shift its attention on to the nameless figure seated next to Julien on the fender. Immediately, the narrator qualifies his knowledge of the Mardou Fox, stating his own intentions to initiate a relationship with her in order to establish what his own relationship to that image will be. "...and she, Mardou Fox,... By God, I've got to get involved with that little woman" (10).

From there the narrator goes off on a tangent, attempting to further his knowledge of Mardou in the context of other images contained within his memories:

"...she had the same face that Rita Savage a girlhood girlfriend of my sister's had..." (10). Another digression follows. This time his train of thought dives deeper still, from the memory of Rita Savage's face to childhood fantasies of her: "I used to have daydreams of her..." (10).

Once the initial image of Mardou sitting on the fender returns to view, the new picture is also improved; this time it's enhanced with the quality of motion: "Mardou was leaning saying something extremely earnestly to Ross Wallenstein (Julien's friend)" (10). The image is no longer an impressionist's still-life, but is closer to what Kerouac infers to in the notion of the "Bookmovie is the movie in words, the visual American form" ("Belief..." 59). The narrator's function is similar to a motion-picture director who oversees the entire project from casting characters to guiding their actions. Kerouac acknowledges the parallel in "Belief and Techniques for Modern Prose" with his final entry: "Writer-Director of Earthly movies Sponsored and Angeled in Heaven" (59).

The image of Mardou is interrupted with a repeat of Leo's desire to know his subject: "I got to get involved with her" (*The Subterraneans* 10). This in turn leads to another tangent on himself; while consumed with a negative self-image, he expresses concern over how others might perceive him. Leo states: "I'd just come off a ship... because of trouble with the steward and inability to be gracious... a thing typical of me, I would treat the first engineer and the other officers with backwards--falling politeness, it finally drove them angry" (11).

The narrative continues and goes on to include a confession. Leo offers an image of himself for the reader's benefit, saying "I am crudely malely sexual and

cannot help myself... I am a Canuck. I could not speak English till I was 5, or 6, at 16 I spoke with a halting accent..." (11). He attempts to return to the "jewel center" of Mardou, but acknowledges the difficulties in attempting to maintain a vision focused: "...difficult to make a real confession and show what happened when you're such an egomaniac all you can do is take off on big paragraphs about mind details about yourself..." (12)

The fourth and final repetition of the "jewel center," Leo's vision of Mardou, is incomplete. He occupies himself with efforts to learn more about her, gathering a "crumb of information concerning this girl I was SEEKING to get involved with... (13). The rest of the novel centers on completing the image he projected; by seeking her out, learning more about her to eventually complete his impression of her.

The relationship was destined to fail from the start. Leo's proclamation in the novel's opening paragraph, "this is the story of an unself-confident man," (9) establishes its tone. He expresses concern that Mardou won't be interested in him and goes so far as to create impressions of the kind of man he believes Mardou would find appealing: "She was interested in thin ascetic strange intellectuals of San Francisco and Berkeley and not in big paranoiac bums off ships and railroads and all that hatefulness which in myself is to myself so evident and so to others too" (14).

Leo assumes that his own subjective impressions are universal knowledge. He not only predicts the type of individual Mardou would show interest in, but he also considers himself capable of predicting Mardou's impression of him and of concluding that she won't like what she sees. Leo is investing his image of Mardou with her image of him, which is really his image of her image of him. Mardou's

impressions at this point are not relevant. Leo's logic reflects his inability to decipher the image in his mind with the reality before him. If he can see things in himself, he concludes others must share the same vision.

CHAPTER FIVE
LAST WORDS

Kerouac's theory, as it is detailed in his two manifestos, can be construed as problematic in nature. There appears to be a fundamental contradiction within the make up of his doctrine. The paradox reveals itself from the onset in the label "Spontaneous Prose Technique" since the term 'technique' implies a skillful art, a practised craft. The paradox deepens with one glance toward the nine points offered in "The Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" and the thirty items offered in "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose." It appears as somewhat of a contradiction that almost forty regulations are contained in Kerouac's manifestos. His lengthy set of rules on how to best avoid restrictions and write spontaneously seems an oxymoron.

However, upon closer examination, the contradiction begins to resolve itself in the awareness that nowhere in his proclamation does Kerouac recommend linguistic freedom be achieved through anarchic means. What is attempted here is the expansion of literary form by adherence to structures. His contempt is for craft in the

sense that it implies the traditional method of prose creation and production, which would produce a writing that was both controlled and deliberate. Kerouac's aspiration was for a new and freer style of writing.

Kerouac employed a methodology he hoped would uncover unexpected truths in the tradition of Emerson, stating: "the moment we cease to report it, and attempt to contrive it, it is no longer truth" (Woods 9). Kerouac's 'craft,' as I see it, was to provide greater opportunity to observe the activities of the mind, and to record the details as they occur without manipulation.

What I have covered in this study is only a fraction of Kerouac's compositional theory at work. An exhaustive analysis of the spontaneous prose in his 19 published novels in their entirety is not only impractical, but unnecessary. Not all of Kerouac's writings adhere to the principles of spontaneous prose. Most texts following *The Town and The City* were indeed written spontaneously. However, no individual novel is completely faithful to his manifestos as a whole. The issue for Kerouac is one of practicality. Intensity of vision and momentum in rhythm can prove a challenging task to maintain throughout the length of a novel. Unavoidably, there will be peaks and plateaus. Pure examples, in all honesty, do not run the length of the novels. Spontaneous prose records the workings of the mind; the mind itself rarely stays focused at such an intensity for any great duration. Breaks in concentration disrupt the prose, and examples of spontaneity are made obvious when set up in relief.

For this reason I have looked at spontaneous prose by concentrating on the passages in the specific novels that best illustrate Kerouac's prose theory in practise. The choice of *Visions of Cody* and *The Subterraneans* as the basic areas of analysis is

one of personal preference and calculated curiosity. With the exception of *The Town and The City* (written between 1946-9, and prior to the discovery of sketching), *Visions of Cody* is Kerouac's most prolific book. *The Subterraneans* is one of his shorter novels. These two novels are entirely different, and incorporate spontaneous technique in different ways. *Visions of Cody* combines a series of vignettes into a collective, coherent whole, while *The Subterraneans* maintains a traditional novel form.

The media had appointed Kerouac spokesperson of a generation. The title "King of the Beats," meant originally to mark him as a cultural figure, managed instead to create a stigma, taking any interest away from the writings to focus on the man. William Burroughs captures the immensity of the Beat phenomenon and comments that:

> After 1957 *On the Road* sold a trillion levis and a million expresso coffee machines, and also sent countless kids on the road. This was of course due in part to the media, the arch-opportunists. They know a story when they see one, and the Beat literary movement was a story, and a big one..." (Introduction to *On the Road.* Toronto: Penguin, 1991 xxviii).

More often than not, whenever Kerouac's name is mentioned, the novel that comes to mind is *On the Road.* In spite of the fact that it is his most famous novel, *On the Road* is not his best work. The immediate success[1] of *On the Road* came as

[1] "Immediate success" is something of a misrepresentation. *On the Road* was written seven years before an agent conceded to publish the novel. After it was published, the public caught on to a *Road* fascination, while Kerouac, working throughout the seven years, was more interested in promoting his current work.

somewhat of a mixed blessing. The media interest came fast and furious, the public wanting to learn more about the man behind the adventures chronicled in the book. While Kerouac prepared himself to discuss his writing style, the world wanted only to hear more of his lifestyle. Ann Charters states: "The media response was so unrelenting that another generation would grow up before Kerouac was accepted as a serious writer with two unique prose styles as well as a compelling vision of life. *On the Road* became an American classic long before he did" (Introduction to *On the Road.* Toronto: Penguin, 1991 ix).

The fascination with Kerouac's life only grew in size. Almost systematically, biographies on his life and times began to emerge. To date, there are almost as many biographies on Kerouac in print as there are of novels by Kerouac. The continual telling and re-telling the story of his life is not only redundant, but ironic. All the desired information can be found in the essence of Kerouac's novels. He states "[the novels are] ...the only thing I've got to offer, the true story of what I saw and how I saw it" (*Desolation Angels*).

While most research is dedicated to covering his life, little has been done in the way of literary criticism, with the exception of Timothy Hunt's invaluable *Kerouac's Crooked Road.* This in turn has provoked me to initiate this project to offer another perspective. My intention was to offer credence to the works of Jack Kerouac, specifically his spontaneous prose, by attempting to do what few critics have done: illustrate Kerouac's basic practise as summarized in his theory of artistic expression alongside examples of his doctrine at work in his writings.

The focus here is on spontaneous prose in order to create a basis from which other readings can follow. A multitude of topics lend themselves easily for discussion in Kerouac's novels. Queries into homosexuality, misogyny, masculinity all await proper treatment. Studies can also be made with Kerouac novels in comparison to other works of literature. Charters suggests:

> *On the Road* can be read as an American classic along with Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* as a novel that explores the theme of personal freedom and challenges the promise of the 'American Dream.' Like these other classics, Kerouac's book also reflects the prevailing social attitudes of its time about women and racial minorities. What Henry James said of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* can be said of *On the Road*. 'The novel had above all the extraordinary fortune of finding itself, for an immense number of people, much less a book than a state of vision, a feeling of consciousness' (Introduction to *On the Road*. Toronto: Penguin, 1991 xxx).

And to be sure, narrative techniques such as plot and character development, leitmotifs, themes, symbols, and other traditional literary techniques in Kerouac are a subject requiring much more investigation. Up to now biography has been the chief preoccupation of most critics, to the detriment of other explorations. Kerouac's life is portrayed as more fascinating than his fiction. I submit that both are equally fascinating, and that it is *because* of his fiction that we know of the man.

Another problem I have encountered in researching this subject is that the state of Kerouac scholarship is torn between biography, as I have just stated, and studies

aimed at the first-time reader, providing summaries or synopses of the novels without ever treating the works academically. In part I feel this is a problem with the works of Kerouac and the Beats not being considered or rarely being considered academic material. It is unlikely that a student having completed his/her B.A. in English literature would have found Kerouac or the Beats on the curriculum. This may perhaps be due to the misconception that Kerouac's work stands apart from "classical" literature because of the lack of grammatical structure and syntax to be found in his novels. And one might consider that his status as a pop icon and a cult hero may obstruct his passage into serious academic study at the university level.

Kerouac expressed discontent bordering on bitterness concerning the treatment his novels received in his lifetime. In the last novel he states: "in so far as nobody loves my dashes anyway, I'll use regular punctuation for the new illiterate generation" (*VofD* 1). As I have pointed out before, in the novel the dashes represented the writer's breathing rhythm, replacing conventional punctuation. Kerouac struggled with his editors, who, in the pursuit of profit pressured him into sacrificing artistic integrity in an effort to make the novels suitable for a larger market. In his grand vision, Kerouac planned a revision of sorts to his novels, in which he would insert all the proper names for characters and places he had been forced to disguise for legal purposes. But, cheated once again, Kerouac died before that dream was realized.

It is my opinion that Kerouac often felt shorted, cheated, that his work was not respected for its artistic intentions, and that the concessions he made to his art for publication lessened the spontaneity and quality he wished to convey. To date there is no standard edition of Kerouac's works. Little textual analysis has been conducted to

produce versions which trace his original texts to his edited texts.[2] Not having an authoritative edition of Kerouac's works, including all the prefaces and introductions, detracts greatly from scholarship. The only writer currently active in assembling and collating all material on Kerouac is Ann Charters, whose many sources have been invaluable to me in this project.

The area of Kerouac study seems to grow steadily despite its relative absence from the university milieu. Every autumn, Kerouac's home town of Lowell, Massachusetts chooses to celebrate its native son with a weekend-long conference dedicated to him and his works. Walking tours are given of institutions recognized from his prose: the Twelve Stations of the cross, the orphanage, and Grotto from *Doctor Sax*, the mighty Merrimack River from *The Town and the City*, the red brick of the now empty mills. These are the recurring images imbedded in his fiction. They are a part of his psyche and as such constantly surface in his writing.

Often an impressive list of Beat poets from Allan Ginsberg to Michael McLure are in attendance at these conferences and provide poetry readings. As well, the conference brings out Kerouac scholars like Ann Charters, who give lectures in places that Kerouac haunted as a youth. The ambience is overwhelmingly Kerouac. The city of Lowell prides itself in its annual event and the writer who immortalized its landscape forever. A similar event is held in Québec City, where there is a Kerouac society.

[2] One such exercise was conducted by Charters and documented in "Kerouac's Literary Method and Experiments: The Evidence of the Manuscript Notebook in the Berg Collection."

These conferences are growing in popularity and notoriety, and it is my fervent hope that this attention will spur a new wave of academic study into the Beat material, philosophy, and aesthetic theories. I hope that this study can be a contribution to this project.

There is still one question I have not answered. Why Jack? He says it best in "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" when he says that the reader cannot help but feel in the reading exactly what was put into the writing. I agree. My reaction to Kerouac, my connection to his image prose was instantaneous fifteen years ago when I first read *On the Road*. The intensity of my feelings has not faded with time or familiarity with the text, and I have achieved the same connection with his other texts. The honesty with which he wrote is conveyed to the reader. I was curious. I wanted to know what Kerouac was doing that other writers were not doing. I began a personal investigation and discovered that the reactions to Kerouac's writing were often strongly negative. And example of this reaction follows:

> The 'beat' generation of postwar America, simiiar in essence to the heroes of the 'kitchen-sink' school of contemporary English literature, was celebrated in 1957 by Jack Kerouac in his novel *On the Road*. This book, a report of the half-literate comments of a group of self-conscious delinquents, addicted to traveling at high speed between New York and San Francisco, and given to jazz, dope, and the lunatic fringe of sex and literature, received attention out of all proportion to its significance as fiction. Kerouac's first novel, *The Town and the City* (1950) was a sensitive study of a young man's growing to maturity; but this new work,

describing a marginal, infinitesimally small group of posturing bohemians, was most accurately described by Herbert Gold in *The Nation* (November 16, as a 'frantic tirade' (Charters *Beat Reader* xxx).

This is, however, not true for all the Beats. In spite of the obscenity trials for "Howl" and *The Naked Lunch*, time has proven forgiving to other beat writers. Ginsberg and Burroughs have been accepted in the mainstream circles; Ginsberg has been anthologized, and Gary Snyder won the Pulitzer Prize for a collection of poetry. It seems that Kerouac has done something to the American psyche that it hasn't understood, or recovered from, or forgiven him for.

Henry Miller, in the Preface to *The Subterraneans*, states: "Believe me, there's nothing clean, nothing healthy, nothing promising about this age of wonder--except the telling. And the Kerouacs will probably have the last word." It seems fitting to me that I allow Kerouac to have the last word. Therefore, I submit the following poem for your pleasure.

49th Chorus

They got nothing on me
at the university
Them clever poets
of immensity
With charcoal suits
and charcoal hair
And green armpits
and heaven air
And cheques to balance
my account
In Rome benighted
by White Russians
Without care who puke
in windows
Everywhere.

They got nothing on me
'Cause I'm dead

They cant surpass me
'Cause I'm dead
And being dead
I hurt my head
And now I wait
Without hate
For my fate
To estate

Jack Kerouac

APPENDIX A

"THE ESSENTIALS OF SPONTANEOUS PROSE"

SET-UP

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

PROCEDURE

Time being of the essence in the purity of speech, sketching language is undisturbed flow from the mind of personal secret idea words, *blowing* (as per jazz musician) on subject image.

METHOD

No periods separating sentence-structures already arbitrarily riddled by false colons and timid usually needless commas--but the vigorous space dash separating rhetorical breathing (as jazz musician drawing breath between outblown phrases)--"measured pauses which are the essentials of our speech"--"divisions of the *sounds* we [illegible] "time and how to note it down." (William Carlos Williams)

SCOPING

Not "selectivity" of expression but following free deviation (association) of mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thought, swimming in sea of English with no

discipline other than rhythms of rhetorical exhalation and expostulated statement, like a fist coming down of a table with each complete utterance, bang! (the space dash)--Blow as deep as you want--write as deeply, fish as far down as you want, satisfy yourself first, then reader cannot fail to receive telepathic shock and meaning-excitement by same laws operating in his own human mind.

LAG IN PROCEDURE

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

TIMING

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

CENTER OF INTEREST

Begin not from preconceived idea of what to say about image but from jewel center of interest in subject of image at *moment* of writing, and write outwards swimming in sea of language to peripheral release and exhaustion--Do not afterthink except for poetic or P.S. reasons. Never afterthink to "improve" or defray impressions, as, the best writing is always the most painful personal wrung-out tossed from cradle warm protective mind--tap from yourself the song of yourself, *blow!--now!--your* way is

your only way--"good"--or "bad"--always honest, ("ludicrous"), spontaneous, "confessional" interesting, because not "crafted." Craft *is* craft.

STRUCTURE OF WORK

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

MENTAL STATE

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

APPENDIX B

"BELIEF & TECHNIQUE FOR MODERN PROSE"

List of Essentials

1. Scribbled secret notebooks, and wild typewritten pages, for yr own joy
2. Submissive to everything, open, listening
3. Try never get drunk outside yr own house
4. Be in love with yr life
5. Something that you feel will find its own form
6. Be crazy dumbsaint of the mind
7. Blow as deep as you want to blow
8. Write what you want bottomless from bottom of the mind
9. The unspeakable visions of the individual
10. No time for poetry but exactly what is
11. Visionary tics shivering in the chest
12. In tranced fixation dreaming upon object before you
13. Remove literary, grammatical and syntactical inhibition
14. Like Proust be an old teahead of time
15. Telling the true story of the world in interior monolog
16. The jewel center of interest is the eye within the eye
17. Write in recollection and amazement for yourself
18. Work from pithy middle eye out, swimming in language sea

19. Accept loss forever

20. Believe in the holy contour of life

21. Struggle to sketch the flow that already exists intact in mind

22. Dont think of words when you stop but to see picture better

23. Keep track of every day the date emblazoned in yr morning

24. No fear or shame in the dignity of yr experience, language & knowledge

25. Write for the world to read and see yr exact pictures of it

26. Bookmovie is the movie in words, the visual American form

27. In praise of Character in the Bleak inhuman Loneliness

28. Composing wild, undisciplined, pure, coming in from under, crazier the better

29. You're a Genius all the time

30. Writer-Director of Earthly movies Sponsored & Angeled in Heaven

APPENDIX C

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CHRONOLOGY[1]

BOOKS	WRITTEN	PUBLISHED	PERIOD IN DULUOZ CHRONOLOGY
Visions of Gerard	January 1956	1963	1922-6, Lowell
Doctor Sax	July 1952	1959	1930-6, Lowell
Maggie Cassady (Springtime Mary)	early 1953	1959	1938-9, Lowell
The Town and the City	1946-9	1950	1935-46, Lowell & N.Y.
Vanity of Duluoz	1968	1968	1939-46, Lowell & N.Y.
On The Road	1948-56	1957	1946-50, Cross-country
Visions of Cody (Visions of Neal)	1951-2	1959	1946-52, Cross-country
The Subterraneans	October 1953	1958	Summer 1953, N.Y.
Tristessa	1955-6	1960	1955-6, Mexico City
The Dharma Bums	November 1957	1958	1955-6, West Coast
Desolation Angels	1956, 1961	1965	1956-7 West Coast, Mexico, Tangier, N.Y.
Big Sur	October 1961	1962	Summer 1960, California
Satori in Paris	1965	1966	June 1965, Paris
Mexico City Blues	August 195[illegible]	1959	
The Scripture of the Golden Eternity	May 1956	1960	
Pull My Daisy	March 1959	1961	

1 The information contained in this table supplied by Ann Charters in *Kerouac: A Biography*. (New York: Straight Arrow Books, 1973). 409.

BOOKS	WRITTEN	PUBLISHED	PERIOD IN DULUOZ CHRONOLOGY
Book of Dreams	1952-60	1960	
Lonesome Traveler (compiled)	1960	1960	
Pic	1969	1971	
San Francisco Blues	April 1954		
Some of the Dharma (Buddha Tells Us)	1954-5		
Wake Up	1955		
Pomes All Sizes	1960s		

WORKS CITED

Ashida, Margaret E. "Frogs and Frozen Zen." *Prairie Schooner.* 34 (1960): 199-206.

Bartlett, Lee, ed, *The Beats: Essays in Criticism.* Jefferson: McFarland, 1981.

Berrigan, Ted. "The Art of Fiction XLI: Jack Kerouac." *On the Road: Text and Criticism.* ed. Scott Donaldson. New York: Viking Press, 1979: 538-572.

Charters, Ann. *A Bibliography of Works by Jack Kerouac: 1939-1975.* New York: Phoenix Bookshop, 1967.

---. *Kerouac: A Biography.* San Francisco: Straight Arrow, 1973.

---. "Kerouac's Literary Method and Experiments: The Evidence of the Manuscript Notebooks in the Berg Collection." *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities.* 84, 1981: 431-450.

---, ed. *The Portable Beat Reader.* New York: Viking, 1992.

Clark, Tom. *Jack Kerouac.* San Diego: Harcourt, 1984.

Eddy, Nelson L. "Neal Cassady and the Origins of Spontaneous Prose in the Writings of Jack Kerouac." *Moody Street Irregulars: A Jack Kerouac Magazine.* 16-17 (1986): 16-19.

Ginsberg, Allen. *As Ever: The Collected Correspondence of Allen Ginsberg and Neal Cassady* ed. Barry Gifford. Berkeley: Creative Arts Book, 1977.

Holmes, John Clellon. "Four Essays on the Beat Generation." in "The Beats: Literary Bohemians in Postwar America." ed. Ann Charters. Vol. 16 of *Dictionary of Literary Biography.* Michigan: Bruccoli Clark, 1983.

Hunt, Timothy A. *Kerouac's Crooked Road: Development of a Fiction.* Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String Press, 1981.

Kerouac, Jack. "The Beat Generation." unpublished manuscript at Special Collections Library, Columbia University, N. Y., 1958.

---. "Belief and Technique For Modern Prose." *The Portable Beat Reader.* ed. Ann Charters. New York: Viking, 1992: 58-59.

---. *Big Sur.* New York: Bantam, 1963.

---. *Desolation Angels.* New York: Granada, 1979.

---. *Dharma Bums.* New York: Viking, 1958.

---. *Doctor Sax.* New York: Grove Press, 1959.

---. "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose." *The Portable Beat Reader.* ed. Ann Charters. New York: Viking, 1992: 57-58.

---. Letter to Ellen Lucy. Special Collections Library, Columbia University, N. Y.

---. *Lonesome Traveler.* New York: Grove Press, 1960.

---. *Mexico City Blues.* New York: Grove Press, 1959.

---. *On The Road.* New York: Viking, 1957.

---. *On The Road.* Toronto: Penguin, 1991.

---. "The Origins of the Beat Generation." *Casebook on the Beat.* New York: Thomas and Crowell, 1961.

---. *Readings By Jack Kerouac On The Beat Generation.* Rec. May 13, 1959. Verve LP #15005, 1960.

---. *Scattered Poems.* San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1971.

---. *The Subterraneans.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1958.

---. *The Town and the City.* New York: Harcourt, 1950.

---. *Vanity of Dulouz.* London: Quartet Books, 1973.

---. *Visions of Cody.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972.

Lipton, Lawrence. *The Holy Barbarians.* New York: Messner, 1959.

Mailer, Norman. "The White Negro." *The Portable Beat Reader.* ed. Ann Charters. New York: Viking, 1992: 586-609.

Miller, Henry. Preface. *The Subterraneans.* New York: Avon Books, 1958.

Nicosia, Gerald. *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac.* New York: Grove, 1983.

Podhoretz, Norman. "The Know-Nothing Bohemians." *Partisan Review.* 25 (1958): 209-214.

Woods, William Crawford. "A New Field: A Note on *The Dharma Bums.*" *Review of Contemporary Fiction.* 1983 Summer vol 3 (2): 7-14.

Young, Al, Larry Kart, and Michael S. Harper. "Jazz and Letters: A Colloquy." *TriQuarterly.* 68 (1987).

Working Bibliography

The following is the working bibliography I used in my study of this subject. The references listed below pertain to the study of Kerouac and his writings. Sources listed in the Works Cited are not repeated here.

Books

Charters, Ann. *Jack Kerouac: Selected Letters 1940-1956.* New York: Viking, 1995.

Cook, Bruce. *The Beat Generation.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971.

Donaldson, Scott, ed. *On the Road: Text and Criticism.* New York: Penguin, 1980.

Ginsberg, Allen. *Allen Verbatim: Lectures on Poetry, Politics, Consciousness.* ed. Gordon Ball. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974.

Hipkiss, Robert A. *Jack Kerouac: Prophet of the New Romanticism.* Lawrence: Regents Press, 1976.

McNally, Dennis. *Desolate Angel: Jack Kerouac, the Beat Generation, and America.* New York: Random House, 1979.

Milewski, Robert J. *Jack Kerouac: An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Sources, 1944-1979.* Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1981.

Parker, Brad. *Kerouac: An Introduction.* Lowell: Lowell Corporation for the Humanities, 1989.

Parkinson, Thomas, ed. *A Casebook on the Beat.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1961.

Portuges, Paul. *The Visionary Poetics of Allen Ginsberg.* Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson, 1978.

Sutton, Walter. *American Free Verse.* New York: New Directions, 1973.

Tytell, John. *Naked Angels: The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976.

Walsh, Joy. *Jack Kerouac: Statement in Brown.* New York: Textile Bridge Press, 1984.

Weinreich, Regina. *The Spontaneous Poetics of Jack Kerouac: A Study of the Fiction.* New York: Paragon House, 1990.

Articles

Budan, John. "The Ultimate Kerouac Reading Experience." *Moody Street Irregulars: A Jack Kerouac Magazine.* 18-19 (1987).

Burns, Jim. "Kerouac and Jazz." *Review of Contemporary Fiction.* 3 (1983).

Camacho, Jose Manuel. "Lowell: Jack Kerouac's Gallaway." *Moody Street Irregulars: A Jack Kerouac Magazine.* 18-19 (1987).

Challis, Chris. "Write in Recollection and Amazement for Yourself." *Review of Contemporary Fiction.* 3 (1983).

Cohen, Alan. "Why I Still Read Jack Kerouac." *Moody Street Irregulars: A Jack Kerouac Magazine.* 16-17 (1986).

Colbert, Alison. "A Talk With Allen Ginsberg." *Partisan Review 38 (1971).*

Dardess, George. "The Logic of Spontaneity: A Reconsideration of Kerouac's Spontaneous Prose Method." *Boundary.* 2 (1975).

---. "Kerouac." in "The Beats: Literary Bohemians in Postwar America." Parts 1 and 2. ed. Ann Charters *Dictionary of Literary Biography.* Vol. 16. Michigan: Bruccoli Clark, 1983.

Duffy, B. L. "The Three Worlds of Jack Kerouac." *Recent American Fiction: Some Critical Views.* ed. Joseph J. Waldmeir. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.

Holland-Skinner, Con. "Through a Swinging Locking Glass: Or Steps to Discovering Jack Kerouac." *Moody Street Irregulars: A Jack Kerouac Magazine.* 15 (1985).

Huerta, Albert, S.J. "The Inner Quest of Space: Twenty-five Years Later." *Review of Contemporary Fiction.* 3 (1983).

Hunt, Timothy A. "The Misreading of Kerouac." *Review of Contemporary Fiction.* 3 (1983).

Jones, LeRoi. Introduction. *The Moderns: An Anthology of New Writing in America.* ed. LeRoi. New York: Corinth Press, 1963.

Kart, Larry. "Jack Kerouac's "Jazz America" or Who Was Roger Beliot?" *Review of Contemporary Fiction.* 3 (1983).

Morgan, Robert Coolidge. "Kerouac's Vanity and the Novel of Inner-Speech." *Moody Street Irregulars: A Jack Kerouac Magazine.* 18-19 (1987).

Peace, Warren. "Jack and the Beatstalkers." *Moody Street Irregulars: A Jack Kerouac Magazine.* 15 (1985).

Ring, Kevin. "The Golden Juke Box." *Moody Street Irregulars: A Jack Kerouac Magazine.* 15 (1985).

Stevenson, David L. "James Jones and Jack Kerouac: Novelists of Disjunction." *The Creative Present: Notes on Contemporary American Fiction.* ed. Nona Balakian and Charles Simmons. New York: Doubleday, 1963.

Walsh, Joy. "Kerouac's Harmonious Combination of Elements: The Long, Symphonic Sentence." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 3 (1983).

Weinreich, Regina. "Synaesthesia, Synchronity, and Syncopation." *Review of Contemporary Fiction.* 3 (1983).