THE UNFINISHED SCREAM: THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE
SELF AND SOCIETY IN THE WORKS OF PAUL BOWLES

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by

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SUMMARY

This thesis shows how Bowles's style and themes have developed from a number of sources, including Dada and Surrealism and Edgar Allan Poe, but moved beyond them to a writing which is unique and radical. The thesis traces the progress of Bowles's work from his examination of representative Western characters undergoing immensely testing journeys into their deepest selves, to his fascination with altered states of perception and Moroccan culture. It argues that Bowles has recognised a double division within humanity; from the natural world itself, and from a true and authentic relationship to our unconscious. As a result of this double division, the self and society which Bowles examines are distorted and corrupted.

The thesis explores how Bowles has consistently worked to undermine the system of values and perceptions which permit such divisions to exist. In order to do this, he attacks the self, as the centre of our own importance within the world, and society, because it conditions us into an acceptance of values and ways of seeing life. Much of his fiction aims to disintegrate and destroy these two key areas in order that he might expose their failings and suggest alternative ways of existing. In particular, Bowles has grown more interested in preserving elements of Moroccan culture as remnants of a more open, less rational way of life. This thesis, therefore, examines the final balance between a destructive urge and a desperate need to preserve and learn from what remains when the distorted and corrupt has been stripped away.
I hereby declare that this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed  N. Campbell  (Candidate).
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I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of the candidate's investigation.

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I would like to thank Paul Bowles for his kindness in discussing his work with me, both through letters and during a visit to his home in Tangiers. Most of all, I would like to thank Jane whose support, encouragement and typing has made the completion of this thesis possible.
INTRODUCTION

We must scream without respite – he who stops is lost.\footnote{1}

If the writer has any function socially today, it is to put obstacles in the way of the consumer society’s development. Admittedly his efficacity is negligible. Still, it’s important that he continue to exist and work. \footnote{2}
The arguments presented in this thesis aim to show how, over a long and varied career as writer, Paul Bowles's work has a coherence and direction based on an extraordinary and radical protest. In many ways Bowles is a protest writer, concerned not with any narrow political protest but with a wider, universal protest against what the world and man have become.

When Bowles examined American society, as the dominant force in world politics and culture, he saw a terrifying place in which 'civilization had turned and begun to devour its own body'\(^3\) whilst engaged 'in the race toward destruction'.\(^4\) His own life allowed him to escape America and to seek out places 'touched by fewer of the negative aspects of contemporary civilization',\(^5\) but he still knew that all around him the world was closing in. To him American society was a nightmare world in which people's individual lives were crushed and moulded by the relentless social pressures of a rapidly changing consumer society. He wrote in his autobiography that 'each day lived through on this side of the Atlantic [his adopted haven was Morocco] was one more day spent outside prison.'\(^6\)

The image is one which Bowles uses many times in many ways in his fiction to express similarly desperate sensations of enclosure and entrapment in his characters. The social malaise which he was aware of also directly affected people's lives and minds. The 'symptoms',\(^7\) of the diseased society were within people too and eating away at their own capacity for authentic experience, true relationships and any sense of freedom. Their very selves reflected the society from which they came. As society grew more totalitarian, more brutal and more restrictive, Bowles used his fiction as a responding voice of protest against it.

The development of the self to its condition in the early Twentieth Century is an unacceptable one for Bowles and so his protest is an effort to destroy it in his fiction. The destructive process uncovers the characters through a process of stripping away their own assumptions until they are disintegrated forms broken from their social selves. At the
heart of the corrupt self is the ego, the means by which the self is
defined and identified, but this for Bowles is the hub of man's problem.
It provides a view of the self which is superior and arrogant in relation
to everything around it and permits man to believe in his capacity
for dominance. The thrust of his disintegrative urge is, therefore, direc-
ted at the ego since, 'the destruction of the ego has always seemed an
important thing. I took for granted that that was what really one was
looking for in order to attain knowledge and the ability to live...'.

For Bowles, Americans epitomise this ego-bound self because they
have grown from a society which takes for granted its wealth and technol-
ogical progress. However, as Bowles has pointed out, 'Americans think
they have it because they know how to make everything work', when, in
fact, their knowledge omits a basic understanding of all that lies below
the surface of their lives or which cannot be comfortably explained thro-
ugh a scientific process. A self built on this kind of foundation is one
without the strong roots of a past which goes back beyond the machine age
or the growth of technological technique.

Bowles's protest, which began as a rejection of the family background
he had experienced in America, with its conditioning towards an acceptance
of the social structure and norms of behaviour, found a much wider applic-
ation in his fiction. The enclosure he felt in America echoed the restric-
tions he saw everywhere in the West. People's lives were stunted and lim-
ited by their willingness to accept the conventions of the established
cultural order or to retreat behind a safe definition of what reality was.
In one of his notebooks Bowles wrote, 'what actually exists is beyond any
system of either chaos or order. Nor is it to be "understood"'. Yet
all around him he saw societies trying to close down and limit this undefined area. The world was becoming a monoculture, defined by its sameness
and its deadness, and so too were the minds of its inhabitants. The self
and the society were bound together in this strange process of flattening
out, and so both had to be attacked in his fiction. He told Oliver Evans
that, 'the world is closing in' and as a result America, and other countries with the same relationship to their culture, had 'a certain human element missing'. In Morocco Bowles found a society without the same attitude. There, people were like 'rocks in the brook that just stay there while everything else rushes by them in the water,...time goes by and people go by. That's the proof that life goes on, somehow, whereas in New York there isn't any proof. It's all going by, nothing going on.'

In the chapters that follow I will examine how Bowles's work developed over the years around some of these fundamental ideas about the self and society. His early excitement at the extreme works of Edgar Allan Poe and then his fascination with the writings of the Surrealists and other facets of the European avant-garde, place Bowles's work within this 'tradition'. It is a tradition of radicalism which is not overtly political, but which is clearly seeking to alter perceptions of reality and offer an alternative to a conventional and repressive cultural order. In 1970, when writing to the American novelist James Purdy, Bowles expressed very clearly his own feelings about the need for people, and by implication artists, to protest about the conditions of their society and their selves.

The normal man will be the one who shares the mass-psychosis of the moment, whatever it may be. The lucky man will be the one who mentions such forbidden things. The new dispensation. 13

The image of the disease eating, like a cancer, into the modern world is one which Bowles uses again and again in his writing and which I will discuss in later chapters. However, it is the emphasis he places on the notion of the man who dares to speak of it that is particularly interesting here. Bowles suggests that the man to be persecuted by society is the one who, like him, is prepared to 'mention' what is really happening around him. A society is built upon an acceptance of a certain established view of reality which if challenged makes the challenger an 'enemy' of that society, an outcast.
It is the position that Bowles accepted for his own life at a very early stage and which gave him a special view of the society around him. He was in his own terms an 'enemy', attacking in words.

I was aware that I had a grudge, and that the only way I could satisfy my grudge was by writing words, attacking in words. 14

The so-called progress of society and the self did not exist for Bowles. He saw mankind changing, but not for the better.

I think it's quite clear that humanity in its arrogant urge to prove itself outside of and superior to nature has destroyed most of its supreme accomplishments...culture that took millenia to form are annihilated in a generation. 15

Bowles's view echoes that of Oswald Spengler who wrote in The Decline Of West of the kind of world Westerners were in the process of creating.

In place of type-true people, born and grown on the soil, there is a new sort of nomad, cohering unstably in fluid masses, the parasitical city-dweller, traditionless, utterly matter-of-fact religionless, clever, unfruitful...This is a very great step toward the inorganic, towards the end...world-city means cosmopolitanism instead of 'home'... 16

These are the characters that populate Bowles's fiction and who have usually reacted to their situation by seeking to escape it, but only managing to take their disordered selves with them into the world. As Spengler goes on to say, one aspect of this kind of civilization is its expansion outwards, where 'Imperialism...is to be taken as the typical symbol of the end' because 'the expansive tendency is a doom, something demonic and immense, which grips, forces into service, and uses up...mankind...'. 17

Faced with this kind of world, Bowles sought to expose it fully in his works and then set in motion a process of destruction which would break apart the people and by implication their social backgrounds as well. An extreme condition required an extreme style to combat it and this is what Bowles chose to use. In a series of crucial statements made by Bowles he outlines the way by which he hopes to 'call people's attention to something they don't seem to be sufficiently aware of'. 18

Much of my writing is an exhortation to destroy...It is a desire above all to bring about destruction, that's certain...I imagined it could destroy the establishment. When I realized it couldn't I got out fast and decided to work on my own hook. 19
His 'hook' was to attack indirectly through bringing into question our ways of interpreting the world and the assumptions we make about our position within it. He wanted to infect these views with 'the germ of doubt' until 'their basic assumptions...have been slightly shaken for a second...'.

To move people in this way would cause 'a temporary smearing of the lens of consciousness' which might enable some new perception or some process of learning to begin. The idea of destruction is not, as Bowles has pointed out, necessarily a negative force. Indeed, 'to destroy often means to purify' by which he means that the disintegrative process he invokes can begin to re-order the way we think or invite us 'to question and ultimately to reject the present structure of...society'.

If we follow through all the elements of Bowles's work, it becomes clear that he has consistently maintained his attack on the self and the society that nurtures it, but at the same time attempted to suggest the things that have been lost in the process of man's embrace of a modern world of technique and rationalism. His own writing has moved latterly to a more lengthy act of preservation in the face of a rapidly disappearing traditional culture in Morocco. The world he longs to preserve in Morocco is symbolic of the human element which had always concerned him as fast being squeezed out of our perception of the planet. The relationship of man to his environment and to his inner self is the vital element which traditional cultures manage to maintain and which Bowles felt was being replaced by a more sinister view of man as superior, unconnected to nature and rational. This view of man, Spengler's 'city-dweller', is the man excited by the possibilities of totalitarianism with its emphasis on control and authority over the natural and human worlds. This is the horror within Bowles's work, the horror of the end product of a world without a heart, without a true and intimate connection between man and his self and man
and his environment.

The artist's only course is to protest and to reveal, which is what Bowles has done. The outcome of the protest may be negligible in the face of a tide of social pressure to conform, but at least he has continued to point out the alternatives and remind us that there are other ways of seeing the world and other ways of living within it which are not automatically divisive.

In 1955 Paul Bowles wrote 'Windows on the Past', an essay that was never reprinted and has remained a forgotten travel piece written for the defunct 'Holiday' magazine. Although it follows a journalistic formula of interesting, colourful experiences threaded together as a European travelogue, Bowles manages within it to make several major points about the psychological make-up of the age. For this reason the article remains his clearest, most didactic statement about his response to the modern world and about his own writing. It provides a framework of ideas and demonstrates that his work, although diverse, shares a common ground based on a psychological theory of man and his world.

Bowles had been a successful writer for years before this article was written, but nowhere had he made such a clear statement of his views. Bowles begins by seeing that America's importance in the world is immense; 'the trend of this century is being set by America for the entire world'. However, it is based upon 'organization, perseverance, industriousness and, of course, technique' and dominates in these areas to the neglect of others. In fact, and this is essential to Bowles's work as a writer, 'the business of technique...stands in the way of our own culture's complete and unimpeded flowering'. He goes on,

In the rush to learn how, we have forgotten that first we must know what...Unconsciously or otherwise we demand something better, we are uneasy, we suspect that we have missed some element vital to the fashioning of a culture.
For this reason Americans are drawn to Europe, 'drawn back to explore her...[because] our intuition tells us we shall find what we need there among the visible vestiges of our immediate tribal past'. 29 What Bowles realised was that America's rational urge to 'learn how' took place at the expense of any development of 'what', or understanding the true nature of the self. Two years later, in a phrase rescued from this article, Bowles wrote in Yallah!, 'where we could learn why, we try to teach them (the African tribesmen) our all-important how, so that they may become rootless and futile and materialistic as we are'. 30

What Bowles saw was that our 'rootless, futile, materialistic' world was that created by 'technique', whereas we were losing contact with a more vital understanding of our selves and our relationship to the world which more 'primitive' peoples maintained. All our obsessions 'stood in the way of our own...flourishing' 31 as people and so as a culture. In 'Windows on the Past' he goes on to define what Americans are looking for in Europe;

I believe...we Americans are searching for...something more all-embracing. I should call it a childhood - a personal childhood that has some relationship to the childhood of our culture. 32

As a result of Americans' obsession with 'technique' they have forgotten their true past, 'lost contact with the psychic soil of tradition in which the roots of culture must be anchored'. 33 In a draft copy of this article Bowles went on to say this obsession had caused 'a profound rift in our collective subconscious'. 34 The emphasis is upon man's loss of his connection to something greater than himself, greater than his 'technique' - to 'the psychic soil' itself, to his relationship with the world.

The modern world, 'our gadget civilization', has no connection with the past; it is not the continuation or outgrowth of any deep-seated myth, and however much the rational section of the mind may approve it, the other part of the mind, the part that actually determines preferences rather than explaining them, is dissatisfied with it. 35

As a consequence of this we are unbalanced and have become over-reliant
on 'the rational section of the mind' whilst still seeking to be 'an
integral, if infinitesimal, part of historical continuity'.

When Americans are 'drawn back' to Europe they are undergoing a sym-
'bolic search for a 'lost childhood, the childhood that never happened,
but whose evocation can be instrumental in helping us to locate ourselves
in time and space.' It is not a regression, but an attempt to regain
a sense of self and world which has been lost by man's rational obsessions.
Jung, whose language is echoed in Bowles's article, supplies the frame-
work of ideas:

The way begins in the children's land, that is, at a time when ratio-
nal present-day consciousness was not yet separated from the histor-
ical psyche, the collective unconscious. The separation is indeed
inevitable, but it leads to such an alienation from that dim psyche
of the dawn of mankind that a loss of instinct ensues. The result
is instinctual atrophy...

The movement to regain a 'lost childhood''s relationship with 'the psychic
soil' is, says Bowles,

the first step, the indispensable one, in the direction of knowing
what we are to ourselves and what we are in the world.

It forms the vital process which dominates his literary output, for in
order that man can achieve any true sense of himself and his world he must
attain a fuller understanding of what he is and where he has come from.
Hence so many of Bowles's works are about displacement and dislocation,
for he sees it as a necessary prerequisite for a mind in search of its
'dark, mysterious core'.

To return, for a moment, to Bowles's essay and to the notion of 'tech-
nique', it is interesting to see this in relation to Martin Heidegger's
ideas on the subject, published in 1953. Like Bowles he considered
technique as the basis for man's separation from his being and the world.

Western technology has not been a vocation but a provocation and
imperialism. Man challenges nature, he harnesses it, he compels
his will on wind and water, on mountain and woodland...[in an]
'adversary relationship', a confrontation.

The similarity in Bowles and Heidegger is captured in the idea that all
of Western man's products, his consumerism, his technology, his rampant
rationalism, stand in the way of any realisation of his true self.

We have compelled nature to yield knowledge and energy, but given to nature, to what is live and hidden within it, no patient hearing, no in-dwelling. Thus our technologies mask Being instead of bringing it to light... and the consequences for man are destructive... Our dissociation of the negative from the positive values of techne, our violent deflection of 'vocation' into 'provocation', have made us homeless on the earth. 44

So for Bowles, man has 'masked' his Being — that is, his true, traditional relationship with the world — behind a mode of thinking and living which must be questioned, even destroyed, before any revelation can take place. Much of Bowles's work examines the implications of man in this predicament and demonstrates the difficulty of escaping from his own mask or cage, which is his preferred image.

What Bowles has always recognised, is the connection of the self to its society, indeed he has said 'human behaviour is contingent upon the particular culture that forms it' and that 'the malady' which we carry around within us 'is only an accompaniment of our "culture" [and] it will naturally be everywhere we are, and most evident where a great number of us is congregated...' Bowles's naturalistic view does place the individual within a framework determined by culture or society and so his work is aimed beyond the self, at the mechanism that produced it.

It is as if the basic pattern of the culture must be reflected in the internal structure of each individual person; as if the individual were in some sense a microcosm and the culture to which he belongs a macrocosm. Each individual, like a Leibnizian monad, 'reflects' the culture of his world from his own point of view and with varying degrees of clearness and confusion. 47

With this view of self and society Bowles connects his work with that of Edgar Allan Poe whose non-naturalistic fiction had its basis in American society itself. As Eric Mottram has written,

If Poe has roots in society, it is in a culture which assumes that the individual is isolated and that this condition is best stated as 'a problem' to be solved by the individual and not by the society which holds him. 48

Thus the individual, conditioned to believe in the power and importance
of the self, must try to overcome the problem without recourse to any sense of a society as a 'beneficent whole'. In Bowles's fiction individuals struggle to escape a feeling of social enclosure and as a result place the entire burden upon their own selves, believing that they can overcome their feelings of despair and alienation. What Poe recognised, and Bowles continued to explore, was the idea that the social conditioning has entered every part of people's lives, distorting even their very sense of themselves. It is not enough to escape and change, but what is required is a radical reassessment of both self and society.

Bowles identified many of these problems with the very nature of America itself and so his first thrust was against the culture which he saw as a place of disease. In this respect there are substantial connections between Bowles's work and that of Edgar Allan Poe, at least the version of Poe which was expressed through the work of Baudelaire. The great French writer traced Poe's work back to a fundamental hatred of American culture and found there the basis for his subversive fiction.

From the midst of a greedy world, hungry for materialist things Poe took flight in dreams. Stifled as he was by the American atmosphere... He was in himself an admirable protest, and he made his protest in his own particular way. 49

For Poe this was a protest about the destructive effects of progress, 'a progress always negating itself'. 50 Like Bowles, Poe saw America as a vast prison in which he ran about with the fevered restlessness of a creature born to breathe the air of a sweeter-scented world—nought but a great, gas-lit Barbary—and that his interior, spiritual life as poet, or even as drunkard, was no more than a perpetual effort to escape the influence of that antipathetic atmosphere. 51

This terrible prison 'leaves the American mind with little room for things which are not of the earth' 52 and so drives it further into its obsessive craving for materialism. As a result of this restrictive world, Poe saw America as a land not of freedom, but of restraint and enclosure, as Michel Butor has written; 'instead of guaranteeing man his freedom [it] takes it from him [and] pays him with illusory progress, which serves
only to conceal its failure'.

This is the very same America which Bowles grew up in and with which he associated the increasing rationalism paralysing its people. Everywhere, as he later expressed symbolically in his story 'The Frozen Fields', he saw a world of constraint and repression, a world forbidding any genuine outpourings from the self. It is a vision Bowles shared with Poe and with D.H. Lawrence who wrote that

All this Americanizing and mechanizing has been for the purpose of overthrowing the past. And now look at America, tangled in her own barbed wire, and mastered by her own machines. Absolutely got down by her own barbed wire of shalt-nots, and shut up fast in her own 'productive' machines like millions of squirrels running in millions of cages. It is just a farce.

Like the characters which fill Bowles's fiction, America itself had 'set in motion a mechanism of which they become a victim', and in its efforts to push itself beyond a past bound up with primitivism and the natural world, it produced a culture built on a particular way of thinking which reduced all life to machine-like patterns and formulas. Edgar Allan Poe's stories demonstrate the urge to penetrate behind this America and reconnect Man with all that he had lost in his drive to progress.

Poe had to lead on to that winter-crisis when the soul is, as it were, denuded of itself, reduced back to the elemental state of a naked, arrested tree in midwinter. Man must be stripped of himself. Lawrence saw in Poe, just as Baudelaire had, 'the disintegrative vibration' aching to cut through all the falsity which man had built up around himself and his society. Lawrence called it 'our plausible rind', which rigidifies around us as a form of protection against the outside world. As our culture forms its 'rind' our self becomes ego-dominated and in this 'state of egoism, we cannot change. The ego...remains fixed, a final envelope around us... safe inside the mundane egg of our own self-consciousness and self-esteem'. But to accept this would be to reduce life to an immediate and limited world without any attempt to see the possibilities beyond its boundaries. Lawrence railed against this
condition:

Safe we are! Safe as houses! Shut up like unborn chickens that cannot break the shell of the egg. That's how safe we are! And as we can't be born, we can only rot. That's how safe we are! 60

The alternative, which Lawrence so admired in Poe, was to expose the condition and destroy the 'shell', 'open the soul to the wide heavens...In infinite going-apart there is revealed again the pure absolute, the absolute relation...'.61 As Allen Tate recognised, 'Poe is the transitional figure in modern literature because he discovered our great subject, the disintegration of personality, but kept it in a language that had developed in a tradition of unity and order.'62 This is the disintegrative will Bowles brought to bear in his own fiction as an 'exhortation to destroy', 'to question and ultimately to reject the present structure of any facet of society'.64 So when Bowles portrays the disintegration of a character in his fiction, he is always looking beyond the person to the society that has produced him or her, because it is there that the changes must take place. The individual is only the symptom of the disease and, as Franz Kafka said, 'you will not abolish the disease by isolating and suppressing the symptom...it will only become worse.'65 Any hope exists beyond the symptom and so the writer 'must go to the root of the diseased condition. Only then will the disfigurements resulting from the disorder disappear'.66 Both Poe and Bowles have described America as just such a diseased society. Poe in 'The Colloquy of Monos and Una' wrote that 'Man...fell into childish exultation at his acquired and still-increasing dominion over [Nature's] elements', but he grew infected with system, and with abstraction...huge smoking cities arose...green leaves shrank before the hot breath of furnaces. The fair face of Nature was deformed as with the ravages of some loathsome disease. 67

Bowles echoes these ideas in many places, for example, in 'Pages from Cold Point' where the United States represents 'today's monstrous world' waiting to spread its sickness, and if 'you are infected with the deadly virus,...you begin to show the symptoms of the disease. You live in terms
of time and money and you think in terms of society and progress'.

Poe's method of attacking the disease was to push his readers out of their safe world and confront them with an array of sensations and experiences which would challenge the closed views their society encouraged.

All his imaginary trips - by ship, balloon, laudanum, hypnosis - were aimed at setting the soul free from the demands of the body and so from the restraints of normal perception; simultaneously releasing the mind from its own tomb, the prison of its endlessly inturned and ramifying nervous complexes... 69

...the direction of Poe's mind, the thirst of his imagination is away from the body and toward the spirit, away from the 'dull realities' of this world, toward the transcendent consciousness on a 'far happier star'. His protagonists are all attempting to get out of the clotted condition of their own materiality, to cross the barrier between the perceptible sensual world and that which lies beyond it. 70

This urge is clearly present in Bowles's work too, and yet the 'clotted condition' has grown worse and the characters struggle more against both their society and their selves which are microcosms of it. Bowles's work continues a familiar struggle but in a progressively more desperate world. As a result, the method of attack has become more extreme, 'attacking in words...to help society go to pieces' in order to 'cause a certain amount of questioning of values...'. 71

Poe's extraordinary vision excited the young Bowles whose mother first read him the stories, but the similarity of his work to the earlier author he feels is 'overworked' by critics. What Bowles shares with Poe and with other writers, like Lautréamont, is a view of the self and of society which needs to be challenged from all sides. Their spirits live on in his own desire 'to question and ultimately reject the present structure of any facet of society...'. 74 As Baudelaire wrote of Poe, he was 'stifled...by the American atmosphere [and]...was in himself an admirable protest...in his own particular way'. 75 Bowles's 'protest' attacks that part of us all which we keep most hidden and are most reluctant to open up to the world, just as Poe's did.
It is within the soul, the heart, and above all within the mind of man that Poe sees the grotesque; and it is to our souls, and not our eyes, that he appeals. 76

In appealing to our inner selves, Bowles's work has a therapeutic effect because it brings to the surface those feelings buried within the subconscious. The process of disintegration opens up his characters and their worlds and reveals their unaccommodated natures, from which we, as readers, can learn. Indeed, Bowles has always felt this way about his work. He told Daniel Halpern, 'much of my work is therapeutic', 77 and Millicent Dillon explains in what way.

He himself had very little choice as to whether or not he should write. He would either write and make his sense of doom a palpable thing - and a fiction - or he would, he feared, go mad. The work, in effect, was his salvation. 78

What Dillon explains was something which Graham Greene, whom Bowles admired greatly, had realised in his own motivation as a writer and written about in his autobiography.

Writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those who do not write, compose or paint can manage to escape the madness, the melancholia, the panic fear which is inherent in the human situation. 79

Bowles has used his writing as a therapeutic release 'to clarify an issue' and to allow it to become a reality through his creativity. He has called it 'a fake psychodrama' in which his fears are played out and exorcised through his fiction. Real psychodrama as a form of therapy aims 'to confront the ghost in broad daylight' and become

a journey into the depths, into the dark places of the human psyche, bringing what is found out into view, to be confronted and dealt with, while the protagonist (the term for patient in psychodrama) and audience experience emotional catharsis and develop new insight - regression, followed by a leap forward. 82

Bowles's motives as a writer may not have such a definite and formulated pattern, nor such a positive purpose, but he shares, at least, some of the therapeutic goals of psychodrama. He told Harvey Breit that 'writing music was not enough of a cathartic' and he needed his fiction to permit a darker journey into the self. The process of his fiction could
open up previously closed areas for re-examination and confrontation because as gestalt therapy recognised, the enemy is

the desensitizing effect of repression, regimented education, technocracy, bureaucracy - the vast alliance of forces that trim and shape the complex and enormously vital human organism down to size to fit a neat, plastic, productive social role. 85

From his earliest stories to his later fiction, Bowles has continually explored the possibilities inherent within the human organism and shown its battle with the forces around it. The self's unfinished struggle within society and the interior consequences of the contest dominate his work, as they have his own life. His work dramatises this, often painful, contest and forms a body of writing of an absolutely radical kind because it continually challenges accepted norms of behaviour and ways of seeing the world.

The image of the unfinished scream which Bowles used in his long poem 'Next to Nothing' carries a resonant meaning for all his writing. It recalls Edgar Allan Poe's provocative relationship with his society and with the self it produced, as interpreted by E.L. Doctorow who wrote,

Historians of early America fail to mention the archetypal traitor, the master subversive Poe, who wore a hole in the parchment and let the darkness pour through...A small powerful odour arose from the Constitution; there was a wisp of smoke which exploded and quickly turned mustard yellow in colour. When Poe blew this away through the resulting aperture in the parchment the darkness of the depths rose, and rises still from that small hole all these years incessantly pouring its dark hellish gases like soot, like smog, like the poisonous effulgence of combustion engines over Thrift and Virtue and Reason and Natural Law and the Rights of Man. It's Poe, not those other guys. He and he alone. It's Poe who ruined us, that scream from the smiling face of America. 86

Poe's scream was against the restrictions which society placed on the self, against the tortuous consequences of the human mind trapped within a terrifying system. The literary scream of Poe, taken up by Bowles, is perhaps closest to Arthur Janov's Primal Scream which 'is at once a scream from the Pain and a liberating event where the person's defense
system is dramatically opened up. It results from the pressure of holding the real self back...'. 87 The system 'strangles and warps...it is literally killing [deadening] the person off...it keeps the Pain away, wrapping such a shield around the feeling self that nothing can be felt'. 88 A realisation and expression of the Pain, through the scream itself, is the means by which the self recognises its reality and breaks through the artificial shielding system to feel again.

The similarities to Bowles's work cannot be ignored and so the scream provides a useful image through which to view his work. In Primal Theory, as in Bowles's work, 'the entire system must be uprooted' 89 in order that everything we assume to be true can be brought into question and challenged. His own artistic relationship to society has always been clearly antagonistic, as suggested by his poem 'Next to Nothing'.

I am the spider in your salad, the bloodsmear on your bread.
I am the rusted scalpel, the thorn beneath your nail.
Some day I shall be of use to you, as you can never be to me...
I am the wrong direction, the dead nerve-end, the unfinished scream. 90

The dark vision inherent in Bowles's work offers little comfort, and for many has been 'the wrong direction' in the sense that it appeared negative and anti-social. However, ultimately, his work has always been 'exemplary', a warning about our self and our society and a warning never finished. As Gore Vidal, a friend of Bowles's, has pointed out, 'our age is one of man alone, but there are still cries, still struggles against our condition...', and Bowles's work provides just such a 'cry'.

If his own work is a kind of therapy for him, then it is for his readers too since it exposes and dramatises the dilemmas of being human in the modern world. To read Bowles's work is to join a difficult journey which involves an effort 'to learn the geography of one's own nature' 92 and to 'watch your universe as it cracks above your head', since 'the warning is given too late to have any effect...the disinteg-
ration has progressed, I'm afraid beyond the point where one could hope for a successful check to it'.

Yet the 'scream' does have a value and the artist must continue to work because,

To destroy the sense of security is a writer's principle task now, it seems to me. To put everything into question, to make for profound doubt, if possible.

Even if 'his efficacity is negligible...it's important that he continue to exist and work' because the writing is an 'unfinished scream' in the face of an increasingly bleak, totalitarian world.
CHAPTER ONE

The Surrealist Influence on Paul Bowles

The works of Surrealism 'were not meant to be appealing; they were meant to make people howl!' 1

I've never written anything save in the shadow, at least, of the Surrealist tradition. Nevertheless, since I was always facing in another direction, I don't consider my writing Surrealist. 2
'A Cry of the Mind': The Stirrings of Surrealism.

The explanations offered by Maurice Nadeau for the necessity of Surrealism provide a framework of ideas and symbols which are vital to an understanding of Bowles's work. Nadeau writes,

Progress indeed! Man makes a beautiful cage to imprison the forces of nature; he succeeds in doing so, but does not realise that he is locking himself inside. No matter how much he screams and shakes the bars, the bars resist, for they are the fruit of a truly rational, truly perfect labour. Indeed the evil is not only in his creations, it is in himself. Man has produced a terrible civilisation because he has become a cerebral monster with hypertrophied rational faculties. Reason, logic, categories, time, space, two-and-two-makes-four have ultimately come to seem the only living realities, whereas they were nothing but convenient forms, practical and provisional means to his ends...but merely a stage in the development of thought, a stage which must be transcended. (The emphases are my own). 3

Nadeau outlines in his broad, emotionally-charged language, 'the basic divorce between man and his world' and his images are those which are so often repeated in Bowles's work. His early poem 'America' emphasises the 'ribbed glass chambers where we live' and constantly his fiction and poems return to the basic enclosures of man and his desire to be free from them. The image relates to Bowles's own view of his early life where he felt he was 'treated as a captured animal' and beyond that to his notions of America itself — as in the poem of that name.

His characters are seen struggling against the perimeters of their cages — which are both their own selves and the world in which they live — because, as Bowles told Daniel Halpern, 'people want freedom inside the the cage'. Man is caged within his own self, with its psychological and its corporeal being which each provide limitations upon existence: 'You’re bound by physical laws, bound by your body, bound by your mind'. 6 Thus man must understand his psycho-biological being, but also he must understand its relation to the world beyond the self, consisting of others and the realm of nature and objects. This dual relationship—of and to self, and beyond self within the world—is at the heart of Bowles's work. Consequently the image of the cage is not simply a protest at man's condition,
but is rather a recognition of that condition and a realisation of the
importance of understanding it and of coming to terms with it.

For Bowles Man has become alienated from himself and from the world -
a position which attracted him to elements of Existential philosophy when
he began novel writing. But it was a position common also to the earlier
movement of Surrealism and to its predecessor Dadaism.

Man, who originally possessed certain keys which kept him in close
communion with nature, has lost them and since then, more and more
feverishly, persists in trying others that do not fit. Scientific
knowledge of nature can have value only on the condition that contact
with nature through poetic and, I venture to say, mythic means, can
be reestablished. 7

The Surrealists recognised that a series of splits or dualisms existed
in human existence, and it was their intention to conquer them and reach
a point sublime, a new wholeness, a synthesis. Man was split within his
self because he placed too much emphasis on intellect and the reasoning
mind to the detriment of the unconscious, instinctual and impulsive
energies which he possessed. Breton called it 'le dédoublement du moi'. 8

Consequently, Man was unable to live fully in the world; everything seemed
to become detached or irrelevant or even threatening. Constantly in
Surrealist paintings and prose, objects assume a centrality and power
which erupt against the frailty of Man. This art sought a rediscovering
of the inter-relations within Man and the world, rather than a perpetuation
of the divisiveness. As Breton writes,

We have attempted to present interior reality and exterior reality
as two elements in process of unification, of finally becoming one.
This final unification is the supreme aim of Surrealism: interior
reality and exterior reality being, in the present form of society,
in contradiction...we have assigned to ourselves the task of con-
fronting these realities with one another... 9

This often meant a shocking realisation or a total exaggeration in effect
to bring these concepts to life. 10 Objects were used to 'subvert the
utilitarian - to disconcert the literal minded observer, to disturb his
sense of reality and grant him a glimpse of the "marvellous"'. 11
Ideally, the Surrealists wanted the expressions to be 'automatic', emerging from the unconscious in order to force a dialectical relationship with the conscious world.

For romantic egotism they substituted a self which absorbs experience without asserting a self-consciously heroic individuality. The insight of Darwin, Marx and Freud had underlied the declining autonomy of the self. What the Surrealists counterposed to this was not a vision of an anthropomorphic universe but a desperate assertion of the need to rediscover the significance of the non-material world. 12

But whereas Bigsby goes on to assert 'the internal nature of their quest', he excludes the relevant effect of the Surrealist quest, to attempt a reintegration, through their plunging inward, with the outside. The inner and outer definitions of self and world are attacked in Surrealism - objects overlap humanity, clocks melt, images reflect a 'doubling' nature, human forms dissolve. The dream is not dealt with clinically, in isolation, as in Freud, who wanted merely to explain dreams so as to give man power over them. 13 Rather they wanted to join the materials of being into a glorious whole.

The initial thrust of the Surrealist movement came from its discovery 'that there is a continuous discourse going on below the level of consciousness to which one needs only pay attention in order to register it; [and] ...that this discourse deserves the most intense attention, even when it seems discordant or incoherent'. 14 It was a question of method and approach that dominated Surrealist thinking on how best to reproduce that discourse or bring it fully-expressed into people's lives. The problem was that of a society which had excluded the instinctual levels of the self and so omitted this 'discourse' from their lives. Reason dominated the self and society and the Surrealists felt themselves repressed and forced to lead inauthentic lives according to the dictates of a cruel social power. Bergson had attacked this social assumption that logic and reason must command human activity.

Precisely because it is always trying to reconstitute, and to reconstitute with what is given, the intellect lets what is new in
each moment of history escape. It does not admit the unforeseeable. 
It rejects all creation... The intellect can no more admit complete 
novelty than real becoming... The intellect, so skillful in dealing 
with the inert, is awkward the moment it touches the living... The 
intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life. 15

The 'unforeseeable' became the Surrealists' love of chance events, of 
automatism and dream (all in different ways analogous with the unconscious). 
'Complete novelty' became the desired effects of Surrealist art and com-
position as it waged full war on all concepts of the 'inert' through a 
love of juxtaposition, mobility, metamorphosis and dissolution.

The Surrealist Declaration of 27 January 1925 outlines the radical 
initiative as a 'means of total liberation of the mind and of all that 
resembles it'. Furthermore it uses language that echoes that which Paul 
Bowles has often used to express his own concerns as a writer. Seeing 
man as caged within a hypocritically false society, the Surrealists were 
determined 'to show the fragility of thought, and on what shifting found-
ations, what caverns we have built our trembling houses'. 16 So often 
the fictions created by Bowles demonstrate the 'fragility' of assumed 
patterns of existence - whether moral, social or religious - in order to 
implant the 'germ of doubt', the questioning within his reader's mind. If 
the security upon which we formulate our social existence is fundamentally 
flawed, how do we stand as people?

The Declaration calls the Surrealist work a 'warning to Society', just 
as Bowles terms his stories as 'exemplary...serving as a warning', 17 and 
finally calls it 

a cry of the mind turning back on itself, and it is determined 
to break apart its fetters, even if it must be by material hammers! 18

The methodology of Surrealism struck at the 'fetters', to liberate man 
and give voice to 'a cry of the mind', or perhaps a more applicable tran-
slation of the French 'cri' would be a scream. We return to Nadeau's 
image of the cage with man screaming against his imprisoning bars, and 
shaking the whole restrictive structure, which lies at the heart of the 
initial Surrealist urge. Bowles responded to this radically neo-Romantic
emphasis that screamed against the civilisation that traps us all 'like fossils in shale'. Paul Goodman, in his classic study *Growing Up Absurd* (1956), used a very similar image to describe modern American society:

So imagine as a model of our Organized Society: An apparently closed room in which there is a large rat race as the dominant center of attention...there is only one system of values, that of the rat race itself.

This is how Bowles saw America, and like the Surrealists before him he felt the 'grim realization that these walls that block the artist's vision are unshakeable' and so they found 'themselves unable even to breathe in a world that had lost all life for them. And there is no physical flight... In the orderly world where the very things they once loved have shaped a prison, they are left to face bluntly their tremendous despair'. Yet this 'unshakeable' despair could not be ignored. The Surrealists tried to expand the human mind beyond its 'prison' and make people aware of the possibilities which existed outside their normal sphere of thought. Bowles found a great empathy with these ideas, but saw also a need to attack the rigid forms of thought which allowed the prison walls to exist in the first place. His first step had to be a personal dislocation in order to move away from the American world whose values he despised and whose ideas were conservative and narrow.

This dislike for America with its claustrophobic, stifling influence on the imaginative young Bowles is best seen in his 1927 poem 'America'. Rather than the original American Dream of new freedoms, openness and expansion, Bowles felt only constraint in a static and atrophied society.

**AMERICA**

The ribbed glass chambers where we live  
Our voluntary crystal shells  
Who is there here to complain?  
The white light of our flimsy prison  
Where we all lie languidly on taupe matting  
Hearing the scraping of dry fronds at the screen  
Where no insect flies nor scaly serpent moves  
The satin coverlets on our beds  
The rows of bottles with brittle stoppers  
Our windows with tiny panes  
Who is there to rebel?
The images of enclosure proliferate, each identifying the pressures against movement outward through their insistent claustrophobic atmosphere: 'ribbed glass chambers...crystal shells...flimsy prison'. It is a world where one can only 'hear' the 'scraping of dry fronds' from outside the prison, implying a separation from any meaningful contact with the natural environment. Indeed, the very natural world is tainted by the sterility of human life, so that there is an absence of motion; 'where no insect flies nor scaly serpent moves'. All is possessed by an inertia, a denial of growth or change, until man, nature and objects are fossilized within the same captive space. The static environment is emphasised through the inclusion of 'glass', 'crystal' and 'brittle', all suggestive of a finite form, while the corresponding human elements are those who 'lie languidly' on 'satin coverlets', caught in their 'voluntary' world of complacency. Humanity has become brittle and atrophied, looking out upon the world from its glass retreat which has ironically become the very cage in which they are trapped. Bowles makes his prison glass to suggest the voyeuristic nature of Man and his detachment from the world. He sits, hears, watches, but is never involved, never concerned about the world outside, because he is always shut away from it. It never touches his security, he just looks out upon it through the restrictive vision of 'windows with tiny panes', unable to reconcile his inner world with the one he observes outside. The questions, 'who is there to complain?' and 'who is there to rebel?' suggest the role of the artist and the need that Bowles himself felt to explore beyond the restrictive society of his childhood.

In 1927, Bowles read in *New Yorker* of the founding of a new literary magazine called *transition* and promptly hunted it down in a small book store on Sixth Avenue, New York. The impact was immediate upon the impressionable and dissatisfied adolescent, as he recalls in *Without Stopping*:
No publication had ever made such a profound impression on me. Quite apart from the frontal assault of Surrealism, the existence of which I had not even suspected, I loved its concise format, the strange muted colors of the soft paper they used as covers, and the fact that each page had to be cut with a paper knife (WS, 69).

Each page offered Bowles the possibility to immerse himself in the avant-garde literature of the time, and to join in the rediscovery of neglected writers whose works were being given a new life by the inspired awareness of transition's editors. 'When I was sixteen and seventeen, transition seemed to me the most important review being published anywhere. I still think it was, although it lasted a very short time.' The questioning spirit of Bowles's mind now found a mirror in published writers whose methods and techniques permeated his own tentative works until he wrote 'I sat at the typewriter practicing the invention of poetry "without conscious intervention". At length I could type an entire page literally without any knowledge of what I had put there' (WS, 70). The results of such efforts were soon published in transition itself, to the delight of the sixteen year old Bowles. He wrote, 'at no point did I ask myself whether or not I had anything to say...' and 'being beyond my control it also escaped my judgement' (WS, 70-2).

Above all, transition influenced Bowles through its contributors: 'What I felt in transition was the excitement of seeing for the first time a literature of protest'. He writes that he 'bought Djuna Barnes' new novel Ryder, because she had been among the contributors to transition' (WS, 77) and he told Oliver Evans that when Aaron Copland suggested Bowles might read Franz Kafka, he had already read him in transition: 'he used to write for transition...some of his things were published in English, in transition, after his death. I loved him even then, in translation.' In his notebooks he wrote out a list of 'transition authors besides Stein and Joyce' he 'remembers being struck by' and they were Lautréamont, Kafka, St John Perse and Gottfried Benn, 'all of whom [he] read there for [the] first time'. He added that he was reading to 'effect conscious escape from
the meaning of any life I had known until then, into the mystery and for me the irrational world of Lautréamont, Joyce, Kafka, Blok and Essenin'.

Transition began Bowles's yearning for Paris too, it gave 'the illusion of being in Paris, for the feeling of the city I got from reading its pages coincided with my own ideas of what Paris must be like, where the people were desperate but sophisticated, cynical but fanatically loyal to ideas. Paris was the center of all existence...and I knew that some day, with luck, I should go there and stand on the sacred spots' (WS, 70). Bowles, therefore, found in transition a double interest; firstly it provided a vision of challenging voices in the European avant-garde to which he could respond, and secondly it provided a further means of escaping the constrictions of his American childhood through the conjuring up of Paris, like a sacred temple to the 'impractical' artistic impulses forbidden by his parents. It was transition which provided Bowles's entry into a world beyond the narrow practicality of his home life.

The Impact of 'transition'

Transition began in 1927 under the aegis of Eugene Jolas who was born in America, but made his home in Lorraine. The journal was an attempt to find a stratum of experience and a language deeper than the surface differences of national literatures, as Dougald McMillan has written; 'Jolas saw transition as a modern day continuation of the search for transcendent experience which had marked the early romantics', and much of this immediate impulse stemmed from Jolas's hatred of American technological society. Jolas wrote that, 'transition reflects this same urge to counteract the abrasive elements of modern life through art'. It is interesting to note how close Jolas comes to Bowles's own experience of America as a nation forgetting its being and in stating reason, and its child, technology, at the helm.

In the first issue of transition, in February 1927, Jolas wrote,
'the tangible link between the centuries is that of art. It joins distant continents into a mysterious unit, long before the inhabitants are aware of the universality of their impulses'. Through art, believed Jolas, man could reconcile the differences created by nationalist politics and cultural animosity and recognise the roots of his common heritage, below the shallow surface of imposed, conscious patterns of society. Jolas, like Jung, who was a contributor and friend, believed in a collective unconscious of myths, symbols and images that proved a brotherhood of man and expressed the possibility of transcendence of meaningless and harmful social, national and psychological divisiveness. Jolas wrote in an essay entitled 'On the Quest' that 'the profound disquietude in which the sensitive man of our age lives' has come about because he has trusted pure reason too long. He lives in the obsession of despair. Call it a new mal de siècle, if you wish, it is none the less a real thing that goes deep into the consciousness of our epoch. The intellectualism vaunted so long leaves him cold. 33 Thus transition set out to counteract that 'pure reason' and 'vaunted intellectualism' through the recovery of the unconscious, of wonder, of mythic sources in literature and struck out against the 'prevailing photographic naturalism'. 34

In the post-First World War period, and with the growing tensions in Europe in the twenties and thirties, Jolas detected a resentment, a sense of betrayal and wrote 'we of this age have no faith in anything, save in anguish and despair, save in being suspicious of a humanity that has betrayed all our ideals and is becoming more depressing everyday'. 35 It is from this growing sense of despair - a 'new nihilism' Elliot Paul termed it 36 - that transition's direction came, organizing behind a 'First Phase' of publication (April 1927 - April 1928) given the slogan of the 'Eclectic-Subversive Period'. The slogan typifies the impulses at work in the journal with its internationally varied writers, some living, some dead, whose works suggested a dynamically new and antithetical position.
The subversiveness was both in the social-cultural impact against nationalism, political and economical domination and also in its attacks on traditional literary form and method. In the earlier editions the journal gathered a wealth of Dada and Surrealist contributors and later developed a more formalised 'Revolution of the Word', led by Joyce and Stein. 37 Amid the turmoil of the new, Bowles aligned himself with transition writers, with those committed to a contrary vision, an assault upon a complacent world. Bowles responded to Jolas's hope that 'transition wishes to offer American writers an opportunity to express themselves freely, to experiment, if they are so minded, and to avail themselves of a ready, alert and critical audience' 38 by submitting two poems 'Entity' and 'Delicate Song' for publication.

In the twenty-seven issues of transition Jolas published over sixty pieces by Surrealists including work by Breton, Aragon, Soupault, Artaud, Arp and Ernst. Some even appeared as English translations in transition before being published in French, for example the opening chapter of Breton's Nadja in transition 12. Jolas was proud of this and later wrote that transition 'had introduced the texts of the then emergent school of Surrealism, a full decade before London and New York became aware of it...'. 39 Though it was never a purely Surrealist organ, it introduced the revolutionary forms to a wider audience, 'providing a wide-ranging selection of surrealist works that allowed English readers to see all aspects of the movement in perspective'. 40 Paul C. Ray has written that 'the campaign waged by transition against conventional literature and conventional modes of perception...owes much to the surrealist program...'. 41 Perhaps just as significant was the policy to republish the Dadaists, even after their formal 'death' and to dedicate a special section to them in transition 25, 'Dada: 1916-36', with works by Hugo Ball, Huelsenbeck Kurt Schwitters and Hans Arp. 'Jolas understood the deep spiritual revolt that motivated the dadaists', 42 and there was always an element with-
in some transition writers of Dadaist destructiveness. Alan Young goes as far as saying transition was 'based on the radical nihilism of the Dada movement', whereas Jolas himself wrote that 'contemporary society seems to us to be in an abysmally dark state and we are entertained intellectually, if not physically, with the idea of its destruction'.

Yet, 'the deep spiritual revolt' that Jolas believed he understood in the Dadaists became another representation of his wide-ranging policy of challenge to convention and tradition in the arts. Jolas, like the Rumanian painter and Dadaist Marcel Janco, preferred to see Dada as 'a turning on the road opening up wide horizons to the modern mind' to which other movements and individuals could respond. The publication of Dadaists in transition represented Jolas's belief that their works offered a radical possibility in the modern era and that through their questionings, their destructiveness, their urge to assert chance and disorder was a voice crying out against the society in which they felt trapped. Jolas rejected the simplistic nihilist label often applied to transition and would have sympathised with Jean Arp's words:

> The honorific title of nihilists was bestowed on us (Dadaists); The directors of public cretinization conferred this name on all those who did not follow in their path.  

A 'Dada Manifesto 1949' explains that Dadaism suffered from this association with nihilism, that is 'the inability of a rationalized epoch and of rationalized men to see the positive side of an irrational movement.' Reports of Dada told only of the 'wholesale attacks on everything' and 'led critics to believe that its sole aim was to destroy all art and the blessings of culture', but the manifesto asserts 'Dada had both destructive and constructive ideas'.

Jolas wanted to present the 'positive' possibilities of Dada without reducing its power and saw in it the humanist gestures of disgust resulting from the Great War and the complacently established forms of art and society. As Tzara wrote, 'The beginnings of Dada were not the beginnings of
art, but of disgust'. Duchamp said Dada was 'the non-conformist spirit which has existed in every century, every period since man is man', and it was through their extremist methods they sought to revive this spirit. It was like the unconscious itself, buried below the layers of established forms, morality, social organization, language and art. Dada sought to shake up the complacent world from within through 'a public execution of false morality' to open up a fuller range of human possibilities and expose and rend its patterns.

This 'public execution' involved the dissolution of existing practices so that 'everything must be pulled apart, not a screw left in its customary place, the screw-holes wrenched out of shape, the screw, like man himself, set on its way towards new functions which could only be known after the total negation of everything that had existed before...'. Here Hans Richter articulates the dual purpose of Dada, as destroyer, certainly, but in order that something new may grow. Art and language seemed to maintain the pretence of order and certainty to the point of pure falsity and deception, and it was this the Dadaists sought to destroy. The reality that authority presented was but a pretence, because the true reality was fragmentary, metamorphic, and open to the unconscious impulses. To admit such fundamentally anarchic elements was to disrupt totally the orderly facade that society sought to promote.

To open up the sheltered society, Dada would destroy assumptions; about what a poem was (Tzara's cut-ups); what a poetry reading was; what a work of art was (ready-mades, collages); it would mock traditions (Duchamp's Mona Lisa) and deride the notions of artistic values or masterpieces through a rejection of ego and reason in preference for chance and the unconscious. They 'were seeking an art based on fundamentals to cure the madness of the age and a new order of things that would restore the balance of heaven and hell', because Man had grown away from a reciprocal relationship with the outside world, preferring reason and egotism, which sep-
arated him from nature and from any mutual existence within the world. All impulsive actions, desires and thoughts were associated with a lack of civilization, and were repressed beneath the brutal facade of socially acceptable behaviour.

Dadaism, 'one of the most important literary movements of our times', as Jolas called it, appealed to Bowles because it demonstrated a healthy disgust with man and society and this 'was the one sound reaction any artist could have in a world apparently gone insane.' In its vitality Dada shunned political affiliations and concentrated on a call for liberation from the inside outwards. Later Tzara aligned himself with the Communist Party as did Breton's Surrealist movement, a decision which turned many away from its ranks. E. Jolas wrote that 'for a creative mind, complete absorption in a party or religious institution is paralysis'. Bowles himself, at one time a member of the Communist Party, later rejected political dogma as 'pollution' and consequently turned from Breton's Surrealist association with Communism. The Party politics left no space for the individual sceptic, the man concerned for a psychological revolution and not just an economic one. For Bowles the problem was based in the psychological fact of man and projected in his relation to the world outside, it was the fundamental Surrealist problematic of the relationship of the inner to the outer, of subjective to objective. Politics seemed to deal with this problem obliquely, through an acceptance of man as a purely rational being in a world that he commanded. What appealed to Bowles was the basic urges in Dada and Surrealism to protest and search for alternative expressions for experience which broke down the narrow limits of the mind.

Dadaism and Surrealism continued to be the most direct forms of protest, although I felt that Dada had merely opened the gate to Surrealism, so that all that was left by the late 'twenties was the latter. There is a non-ideological anarchy in Bowles's view of social man trapped inside an enclosing world, which recalls Herbert Read's 1938 statements
in Poetry and Anarchism.

There is nothing I so instinctively avoid as a static system of ideas ...In order to create it is necessary to destroy; and the agent of destruction in society is the poet. I believe that the poet is necessarily an anarchist, and that he must oppose all organized conceptions of the State...In this sense I make no distinction between fascism and marxisn. 58

Artaud echoed this in The Theatre and its Double,

Poetry is anarchic in that it questions all relationships between object and object, form and meaning; It is anarchic also in so far as it exists as the result of a disorder that brings us nearer to our chaos. 59

In Bowles's fiction, much of which carries an apparently realistic form, a similar action is involved moving against a security falsely assumed. Particularly in his stories, we find the recurrent drive to the disruptive, the extraordinary, to 'a magic of disturbance',60 because they are concerned with examining human psychology under the threat of disintegration arising from the dislocation of assumptions, patterns and systems which we trust and feel secure within. Even those characters who flee the insanity of technological, modern society to seek some new meaning, some new hope, discover the impossibility of their task. For the truth is that modern man can never escape from himself. He carries his warped psychology about with him no less inevitably than his bodily diseases. (But the worst disease is the one he creates out of his own isolation: uncriticized fantasies, personal symbols, private fetishes...). 61

Bowles's work probes the 'warped psychology' and wrestles with the problems it manifests once it is allowed to surface outside of established social forms.

Transition published radical works and statements which excited Bowles and which have had a lasting influence on his work. For example, Hans Arp wrote that today's representative of man is only a tiny button on a giant senseless machine. Nothing in man is any longer substantial. The safe deposit vault replaces the May night. 62

This kind of criticism inspired Bowles who later imagined a terrifying technological totalitarianism in Up Above the World. A more direct influ-
ence led Bowles to search out Kurt Schwitters on a visit to Germany. Schwitters's giant collages took waste and objects and reintegrated them with the artist's creative forms, while his literary works consisted of ontophonic poems and concrete poetry which sought to destroy the language of established poetics to penetrate the rhythms and sounds of language's fundamentals. Bowles explains that 'Merz-Kunst was Schwitters's own brand of Dada, its lineage most evident in his poems and stories'(WS,115), which he recited to Bowles whilst he was visiting.

The impact of Schwitters was important enough upon the young Bowles (aged 20) that he considered using his poetry for a musical setting:

I notated the words, the rhythm, and vocal inflections and later used it without changes as the frame for the theme of the rondo movement of a sonata for oboe and clarinet (WS,115).

Consciously and unconsciously, Bowles assimilated Dadaist energy, whether through Schwitters or Gide whose Les Caves du Vatican he bought at the age of fifteen. He 'was seduced by Lafcadio's acte gratuit' (WS,67), which embodied the disruptive energies of Dada, since 'at the heart of Dada lay the "gratuitous act", the paradoxical, spontaneous gesture aimed at revealing the inconsistency and inanity of conventional beliefs'. The gratuitous act was a means of breaking the enclosure of moral and social systems and asserting individual and artistic freedom because it existed in and for itself without any further connections. Its appeal to Bowles suggests his inner desire to free himself from the oppressive society in which he grew up and to expose it to the 'unleashed id'.

Bowles, inspired by his published poetry in transition, also had four poems published in a'very important review' (WS,104), This Quarter, which was well known for its interest in Surrealism. Meanwhile, back in America, Bowles published poems in blues, a magazine edited by Charles Henri Ford and Parker Tyler. Ford's importance is significant; he is 'America's surrealist poet. In retrospect he is seminal. His first two
books create American Surrealism'. His initial contact with Bowles, through blues, was to lead to a further relationship with the publication of View in the 1940's. The contact maintained Bowles's interest in Surrealism, but his trip to Europe in 1929 provoked a major Surrealist experimentation.

It involved the beginning of a novel, 'Without Stopping', which was the application of automatic writing to the general subject of my trip to Europe, scenes put together, but not in a very coherent fashion, I'm afraid. I was very influenced by Finnegans Wake at the time. Despite the reference to Joyce's influence, Bowles is describing the Surrealist method of automatic writing, since he 'decided to write it as it came to [him] and prune it later' (WS,97) direct from his memory and unconscious. He adds,

I was afraid that if I stopped to exercise choice, I would also begin to consider the piece critically, which I knew would stop the flow. And it was the flow above all which preoccupied me...(WS,97).

Even at such an early stage in his career, Bowles was discovering the strengths and weaknesses of the Surrealist method. It provided a means to plunge into the unconscious by just writing, without critical judgement or interruption, but it also depended on a flow which seemed to destroy artistic control.

The ability to write 'automatically' was seen by the Surrealists as standing in 'the same relation to the unconscious as does the dream', as Paul C. Ray explains:

the dream is one method by which the contents of the unconscious find expression, automatic writing is another. Automatic writing ...is a kind of dream, but a waking dream, which differs from a sleeping dream only in being verbal not visual. Breton's Premier Manifesto defines the ideal conditions for automatic writing as being in a state of passivity and receptivity, and beginning writing without any preconceived notion in the mind, writing rapidly without looking back and if one has to stop then do so, but begin again with the first letter that enters your mind and so reintroducing the
arbitrary into the work. These conditions must have been peculiarly easy for the young Bowles since he writes in *Without Stopping* that,

I had thought of myself as a registering consciousness and no more. My nonexistence was a *sine qua non* for the validity of the invented cosmos (WS, 53).

Hence he was totally passive and receptive, as Breton demanded, and as to any preconceived ideas in the mind, Bowles states later his 'habit of never starting writing until I had entirely emptied my mind' (WS, 102). Bowles later referred to these techniques as his 'self-imposed Surrealist practices' (WS, 102).

It was in poetry that Bowles first experimented with the relationship between the unconscious and creative expression, and it was not a Surrealist, but Arthur Waley who had the initial affect on Bowles. He bought a book of poems translated from the Chinese by Arthur Waley and up until then 'poetry had never interested me...' (WS, 52), but now suddenly 'Waley's compact little pellets... suggested the existence of a whole series of other purposes for which the poetic process could be used. I began to look at the real world around me with the idea of defining it in as few words as possible' (WS, 52).

This meant close attention to details, senses, perceptions and the expression of them in language as they entered his 'registering consciousness'. Two years later in 1925 Bowles had found a new way of 'not existing as myself and thus being able to go on functioning', it was the fantasy in which 'the entire unrolling of events as I experienced them was the invention of a vast telekinetic sending station. Whatever I saw or heard was simultaneously being experienced by millions of enthralled viewers...' (WS, 53). His existence was not alone, but was shared by all people, linked by a common point of contact, a 'sending station', which enabled him to exist and yet not as an individual, since 'they saw through my eyes'. It is a fantasy of extreme detachment from responsibility of one's self through which the young Bowles could 'view, rather than
participate in, my own existence' (WS, 53).

There are elements within his hermetic poetry that clearly stem from this detachment. Life becomes totally abstract, flickering, impressionistic and yet events seem to follow their own peculiar logic, as if somehow we, the readers, should have equal access to the 'sending station' from which they come. Bowles once claimed that 'the only published material of mine which embarrases me now is the great number of 'poems' I scattered like chicken feed to little magazines during the late twenties and early thirties' (WS, 367). He considers them 'literary indiscretions' (WS, 367), but they do prove his experimentation with Surrealist techniques and his widening of ideas. He later adjusted this view and saw them as 'nuclei of obsessive flashes of memory...a book of notes for future use'.

Bowles's Poetry: 'a book of notes for future use'

Just as his own childhood had lead him into the imaginative invention of secret places and landscapes outside the domain of parental control, so in his earliest poetry landscape emerges again. Amidst a childhood world of 'vague menace on all sides', his imaginary landscapes provided a place where he might enjoy some personal freedom from his practically-minded parents. His 'fictitious world' (WS, 34) was where he had total control, and organised and patterned its existence, so that landscapes succumbed to his cities, railroads, houses and maps. Yet, in his poetry the landscapes overwhelm in their presence as undifferentiated and full of chaotic movement, life and death, dark and light. The human presence is unsure, detached, seemingly wandering against the rhythms of a natural world that highlights Man's failings. In Bowles's poetry it is clear that the Surrealistically released unconscious emerges as landscape and nature in all its metamorphic glory and terror. Rational Man yearns to dominate its power, and ultimately nature cannot be fully possessed - it is destroyed, changed, spoiled, - but it lives while man dies searching
for its mysterious immutability.

The young Bowles's fictitious worlds were just replicas of the world around him, except they were under his control and not his parents. Man seeks, in Nadeau's words, to 'make a beautiful cage to imprison the forces of nature', but in doing so only succeeds in 'locking himself inside'. The need and desire for a safe, controlled world beyond threat is a common goal in Man, but in achieving the goal Man creates immense problems for himself. As Eric Mottram writes,

Detached life in an enclosure for which one is not responsible but which nourishes, is a familiar dream. Nostalgia for that peace and security may drive a Man towards the terrible awareness that the sky does not enclose safely... 71

Bowles's poetry began to explore this urge in Man and its consequences for his life as a whole.

It is the natural world; fierce and beautiful, unpredictable and rhythmic, dark and light, which represents a vision of authentic life and not the impositions that Man seeks to construct upon it. The unconscious process reawakens the human sense of this, because it breaks through the artificial security of the organised mind and introduces the magical, inexplicable and metamorphic patterns which are called chaos in the rational world.

The poem 'America', which I have already referred to, is a useful focus for these ideas, for it provides an image of the mind and society which interrelate around a central proposition of complacent security. Man has conquered and subdued the natural, threatening world and constructed a solid form in which to live and see, if only through 'windows with tiny panes', and in doing so has excluded the source of his vitality, Nature and Earth.72 To view the poem in this way one must allow both the literal, physical image of Man separated from the natural world and also the psychological image of Man divided within, between his conscious and unconscious selves.

But the poem is not conclusive at this point, for the 'crystal shells'
Man has manufactured to protect and secure his being are not totally safe. Nature lives outside the 'flimsy prison', its presence recorded by the threatening sounds of 'the scraping of dry fronds at the screen'. When in later works of fiction, Bowles is working against this kind of false security, both in personal and socio-cultural terms, he again uses landscape images to convey his purpose. The unconscious rises up to confront the overly-rational self, just as nature resists the restrictive forms Man seeks to impose upon it. Bowles's work constantly reiterates this fundamental struggle between the inside and outside, between the fluid, metamorphic world and Man's perception of it. In a poem 'A Chatting as of Unfetters', written for Daniel Burns in 1927 and never published, there is a clue to such an impulse in its last lines. The whole poem, associative and surreally formed, ends in a piece of romantic, Poesque drama that does, however, reveal something common to Bowles's later works.

For a soul is not a soul sans it have a dark recess wherein lie the worms of ruin. 73

So often his poetry, as in his later fictions, reveals and explores that 'dark recess' as it appears in Man's psychological identity. The sense of a wholeness that the use of 'soul' suggests is complemented by the idea that it must not exclude 'the worms of ruin'. Both forces coexist in the soul of the integrated self and consequently must be permitted equal standing within life.

The dilemma had been witnessed in early Dada and Surrealist works where they were 'haunted by the sense of inner disunity and by the more obvious outer division between man and his surroundings.' 74 Bowles's use of glass and windows in 'America', was an often-used representation of man's dilemma in Surrealist works, where 'windows separate the watcher within from the odd and vaguely threatening' world outside. 75

The earth and sky embrace in 'Serenade au Cap' (1926); 76 the sky 'hugs
the hot earth close to its face' and the natural elements intertwine, merge and create the sense of wholeness in the poem. Bowles stresses the 'dull', 'dark ening' and 'grey' aspects of the landscape, but alongside we find 'the soft earth is warm and black', 'the pool is still with warm dark water...', suggesting the coexistence within nature of opposites. What Man may view as sinister and harsh is but a function, a process, within the whole movement of the 'serenade' to which he seems outside.

The poet's voice indicates the distance between the human and the natural, for it relates the movements of the elements to human characteristics. The evening becomes a 'grey face', as it 'hugs' the earth 'close to its face', but the language measures nature against man's image, when only the superficial gestures may be similar. The action of personification is the poet's reduction of the vast, alien and complex natural world to his own realm of functions. It is an ego-bound poetic grasping at what cannot be defined, or neatly reduced to specific humanized movements.

The poet himself is thus recognised as a voyeur, standing outside nature trying to encapsulate its powers, to express its dynamism in a language that ultimately fails to do so. The language reduces and confines the environment because it wants to bring it into the human realm, into the primarily rational, organised realm defined in an inadequate language. By using the musical term 'serenade' in the poem's title, Bowles points to the traditional piece of music expressing the moods of evening, which is clearly what the poem achieves, but there is perhaps another, more symbolic sense in using the term. The serenade, appropriate to evening, was often played outside a woman's house as an action of wooing or affection. Therefore, in using the term, Bowles suggests the separation of the poet (man) from the woman (nature), for he is locked outside her house and creates the poem/serenade to bridge the space between them. It is both an appeal for reconciliation in its desire, but in its demonstration, a model of man's dilemma.
The image of woman and nature, especially Earth Mother is one to which Bowles's work often returned in his expression of division in life. The relationships with mothers, and his 'mother-figures', are usually unsteady, distrustful, even violent, because in the world of separation Man has lost his true relationship to the Mother Earth, nature, the unconscious. Ted Hughes has expressed a similar point of view about Christian culture 'based on the assumption that the earth is a heap of raw materials given to Man by God for his exclusive profit and use' which is a fanatic rejection of Nature, and the result has been to exile man from Mother Nature - from both inner and outer nature. The story of the mind exiled from Nature is the story of Western Man... 77

'Prelude and Dance' 78 continues this idea with the poet static, sitting 'under a tall tree', amid a world of mobility from which he is typically alienated. So 'a heron regarded me' and bees were 'at a distance', while 'a bird moved/ Over hills...', but the poet only 'watched it from afarafar'. The bird image was popular with Surrealist poets because 'the bird is the vertical or pure parallel of the "plenitude" of the earth... He has a direct right to the sky, and the motion of the wings enlarges space itself, like the ideal force of the Surrealist poem... The bird exemplifies pure freedom and constant revelation of light... 79 Likewise in Bowles the bird serves a similar function, but it ultimately reflects upon the poet/man, alone, isolated within the fluid and mobile universe.

The poem itself divides into two stanzas - the 'prelude' identifying the poet/man and his situation, and the 'dance' moving beyond him to the world surveyed by the precious bird. But it is a world of light; 'glass tops', 'platinum' and 'steel' wherein everything is suffused with whiteness. Here, Bowles actually presents a female figure enwrapped within the natural world - appropriately it is the White Goddess:

In the platinum forest walked a white maiden
Slow white tones rose from her throat...
She is Nature itself singing 'among the trees' of 'where the forest white brook are / Where the wood white shadow are...Where the water white sky are / Where the long white day are...'. She possesses the secret, mysterious knowledge of 'where' and she is 'among' the mobilities of nature. They merge in her, she in them, until she disappears; it is a perfect moment where ego and individual disappear in a Nirvana - an entropy which dissolves object and subject while 'a tone still floated in the air'. Her 'dance' is the embodiment of nature's being, its continual construction and deconstruction, its rhythms and stillnesses, its music and silences. Thus whiteness is appropriate, for it is no colour and all colours, everything and nothing - as nature.

The language is surreal - 'forests of platinum...hills of steel', and it creates typically surreal paradoxes or contradictions which affect the 'expansion and extension' of usual perceptions, such as 'slow white tones', 'the wood white shadow' and the 'water white sky'. It is what Caws terms 'doubling', bringing together seemingly opposite notions so as to create anew, to inspire the 'merveilleux'. It is not a Surrealist monopoly, but rather a romantic inheritance - certainly seen in Poe, who defined a similar process as 'pure imagination' - 'the most combinable things hitherto uncombined', and in Baudelaire's synaesthetic poems. The effect is a dream-like surreality of vision both through the language of images and the incantatory repetitions within its lines; of the initial word 'where' and the ultimate word 'are'.

Bowles's Surrealist leanings emerge in his disturbing images and juxtapositions, sometimes termed the 'analogical process', by which distant objects or ideas are brought into a confrontation in order to create a new reality. An example is the image 'steel lizards' in Bowles's 'Elegy', which combines two seemingly distant notions in a single space. It gives us a tension of softness and hardness, of animate object and inanimate object, of man-made and nature-made. Similar peculiarly disorientating
images arise like 'the unnatural laughter of psychic objects' ('Double Exposure')\(^8\) in which one is given an apparently impossible combination as a figurative image. Logically, objects cannot laugh, but what are these psychic objects which appear to have an actuality which laughs? When these complexities are further increased by the inclusion of the adjective 'unnatural' we are left with little faith in our concepts of reality. Therefore, to proceed we must allow a new reality to exist, a new vision beyond the assumed and accepted. The senses may be joined to a similar end, as Baudelaire knew, so that an exclusively visual perception may be impressionistically reinterpreted with additional senses applied. Bowles often incorporates such a sensual awareness in his poetry:

\[
\text{I shall lean on a pillar of amethyst}
\]

\[
\text{and sing clear blue tones before water}
\]

or

\[
\text{Can you feel the greenesses of me?}
\]

\[
\text{Can you feel the light here?}
\]

\[
\text{A silver curtain is softening about us,}
\]

\[
\text{it is only my song.} \quad 83
\]

Original Surrealist poetry's new reality was a 'point sublime' 'where all the contraries are identified' but Bowles's poetry tends to express a continual division between man and the world symbolised as a separation from the White Goddess.\(^8\) Nature is imaged as 'a/slow unchanging circle'\(^8\) within which all is changing, metamorphosing but in its own order, within the great whole, the vessel or womb of Mother Earth. The circle holds a special meaning for 'the immutability of spheres is constant' and associated in Bowles's mind with the female - 'close her eyes and fold her hands above'.\(^8\)

For Bowles, Man, the egotist, has lost his relationship to the world and to nature in all its manifestations and this reflects an internal crisis as well. For Man's own being is affected when he loses contact with the outside. He is locked up inside himself and unable to feel a
communion with anything outside that self. He has created a world that mirrors this fundamental split, a world of science, of time, of technology, in which reason dominates. Life is measured out in units of work-time, judged on economic success and rejects anything it cannot categorise, label or explain as irrational, useless and childish. Thus in Bowles's poem 'Elegy' the mood is a mixture of mourning and lament with a muted anger and protest against man's absurdity. The prevailing mood is that 'Everything is too late', that man has lost his centre, his communion and, therefore, all his gestures are mere vanities. From the circle of wholeness and inclusion, man is left with its fragments and the implications of the break-up in human relationships: 'We are all unbecoming to each other.../Everything is unbecoming to everything else'. Man has lost his home, in the sense that man is now an outsider in the natural world, separated from the roots of being: 'We are all unsuited to dwell here in this plain', homeless on the earth. Jung wrote that primitive man who was in constant contact with the earth was also in contact with his unconscious.

The country he inhabits is at the same time the topography of his unconscious...[he dwells] in the land of his unconscious. Everywhere his unconscious jumps out at him, alive and real. A whole world of feeling is closed to us and replaced by a pale aestheticism.

Heidegger wrote that, 'to be human is to be immersed, implanted, rooted in the earth, in the quotidian matter and matter-of-factness of the world (human has in it humus, the Latin for "earth")'. But man has broken the bond and sought to elevate himself above the world, to exploit it, control it and organise its powers for himself. The problem remains that the world is all around man in his isolation, and if not in harmony with man, it seems to threaten him. Consequently man has departed from his relationship to Nature (in its fullest sense, and not just in a romantic view), and must suffer for his presumption. The division between subject and object is total.
These particular concerns are evident in 'Spire Song', of which Bowles has said 'its method of composition, like that of all the other poems was strictly Surrealist...Yet I doubt that one could call it a Surrealist piece'. The free-ranging use of the unconscious in its composition gives it a Surrealist thrust, but it is perhaps closer to many Surrealist works than Bowles was prepared to admit. It is concerned with 'l'un dans l'autre' and in bringing disparate perceptions together in an act of disturbance which might open up new visions for the reader. The poem shifts between the immediate detail - 'the heated beetle pants' - to the distant - 'on a faroff hill the peasant is lunching', in order to actually dissolve the distance, between interior and exterior and human and natural. Bowles has called the poem 'a long Surrealist effort' (WS, 72) and it clearly fulfilled many of his ideas about Surrealist techniques. He told Gertrude Stein that 'it was written without conscious intervention... It's not my fault I didn't know what I was writing' (WS, 122).

The opening stanza is simple and realistic with its pastoral images moving between the minute (beetle, pebbles) and the large (faroff hill, field) and as ever placing man against the setting of nature, here it is 'the peasant lunching'. The second establishes the relationship of the peasant and valley:

A clear blue radiance will spread out from my heart into this great valley.

The interior (heart) and exterior (valley) are joined here in a gesture of assurance and joyous wholeness in all things, later reflected in the sensual unity of the image 'sing clear blue tones before water'. The poem is suffused with 'radiance' and sunlight like the 'rapid terraces of 'light' so strong you could 'feel' it . The inter-relationships of man and nature flourish but in stanza IV Bowles suddenly reintroduces death as a reality in nature: 'A fresh mist drowns plant...'. Man cannot accept mortality, and seeks in nature a pastoral comfort, a reassurance of vitality, but in doing so forgets the importance of death which
is everywhere, even in the beauty of stanza one; 'can you still smell the rot of last year's crop?'. Amid the new corn in the field he recalls the death and rot of the old corn - a process natural, but avoided by Man who seeks the 'radiance' without the full consideration of its implications. Thus Man reappears

Moss clings to my shoulders
and we are locked up in here
refusing to see past the thicket.

Man is 'locked up' in nature because of his assumptions about it and his exploitation of it and in 'refusing to see past the thicket' he has a blinkered, narrow vision which excludes that too distasteful to see or disturbing to contemplate. The thicket-image is perfect, representing Man caught up in the density and intricacy of nature because he wants to explain it and possess it on his simplistic and narrow-minded terms. 93

All the promise of the pastoral radiance of spring is suddenly brought into question because man has only deceived himself - as the poet deceives his reader - into believing nature is a picturesque realm of renewal and light and vitality. Louis Aragon, Dadaist and Surrealist writer, expressed his disillusionment with the hopes of a Surrealist-inspired rebirth, with a similar image of spring. Traditionally the season of rebirth and blossoming, it is no longer the vital metamorphic energy it once was:

The returning spring is without metamorphosis
It no longer brings me the heaviness of lilacs
I think I remember when I smell the roses. 94

Consequently the poem's title 'Spire Song' takes on a new importance, for it refers to the vision of the poem in the sense that each stanza and line is a 'spire' in the total structure. It is a spiral structure moving inwards and outwards within its own form, not linear or logical, but ever-moving, ever-turning, as nature.

Now the distances in the poem become signs of Man's separation from the whole radiance of nature. The hill is 'far' and the pastoral world continues its motion: 'new spiders climb warily', 'split starlight sifts
through cracks', 'long breathing of cows', 'hollyhocks stand high', but Man is gone. His house is empty, repossessed - 'the screendoors are open/and the boards of porches do not creak.' What is left are 'soft noises, rounded sounds roll out'. The emphasis is upon the circularity, the roundness, and wholeness of what remains, that is the natural. It is the 'slow unchanging circle' which persists, but without Man.

In the final two line stanza the propositional statement expresses the reconciliation within nature because it places 'night' and day ('dew'), within a process, separate but harmonious:

Cannot a gushing out of night
be dew on slanting spears of grass?

Man is bound by his ego and so too rational, too narrow, too removed from the roots in the earth and nature to achieve such a moment.

In 'Elegy' this division is so extreme that all that is left is a suicidal gesture or a movement out of this divisive world entirely: 'cease struggling against truth/ Let me dismember you deftly'. To 'dismember' is a violation of the body and so may be seen as a way to escape the ultimate boundaries of the human - our physical form. As always the extremity of the act of liberation results in doom since Bowles is attacking the very basis of mankind's concept of itself. To break the enclosing boundaries of the self may be a desirable act but its actual undertaking pushes man beyond humanity and so into madness, death or annihilation. A line in 'Taedium Vitae' suggests this dilemma: 'a day away the sand i touch today will be a day away tomorrow.'95 The sand demonstrates the ever-changing, never-changing aspect of nature that man desires to own and understand, but cannot. Unlike Man's rigid structures and patterns of life, nature continually shifts, dissolves, and emerges anew. Significantly, Bowles uses the lower-case 'i' for the human presence dwarfed by the true power and being of nature. It is the 'i', the ego, which so dominates Western Man's view of himself and which Bowles sees as the
major problem with modern civilization: 'The destruction of the ego has always seemed an important thing'. Even when Bowles wrote 'Elegy' he felt that 'we are too late', but he continued to write because he felt it was important to 'call people's attention to something they don't seem to be sufficiently aware of'.

Bowles and Lautréamont: the poetry of doubt

The assimilation of Surrealist influences into Bowles's work continued throughout the Thirties and Forties, with one of the most important being that of Lautréamont. Bowles had discovered Lautréamont's Maldoror in transition where Jolas busily resurrected Isadore Ducasse, who had been long admired and worshipped by the Surrealists. Bowles wrote of a journey in France in 1932:

I had with me on the train a copy of Les Chants de Maldoror of which until then I had read only sections [in transition]. I was far more enthusiastic about Lautréamont than about Rimbaud. His legend, at least the version of it presented by the Surrealists, was almost as compelling as Rimbaud's and the work itself, constantly violent and totally devoid of subtlety, a good deal more easily approached (WS, 154-55).

Bowles was excited enough to use the book constantly and in order to refer quickly to his favourite passages constructed his own index, a fact recorded in a fragmented note amongst his Archives at the University of Texas:

made own table of contents for chants de Maldoror, to be able to find any passage at a moments notice (sic).

As the statement in Without Stopping makes clear, Bowles knew Lautréamont as much through the Surrealists' worship of the writer as through any independent discovery. The 'violent' nature of the work, its images, its dream-like metamorphic forms, its grand gestures and apocalyptic tones all appealed to the Surrealists. Tzara called it a 'marvellous anti-human epic' and praised the 'liberty of his (Ducasse's) faculties which are bound by nothing, which he turns in all directions, and especially towards himself, the strength to humble himself, to dem-
lish, to cling to every blemish..." Breton, like Bowles, preferred Lautréamont to Rimbaud, recording the fact in the second Manifesto, where Lautréamont is the 'one exception' to Breton's mistrust of 'the cult of men' because he was not 'questionable' in his motivations whereas Rimbaud had 'wanted to fool us' by 'allowing...certain disparaging interpretations of his thought...'. Breton later added that 'Nothing not even Rimbaud, had up to that time affected me as much.'

Lautréamont's writing embodied the revolt and defiance, both in form and content, which join in the 'psychic explosion' his work reflects. He attacks the vulnerabilities of man, who deceives himself with his superiority over natural forces and who presumes to dominate life with reason. It is expressed in *Maldoror* as

> attacking humanity, which thought itself invulnerable, through the breach of absurd philosophical tirades;...O human being, here you are now, naked as a worm, in the presence of my sword of diamond.

Reason restrains man's potentialities because intellectualism distorts the world into a narrow perspective, which in Lautréamont is questioned so that 'intelligence could temporarily be destroyed by the "tourbillon des facultés inconscientes"... and a new reality created. In a letter Lautréamont referred to *Maldoror* as 'la poésie du doute' (the poetry of doubt) and it was through a process of questioning, disorientation, destruction, violent verbal assault and decentralization that he created such doubt. It was a doubt about the security of the imperial self, of its location within a human-oriented universe, of ego-domination over nature and objects. All the assumptions that presented 'reality' as a fixed, coherent, explicable fact become unhinged in Lautréamont, because he challenges the static view of self and society, preferring 'a world of miracles, of metamorphoses, of revelations' where all things are in flux.

For Lautréamont, 'we are prisoners confined for ever in the nightmare of our culture', and like Bowles's characters, we are 'victims' within a
cage/prison of our own invention: 'we can only see the world as our culture would have us see it, [and] our view of reality is strictly the limited view that you enjoy from a cell window'.

Lautréamont recognised that language is 'a prison from which there can be no escape', but whose forms worked within the language to 'make us realise that we are "inside", show us the walls, the bars on the window, and perhaps something beyond'. When our cultural pattern determines the way we perceive life and ourselves, it does so by restricting that perception and by selecting only what it wants us to see and know. It erects taboos, prejudices, laws and psychological repressions in order that the cultural pattern may function without interruption or disorder. As in Bowles's poem 'America', Man has become detached and blinkered in a cage whose only access to the world is through the windows it provides. 'Authority makes us see things its own way; it places us in a room with a limited view, a view that shows us nothing but sweetness and light'.

Lautréamont's poetry of doubt forces the reader to stop making assumptions about the world and the 'reality' proposed by their cultural traditions and attempts to break them down instead.

The reader brings to the text certain expectations which are the result of his culture. Since these expectations are being constantly denied, it is his culture that is being put into question.

This helps to draw closer to the similarities between Bowles and Lautréamont's desire to attack not only the individual but the society as well. As Balakian writes, Lautréamont felt a sort of asphyxiation at the thought of man's plight: 'qui resté enchainé à la croûte durcie d'une planète' at the thought that it was impossible to stop outside of physical laws.

Later, echoing Lautréamont, Bowles would write of his own work as 'a corrosive agent' working away at complacent estimations of reality, sowing the 'germ of doubt'. He also knew that man was 'inside the cage' and that 'human culture is contingent upon the particular culture that forms it'. Like Lautréamont, Bowles wants to
tear away the mask from man's treacherous muddy face, and one by one... cast down the sublime lies with which he deludes himself.114

Through the individual to the culture which forms him the attack progresses, overriding taboo and, in so doing, assaulting the basis of culture and law. Eluard later wrote 'one of the principal properties of poetry is to inspire in frauds (cafards) a grimace that unmasks them and lets them be judged.' Transgression breaks the lines of convention and opens avenues that culture prefers to cut off from its people. It affirms the possibilities inherent in the repressed and in the unconscious and by breaking taboos it says the unsayable. As that cruelty which is within us emerges in Lautréamont and in Bowles it is usually condemned as gratuitous horror, but it arises from humanity, not from something outside of us: 'It is we who are responsible for the naked horror of the work...,' and it is for us to respond to it. Another Surrealist painter/writer Arp was accused of horror and replied 'it must be so, since horror is a milestone along the road leading to his (man's) rejection of intelligence...Man has fallen out with nature. Now man flees full of anguish before nature.' Unconscious images flow through Maldoror, with an elaborate and varied bestiary taking on metamorphic forms and roles — common only to dreams. Archetypal images and symbols rise up from 'the dark recesses and secret fibres of consciousness'(M,65) such as the devouring power of God and authority, the sea and the child. Man is freed from cultural restrictions and in a renewed relation to nature passes beyond his isolated self.

The unconscious realm, like the world of nature, had been subjugated by Man's dominant consciousness and ego, but in Maldoror this changes by readmitting the unconscious and denying the anthropomorphic world. Man is no longer superior, for he is seen sharing space and form with animals and elements, like the octopus, 'whose soul is inseparable from mine'(M,41) and the scene in which Maldoror and the shark are joined
Man in the universe, the ego in Man - these concepts of centre are rejected by Lautréamont as he perpetuates a progressive decentralization in his work. Rather there appear images of fullness and fluidity, which allow for his preferences of metamorphosis, motion, and doubt over fixity, stasis and certainty. The sea is his most persistent image for it provides the sense of unity in which opposites combine - the Surrealist ideal - and where there is centre and circumference without a single dominant presence. The sea, like nature itself, rejects the kind of fixed patterns which culture establishes and perpetuates with rigid laws and taboos. Man must challenge the 'grid' of restraint to attain something closer to the sea/nature:

Old ocean, your harmoniously spherical form, which gladdens the stern countenance of geometry...Old ocean, you are the symbol of identity: always equal to yourself. You never vary essentially and, if somewhere your waves are raging, further away, in some other zone, they are perfectly calm. You are not like Man...(M,42-3).

Within the wholeness of sea/nature live all kinds of things, just as within the true self lie all possibilities, if only one could make the plunge and discover them.

Like Lautréamont, Bowles wants to smash the grid, cut through the masks of deception, destroy the ego and reintegrate the conscious and unconscious realms as man and nature. Bowles's reading of Lautréamont gave him the appetite for a radical challenge on established forms of reality, just as Dada and Surrealism had. Throughout his career, Bowles's work demonstrates the basic formula of Man within a 'nightmare culture' of his own making and his struggles inside it. Though Bowles has never offered explicit solutions, his work has consistently dramatized the problems of such a dilemma.

In 'No Village' (1930), a prose poem, whose form is clearly derivative of Lautréamont's, Bowles demonstrates his affinity with Maldoror.
In eight sections Bowles builds a narrative, ever-mobile and aggressive in tone, apocalyptic in mood, with all the beasts and imagery one expects in Lautrémont. It lacks the totally subversive attack of Lautréamont, preferring a structure modulating between the personal (interior) and public (exterior) disaster (a structure he used again in 'Next to Nothing'). The Poe-like presence of a mysterious but desired female, Astrea, leads the narrative voice through the apocalyptic world around him. As the Man/Woman relationship is threatened so is the human/natural one, indeed the poem is dominated by its images of ending, death and apocalypse. It presents a sensational atmosphere of threat through its language; 'press', 'pushed', 'kill', 'led', 'smothered', 'fetid', 'choke', 'blind', 'shriveled', 'shiver'. Alongside, nature is distorted in images of intense alarm; 'ashes of dawn', 'dark fume of the lake', 'fetid mist', and beasts move 'dankly' among them. It is a world of 'carrion'. 'drought' and death where the pastoral image of the 'valley' used in 'Elegy' is transformed so that 'in the valley the fir-trees crack and the glaciers sigh', while all Man's creations are destroyed; his 'chateau crumbled into the ravine...The church-steeple sways...The day has turned inside out'. The secure and accepted is inverted: light to dark; life to death; water to drought; and objects threaten humanity - 'Tambourines wreak tears from children...'. Realities crumble all around, mirrored in the peculiar imagery - 'a shore of guitar-rhythms', 'wolves form a rallentado', 'the hospital rises into a falsehood', 'broken smoke of my suburbs'. The presence of Lautréamont is clear in such violent images as 'A glass crocodile rips the quivering morning into a bloody face' or 'lice swarm on my hands...' or 'One more cry, before my throat splits across and my heart gushes from my forehead.'

As the traveller, the ravaged Maldororean 'I', continues on his journey into 'uncharted, perilous wastelands' (M, 29), he is searching for the mysterious Astrea. She is appealed to twice with the single cry
'Astrea!' and then 'One more cry, Astrea, while still the poolwater circles...'. It seems she must set him free, reduce the suffering: 'Rub out the walls of this chamber and touch my cheek with a fingernail. Scream that the marshes shall not have me'. Through the figure of Astrea, the archetypal Earth/Woman, he seeks salvation from the apocalypse and the threat it holds for him.

Section IV implies the possibility of 'a harmony of quiet' which 'will burst from our warm lips' as the two meet. The darkness and disorder is interrupted by sunlight (there are nine references in this section) associated with Astrea; 'The sun knows your hair...'. But the harmony is never guaranteed, the section centres around a Lautréamont-style question, to Astrea or to the reader, 'Do you doubt?'. We must doubt, since the apocalyptic scenes have dominated the work and are never far away even in this gentle section, as with the image of 'the sallow late sky shrieks' (recalling Munch's threatening sky in 'The Scream'). Our doubt is further increased by the line 'You have brought me deep into confrontation and challenge, not of harmony'.

Astrea eludes him and the poem returns to its images of ending and impending disaster. All life is under threat - 'the hurricane withers the gourdvines. The Mockingbird shrivels in the hedge and reeds no longer sprout by morass.' The sun in section IV had suggested harmony, but the inversion proceeds in section V as 'The sunflies screaming through fireflooded streets.' Now it too is part of the apocalyptic environment - the drought, hurricane and now conflagration. Fire surges into the poem, palms 'smoulder', a 'beggar is scorched', 'ashes and sparks spatter upon the hillside'.

Fire and thunder join, nature convulses, 'the equator cuts the noon into shreds' and another appeal is made to Astrea: 'convince me that resolution means an elegy, and say but one word', but she is silent amid the storm. The journey's 'final place' is that of humanity, where
all threat is reduced by the business of living in the everyday world. Nature exists, but controlled in Man's environment of 'squalid cafés', the 'harbour', 'the park'. In a new ironic voice, borrowed from T.S. Eliot, Bowles places humanity in relation to nature - a nature so obviously elsewhere disturbed. The previously mighty octopus (as in Maldoror) 'is languid in the aquarium', as Man again looks upon and contains the energy of nature in his city built against the threat from the unknown.

All the apocalyptic energies of nature reflect some greater wholeness which Man does not possess, though he yearns to do so, and instead he builds frail structures and commits himself to the banal and static. Nature is metamorphic, violent and limitless so that 'in the lazy valley there is no village', no place for Man - again excluded from the Paradisal 'valley' by Bowles.

'No Village' suggests the quest for meaning which motivates so many of Bowles's fictional characters in the form of a mythic return to a natural state in which man is once again integrated with nature. But man has come too far to make such a simple transition and is burdened by the weight of his culture and self to the extent that to step outside it is to be no longer human and to be endlessly vulnerable. It is a fascinating paradox which constantly emerges in Bowles's work. To be a conscious individual in a 'nightmare culture' may cause immense pain and neuroses, but the journey to rid yourself of such deep-seated influences is itself disintegrative.

In Lautréamont and Bowles there is a realisation that the fundamental drive in man may be 'a drive towards a state of inorganicism...an ideal of undifferentiation...crudely termed "a death wish"...where all tensions are reduced', At this 'zero point' all limits separating self from inorganic disappear and are replaced by a great metamorphic state like 'the embraces of the cataract' in Poe's *Arthur Gordon Pym*. This may be a
desirable romantic state of total harmony, but of necessity it also means the complete annihilation of the self as it becomes merged with everything else. Man has not found a balance between the demands of his conscious and unconscious, nor between his desire to be both a part of, and separate from, nature and so as a consequence he has followed an extreme one-sided path. At this extreme point when the culturally constructed ego-self fails to maintain its control man resorts to an ancient longing for the comfort and protection of the womb. But without any true residual relationship to the Earth Mother - which man has constantly exploited and manipulated - it becomes a devouring maw which absorbs him within itself. The final and only comfort is total disintegration, rather than any romantic reintegration with the world.

The Shadow of the Surrealist Tradition

The poetry written between 1926-1934, as I have shown, owes much to the Surrealists' methods and techniques and Bowles found a great deal to interest his rebellious imagination in the individual authors he had discovered, none more so than the infamous Lautréamont. Bowles had his doubts about the feasibility of a totally Surrealist approach and so 'evolved a personal and schismatic version which better suited [his] needs'. The influence was, however, important:

When I left America for the first time [1929], I had already published in various European avant-garde magazines. The Surrealist influence was almost complete. By the mid-thirties I was less interested, being involved in the New York theatre, and by the forties I had become somewhat impatient with the dogmatic utterances of Breton, and of Surrealist Literature in general.

Bowles developed a 'personal and schismatic version' of their ideas to suit his own needs, since 'the Surrealist method had always seemed a valid one ... and it still does'.

Bowles's interest in Surrealism was kept alive by his acquaintances in Europe and America; people like Julien Levy, whom Bowles met in Paris
in 1931, an art critic and collector with a Gallery in New York, who wrote an early book on Surrealism in 1936; Kristians Tonny a Dutch Surrealist painter met in Tangier in 1931, and Edouard Roditi a critic, poet, essayist and important translator of Surrealist works.

Despite the variety of work undertaken by Bowles during the thirties and forties, including composing, theatre music and his own writing, he was never too far from the 'shadow...of the Surrealist tradition'.

For example in 1941 on a Guggenheim Fellowship Bowles wrote 'The Wind Remains', an opera based on Garcia Lorca's 'Asi Que Pasen Cinco Anos' which was performed in 1943 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The play was Lorca's most surreal and it caused problems for Bowles: '...its text was an excerpt from a Surrealist play. It meant nothing and went nowhere...' (WS, 249). But nonetheless, Bowles used Lorca again in 1948 with his Yerma because 'its Surrealist technique fitted for the fragmentary kind of treatment I wanted to give it'.

He also became involved in View, a magazine of the arts published out of New York between 1940-1947. It was primarily under the guiding hand of Bowles's friend Charles Henri Ford, who had previously published his poems in blues (1929-30).

Bowles had used a libretto by Ford for his opera 'Denmark Vesey'(1938) and had been aware of his friend's work for some time.

View was an important magazine in its time, as Kenneth Rexroth writes, Charles Henri Ford and Parker Tyler, with Philip Lamantia, a young poet from San Francisco, edited the magazine View which was more than a revival of blues or transition. It was, for its lifetime, the principal organ of Surrealism in exile, and as such, the expression of the third period of Surrealism...

Herbert S. Gershman is even more precise in his linking of its importance with Surrealism, when he writes, 'The first official recognition of the Surrealist presence in the USA comes with the special number devoted to them by View...' (no. 7 Oct-Nov. 1941). Bowles was particularly interested in Surrealists like Ernst and Duchamp who lived in New York during the war and with whom Bowles had some personal contact. Bowles was a
'contributing editor' to *View* and 'did a good deal of work' for them:

'At first I wrote Jazz criticism, and then I started to make translations of material I thought would interest Ford' (WS, 261). In the translations, Bowles chose from a range of interesting authors, in both French and Spanish, many of whom were Surrealist writers.

Most obviously, Bowles translated two long extracts from Giorgio de Chirico's Surrealist novel *Hebdomeros*. 130 He was a man most noted for his paintings of the scuola metafisica which were seen as precursors of Surrealist art, though he had personal clashes with Breton and the official Surrealist group in Paris in the 1920's. He probed reality behind ordinary objects by displacing them, and setting them in new and mysterious relations, just as the Surrealists sought to do with analogical images and collages. He has said that, 'To become immortal a work of art must escape all human limits: logic and common sense will only interfere. But once these barriers are broken it will enter the regions of childhood vision and dream'. 131 His art distorts, dislocates and challenges our perceptions of visual reality, just as many Surrealist works, and his novel sought a similar effect. As J.H. Matthews writes, *Hebdomeros*

is the fruit of a compulsion to question the stability of a universe ordered by reason in the name of the real...the question Chirico poses in this novel of enigma is...the nature of the real. 132

The atmosphere is 'closed and hermetic' and *Hebdomeros* is continually moving, trying to escape it, but all seems 'bound up' like an 'immense knot which death unties, then reties...'. Chirico uses a 'technique of uncertainty, in which we are offered the challenge of an enigma' whilst being 'arbitrarily denied information which might possibly explain more than we can understand'. 133 Bowles also translated André Pieyre de Mandiargues, a Surrealistic writer well known for his 'fantastic metamorphoses...of phantasmagoric visions' creating 'a world that knows no calm, has no fixed shape, but which is composed of mirages that dissolve as does sugar on the tongue'. 134 Through such work Bowles experienced
the possibilities of protest and of questioning the stability and nature of reality. His own writing draws on these impulses constantly although within an apparently realist environment.

In the 1940's, Bowles met the exiled Dadaists and Surrealists living in New York: Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Salvador Dali, Hans Richter and Man Ray. His friend Peggy Guggenheim married Ernst in 1942 and Bowles was later to collaborate with the artist in 1947 on Richter's 'Desire' for which Bowles wrote a score, having previously written a score for a film of Ernst's collages *Une Semaine de Bonté*. In 1944 Bowles wrote a ballet, 'Colloque Sentimental', for which Dali designed extravagant sets and costumes and much later, in 1952, he appeared in Hans Richter's film '8x8' playing piano with Ahmed Yacoubi - the incident is recorded in Anais Nin's *Journals Volume 6.*

All these involvements coincide with Bowles's first fictions; 'Tea on the Mountain' (1939) and especially the two published in View, 'The Scorpion' in December 1945 and described as 'a surrealist short story...', and 'By the Water' in 1946. At the age of thirty-five and beginning as a 'writer of fiction' - a distinction Bowles insists upon since, 'I didn't consider poets "writers", but as people operating in a separate category of literature.', he had already discovered for himself the possibilities of Surrealism.

Although Bowles grew less satisfied with Breton's Surrealism in the mid-thirties, he still believed in the techniques and wrote recently that 'the Surrealist method has always seemed a valid one to me, and it still does' and amplifies it in another letter.

Unconsciously I adopted the Surrealist point of view as the only possible one; this isn't surprising if you consider that it was the impact of Surrealism which propelled me into writing. So, I suppose in a way that I've never written any thing save in the shadow, at least, of the Surrealist tradition.

Yet Bowles was quick to see the limitations of Surrealistic technique when applied to writing novels and tended to use it very sparingly. Writ-
ing a novel needed a greater degree of control if a meaning was to be clearly conveyed to the reader. It led Bowles, like other artists of his time, to be critical of a purely automatic approach to their work. Joan Miró, for example, a painter Bowles had met in the thirties and 'whose paintings [he] knew and admired...' (WS, 140) sought a balance between automatism and conscious control:

Rather than setting out to paint something... I begin painting and as I paint the picture begins to assert itself, or suggest itself under my brush... The first stage is free, unconscious. 139

In a similar way Bowles records in Without Stopping his discovery of Matta's technique for painting, which like Miró's rejected a purely automatic style. 140 It was while visiting the painter in Taxco that Bowles discovered his method, a version of the Surrealist tradition:

he called it la peinture métaphysique because at the beginning of each canvas the process was largely aleatory... [his wife] would blindfold him, give him a brush, let him choose a color... then steer him to a blank white canvas that he would eventually manage to touch with the brush, making a small spot... then starting from these random focal points whose colors had already been arbitrarily imposed, he took off the blindfold and began to weave connecting patterns between them... (WS, 236-7).

Matta would call these paintings 'inscapes' or 'psychological morphologies' because he was projecting visual metaphors for his inner feelings, impulses and passions. There was a balance within the frame of conscious and unconscious elements, rather than a dubiously inauthentic belief in a purely automatic art. It was to this sense of Surrealist method that Bowles's fictional techniques turned since he believed,

it's much less likely that a good work will come out of a free association than out of planning... However, I think calculation should only come in at a certain point.

He goes on to say

I doubt very much that with no conscious control at any point during the work it would be possible to construct that organic form. I don't think one could follow the Surrealist method absolutely, with no conscious control in the choice of material, and be likely to arrive at organic form. 141

Thus, the technique must be both conscious and unconscious, that is allow
into it the unplanned, spontaneous movement. His novels all include sections of dream and hallucinatory power which result from a pursuit of automatic writing, but they are also structured around unplanned incidents that have presented themselves to Bowles at the time of writing. For this reason Bowles cannot discuss 'intentions' within his works, or what they 'mean'. As he told Lawrence Stewart,

I sort of open the door and plunge into this unknown world - and then suddenly the door of the ending appears, and I go out again. But what's happened while I was inside, I don't know. 142

'What intellect I have is held in abeyance when I write', and meaning must emerge from the interactions he creates within the piece of work, like Matta's random spots of colour joined by his conscious artistic will. Bowles has faith in the unforeseen, the enigmatic and the mysterious which emerges in his work, and from this he will accept guidance. Bowles would agree with Eugene Ionesco, who wrote

I believe there must be in a writer...a mixture of spontaneity, unawareness and lucidity; a lucidity unafraid of what spontaneous imagination may contribute. If lucidity is required of him, a priori, it is as though one shut the floodgates [or Bowles's 'door']. We must first let the torrent rush in, and only then comes choice, control, grasp, comprehension. 144

When asked in 1972 to supply a comment about his work, Bowles replied with this,

All I can find of interest to say about my work is to mention the key role in the process of writing played by my subconscious. It knows better than I what should be written and how it should sound in words. 145

The 'key role' was to provide a subversive mode to disturb established perceptions of reality and seek a literary expression for their alternatives. But Bowles could never submit entirely to automatism, since he needed to direct his attack in a very specific way. Perhaps he remembered Gertrude Stein's comment about his early Surrealist poetry: 'What is the use of writing unless every word makes the utmost sense.' 146

Eugene Jolas had expressed his considerable doubts in these matters in transition:
The subconscious is not enough, we must organize...It is blind fanaticism, to deny the conscious will as a creative agent...[Surrealism's] mistake lay in the fact that, after applying Freudian and Dadaist discoveries, they did not transcend them. 147

Jolas, like Bowles, believed the artist must enter into his work consciously and unconsciously so that within the product one witnesses an integration.

Our conception of literature...is not the formalized one of the Surrealists...we do not hold with them that writing should be exclusively of the interior...We believe in a new romanticism...which achieves magic by combining the interior and the exterior, the subjective and the objective, the imaginary and the apparently real. 148

Bowles wanted ideas to be conveyed in his work and without conscious control this could not be guaranteed. His language had to communicate directly to his reader if he was to be a 'corrosive agent', working from the inside outwards. In a draft letter in his Archive, Bowles expresses this basic problem in relation to the experiments of his friend William Burroughs:

I'm not really convinced of the importance of Burroughs's new kick, because I don't believe abstract literature can help much. Even one word alone expresses a thought, and thoughts can only be reflections of what goes on outside. 150

Bowles has since explained this further.

Language is a tool for the expression of ideas; the most useful tool is the one which provides the maximum of conciseness and clarity in the expression of the idea. 151

Even the Surrealists realised that dream-images could only be approximated in literary forms, and this probably goes some way to explaining why the Surrealist painters have always been more successful than the writers. Bowles had lived through some of the greatest periods of literary innovation, but

between the twenties, when the Revolution of the Word was everywhere, and the forties, when I returned to writing, I had come to realize that the place to begin the attack was not in the words, but in the ideas, at the heart. Start at the core and eat outwards; then maybe the whole apple will rot. 152

Bowles's 'attack' was upon the world in which he lived, upon the ideas that he saw threatening all life on the planet, and like the Existentialists who emerged after the war (and after Surrealism in France), the
'ideas' became the central target. Bowles believes linguistic innovation is a healthy pastime, but it remains exterior to the principal business of writing, unless one is totally indifferent as to whether one's ideas are going to reach the reader... nothing can happen until the ideas have got across; 'for that only the clearest language will work. 153

What Bowles attempts in his fiction is a shackling together of the unconscious impulses with the lucid language he believes is vital to the persuasive power of his work. He must create situations in which credibility is not reduced, or clarity blurred by abstraction, as he told Oliver Evans,

I look for accurate expressions, for accurate accounts of states of mind, the way in which the consciousness of each individual is reported in the book. How the author makes us believe in the reality of his settings. 154

But constantly Bowles is using 'the language one has in common with one's readers', in order to undermine what the reader believes, assumes and accepts. It is a process of conspiracy, by which Bowles enters his readers' minds in order to disrupt them, to push their awareness beyond or outside the boundaries created by established forms of the social self. When Bowles wrote 'I had no faith in any political procedure save conspiracy' (WS, 186) he is expressing much about his approach to writing itself.

In order to present his ideas Bowles had to find a point of view, a form to do so. Surrealism was an important impetus, as I have shown, for it seemed to embody the young man's own rebellious and dissatisfied yearnings and give a method to express them. But it was problematic and he could not find in it a form suited to the fiction he now wanted to write.

Dada was 'an alarm signal against declining values...', because it stood out and screamed in the face of the contemporary world grown complacent, static and hypocritical with 'a nerveless, deluded, superficial image of an ordered existence'. 157. When Paul Bowles calls his short stories
'exemplary tales' he means that they serve as warnings, alarm signals against various courses of action or thought that suggest to him a degeneration in human life. Yet whereas Dada stood outside in order to offer a complete anti-world of art, language, action and morality, Bowles works from inside, to 'start at the core and eat outwards; then maybe the whole apple will rot.'

Dadaists, like Hans Richter, have worked hard to re-establish the positive, serious side of Dada - to evolve a philosophy from the various outbursts of expression which lie at its heart. Of course, he writes in traditional narrative forms, with lucid syntax and explication of points and arguments. Surely the point is made that for a body of ideas to emerge from Dadaism it must be formed through a clear use of language and an innovation that does not completely obliterate the overall task of amplification. Richter believes Dada's destructive urge was basically a challenge to the either/or framework, the 'conventional yes/no thinking' which dominated the Western mind; 'an inversion was necessary to restore the balance'. Dada's contradictions, its morality and amorality, its art and anti-art, its poetry and chaos were a 'radical attack on dualistic thought', seeking 'the liberation and expansion of thought and feeling... followed by the integration of both in verse, in painting and in musical sound. "Reason is a part of feeling, and feeling is a part of reason (Arp)".' Richter thus resolves Dada, like Surrealism, as the drive towards a unity of opposites, coincidentia oppositorum, the Bretonesque 'Vases Communicants'(1932); 'Laws appear which include within themselves the negation of Law.'

What Bowles came to understand was that Surrealism had produced a variety of revolutionary methods for the production and discovery of the inner being in literary forms, but that it also had a definite philosophy. The Surrealist philosophy believed in a positive redefinition of the real and the presentation of an expanded consciousness through a recon-
ciliation of opposites. The philosophy, which Breton came to symbolise was of 'fervent, persistent affirmation' and spoke of 'the awareness of the unfulfilment of the spiritual scope of Man's allotted time'. Bowles could not sustain such a consistently optimistic philosophy, but he approved of the Surrealist method - as Balakian writes, 'many have appropriated Breton's techniques but it would seem without his vision'. Bowles appreciated the method and the fundamental urges within Dada and Surrealism but his vision tended towards the darker side of Man.

His work reintroduces the darkness, the unconscious into our rationally organised conceptions of life, but he is not consciously 'using horror as a device'. It is 'the evocation of horror on the printed page' and 'the awakening of the sensation of horror through reading' which 'can result in a temporary smearing of the lens of consciousness'. Once 'awakened', the unconscious may permit the author to achieve his aim, to 'cause a certain amount of questioning of values', because the 'lens of consciousness' no longer dominates the situation. A crack has been rent in the cage that separates Man's subjective inner self from the objective world around him, just as it has also, within Man, brought the unconscious into the conscious. In Bowles the world of nature objectifies the possibilities of flux and metamorphosis, with its indifference but its vital importance to mankind. Man must be reintegrated both within himself - conscious and unconscious, and within the cosmos, Man and nature (subjective/objective). The action is perpetual in Bowles's work, and its difficulties provide much of his material.

His concern with the unconscious stems from a belief in the necessary balance between unconscious and conscious, intuition and reason - just as his rejection of the full Surrealist doctrine stemmed from his belief that there must be both an allowance of unconscious flow and also a conscious organization of materials. In form as in content, Bowles asserts this balance. But he shares a fundamental Dadaist urge, which
is that if a situation has become intolerable it must demand a creative violence, an 'inversion', in order to reintroduce the energies lost. Thus his stories are often an outflowing of this 'violence' stemming from the unconscious. They become 'emotional outbursts', often open-ended texts, entering the reader's mind so they become 'infected by the germ of doubt' until 'their basic assumptions have been slightly shaken for a second'.

Unlike the Dadaists, Bowles knew the means to achieve his purpose had to be through established forms - 'I was aware that I had a grudge, and that the only way I could satisfy my grudge was by writing words, attacking in words'. Consequently, the use of those forms and words became a weapon turned against the society which produces them, as Bowles has admitted 'I'm just a propagandist...all writers are propagandists for one thing or another.' His 'propaganda' seeks to negate values too-long held sacred, negate Man's assured superiority, negate his social forms, his power-lust and his techno-imperialist society. But Bowles maintains the basic communicating fact of language to reach the reader, since 'nothing can happen until the ideas have got across; for that only the clearest language will work.' Any transformation comes at the point the words enter the reader's mind, because too often the reader (as in Dada or Surrealism) will have systematically rejected, through prejudice, an immediately abstract piece of work. Bowles knows 'the way to attack, of course, is to seem not to be attacking. Get people's confidence and then, surprise! Yank the rug out from under their feet.' This can occur in the course of reading the text, or can occur outside the text, within the reader's mind.

It is, therefore, the energy of Dada and Surrealism which survives in aspects of Bowles's work, without committing him to its name or its tenets. When Bowles says 'much of my writing is an exhortation to destroy' he aligns himself with their general impulse, but it is not a
purely negative gesture - no artistic gesture can be - since 'destroy and end are not the same word. You don't end a process by destroying its products.' 169 'To destroy the sense of security is a writer's principal task now, it seems to me. To put everything in question, to make for profound doubt, if possible. Writing which manages to do this seems to me the true "littérature engagée". 170 Just as Lautréamont believed in the 'poetry of doubt' and the vital function of literature 'qui ouvre sur les plus vastes espaces' (which opens onto the widest spaces), 171 and the Dadaists and Surrealists used the urge to destruction in their work, so does Bowles. His work plunges into the unconscious to reclaim what has been lost and to disturb what has taken its place. Ultimately his work attacks the very notion of an individual ego-self,

The destruction of the ego has always seemed an important thing. I took it for granted that was what really one was looking for in order to attain knowledge and the ability to live, to know that one's living life to the best of one's ability... 172

Bowles's attack on Man and his world sees the problem condensed in Man's very notion of his closed, unified, indivisible self. The urge to destroy social norms has always looked to transgression as a means of calculated inversion of accepted patterns of behaviour and there is none greater than an assault on the imperial self. Our concept of the ego, the 'I', is central to the society which is built and sustained by it, but it is a cultural construction. Only when this is attacked can any change occur.

It's the stripping away of all the things that differentiate one person from another person. By stripping them away one arrives at a sort of basic working truth which will help one to go on. 173
CHAPTER TWO

The Short Stories: Exemplary Tales

Habit and routine are great veils over our existence...when the social fabric is rent, however, man is suddenly thrust outside, away from the habits and norms he once accepted automatically. There, on the outside, his questioning begins. 1
In the Thirties Bowles travelled constantly in Europe, South America and North Africa, but two particular factors rekindled his interest in writing. Firstly, he married Jane Auer who was busy writing Two Serious Ladies and this stimulated his own interest in fiction:

I'd say that the impetus to write came definitely from being around her when she was writing Two Serious Ladies...it was an influence of action rather than a literary one.  

While Jane provided the 'influence of action' another source gave him the 'literary' stimulation in the form of an edition of View, 'Tropical Americana', which he was editing. During his research he had been reading some ethnographic books with texts from the Arapesh or from the Torahumara given in word-for-word translation. Little by little the desire came to me to invent my own myths, adopting the point of view of the primitive mind.

The problem he faced was of how to achieve 'the point of view' he desired without losing the basic spontaneity and fantasy of the myths. Although, as we have seen, Bowles was excited by the experiments of the Surrealists he found it very problematical to use their techniques directly in his work because, as Rosemary Jackson writes, The Surrealistic...is closer to the marvellous - it is super-real - and its etymology implies that it is presenting a world above this one rather than fracturing it from inside or below.

Bowles knew that he wanted to 'start at the core and eat outward; then maybe the whole apple will rot', and so he had to modify substantially his use of Surrealism. He wanted, above all, to enter a dialogue with the 'real' as society defined it and through that to attack its assumptions and values. His stories have an opening activity which is disturbing, by denying the solidity of what had been taken to be real.

This new interest in primitive culture and myths provided a new way of approaching this very dilemma, and as he tried to 'invent' his own myths, Surrealism gave him the means.

The only way I could devise for simulating that state was the old Surrealist method of abandoning conscious control and writing whatever words came from the pen (WS, 261).
Thus Bowles's fascination with Surrealism had a direct influence on his first fictions, since their techniques of automatic writing and the suspension of conscious control enabled him access to 'the matrix of a mythopoeic imagination which has vanished from our rational age'. In mythic forms Bowles saw a human expression of the unconscious energies society repressed.

Myth is the primordial language natural to these psychic processes, and no intellectual formulation comes anywhere near the richness and expressiveness of mythical imagery. Such processes are concerned with the primordial images, and these are best and most succinctly reproduced by figurative language.

Many of Bowles's early stories aim at a kind of 'figurative language' to express basic human dilemmas and suggest something of Robert Duncan's poetic definition of myth.

Myth is the story told of what cannot be told... The myth-teller beside himself with the excitement of the dancers sucks in the inspiring breath and moans, muttering against his willful lips; for this is not a story of what he thinks or wishes life to be, it is the story that comes to him and forces his telling.

When Bowles writes of his desire to adopt 'the point of view of the primitive mind' (WS, 261), he means the discovery of a new way of seeing the self and the world relieved of the assumptions demanded of a social-realist writer of the modern age. Michael Bell terms this the 'mythic sensibility' and further defines it as 'a way of feeling and thought' whose fundamental characteristic is 'the absence from a modern scientific standpoint at least, of a firm and rational distinction between the inner world of feeling and the external order of existence.'

The mythical imagination sees 'no separation of a total complex into its elements, but that only a single undivided totality is represented - a totality in which there has been no 'dissociation' of the separate factors of objective perception and subjective feeling.'

From this point of view the world is seen as a whole in which Man is just a part and remains so through a constant appreciation of all that exists around him. Everything within Man and outside him is connected
and held in a reciprocal, harmonious balance. Myths tend to explore the ways in which this balance is maintained or damaged and its consequent effects in the world, including man. Through experimenting with this 'mythic sensibility' Bowles wanted to arrive at some basic understanding of man's relationship within the world and within himself and how separation and mistrust have come about.

It was a means of commencing writing for Bowles and as he says, First, animal legends resulted from the experiments and then tales of animals disguised as 'basic human' beings (WS, 261).

Stories like 'The Scorpion' published in View (1945) demonstrate this early interest in simple mythic situations which reveal deep truths about humanity. Bowles, however, soon altered his approach:

The subject matter of the myths soon turned from 'primitive' to contemporary, but the objectives and behaviour of the protagonists remained the same as in the beast legends (WS, 262).

Apart from 'The Scorpion', and 'By the Water', it is difficult to identify these early experiments. Indeed contrary to the entry in Without Stopping, Bowles has said

The invention of myths to which I applied myself in 1945 was a ploy to help me find a point of view. Once I had found it, the ploy was no longer relevant. I did not save any of the material resulting from this process, only that which came after I had abandoned it. 13

The important notion here is that of the 'ploy' enabling Bowles to move into a new way of seeing the world, outside expected literary traditions or realisms. Myths rarely exist within a particular time or place, the protagonists are not delineated, but remain modes of being within the overall function of the myth, and the concern is usually with what actually happens within the telling, not with motivations or conclusions:

Myth dissolves the world of concrete time and space: myth makes man once more exist in a timeless period, which is in effect an illud tempus, a time of dawn and of 'Paradise', outside history. 14

Myth permits the apparently 'unreal' or 'fantastic': animals and men converse, there is metamorphosis, magic and disappearance, all things
usually restricted by social, 'civilized' man to fairy-tales and dreams. The expression through myth of all these 'unrealities' suggested the richness of what remained beneath the conscious mind and what Surrealism, using its own forms, had sought to uncover. As civilization progresses rationally, its myths are lost or relegated to the nursery and man loses contact with the natural world and the unconscious and so becomes divided within himself. But, says Jung,

If they had lived in a milieu in which man was still linked by myth with the world of the ancestors, and thus with nature truly experienced and not merely seen from outside, they would have been spared this division within themselves. 15

The attraction of myth was the scope it gave to a writer concerned with explorations of the unconscious, of the realm of being that Man had smothered below his rational self.

Born of the irrational, and obeying a logic much closer to the subjective and associative promptings of the unconscious mind than to the formal progression of scientific inquiry, myth offered a new kind of insight into the wayward realities of social phenomena... 16

Any examination of Paul Bowles's stories must begin with 'The Scorpion' because of this experimentation with the mythic sensibility, and because it is the first cogent expression in fiction of his obsessive themes.

'The Scorpion' 17

The mythic atmosphere of this story is clear from its first statement which tells of 'an old woman' who 'lived in a cave' and whose sons have left her to go to the town. She is torn between two worlds, the safety and familiarity of her cave and the ever increasing presence of the town to which her sons are tempted. The central motif in the tale is of separation between the mother and her sons:

In the town there are always many things to do, and they would be doing them, not caring to remember the time when they lived in the hills looking after the old woman (CS, 27).
But there are wider separations within the story too, between nature ('hills') and culture ('town'), childhood and adulthood, and conscious and unconscious. Although the woman lives with nature, in a cave behind 'a curtain of water drops', she is far from in harmony with its elements. Her cave represents a territorial self separate from the world around her and jealously guarded from intrusions: 'outside...she saw the bare earth...Inside where she was the light was pleasant...' (CS, 27). Inside she is enclosed and secure in a kind of limbo - 'neither happy nor unhappy' - as if the cave is a womb with its walls 'a pink color from the clay around' (CS, 27). Norman O. Brown has written that

the cave is the self-enclosure of the self; self-imprisonment; in a shell - the shellfishness of selfishness, the cave of separation and the self...in the cave of separateness the self curls up in sleep. 18

This ably defines the old woman's behaviour as she avoids the threat of 'the gray sky' by retreating to the 'pleasant...pink color' of her cave where she has no human contact.

The world outside appears indifferent to her: 'sometimes dry leaves went past' and a 'few people used to pass from time to time' but she 'would never call to them'(CS, 27), preferring 'to go on watching as they turned back and went in other directions.' She is completely isolated and persuades herself that this gives her a special sense of freedom because 'she was free to move about at night.' However, her 'freedom' is substantially qualified since it is confined to the dark hours and the anonymity of night. This meant that she could 'eat everything she found without having to share it [and] she owed no one any debt of thanks for the things she had in her life.' All her 'advantages' define her as totally selfish, totally consumed by her own dissociation, resulting in a seclusion of the self from all contact with the 'outside'.

Her total seclusion is intruded upon by 'one old man' who would 'sit on a rock just distant enough from the cave for her to recognize
him' (CS, 28). She 'disliked him for not giving some sign that he knew she was there' (CS, 28) which suggests beneath her lonely existence is a need to belong to the world in a more direct way. As long as she is unseen it is as if she does not exist in the world and this takes away a part of herself, the part that connects her to the body of humanity. The old man is that part of her outside with which she has no connection, and like the indifferent natural and human world he 'always passed by in the distance...' (CS, 28).

While the old man intrudes upon her insular world, so does nature, in the form of the scorpions which crawl along the walls of her cave. Her action is to destroy them, banish them from her cave and exclude them from her self because they have no place in her world.

When one of her sons returns to her cave her isolation is totally disturbed. She cannot even remember which son it is except by a scar he has on his arm. Their conversation is also bleakly monosyllabic emphasising their separation once again. Their meeting is characterised by a 'silence' and emptiness between them. When the son stands in the mouth of the cave he cuts out the light and her immediate reaction is that of a scared animal trapped in its lair:

She busied herself with trying to distinguish various objects: her stick, her gourd, her tin can, her length of rope (CS, 28). Her self-orientated world seems threatened so she identifies the things which she values and that might be under threat from the intruder's presence.

Finally, he enters her cave and demands that she return with him to the town, break out of her self-enclosure and into the world. Her reaction is total refusal, then procrastination, wanting to sleep first. As she sleeps, within her womb-like cave, she dreams, entering into the depths of her self. It is a dream of the town, 'filled with people', and overpowering buildings like the church's 'high tower' with its
'several bells'. Everywhere she goes she is 'surrounded by people' which may, she dreams, be 'all her sons or not', she cannot tell. Her desire is to ask them if they are her sons, but they 'could not answer', indicating a need for relationship, still denied.

In the dream-night she is a child again crying in a room surrounded by the loud noise of the church bells which she imagined 'filled the sky'. Outside the room she can see the stars, beyond the enclosed room a glittering expanse awaiting her. Within the dark room, like her cave, crawls a scorpion, but now she does not kill it because it will not bite her hand. Her realisation that it 'was not going to sting her' gives her 'a great feeling of happiness' and she kisses the insect. As she does so she makes a vital contact between herself and nature, 'the bells stopped ringing' and so end her sense of oppressive enclosure, and she is aware of 'the peace which was beginning' inside her. The consummation of her contact with the scorpion is her taking of the scorpion in her mouth, a communion of her spirit and the body of nature: 'He crawled slowly down her throat and was hers' (CS,30). Being swallowed or eaten 'is at once an act of incorporation or "inward digestion", and of seizure for increase of power...[and] the act of eating, and assimilating the world now appears as a means to possess and obtain power over it'. To the primitive mind, eating is 'conscious realization' in which we take in the unconscious to the conscious.19

The old woman has moved from her ego-centred cave towards an experience of relatedness because she has taken the 'scorpion' (unconscious) into her conscious world and is

no longer imprisoned in the petty, oversensitive, personal world of the ego, but participates freely in the wider world of objective interests. 20

She has a new relationship to the world, in which good and evil coexist, nature and man coexist and the isolated self can meet the challenges of an outside world. In a sense she is re-born from the womb of the cave,
from her selfish state back into the world. This is clearly why the old man is reintroduced at the end. Now she can ignore him while he is forced, for the first time, to acknowledge her. To him it is 'as if a miracle had occurred' as she emerges from the cave and walks away with her son. The old man calls a 'Good-bye' to her, and so admits her presence, makes her visible in the world of others, validates her self. The transformation is completed and she moves into the world, with a sense of self and world coexisting, balanced as the scorpion still lives within her. Her isolated self or ego-dominated self locked within the identifiable limits of the cave is now drawn into the challenges of the outside, of the interpenetration of inner and outer 'realities'. Rather than reject the 'outside', it has entered her and she must move into a new life with the unconscious and conscious balanced but not divided inside her.

For Bowles the importance of her dream is everywhere at the heart of his fiction, for it signifies Man's basic dislocation in the world and a means towards its explanation. Man has lost 'the scorpion' - sense of himself, or has repressed it beneath his ruling, dominant social self. Any balance or wholeness possible for Man must aim at the reintegration of such lost elements within the self, to bring Man back into contact with the environment in which he lives. Nature itself is violent and gentle embodying both the creative and the destructive, but humanity, constantly striving to rule the natural world, has sought to ignore the violent or unconscious elements because they seemed only to threaten the order and pattern Man designed in his world. As the ego has developed in Man he has broken away from any connection with the forces of the outside world, which now appear only as interior elements for his use. Similarly he has neglected elements within himself which would have given him most contact with nature - his unconscious, instinctual self - and developed instead a limited, rational, enclosed view of the world.

In striving to invent myths through a primitive sensibility Bowles
sought the state of mind which saw no division between the inner (unconscious) and the outer (conscious) worlds. In these stories, the world around us is identified with the unconscious, representing all that Man has lost contact with in his drive for an ego-centred existence.

Again Jung suggests the framework of ideas because,

The country [the primitive] inhabits is at the same time the topography of his unconscious...[he dwells] in the land of his unconscious. Everywhere his unconscious jumps out at him, alive and real. How different is our relationship to the land we dwell in?...A whole world of feeling is closed to us and replaced by a pale aestheticism. 21

Bowles himself has written,

The only effort worth making is the one it takes to learn the geography of one's own nature. But there is seldom enough energy even for that. One must accept one's own limitations as one accepts life and death, pain and pleasure... 22

Yet 'the further we remove ourselves from it [unconscious] with our enlightenment and our rational superiority, the more it fades into the distance', 23 and so in Bowles's work he is constantly breaking through the veneer of the civilized, social self to reassert its presence. Because Man has neglected the fullest possibilities of the self it was necessary for Dada and Surrealism to erupt into the world of reasoned complacency with all the violence and ambiguity they could engender. It is the chthonic [from the Greek Khthon meaning earth] to which Bowles directs his attentions, to the places within all of us which we dare not admit and which society conditions us (in its own interests) to discredit.

In 'The Scorpion' the chthonic enters the old woman through the insect and becomes a part of her, thus ending the story with a sense of harmony or balance. Bowles's stories can rarely reach such a resolution or moral conclusion. As he told Oliver Evans, 'A moral message is the last thing I look for [in fiction]. I reject moral messages, unless they're my own.' 24 He was more concerned that his own work should generate confrontations in order to open possibilities rather than close them down.

The 'ploy' used by Bowles had allowed him to present fundamental human problems in a mythic form and thereby clarify them in his own mind
outside of the exigencies of intricate plots, characters and motivations.

Bowles has written:

I was merely seeking a method which would make it possible for me to write...They led in a natural fashion to tales about human beings. 25

Robert Scholes has coined the term 'fabulation' for certain writers who have worked in a similar area (although Scholes's categorisation as it is ultimately formulated does not apply to Bowles) and says that such writing 'offers us a world clearly and radically discontinuous from the one we know, yet returns to confront that known world in some cognitive way.' 26 Bowles is concerned to take his fiction out of the 'known world' - in his 'myths', fables and even in his more 'realist' fictions, which locate Man in alien environments - because this process of dislocation can bring the reader into confrontation with some aspect of the self and the world. His art, generated from Surrealism and the power of myth, is

an art of estrangement, resisting closure, opening structures which categorize experience in the name of a 'human reality'. 27

The 'warnings' his stories provide are concerned with the limitations of a fixed and rigid system of thought and values which is inherent in a rational monological society. His fiction, of necessity, disrupts accepted ways of thought, its consequence is to introduce dark areas...something completely other and unseen, the spaces outside the limiting frame of the 'human' and 'real', outside the control of the 'word' and of the 'look'. 28

It was Bowles who first described his stories as 'warnings' and the idea does relate to the original impetus from myths. As Mircea Eliade has explained, myth is 'exemplary - that is, it serves as the pattern and model to a great many human activities' and myths reveal the structure of reality, and the multiple modalities of being in the world. That is why they are the exemplary models for human behaviour; they disclose the true stories, concern themselves with the realities. 29
Here the word 'exemplary' suggests that myths project a model, an example of how people might behave in given situations, but it could also mean that myths provide a warning in portraying the possible outcome or consequences of an action. It is this meaning which Bowles applies to his own stories:

I think of them as exemplary tales. ('Exemplary' in the sense of 'serving as a warning') Of course, the warning is given too late to have any effect, since the disintegration has progressed...

The 'warning' is of what happens when the human mind cuts itself off from its unconscious and tries to adhere only to the patterns of existence that it believes right and acceptable. The stories chart a very clear path which warns us all of the consequences of neglecting the side of ourselves which society refuses to acknowledge and which families constantly try to repress. Interestingly, Jung has referred to 'warning dreams' as serving a similar function because 'salvation lies in our ability to bring the unconscious urges to consciousness with the aid of warning dreams'. Bowles's stories do not reach for 'salvation' but they do try to re-open a dialogue with the unconscious and show through a variety of situations and characters that Western Society has too easily forgotten elements of itself that need to be confronted. 'The dream compensates for the deficiencies of their personalities, and at the same time it warns them of the dangers in their present course.'

Many of Bowles's 'exemplary tales' maintain their connections with myth through the use of a basic journey structure by which characters move into new landscapes which, as we have seen, correspond to new states of mind. 'Distant Episode' and 'Pastor Dowe at Tacate' will be examined in more detail later, but in 'By the Water' the 'Young Amar', an innocent initiate undergoes a descent-journey from which he must learn.

Beyond, the street appeared to descend sharply and lose itself in darkness...he passed over into the unlighted district...(CS,31-2). His descent takes him to the underground bath ('hamman') where he is
confronted by the grotesque near-mythic figure of Lazrag, deformed and monstrous. It suggests the unconscious, shut away in darkness and becoming cruel and violent without a place in human consciousness. But Amar has made a vital contact which breaks his sheltered world. As Jung knew,

the conscious mind, advancing into the unknown regions of the psyche, is overpowered by the archaic forces of the unconscious... The purpose of the descent...is to show that only in the region of danger...can one find the treasure hard to attain ... 33

Whereas Amar is 'saved' from the presence of Lazrag many of Bowles's stories make the 'treasure' unattainable, but it is the motivating force for his characters' quests. These journeys become extreme confrontations of established patterns of thought and new ways of seeing and, as Jung wrote, 'the psychological danger that arises here is the disintegration of personality'. 34

It is a necessary movement in the stories since it is part of the 'warning' which they provide to the people and to their society with its narrow definitions of reality. Many stories exhibit this journey-descent motif: 'Call at Corazón' is a journey into the heart ('Corazón') of darkness in which civilized, rational man is confronted by the sexual threat of primitivism; 'Under the Sky' in which a peasant moves down from the hills into the town; 'At Paso Rojo' when the passage ('paso') is from town to the primitive urges of the jungle and 'The Circular Valley' where,

On all sides the ground sloped gently downward towards the tangled, hairy jungle that filled the circular valley...(CS,113).

All journeys are dislocations which force new experiences, and Bowles used this simple idea to suggest the inner descent into the unconscious world where society has repressed its fears and terrors. The journeys dissolve familiarity, breaking the false security of the everyday rational world and take us back into the mythic and the unconscious:

we must go back to the beginning; it must be all done over; everything that is must be destroyed. 35
From 'The Scorpion' Bowles moved to one of his most important stories 'A Distant Episode' (1945) which clearly examines an idea at the heart of his work, what Tennessee Williams called 'the collapse of the civilized "super ego" into a state of almost mindless primitivism'. The physical and mental disintegration of the Professor's character in the story is emblematic of Bowles's 'warning' - as he has written

the word disintegration refers to the disintegration of society and eventually civilisation...It was not the characters in the fiction that were to be purified; they were already victims. They are victims of their culture, of their accepted, enclosed patterns of thought who build around them a seemingly secure fortress holding at bay all forces of the 'other' around them. Here we inevitably return to the central image of the cage that makes these characters 'victims'. The fortress cuts them off as well as protects them, it reduces the possibilities of life to only that permissible within the boundaries of that cage/society. It becomes what Bowles calls 'our artificial palace' built on a self-deluding security and as he reminds us constantly in his work 'security is a false concept' and 'to destroy the sense of security is a writer’s principal task now...'. 'A Distant Episode' makes a very direct attack on the artificial palace of thought which Western society has established.

'A Distant Episode'

The story is a descent into the unknown, beginning when the 'September sunsets were at their reddest' (CS,39). Appropriately the sun is going down and so the Professor, the central character, enters a world of darkness and 'lunar chill' (CS,49). Besides the symbolic implications of the red sky he actually descends into his new environment leaving behind the security of his academic, ordered world and bringing with him only a few vital products to protect him: 'two small overnight bags full of maps, sun lotions and medicines' (CS,39).
The Professor returns to Ain Tadouirt on the strength of a 'fairly firm friendship'(CS,39) with a man he has had no contact with for nine years. It seems self-delusive to expect any kind of friendship to survive such time and distance, especially such an uncertain one as this. But the memory of this 'friend' is part of his past which he recalls as a source of comfort:

He closed his eyes happily and lived for an instant in a purely olfactory world. The distant past returned - what part of it, he could not decide (CS,39).

At a distance these thoughts become pleasant, but they are necessarily vague. Any precise memories may reveal the deceptiveness with which he lives.

When the Professor's tenuous connection to the place disappears - on hearing about Hassan Ramani's death - he is plunged into a sense of isolation in which he is 'feeling lonely, and arguing with himself that to do so was ridiculous'(CS,40). He is desperate to retain conscious control of his feelings, but it is clear that he has cut himself off from the familiar into a place where even the Professor of Linguistics cannot communicate with anyone. Without the consolation of communication he uses money to try and establish a relationship, giving the café owner ('qaouaji') an 'enormous tip'(CS,40). He substitutes any relationship of trust with a crude economic relationship in which he can maintain power only through his command of money. Stripped of the security of his own culture, the Professor resorts to a desperate bribery in order to keep his superior position.

At the same time he attempts to make some economic relationship, Bowles refers to a 'growing chorus of dogs that barked and howled'(CS,40). At first they sound 'distant' and so controllable, like the Professor's memories, but gradually they become more immediate and threatening. This is mirrored in the 'white endlessness'(CS,41) of the desert which suddenly
becomes a very real and menacing presence challenging the Professor's ordered mind. The whole landscape seems to be hostile as the Professor moves further into his descent in search of his camel udder boxes from a local Reguiba tribe. Bowles repeats his previous movement into an olfactory world but now it is no longer 'happily' because everything is real and immediate rather than distant. There is a horrendous 'stench' and 'bad dogs' replace the 'distant dogs' he had noted earlier.

As he arrives at 'the edge of the abyss' (CS, 42) he begins to fear the qaouaji's presence, but typical of the Professor he reassures himself by referring to an external system of values which, like his academic, rational system of thought, is totally irrelevant in this primitive environment. He reassures himself by referring to the powers of law and justice which would 'surely' find out the guilt of the waiter if anything were to happen. In exactly the same way he tries to convince himself that 'these people are not primitives' (CS, 43) by applying his mind and sheltering behind a self-assured knowledge. However, left alone he begins to lose control:

He spat, chuckled (or was the Professor hysterical?) ... [he] was in a state of nerves (CS, 43).

Just after this 'his lips [were] moving automatically' and he has to struggle for a 'sense of reality' by orientating himself with the 'hard, cold ground' and the 'moon'. But even these once-stable forces have become unsure, so that the moon was 'like looking straight at the sun' (CS, 43) and by shifting his gaze he created 'a string of weaker moons across the sky'. Everything he could trust, even his vision has become uncertain and his only utterance is 'Incredible' (CS, 43) as he struggles to assess his own position at the abyss: 'there was nothing to give it scale; not a tree, not a house, not a person...' (CS, 43). He is alone, without any supportive systems through which to quantify his experiences except the 'wind going by his ears' (CS, 43) and the desert all around him.
Although the Professor has a 'sudden and violent desire' (CS, 43) to turn back, it is his pride which makes him continue and in an elaborate ritual he seems to assert his defiance of the threatening landscape and his own fears:

he spat over the edge of the cliff. Then he made water over it... (CS, 43).

This action, however, suggests the Professor's continued loss of his old self for it is the action of a child or primitive rather than a Western academic. The next stage in his disintegration is being attacked by the Reguiba whose extreme violence shatters the ridiculous social values and laws that the Professor's mind still contains. As the dogs tear at his ankles he can only think 'he was scandalized to note that no one paid any attention to this breach of etiquette' (CS, 44). Still clinging to his old values he yells, 'You have all my money; stop kicking me!' (CS, 45), but his money has no worth to them.

The Professor's disintegration is continued on both physical and mental levels, reducing him stage by stage to a silent conditioned animal. The cutting out of his tongue is an act of brutal irony, since the Professor is a linguist (though we may have almost forgotten it). Communication cannot be anymore, he has had taken away his most socially valuable asset, the link with the world. Without his tongue the linguist is reduced to nothing.

'In a state which permitted no thought...'(CS, 45), he is taken away, dressed in 'a suit of armor' made of tin cans (CS, 45). Ironically, the products of Western civilization become his burden, his mockery - the protection he sought is now found in an 'armor' which encloses him and imprisons him, reducing him to a manipulated toy. The Professor becomes the very caged creature that Bowles saw as a perfect image for man as a victim of his own society and its ways of thinking.

His old values based firmly in monetary worth are now reversed on him,
so that he is 'a valuable possession' (CS, 46) and is sold for 'a sum of money' (CS, 47). Finally his reasoning is gone and he 'did not begin to think again' (CS, 46), 'he ate and defecated, and he danced when he was bidden...' (CS, 46). He has become an animal, 'trained' and instinctive.

The ironies continue with the entry into the story of a 'venerable gentleman' who 'made a point of going into classical Arabic...' (CS, 47), which suggests his learning and his linguistic skill. It reminds us of the original Professor, and this equivalent figure in the Arab world provokes a change in the reduced man, so that he 'listened' and 'was conscious of the sound of the old man's Arabic'. The words are 'noises' that bring back to his memory the events leading to his disintegration, so that 'the pain had begun' (CS, 47), 'he had begun to enter into consciousness again' (CS, 47). It causes him to refuse the dance when prodded.

Gradually consciousness returns, words register in his head, he reads the calendar and they are like notes playing a 'music of feeling...in the Professor's head' (CS, 48). With it comes the curious 'feeling that he was performing what had been written for him long ago' (CS, 48). Earlier the Professor had felt happy because his 'distant past' was only something imprecise, but when it becomes immediate and real it focuses as a memory of primitivism buried in his own unconscious. To be purely lost in the insanity of his recent past is bearable because he is unaware of it, but to recognise and think about his situation is unbearable. The admission of a pre-rational state within drives him into a wild frenzy where instinct forces out all conscious thought and 'his emotion got no further than this one overwhelming desire' to attack 'the house and its belongings' (CS, 48). He acts as Kit Moresby does at the end of The Sheltering Sky when she recognises her own condition and it drives her into an insane, infantile rage.

The Professor's final act is to destroy the secure world of the conditioned animal - 'he attacked the house...he attacked the door...he climbed
through the opening made by the boards he had ripped apart...'- and to escape into the wilderness. He is finally liberated but only into madness and seen as a 'holy maniac'(CS, 48) disappearing into the 'setting sun', out into 'the great silence...beyond the gate'(CS, 49).

The Professor's disintegration undermines not only his own self but the society of which he is a representative, for its values and beliefs provide the framework of ideas by which he lives. The descent in the story destroys that framework and exposes him to a fierce awakening of other values and cultures. The warning in the story is about the inevitable consequences of seeing the world through a single, arrogant perspective as a place for human examination and exploitation.

'Pastor Dowe at Tacate'

'Pastor Dowe at Tacate' follows a similar basic pattern to 'A Distant Episode' because it displaces a Westerner, this time a pastor, outside of his usual environment. The difference in this story is that Bowles concentrates more of the story on the personal unconscious rising up in the man to force a questioning of his cultural values and assumptions. Religion, after all, is a rigid example of the kind of closed beliefs that Bowles has always found restrictive, just like the Professor's academic arrogance in 'A Distant Episode'. It is this layer of inflexible, accepted values which have to be stripped away before anything new can be introduced into the man's mind.

With the central character/victim dis-located in the South American jungle he is also isolated, caged within his faith and its attendant beliefs: 'he could see that their attention was born of respect rather than of interest'(CS, 137) and 'he had the sensation of having communicated absolutely nothing to them '(CS, 137). Ironically, as with the Professor in 'A Distant Episode', he has learned the language but the knowledge does not make him belong: 'to their ears everything must have a pagan
sound. Everything I say is transformed on the way to them into something else' (CS, 145). Two events early in the story emphasise the kind of man the Pastor is. Firstly when a native, Nicolas, suggests he might improve his services through the introduction of music, he replies that it's 'ridiculous!', but his reason is only that 'it is unheard of' (CS, 138). Faith and his beliefs cannot accommodate within itself such a suggestion because it seems to go against a pattern of values strictly accepted as 'right'. On a more personal level the Pastor's own values (obviously bound very closely to those of his faith) are revealed when he reacts to the nakedness of a young girl from the village: 'It seemed to him she was too old to run about naked. He turned his head away...' (CS, 138).

The wider values and taboos of his religion are reflected in his own limited ability to understand the social customs of other people and in his own repressed feelings about sexuality exposed here by the naked girl. Even physical contact is repulsive to the man of intellect and spirit, 'The touch of the brown hand was vaguely distasteful to him' (CS, 139).

The Pastor is separate from the people because like guns and Jesus Christ he is connected with the God Metzabok who 'makes all things that do not belong here'. This alienation does not immediately trouble Dowe, as he merely sees it as part of the white man's burden and finds comfort in resorting to the rational explanation for his situation:

he was wholly alone in this distant place, alone in his struggle to bring the truth to its people (CS, 140).

This absolute belief in his version of a 'truth' is the very pattern of mind that Bowles's stories are aiming to destroy or undermine because it represents the rational arrogance that has allowed notions of superiority to exist. But for Pastor Dowe his intellectual system and belief in his duty enable him to justify his position: 'He consoled himself by recalling that it is only in each man's own consciousness that the isolation exists; objectively man is always a part of something' (CS, 140).
For the Pastor that 'something' is what is under threat. The vague notion of that 'something' does not seem to have any real existence except as a rarified, intellectual concept, unlike the natives who feel a real and intimate physical connection with the 'something'; their God Hachakyum, the Earth, the Jungle and so on. But this is all a part of the world which Western religion (and humanity generally) has exiled from itself in its obsession with the mind and rationalism. Like the Pastor, all the emphasis is upon 'consciousness' and all else is pushed aside.

In the story Bowles shows Dowe gradually compromising his rigid faith - firstly allowing music at his services, and then giving salt to the people and this all typifies the gentle loosening of his grip on his precious intellect; again the naked girl is used to highlight the Pastor's situation. The world of childhood is anathema to Dowe because it lies beyond the grip of reason and adheres to none of the strict patterns that he believes essential to an orderly and 'true' existence. As he comments later 'he had long since given up expecting any Indian to behave as he considered an adult should' (CS,144). This time the girl appears holding what looks like a doll, but turns out to be a baby alligator. The odd incident suggests two things, firstly a ludicrous parody of the Virgin and Child, and secondly it demonstrates very openly the physical connection between the people and the wildness of nature, as in 'The Scorpion', which he finds so difficult to comprehend. He reacts predictably to the child; 'there was a hidden obscenity in the sight...' (CS,143).

As the Pastor continues to bring 'truth' to the people he becomes increasingly aware of his distance from them and this is underlined by the natural environment.

The few birds that made themselves heard sounded as though they were singing beneath the ceiling of a great room. The wet air was thick with wood smoke, but there was no noise from the village; a wall of cloud lay between it and the mission house (CS,144).

These images ably indicate his predicament, enclosed, oppressed and isolated. The product of these feelings is that he is losing his previously
secure acceptance of a conditioned set of values and precepts and being forced into 'the smothering feeling they gave him of being lost in antiquity' (CS, 144). This 'antiquity' is his vision of the past and the primitive as being an inferior, barbaric place that rational man has struggled, with the aid of religion, to escape. What he fails to see is the inherent value of antiquity and what this 'other' aspect of the self can offer him. Bowles had recognised this value in the edition of View called 'Tropical Americana'. He wrote tropical America...offers the tragic, ludicrous, violent, touching spectacle of a whole vast region still alive and kicking, as here it welcomes, there it resists, the spread of so-called civilisation. The avant-garde is not alone in its incomplete war against many features of modern civilisation; with it are the ponderous apathy and the potential antipathy of the vestigial primitive consciousness. 40 Dowe's overwhelming feeling of 'infinite sadness' makes him turn to Psalm 78, a distressed call to God for support, in order to counteract the growing sense of despair within himself. Bowles externalises this, as ever, using the natural world around him which now appears as a threatening 'emptiness...the white void' all around him. As the supportive framework of his faith and consciousness is shaken, all that remains is the world around him with which he feels no connection and so it appears as a threatening void. Into this void he flings his broken glasses' case, saying 'All things have their death'. Symbolically this action begins Pastor Dowe's journey, his 'descent' into the depths of the jungle and himself. Bowles, therefore, suggests he has 'died' out of his old self, symbolised by the case, and is about to enter into a new phase as he leaves his 'suffocating little room' (the enclosure image again suggesting his narrow mind and limited understanding) and takes the 'only one path practicable' leading 'downward' into 'mere whiteness'(CS, 145-6).

As his 'descent' continues it is as if he is beginning life again, like a child 'carefully putting one foot before the other'(CS,146) and finding it 'strangely relaxing' as 'thought' remains inactive within him. He becomes more aware of the natural world; 'the fog was now above him...
giant trees...dripping slowly in a solemn, uneven chorus onto the wild coca leaves beneath'(CS,146) like a massive natural church. Now, with this growing awareness, he does not reject the presence of two natives and 'on an impulse' he follows them into the jungle 'where slow growth and slow death are simultaneous and inseparable'(CS,146).

As he repeats the question 'Where are you going?' of his two primitive guides he feels uneasy about his journey into the 'dark stream' and 'at each successive bend in the tunnel-like course, he felt farther from the world'(CS,148). The 'world' he is leaving behind is that defined by the boundaries of his faith and his limited conscious view of life, as he says 'a region like this seemed outside God's jurisdiction'. His security in his faith is broken; 'God is always with me', he says in an effort to reassure himself (like the Professor chanting 'Hassan Ramani' as he descends). But these are just words, and 'the formula had no effect'(CS,148) because he is becoming aware of other forces: the natural world, the primitive and the unconscious. The Pastor's 'spiritual collapse' is a result of 'the inner most fibers of his consciousness' relaxing and being replaced by 'a monstrous letting go'(CS,148) of his unconscious. All the old values begin to disappear; 'the Pastor remained sunk within himself, feeling, rather than thinking'(CS,149) and his conscious rational self is submerged as he declares 'I have passed over into the other land'(CS,149). His journey is what Jung calls 'nekyia' - 'a night sea journey whose end and aim is the restoration of life, resurrection, and the triumph over death'.41 A true spiritual revelation is, ironically for the man of faith, achieved in contact with the depths of his own self and a liberating intimacy with primitive nature.

Even as his consciousness returns, through language, as with the Professor, he does not feel disgusted at having prayed to the God Metzabok in his cave because he has found a new feeling, 'strong and happy' whereby
'his spiritual condition was a physical fact' (CS, 150). He recognises his action 'but his deploring of it was in purely mental terms' which shows he now acknowledges that his 'purely mental' approach to life excluded a great deal of emotional and instinctual vitality. So with the 'sensation of having returned to himself' after his revelatory passage he must return to the village.

Almost immediately he feels a greater communication with the villagers and particularly Nicolas, who shows the Pastor 'the treasures of the household' (CS, 151). He feels 'fortified by [his] experience' and confesses 'a strange nostalgia for the days of his youth' (CS, 151) which both suggest a contentment and a closer relationship with the childhood he found so hard to accept earlier on in the story. His service has a new approach and vigour which 'electrified' his audience, and even the alligator, which he had previously found so disgusting, is picked up by Dowe.

Just as in 'The Scorpion' and later in 'The Frozen Fields' and 'Allal' Bowles uses an animal to represent the 'other' or unconscious which man makes contact with. However, the Pastor has assumed too much and believes his new self to be complete when in truth he has merely touched the surface in acknowledging the existence of alternative values. This is made clear when the young girl is offered to the Pastor as a wife. Suddenly his old self comes rushing back, led by the sexual taboos that were so strong within him earlier.

At this same moment he sees a native women holding his glasses' case which he had symbolically thrown away and assumed 'dead' earlier in the story. Bowles, through this single symbol, shows that it is not so easy to leave behind the old self and undergo a miraculous transformation - it lives on, changed but still identifiable as it has always been. Finally nothing has altered and he is ironically reminded by Mateo that he will not be able to change the minds of the natives because 'these people are very severe. They never change their laws' (CS, 154). There is nothing
Romantic about Bowles's primitives, in fact they can be as rigid and inflexible as his Western characters; as he has said 'I don't see any difference between the natural man and the civilized man, and I'm not juxtaposing the two...' What he does show is the fact that contact with different people, places and beliefs can force all men to question themselves or to recognise the possibilities for alternative ways of being. The fullest implications of his new knowledge would mean an acceptance of ideas that he would find unbearable. There can be no easy reintegration or return to innocence.

The images of the primitive and the child serve a healing function because they symbolize our birthright to wholeness, that original state in which we are in rapport with nature and its transpersonal energies which guide and support. It is through the child or primitive in ourselves that we make connection with the self and heal the state of alienation...

But before any true 'healing' there has to be a 'purification' of the old self, of the ego or conscious self, which Bowles suggests in this story must be more than a gentle journey. It must be a more extreme rupture, 'a disintegration of the canon' (of values) within society 'loosening and even fragmenting the internal psychic environment, through conflicts within the internal environment and within the external environment.'

'The Circular Valley', 'At Paso Rojo' and 'The Echo'

By the time Bowles wrote 'The Circular Valley' in 1948 he had written all the most important stories which would form his first collection, and so it stands almost as a coda to them. It clearly dramatises man in relation to nature and demonstrates in a curiously objective way the failings of man when compared to the natural world. Atlajala is the spirit of the circular valley, the god who presides over a world of impermanence with all the transformatory, metamorphic magic that suggests power and freedom way beyond human comprehension. The spirit of the natural world is indifferent and playful, seeking out new experiences
regardless of consequences. It drives Atlajala to enter a human being in the form of a friar and for the first time to experience a set of feelings previously unknown. For Bowles they are the feelings of a 'victim', of someone who belongs to a world that has long rejected contact with a natural world or with aspects of the self which permit desires. The human world is

unbearably stifling, as though every other possibility besides that of being enclosed in a tiny, isolated world of cause and effect had been removed forever (CS,114). 46

It is Bowles's favourite image for man as enclosed within a highly restrictive mind and society, a 'little shell of anguish'(CS,114). Within the friar Atlajala experiences the sensation of looking into the sky, not to see the stars,'but the space between and beyond them'(CS,114). Man cannot accept what is and instead looks for answers outside himself. As so often in Bowles's fiction it is the idea that the answer to their crisis can be found outside themselves, but again and again we see that the 'treasure' or secrets to solve the problems begin within the person, in their own awareness of themselves.

What Atlajala experiences is the friar's refusal to accept these desires from within, which his faith (as with Pastor Dowe) has conditioned him to think of as sinful. He represses Atlajala's spirit, the spirit of the natural world, of the dark unconscious and so cuts himself off from any true contact with 'what is'. The friar's world is one of alienation: 'Each was a separate world, a separate experience'(CS,115) and even death (like the unconscious) is not accepted and 'they pretended with such strength not to know' they were doomed. In contrast, Atlajala accepts death and was 'living in the awareness of the slow, constant disintegration...'(CS,114). The integration of death into life is something Bowles believes is important and has spoken of in relation to the Moroccans:
for them, even death is not something to fear. One must never fear death because that ruins life. Death is a part of your life, and to push it away is a sin. It's almost a sin to weep if someone dies. 47

The effort to overcome, or ignore death and impermanence has led humanity to commit horrendous crimes and to invest itself in a technological age that has pushed it further away from any contact with nature. Just as Man is distant from this outer world, he is also alienated from his own inner nature and this is what 'The Circular Valley' shows. Once again Bowles uses the idea of distance to suggest Man's ability to deny what is close at hand in preference for the imprecise and out of reach.

The events of the stories suggest a commonly held view that women are in greater contact with nature, or as Bowles prefers to view it I see her rather as a stronghold of atavisms, a filing cabinet of racial memories, the static half of humanity, in touch with what Jung calls the 'night mind' as opposed to the individual subconscious, which can go no farther back than conception. 48

In 'Call at Corazón' he writes, 'Modern, that is, intellectual education, having been devised by males for males, inhibits and confuses her. She avenges...'(CS,66). Because women are more intimately connected with nature and atavisms they seem in Bowles's work to be 'avengers' against the rational, intellectual males. Atlajala, when inside the woman, was 'housed in nothing,...in its own spaceless self'(CS,117) because her feelings were so similar to those of the natural spirit itself. This is perhaps why female characters in Bowles' fiction so often achieve a greater contact with the natural world and with unconscious regions of the self. They are closer to it in the first place.

The two final stories which fit into this area of post-mythic stories of journey and descent are 'At Paso Rojo' and 'The Echo' which both focus on female characters undergoing revelatory experiences. 'At Paso Rojo' begins with two liberating gestures which in typical Bowles fashion fracture the enclosed security of the characters and force them into a new situation. Here they are firstly the death of the dominant condit-
ioning force of the mother and secondly the dislocation from the city
to the country. But the two daughters are very different; Lucha, a 'sensible woman' is governed by exterior judgements, even down to her view of death as something to be revered with 'outward observance'. Apart from her mother's death however, 'her life was in no way changed'. For her the country, and her brother Don Federico's ranch, is too primitive; the servants are 'Indians, poor things, animals with speech' and she views her brother as having 'lowered his standards' by living there. Above all it is 'eating his soul little by little' and he is 'losing his civilized luster' and becoming more primitive himself with 'the skin of a peasant...slowness of speech...and inflections of voice...that can come from talking to animals rather than to human beings'(CS,121-122).

For Bowles these statements represent the very movement we have already examined in the other stories and it is again the idea of 'losing the civilized luster' that he is concerned with. It is through the second daughter, Chalia, that the id is unleashed in the story. Contrary to her sister she feels liberated by the mother's death and by the new environment so that when Don Federico says 'you change here' it has a particular meaning for her. The first time she is mentioned in the story we are told 'she is very much changed'(CS,122).

The story is set on a ranch which 'stood in a great clearing that held the jungle at bay all about...' (CS,122) suggesting man has to struggle to maintain his place in nature. All around, however, are the forces which man tries to 'hold at bay' like 'the monkeys...calling from one side to the other, as if neither clearing nor ranch house existed'. Using geography Bowles symbolises the inner struggle that Chalia undergoes in her dreams where she recalls a song's 'terrible line' which reminds her 'the night goes on without you'. The dreams conjure up images of night and darkness, of repressed desires and unconscious urges which she has never admitted into her life before. Like the primitive world around her she can only
just keep it at bay.

Chalia rejects mourning clothes and even begins to wear 'crimson nail polish' showing that she is changing and finding a new spontaneity away from her old self. The colour of the polish is significant because red is a colour associated with vigour, action, danger in contrast to Lucha's black. Truly Chalia's journey in the story is a 'paso rojo', a red passage - suggestive of birth as the child enters the world from the uterine passage. As Edinger suggests, images of the child and the primitive reconnect us with the self and the world around us.

It is the natural, elemental world that pervades the story, as in 'The Circular Valley' and 'Pastor Dowe', and which brings with it a closeness to the primordial, unconscious world. The jungle breeze is 'like the breath of a great animal' and insects inhabit the very structures of the human world as if to suggest that nothing can keep them at bay. The wall in Chalia's room does not divide her from the world of nature outside because it is a living mass - 'full of monsters', she says. It shows Chalia nature's predatory state; as a beetle landed 'the nearest spider darted forth, seized it and disappeared into the wall with it'. She is initially disgusted and moves her bed away from the wall, but the sounds are so all-enveloping that she returns to 'face' the wall and 'sat watching the wall until very late'. It is as if she is realising what Don Federico has already said about the jungle just seeming to be 'quiet' but 'it's not quiet at all'(CS,122).

Chalia's other self is coming to the fore as she 'faces' the wall, accepts the world outside herself and relates it to the inner desires which have terrified her in the past. The double is splitting as Chalia rejects the side of herself imaged as Lucha and enters into contact with the hidden aspects of her own self. This begins on her horse ride, leaving the 'high barbed-wire fence that enclosed the house', she moves into the 'open space' beyond with a young ranch hand Roberto. The ride
is charged with a Lawrentian sexuality, full of Chalia's suppressed desire hinted at initially in her over-reaction to being called 'señora'. Twice she unbuttons her shirt, finally to rip it open totally in her mad rush through the jungle on horseback. We are constantly reminded of the sexuality of horse-riding, as she sits 'astride' the horse 'clutching the horse's flanks with her legs...'.

Her desire becomes focused on the boy and she entices him away from the rest of the riders. At one point he tells her that she is safe from the insects 'if you stay on your horse', but now she is unconcerned and ironically becomes a predator herself with Roberto her prey. As her desire explodes in an embrace 'she felt as if she were hanging to consciousness only by the ceaseless shrill scream of cicadas'. In this almost-unconscious state she feels a 'delicious excitement' in contact with the primitive being who is closer to the natural world than she can ever be: 'his legs [were] straight on the earth...'. Her longing for a joining with his vitality is ended by her humiliation as he moves away quickly and 'she tumbled forward with her face against the ground'. Ironically, her contact with the earth is a humiliating 'fall' and it brings her abruptly out of her moment of passionate release. She leaves him and takes his wilder horse on a dangerous ride giving her a 'powerful feeling of exultation'.

Here, Bowles examines her state of mind because she thinks of possible death, but it does not frighten her since she feels so detached from both life and death:

Only other people lived and died, had their lives and deaths. She, being inside herself, existed merely as herself and not as a part of anything else. People, animals, flowers and stones were objects and they all belonged to the world outside. It was their juxtapositions that made hostile or friendly patterns (CS,129).

But as her ride continues she has to 'fight off' the 'indefinite sensation...of belonging to the world outside' (CS,129). Eventually she can no longer hold onto the concept of her inner self isolated from the natural world:
she began to feel that almost all of her had slipped out of the inside world, that only a tiny part of her was still she (CS, 129). For a moment she merges with the world around her, her ego dissolves and she feels the inside and outside become one.

This state cannot last and gradually her conscious self returns as she approaches the ranch. Her feelings of shame predominate and Roberto's arrogant display washing naked in the river arouse in her a strong, human desire for vengeance upon him. In all that follows Bowles demonstrates that she has undergone no Romantic reintegration with unconscious or natural forces; in fact she has changed, but to an extreme detached amorality. It allows her to steal from her brother, lie and deceive Roberto and eventually murder him. In breaking through the 'civilized luster' she has found a cruelty that transgresses all kinds of laws and moral codes, but in a sense this is the natural outcome of repression and imbalance within the mind and in society. There can be no simple or easy adjustment. Indeed Chalia at the end is a cold predator on fellow humans, like the spiders she watches on the wall and significantly it is to these that she turns finally, sleeping 'peacefully' amongst them.

In 'The Echo' the traveller is Aileen, a young woman torn between childhood and adulthood, who is visiting her mother deep in the Colombian jungle. Once again, as in 'The Scorpion', 'At Paso Rojo' and 'Pages from Cold Point', a familial relationship is seen as cold, unsure and distant, giving rise to severe doubts in Aileen about her own identity. Her journey is an effort to discover her identity, indeed her whole approach seems deeply narcissistic. The story's first words are, 'Aileen pulled out her mirror...', but the image is symbolically unsteady and 'she was unable to see whether her nose needed powder or not' (CS, 51). Her quest is 'echoed' in her insistent need 'to decipher a meaning that did not lie in the sequence of the words' in her mother's letter.

Aileen wants to reestablish some relationship with her mother because
she feels it will enable her to become a more real person since she feels 'like a character in an animated cartoon'(CS,53). Her sense of insecurity obviously stems from a childhood when she 'convinced herself that her head was transparent, that the thoughts there could be perceived immediately by others'(CS,55) and so felt no 'mental privacy'. This has driven her into herself and away from any contact with people. She resembles the house in the story, which, we are told, was 'built right out over the gorge' with an 'enormous void beyond and below that side of the house'. When she feels anything beyond insecurity and paranoia it is a 'precarious moment', a moment when she feels 'definitely uncomfortable' because 'the emptiness was too near'(CS,56). She feels herself threatened on all sides and yet wants some kind of contact beyond herself.

The distance between Aileen and her mother is magnified by the presence of Prue, her mother's lesbian lover, who her daughter despises. It is, however, a jealousy based on the nature of Prue's life and her relationship with Aileen's mother. Prue is a free spirit who has reached a kind of peace in her own life which Aileen clearly has not. Prue is one of 'the echoes' in the story because everything Aileen says to her reflects upon herself and reveals her to the reader. She says to Prue, 'You're so tied up in knots. You get upset so easily' and 'she's a maniac' – both of which suggest more about her.

Like Prue, Aileen tries to find the answer by experiencing the 'primordial freshness' of the jungle, but all she finds is a native who spits water in her face. When she feels 'horrified to see how near she stood to the ugly black edge of the gorge' and believes the house 'looked insane down there'(CS,59), she suggests her own precarious and confused mental state too, desperate as she is to belong.

It is Prue who confronts her with this, acting again as a kind of echo of Aileen's own confused mind, when she says 'What the hell d'you think life is, one long coming-out party?'. In Aileen's replies she echoes
her inner feelings and despair: 'I think you should look once in the mirror and then jump off the terrace...I think Mother should have her mind examined' (CS, 60).

The 'mirror' suggests Aileen's narcissism and her fear/desire to enter the emptiness of the gorge to rid herself of the enclosed self she wants to escape, but protects violently. The madness she sees in her mother and in Prue earlier is her own imbalanced mind. What Aileen's anger shows is that she recognises in Prue all that she cannot be and in trying to cover this up it erupts as violent hatred. The turmoil within Aileen becomes 'endless excruciating dreams' which cause her to feel 'as if some newly discovered, innermost part of her being were in acute pain' (CS, 61). She is now at war within herself because the 'Prue' half of her self is up against the child-like 'Aileen' side. She cannot confront this and so leaves, but it is 'as if she were leaving love behind' (CS, 61), 'Not Mother. Not the house. Not the jungle' (CS, 61-62). This suggests it is Prue being left behind and so the love of her unattainable self, her own echo.

The final conflict is when Prue 'echoes' the action of the native by flicking water in Aileen's face which provokes violence because it suggests Prue's arrogant confidence in her relationship with Aileen's mother. The certainty exhibited by the native man and by Prue are disconcerting to the girl living on the edge between hope and despair. Her 'scream' echoes around the gorge to emphasise her isolation and the fact that she has found no love and no relationship with her mother - all she has is a shaky hold on her own mind.

Aileen leaves the tranquility of the jungle unable to 'decipher' her self and unable to return to any false security that a memory of childhood might have offered to her. Instead she has seen the impossibility of any magical reintegration with the past or with nature, and that the kind of freedom which Prue exhibits in the story is not easily attained.
Aileen discovers, like many of Bowles's characters, that a system of thought and a rigidly defined self are burdens which when set against the forces of the unforeseen are rapidly broken down.

This group of 'mythic' stories begin to unravel Bowles's fascination with basic human dilemmas; familial relations, man's relationship to the world, the repressed mind and so on, but a second group takes them a stage further. In the first group of stories he examined the effects of a system of values and an ego-dominated self in confrontation with an indifferent and all-powerful Nature or a similar, related force from the unconscious, where

the unconscious is not a demonic monster but a thing of nature that is perfectly neutral as far as a moral sense, aesthetic taste and intellectual judgement go. 50

Bowles serves a warning for those of us who may hanker after some great Romantic discovery that would transform us or make us 'one' with the outer world or the inner self. Man has moved so far from this state of 'innocence' or unity that there is no easy compromise that can bring it back, and to attempt to casually plunge oneself into a journey of discovery is to lay oneself open to disappointment or death.

The connection between these stories and the second group is that in these Bowles examines various aspects of human nature which are symptoms of his division from Nature and inner nature. They are concerned about the society man has produced and about what that society produces and encourages. Through these stories he opens up an exploration of the themes which dominated most of his novels and contribute greatly to what Bowles himself has called 'disease': 'I am writing about disease...because I am writing about today'. It is the 'disease' caused by Man's desperate need to dominate the world and inflate his ego in the pursuit of his own power.

I believe unhappiness should be studied very carefully; this is cert-
ainly no time for anyone to pretend to be happy, or to put his unhappiness away in the dark...You must watch your universe as it cracks above your head. 51

I think it's quite clear that humanity in its arrogant urge to prove itself outside of and superior to nature has destroyed most of its supreme accomplishments... 52

These stories begin to explore these ideas and his novels continue the process in greater depth.

The corruption of innocence is common to many of these stories and so is a useful place to begin. In 'The Fourth Day Out from Santa Cruz' Bowles shows how a young sailor is forced into brutality in order that he win acceptance from the rest of the crew. It is a tale about the pressure of social conditioning on the individual to conform to established patterns of behaviour, since until the boy acts as the others he is ignored. Bowles ritualises Ramón's destruction of innocence by the crew and by so doing demonstrates the way society works towards a brutality which militates against any preservation of naivety or innocence. Discussing this story Bowles said

Human behaviour is contingent upon the particular culture that forms it. Maybe the behaviour of the sailors in that story is only a condition of modern life. 53

He goes on to add that 'not all cultures insist on the destruction of innocence', but certainly the majority put great emphasis on a process of 'growing up' which penalises innocence.

What Bowles's stories demonstrate is that corruption of innocence is very strongly connected with other central concepts such as the acquisition of wealth, power and the abandonment of trust. 'Pages from Cold Point' is a good example of this.

Norton, the father, who believes civilization is fundamentally flawed and in a 'process of decay' takes his son Racky away from it all to a place where 'vegetation still has the upper hand, and man has to fight even to make his presence seen at all'(CS,83). He, like other Bowles
characters, sees an intrinsic quality in nature and feels it will preserve uncorrupted those qualities in his son which he most admires.

I know he will always have a certain boldness of manner and a great purity of spirit in judging values. The former will prevent his becoming what I call a 'victim': he never will be brutalized by realities. And this unerring sense of balance in ethical considerations will shield him from the paralyzing effects of present-day materialism (CS, 86).

The effort to maintain Racky from the 'present-day' and to preserve his 'innocence of vision' is a Romantic, Rousseau-esque dream that underestimates the boy's own will and rather, as Eric Mottram observes, 'idealizes his...son by granting him characteristics he admires most in himself'.

Racky's homosexuality transgresses the norms of innocence and so does his use of money to keep it hidden, but above all it is the fact that the boy assumes control over the father, betraying confidence and manipulating him so as to win independence. The father believed that 'today's monstrous world' was a disease that had to be kept away from his son - but ironically the boy was always 'living in terms of time and money', never the innocent his father had hoped. Racky's innocence was lost before his father's escape to the Islands and maybe had long been compromised by the very society and its values they were running away from. The image of corruption Bowles used to suggest this was incest between father and son - a perverse circle of exploitation and deviance which seemed to typify the inherent sickness of the society Norton wanted to escape. The society may be diseased but you cannot detach individuals from their responsibilities and from the values which they carry around inside them. As Norton ironically comments, 'you are infected with the deadly virus, and you begin to show the symptoms of the disease' (CS, 88). Racky's loss of innocence, like Ramón's, gives rise to a corrupt, brutal 'social' viewpoint which Bowles sees as inevitable in our culture.

I think the child loses an accurate perspective on life when it accepts the adult, or 'social' viewpoint, which is no viewpoint - merely an amalgam of negatives and halfway precepts. 55
These are two vitally important ideas for Bowles; the 'accurate perspective' lost with the child and the 'social viewpoint' which is imposed by society upon them. Many aspects of this are explored in the stories and the novels, but a clear sense of his personal experience comes through his autobiography Without Stopping.

Bowles sees the relationship of child and family as one of powerless and powerful, since 'each of us joins his family as its weakest member. The neonate is powerless and must accept the family as he finds it... the infant is least able to formulate and impose its will on the others'.

Bowles records a moment in his youngest life when he felt a 'certainty' (WS,9) of being, attained through language, his first word relating correctly to its object, 'mug'; through specificity of place ('Uncle Edward's house in Exeter') and time ('the gold clock chimed four times') and age ('I was four years old'). Through this experience of location, of existence, he felt 'I was I, I was there, and it was that precise moment and no other' (WS,9). Against this 'certainty' Bowles registers the presence of his family, through his mother, who is introduced as having planned the boy's life a long while ahead, entering him for college.

Similarly, a while later he had another experience in which he felt an assuring certainty of existence: 'I am I, it is now, and I am here' (WS,10). But these two incidents suggest only a narrow sense of existence, one conditioned externally by one's presence in a situation, by one's relation to time and space and objects within them. In that world, Bowles was the 'captured animal of uncertain reactions' (WS,26) because it was not him, but his family who defined the space he lived in and 'the most important power is the power to define reality'.

Through his childhood in which he 'felt a vague menace on all sides' (WS,29), Bowles learned to contain his feelings from his parents, to practice 'deceit' in order to preserve the vital privacy of his self. Consequently, his original moments of 'certainty' are less personal rev-
elations of Being and rather affirmations of his enclosure within his family-defined reality. He was being molded into the American middle-class through the repressive machinery of his family, and as David Cooper has observed 'the family's role is inducing the base of conformism - normality through the primary socialization of the child.' As Without Stopping shows Bowles was caught in the middle of his mother's and father's curious personal and inter-family battles, 'often used him 'as a weapon'(WS,18) in the fight, and always involving him in the conflicting arguments. Bowles maintained his own self only in his self-created private worlds or in the restricted privacy of his isolated childhood, while his family, as 'primary socializer of the child' sought to 'instill social controls' through 'etiquette, organized games, mechanical learning operation in school', all to 'replace play, freely developing fantasies and dreams...[which are] systematically suppressed and forgotten and replaced by surface rituals.',

'Señor Ong and Señor Ha'

These observations on childhood help us to see many of Bowles's concerns which emerge in The Delicate Prey stories and suggest the origins of his own interest in the 'negatives' which emerge as 'innocence' is destroyed. The best example is the story 'Señor Ong and Señor Ha'(1947). In the story Bowles undertakes to show how another young boy, Dionisio ('Nicho'), loses his innocence and is initiated into the world of adult corruption and power. It is important that the boy's name is Dionisio for it connects him to the Dionysian world as defined by Nietzsche as 'the ground of experience'.

This 'ground' is like the earth that was without form and like the darkness that was upon the face of the deep. It stands for and is a single, fundamental human disposition, involving as yet no division between self and world, and thus no knowledge that is not instinct and intuition. This is the world Nicho inhabits, where knowledge is simple instinct and connected to earth in an 'innocence' uncorrupted by any intrusions from
the outside; 'he spent his days down by the river, jumping like a goat... throwing stones...finding deep pools to swim in, and following the river downstream to lie idly naked on the rocks in the hot sun'(CS,175). Against this Dionysian world Nietzsche posits the Apollonian world - a world of knowledge, law and social order. When the former is intruded upon by the latter there is a loss of 'innocence' and an increasing influence of social pressure. In the story Nicho, we are told, needed someone to 'instil discipline in him'(CS,174). In Bowles's concept of society, it is, by definition, already corrupt and polluted and so the influence is a negative one.

'Señor Ong and Señor Ha' begins by stressing the encroachment of the Apollonian world in the form of 'lazy' townspeople who 'had fallen into its little pattern of living off the Indians who came down from the mountains...'(CS,173). But things were changing because 'the government had begun the building of the great dam up above' and this meant the Indians now had money to spend in town and 'they did not know what to do with all these unexpected pesos'(CS,173). Indeed the theme of money and greed is a part of the greater element of power in the story, for it allows and gives mastery, one man over the next. As Marx wrote of money, 'the less you are...the more you have...it is accumulation that robs you of being'.61 Indeed in the story, it is the lack of money which forces his aunt, who he lives with, to take in strange men to her house and which forces Nicho back to the disciplined and socially respectable school;

He is a proud man, and rich enough to feed us both. It is nothing for him. He showed me his money.

Money has an almost magical quality because it endows the owner with power and authority which permits anything. Against Ong's immense power, Nicho becomes more aware of his powerlessness to do anything about it.

His powerlessness to change that condition seemed much more shameful than any state of affairs for which he himself might have been at fault (CS,175).
Ong tries to win Nicho's affection through material gifts '...Candy... a metal pencil...', but the boy is resistant and becomes full of dislike for the Chinaman who has disrupted his world. But all the time Nicho is innocent about Ong's activities; 'he could not understand at all' but is still inquisitive and felt 'there was something more to know about the visitors' (CS, 176).

Nicho's innocence is emphasised through his relationship with the albino girl Luz who introduces a fairy-tale world of treasures and adventures which is juxtaposed in the story with the encroaching world of corruption around them. Though Nicho finds her beautiful and fascinating even she is quickly absorbed into the greedy world of the story through Nicho's aunt who sees her only as 'good luck'. Bowles's language clearly links this exploitative attitude towards Luz with the theme of power and greed when the aunt talks of the 'profit' to be made from Luz's powers. Later the aunt 'was touching [Luz's] hair only in order to bring herself good luck'(CS, 189).

Gradually Nicho's 'understanding' and knowledge increases, but to begin with his life is made of games and adventures which have no concept of value. For the child beauty is precious, like Luz or the mica which he finds on the river bed and brings up as a gift for the girl, calling it 'silver'. This becomes their treasure and is hidden in a secret place. Ironically Bowles draws a contrast between the innocent game of the child and Señor Ong's hiding place in the aunt's house where he keeps his 'treasure' - drugs. When Nicho accidentally discovers Ong's hiding place it re-opens his old suspicions about the Chinaman and it begins to alter his own view of things: 'now that he suspected Señor Ong of having a treasure too, the little can of sand seemed scarcely worth his interest'(CS, 180). Suddenly he is taken up with the idea of 'stealing back the gold' to give it back to his aunt, from whom he assumes Ong has stolen it. Of course, he does not realise that the treasure is not gold for his innocence assumes
everything very valuable must be.

When he finds the white powder he is amazed and thinks he has been tricked and the gold replaced with 'worthless dust' but soon realises 'all this powder must be the real treasure'(CS,182). Unwittingly the boy stumbles upon the fact that Ong sells the powder and as he does so Nicho experiences the

feeling that he was about to discover the secret and at the same time become master of the situation (CS,183).

For the 'powerless' boy comes a hint of mastery which his new found wealth endows and soon he feels 'pleasure and greedy anticipation'(CS,183).

Soon Nicho is making money selling the drugs, but deceives Luz by pretending the pesos multiply in his secret hiding place and so tries to maintain the fairy-tale world alongside the adult world of corruption. But again, of necessity the deception corrupts the innocence and so does Nicho's new sensation that 'her credulity made him feel clever and superior'(CS,186). He has become bound up in a new adult world of power and supremacy, but he quickly sees it can be a dangerous world when he overhears Ong's plan to kill a rival, Señor Ha, whom he suspects of taking his trade away. Nicho's warning to Señor Ha causes the police, another element in social corruption, to arrest Ong for possessing drugs.62 Iron-ically as he is dragged away and beaten he says to the police 'Not in front of the boy...' because for him Nicho is still an innocent child who must be protected from the corrupt world. This hypocrisy resembles Norton's attitude in 'Pages from Cold Point' in sheltering Racky from the corruption that he has brought with him from civilization.

The final movement of the story sees Nicho becoming bound up further within a corrupt world when Señor Ha moves in with his aunt and immediately enlists the boy's support. Nicho 'felt suddenly very important' as he shows them where Ong had hidden the drugs. But the boy, no longer innocent, has his 'treasure' in the secret hiding place and 'the thought of his
secret made him feel strong' (CS, 191). He has quickly learned the excitement of power and the use of deceit which are vital forces in the adult world.

Ultimately the story is a kind of parable about the corruption of innocence and the way that certain desires for money and power govern the adult world. The story's last paragraph places the piece in relation to a more general movement that concerns Bowles, that is, so-called 'progress'. Man's drive to be 'prosperous' and to have more cannot be achieved without costs and these are very clearly outlined in the tale. Firstly, humanity sacrifices elements of itself in the quest for power and greed and 'progress', as Marx recognised,

\[
\text{the more you have, the greater is your alienated life. Everything which the economist takes from you in the way of life and humanity he restores to you in the form of money and wealth.} \quad 63
\]

This loss is demonstrated by the way in which Nicho's innocence is eroded as he becomes more aware of the excitement of power and the desire for material wealth. Secondly, the price of 'progress' is man's further separation from the natural world and his exploitation of it: 'the thick jungle along the way to Mapastenago was hacked away, the trail widened and improved...'. Just as the 'improved' road will bring more money into the town so it will take away any sense of the place's spirit and it will be engulfed into Norton's 'monstrous world...infected with the deadly virus' and soon it will 'show the symptoms of the disease'. This theme of disease helps identify Bowles vision of a world being gradually eaten away, consumed in a world of 'incompetence and commercialism' with people who 'live in terms of time and money' and 'think in terms of society and progress'. Innocence is part of what is consumed, the disease is what Bowles examines.

'Under the Sky'

He further examines the disease of power in 'Under the Sky', but here
it shows how the corrupting pursuit of power can only ever be destructive.

In the story a gullible country-man, Jacinto, who is quickly tricked by a 'town-dweller' into parting with two 'grifas', yearns for power in some form. In the countryside Jacinto has a contact with nature which gives him a kind of power: '[he] knew at what time of the year the rains would come...he refused to bend over in order to be able to trot uphill...he strode powerfully ahead...' (CS,77). But outside of his own place he is a victim who desires a way to assert himself,

he wanted to have a gun so he could pull it out and shout: 'I am the father of all of you!' But it was not likely that he ever would have a gun. (CS,78)

This is a plea for a God-like power over all, which he equates with violence (gun) and sexuality ('father of you all'). He uses drugs to try and escape his feelings about himself, to become 'dead too'(CS,79) like those who lie in the cemetery and 'did not need to fear'(CS,79). When he has had 'too much of the drug' he feels more confident in himself and can approach a woman outside her hotel.

His desire is for power and control, to assume the role of master over her:

Sit down, Senorita.
Why?
Because I tell you to...Come to the market...I am going into the hotel and kill the man who came here with you...I have a pistol in my pocket... (CS,81).

All these instructions and commands are played out against the supreme power of God - seen in the story as 'sky' - 'remote and motionless'(CS,77). Jacinto's rape of the woman is his effort at achieving some power, some affirmation of his own existence, but ironically he is surrounded by death and emptiness. He is in a graveyard, with vultures and a statue of a 'stone woman' looks on mockingly at 'his utterly empty face'. His brutal act is only a further depletion of life with man trying to conquer time, be 'father of all' by plundering woman. But as Bowles stated in 'The Circular Valley', 'he never would attain that sense of completion he sought'
(CS,117) because in seeking something through the woman he has assumed a destructive power over her.

Having moved beyond his life in the hills with its own natural balance and wholeness he tries to assert himself, his ego, within the 'Inferno'. But it moves him closer to the emptiness within him and his only solution is a violation of human relations and symbolically of Man's relationship with the world. This is best seen in the last paragraph when Jacinto returns a year later full of regret about what he had done. The sky and the world is indifferent to him; 'on the ground the dust blew past' (CS,82), but he has broken a bond with that world:

he began to weep, and rolled over onto the earth, clutching the pebbles as he sobbed...'He has lost his mother' (CS,82).

Appropriately the final ironic comment tells us what has been lost in the story, Man's relationship to Mother Earth, to nature and to a way of living with its power rather than trying to steal it away.

These early stories in The Delicate Prey are crucial to understanding Bowles's initial working out of the themes which dominate his writing, but many of the ideas stem from his own childhood experiences when he became aware of the way people are conditioned to accept established patterns and beliefs, the way the imagination and unconscious is stifled and the way we are forced to accept a closed environment with its own stultifying norms and codes of behaviour. From his experience Bowles emerged with the desire to be an artist because it offered a means by which he could rebel and transgress these patterns of behaviour. It would allow some contact with a world beyond the narrow one defined by America and his family. Bowles best expresses this in a story written ten years after this first collection, in 1957, 'The Frozen Fields'. It is about his childhood and about a symbolic struggle to resist the constricting forces of society and to find a means of survival. Above all, like the earlier stories, he emphasises what the 'social' viewpoint is and how there is
a whole alternative world which we must all be made aware of. Complacency is the enemy.

In his autobiography *Without Stopping* he describes his family situation as very puritanical and restrictive and as he told me 'the learned doctors would surely be in accord that in my case the family was "destructive" in its influence'.

Very early I understood that I would always be kept from doing what I enjoyed and forced to do that I did not (WS, 17).

The child's world can be full of possibilities, mysteries and free from harmful repressions, but it is not long before the adult-world absorbs it into 'one of distrust and intrigue'(WS, 16). He later referred to Tangier, his adopted home, as appealing 'particularly to those with a residue of infantilism in their character' because it lies outside the 'social organization and hypertrophied governments' that dominate and formulate the normal 'grown-up' world. The nature of his later stories, translations and immersion in Moroccan culture, suggest that Bowles found the 'accurate perspective' closer there than in modern America or Europe.

'The Frozen Fields',

Once again, the story begins with a journey which breaks the rigid social pattern in the form of a train ride which 'was late'(CS, 261). The characters feel a 'general restlessness' and talk 'fretfully in low voices' as they move towards a Christmas gathering. It is into this unnerving scene that Donald is introduced, innocently scratching pictures onto the iced window of the carriage. For Donald, the journey is to be one of discovery and rebellion against the strict repressiveness of his father who persistently restricts his son's actions. Scratching on the ice results in an immediate 'Stop that', from his father; while Donald's excited shout results in his father's 'You don't have to shout...And stand still, Pick up your bag. '(CS, 261). Even when Donald's feet are cold, his father says 'He just wants attention' and tells him 'Just keep quiet for a while '(CS, 262)
Everything is governed by the presence of his father to whom life is defined by its order and organization, in which 'discipline begins in the cradle' (CS, 270) and all things, even the family, function according to 'a few basic rules' (CS, 271).

His mother is less threatening, but like Donald, is ruled by her husband's iron hand. The boy is caught amid a tense relationship, in which he often depends on his mother's intervention to save him from his father's anger. During a joyless visit at Christmas to their relations' farm Donald is exposed to an atmosphere which is repressive and charged with unspoken prejudices and hates. Insinuations are made about drug-addiction, divorce and homosexuality but never openly expressed because the boy 'was not supposed to hear' (CS, 265). The preservation of the family's concept of order depends on the maintenance of a law and morality which cannot recognise the existence of its opposites within the same system.

Their concept of order is formulated around the ritual of Christmas, in which, 'the important ritual was the tree' (CS, 266), and the Christmas meal and presents. The individual tensions cannot remain subdued by the ritual order, and it is their presence which destroys the artificially sustained atmosphere. Mr Gordon, a homosexual companion of Uncle Ivor (though no one will admit it, of course) is an immediate threat to the puritanical orderliness because he wore diamond rings and sat in 'Grampa's armchair, where nobody else ever sat' (CS, 267). He also buys Donald extravagant presents compared to the usual practical gifts of his parents. Yet Donald's father cannot accept this, and must formulate a rule in order to chastise Mr Gordon: 'it's bad business for one kid to get so much' (CS, 268). Mr Gordon finds the father's dominance 'sinister' (CS, 270), and through his gift of a fire engine, with its pleasure and its impracticality has offered Donald 'the power...to change his world' (CS, 268). The power comes from its challenge to his father's control over him, by breaking
away from the normal and the accepted into the flamboyant and desirable.

As the tensions explode at the Christmas meal, Donald finds himself drawn to Mr Gordon who had an equally restricted boyhood and comments that his parents were 'dead now, thank God'. This is a fantasy which Donald shares too. Similarly, Donald is drawn toward Uncle Ivor - a homosexual - because of his tender understanding of the boy. The brief glimpse of Donald and his uncle together shows a level of true human contact never achieved with his parents. His father intrudes and, suspecting the worst, takes out his anger on his son by forcing him to compete in snowball throwing, but the boy refuses because a wolf could be waiting there, somewhere back in the still gloom of the woods. It was very important not to make him angry. If his father wanted to take a chance and throw snowballs into the woods, he could, but Donald would not. Then perhaps the wolf would understand that he, at least, was his friend (CS, 274).

What Donald weighs up in his mind is the possible risk of aggravating the wolf over that of displeasing his father, and it is now he chooses. The result is a defiance of his father for the first time in his life, leaving him 'bare and unprotected' (CS, 263) like the land. His father's reaction is a violent one, in trying to smother Donald in the snow, but the boy remains defiant, with a new sense of himself; 'He felt detached...' (CS, 274).

The wolf, imagined by Donald in the woods, occurs earlier in the story as an image of retributive force against his father when he dreams of it 'smashing the panes' and seizing his father 'by the throat', dragging him into the forest (CS, 265-66). The wolf provides for the repressed, conditioned Donald an indication of natural power, freedom and wildness that exists within us all, but which remains hidden under the strictures of the social self. At the moment of defiance Donald discovers elements of that strength within himself, and can therefore associate more readily with the wolf than his father. He would rather spare the wolf than his father now, and it is such an image that is finally present in the story. Donald lies in bed and imagines the wolf 'out there in the night, running along
paths that no one had ever seen...(CS, 276), and his final joining with the beast:

he lay down beside him, putting his heavy head in Donald's lap. Donald leaned over and buried his face in the shaggy fur of his scruff. After a while they both got up and began to run together, faster and faster, across the fields (CS, 276).

The wolf has brought Donald closer to the world he had admired in Pavlova's dancing, 'the sudden direct contact with the world of music'(CS, 262), and with the symbolic beast he enters 'an enchanted world more real than the world that other people knew about'(CS, 262). But now he has the inner assurance to protect this world against the intrusion of his father, whose practical consciousness had presented 'a grave danger, because it was next to impossible to conceal anything from him, and once aware of the existence of the other world he would spare no pains to destroy it'(CS, 262).

What Donald has arrived at is a renewed conception of his self, one freed from the restraint of his claustrophobic family, in which he has discovered the wildness within him. The wolf is an archetypal image of cunning, wildness and freedom, the undomesticated beast lurking in the dark interior. Within the story, Donald has found some definite strength against his father, and against the whole society he represents.

At the point that social pressures become too restrictive and begin to suffocate, Bowles advocates a wolf-like liberating violence to try and reach beyond its cage. He told Halpern that 'the typical man of my fiction reacts to inner pressure the way the normal man ought to be reacting to the age we live in. Whatever is intolerable must produce violence.'68

'The Frozen Fields' represents a very direct portrayal of the family's power as a social tool to repress and condition the child into accepting an order of established rules and ways of seeing the world. The story's violent imagery indicates the need for rebellion to shatter the deep-rooted and accepted ways of thought that society can hold as sacred. Acts of transgression are the extreme tactics required to cut through such
fundamentally limited and destructive views of life.

This realisation about the restrictive nature of society was something Bowles experienced as a child. His father, a strict puritanical man, disliked a woman called Dorothy Baldwin whom he saw as 'unstable... an out and out radical' (WS, 22), but she had a great impact on the young Bowles. Out walking with Dorothy the boy told her 'the path is farther on', to which she replied, 'We're going to make our own path... it's no fun to follow somebody else's' (WS, 22). At the risk of being stung by wasps, they plunge into the 'waist-high vegetation' seeking their own route through.

The episode came to his parents' attention, and they 'formulated the lesson' from it: 'it was safer to stay on paths, literally and figuratively' (WS, 22). But Bowles was not impressed, rather 'the moralizing had its effect on me, albeit in the opposite direction' and he adds,

Dorothy and I had accepted implicitly the dangers of the walk and that it was not her fault that the wasps had stung me. Vaguely I understood that laws were made to keep you from doing what you wanted to do. Furthermore, I understood that for my family the prohibition itself was the supreme good, because it entailed the sublimation of personal desire. Their attempt to impose this concept was only one of numerous strategies for bolstering their power over me. They had an idea of how they wanted me to be; but insofar as I resembled it, I should remain subjugated to them, or so it seemed to me then (WS, 22).

This episode clearly parallels that of Donald in 'The Frozen Fields' in his realization of familial imposition and conditioning, and simultaneously of the possibilities of alternatives to the established patterns. What Bowles identifies here is repression, ('the sublimation of all personal desire'), imposition of power, ('their attempt to impose this concept... for bolstering power over me'), and subjugation. These were the means by which society maintained control over people and their continued presence were the very things which Bowles felt had to be challenged in his fiction.

All the means by which Man is enclosed and reduced in his relation to the world and his inner nature have to be destroyed or else the consequence is a stifling conformity and corruption in self and society.
Those who define reality hold the power by which society is governed. In every aspect of life norms are outlined, made respectable, confirmed and reinforced - and gradually all other possibilities are outlawed and pushed outside the frame, being defined as unacceptable or insane. Culture moves towards homogenization, which Bowles fears more than any other force, because it closes down, makes-the-same all the things which should be different. Difference is replaced by sameness - totalitarianism flourishes in the undifferentiated world of mass.

The machine of repression has always had the same accomplices; homogenizing, reductive, unifying reason has always allied itself to the Master, to the single, stable, socializable subject, represented by its types or characters. 69

The self is ultimately in danger of becoming a manipulated, controlled shell because it has lost its capacity for difference, 'otherness', and become merely an object in the 'monoculture', as Levi-Strauss has termed it. Bowles fortunately realised this early on:

It occurred to me that this meant that I was not the I I thought I was, or, rather, that there was a second I in me who had suddenly assumed command (WS, 77-8).

This led him to flip a coin and choose between suicide and leaving for Paris. Appropriately, in a note amongst his papers, Bowles has described this same event in a different manner, but one which is particularly important to the argument. He describes the flip of the coin as his 'transition' from childhood - 'About two months after my eighteenth birthday I ceased being a child', and had a choice, 'to swallow the contents of a bottle of sleeping pills and the other was to disappear, that is to go away leaving no tracks'. 70 Thus, Bowles equates the movement away from America with his movement from childhood, and especially from the childhood restraints imposed by his family. Childhood has the potential to be a state of innocence or unconditioned bliss in Bowles's imagination, yet his own personal experience was that 'the world of children was a world of unremitting warfare' (WS, 27). It was a cruel world dominated by
other voices and established patterns of behaviour, which Bowles longed to escape for another world where he might decide his own fate. For Bowles it meant the release of Europe, and particularly Paris and the European avant-garde, to find what he has termed a 'lost childhood'.

The stories are often 'simple emotional outbursts'71 aimed against elements of humanity which Bowles wanted to undermine. Because the structures he was attacking were so established and rooted in psychological patterns of thought he often used extreme methods to jar them out of place. Only then might the readers see them in a new way. Bowles's stories suggest the future direction of his career for they are

an effort to make Man aware of the ultimate realities of his condition, to instil in him again the lost sense of cosmic wonder and primeval anguish, to shock him out of an existence that has become trite, mechanical, complacent and deprived of the dignity that comes of awareness. 72

To begin to achieve this his writing has to cut through the illusions long established by an ego-centred world, using his work as a 'weapon' and 'attacking in words' in order to produce a 'dislocation' which might 'cause a certain amount of questioning of values afterward.'73 The stories aim at 'the disintegration of facile solutions and...cherished illusions' because 'once they are given up, we have to readjust ourselves to the new situation and face reality itself.'74
CHAPTER THREE

The Sheltering Sky: The Obstacle Within

If a Westerner encounters an archaic culture with the idea of learning from it, I think he can succeed. He wants to absorb the alien for his own benefit. But to lose oneself in it is not a normal desire. A romantic desire, yes, but actually to try and do it is disastrous. 1

I suggest that every person open an interior trapdoor, that he negotiate a trip into the thickness of things...a revolution, a turning-over process comparable to that accomplished by the plough or the spade, when [things]...hitherto buried in the earth, are exposed to the light of day for the first time. 2
The stories collected in *The Delicate Prey* suggest how Bowles was developing his fiction away from the influence of Surrealism and the technical impetus of myths. Yet both are never finally excluded from his work, but instead constantly inform his writing in terms of form, mood and image. Indeed, the stories have always been connected to the poetry in Bowles's mind because 'when I write a story I think more or less the same way as if I were writing a poem. It's quite different from writing a novel.' When he began to write a novel he had to approach it in a new way, but without losing the energy and excitement of his stories. What Bowles wanted to capture in his prose was 'the drama that follows living.' The movement from poetry and short stories to the novel is similar to that described by Ted Hughes about the work of Vasko Popa who moved 'from literary surrealism to the far older and deeper thing, the surrealism of folklore.' Popa did this because the former style was always at 'an extreme remove from the business of living under practical difficulties.' Bowles felt a similar need and went even further by shifting away from folklore or mythic surrealism in order to explore the 'business of living' in an accessible and immediate way.

Whereas the stories are often 'emotional outbursts' or brief glimpses at human dilemmas, Bowles used the novel form to penetrate more deeply into the minds of his characters and into the society that they represented. Bowles has always felt that the best way to express his ideas is through a clear language and an accessible narrative structure. 'Language is a tool for the expression of ideas...But nothing can happen until the ideas have got across; for that only the clearest language will work.' He dislikes post-modern American fiction because it's 'very difficult to get into...[and] it's too much to have to swim around in that purely literary magma for the time it takes to read a whole book.' His own fiction had to sustain the readers' interest and be authentic in its representation of characters and ideas. Again, attacking recent fiction Bowles has said 'the content is hard to make out because it's generally
symbolic or allegorical, and the style is generally hermetic. It's not a novelistic style at all...'.

For Bowles, the 'novelistic style' could not be hermetic because he wanted his ideas to reach everyone who read it, so that he could be a 'propagandist'. What good is propaganda that people cannot understand? For this reason his novels are not abstract and generally use conventional narrative, but never in order to reflect an orderly concept of reality. In fact, Bowles felt 'the best way to attack, of course, is to seem not to be attacking', and this meant adopting a style which would appear to be conventional, but which opened up the readers to new experiences and challenged old beliefs, without alienating them from the text. Bowles is fully aware that

Realism, as an artistic practice, confirms the dominant ideas of what constitutes this outside reality, by pulling it into place, organizing and framing it through the unities of the text. So to avoid this confirming realism, Bowles is careful to use the power of dislocation in his fiction so that the action takes place in an environment distant from any fixed, recognisable 'reality', where characters are exposed outside any established 'frame' of ideas. His choice of landscapes and cultures allow him a kind of artistic freedom to maintain a clarity of expression whilst exploring human consciousness in great depth.

Bowles's primary concern is to make this expression 'real' for his readers and he will use any method in order to achieve this. In terms of The Sheltering Sky this meant writing it 'consciously up to a certain point, and after that let it take its own course...[using] a surrealist technique - simply writing without any thought...'. Yet he was still fully aware of an overall shape and direction he wanted from his novel, since as he has said 'everything in the book was intentional, but not reasoned (I knew what I wanted, but not why I wanted it.)'. His later novels continued to combine, in varying degrees, the real and surreal, but always with one particular thought in mind: 'to produce a tale that
would hold the attention'. The direction his writing took still owed a great deal to his experiments with Surrealism and myths, but he was forging his own style of fiction which had the power to both disturb established patterns of reality and in doing so, to open up alternative perceptions of the world.

The first of Bowles's novels examines two characters, Port and Kit Moresby who are caught in a seemingly perpetual escape from themselves and their culture, which 'has destroyed the whole world'. The journey, as in the stories, reveals the nature of their complex psychological conditions - and as they move further from the systems of social order which anchor their lives, their own disintegration accelerates. Early on Port expresses his disgust at the society they are trying to escape:

Everything's getting gray, and it'll be grayer. But some places'll withstand the malady longer than you think. You'll see, in the Sahara here... (SS,16).

He expresses familiar views about Western culture's decline and its poisonous influence in the world, but believes it can be avoided in places distant from it, like the Sahara. The Moresbys have successfully kept 'as far as possible from the places which had been touched by the war', because they see it as 'one facet of the mechanized age'(SS,14), and believe they can continue to do so. However, as the novel shows, the problems are not so easy to escape from, for people carry within them the very dilemmas they think they can evade. The deeper the Moresbys go into the vast emptiness of the Sahara the more exposed their inner selves become. As Port plunges inevitably towards his death he realises 'he carried the obstacle within him'(SS,168) and that it was not something he could continue to avoid. Once Kit Moresby has seen herself for what she really is at the end of the novel her only course of action is to continue to run away from both herself and the society from which she has come.

Bowles has said the novel is about 'what the desert can do to us'
and that it is 'the protagonist'. Its vast emptiness offers no solutions to Port, but rather intensifies, like a mirror, his own inner vacuum. As W.H. Auden has observed the desert is either a place of exile or where 'one chooses to withdraw from the city in order to be alone...in a period of self-examination and purification'. It is a place with 'the absence of limitations' which allows man to see himself as free there, beyond community, law and institutions. But as Port discovers, to be absent from limitations is not to be free because deserts 'are also lonely places of alienation' where 'nothing moves and...everything is surface and exposed'. The desert's glaring power is to expose those who enter it - its light and heat lay bare the most complex systems; as Bowles writes, it was 'too parched to shelter even the locusts' (SS, 75). As Tunner thinks in the novel,

> It was too powerful an entity not to lend itself to personification. The desert - its very silence was like a tacit admission of the half-conscious presence it harbored (SS, 251),

and as d'Armagnac tells him, 'all your philosophic systems crumble. At every turn one finds the unexpected' (SS, 252).

Port's journey is based upon an illusory belief that escaping the city, America and the Present will permit him to find some comfort or 'repose'. As he sits alone with an 'unpleasant tension inside him' (SS, 57), thinking of the 'sadness inherent in all deracinated things' (SS, 57) he believes

> the happiness, if there still was any, existed elsewhere:...beyond the mountains in the great Sahara, in the endless regions that were all of Africa. But not here...(SS, 57).

Port can find no repose where he is because his source of tension is inside him. Escape into the Sahara cannot lead him to any discovery or new vision, but only to the ultimate point of vulnerability where the source of his anxiety - his self - is destroyed. As Bowles told Jay Laughlin, *The Sheltering Sky*

> is an adventure story...on two planes simultaneously: in the actual desert, and in the inner desert of the spirit... the journey must continue - there is no oasis in which one can remain. 16
The relentlessness of the journey is captured in the Moresby's drive inward.

On the journey to Ain Krorfa, 'into regions he did not know', Port expresses the significance of the desert.

At each successive moment he was deeper into the Sahara than he had been the moment before, that he was leaving behind all familiar things, this constant consideration kept him in a state of pleasurable agitation (SS, 109).

It is the urge to leave the familiar behind which appeals to Port and to be a 'pioneer' (SS,108) like his great-grandparents who left Europe to discover America. In his memory Port holds an ideal of a life of freedom and purpose which he is trying to rediscover in the wilderness of North Africa. Ironically, as D.H. Lawrence reminds us, 'they came largely to get away...away from themselves. Away from everything...To get away from everything they are and have been.' Port is closer to his ancestors than he imagines but not through the idealistic myth he has of them but through a similar desire to escape. Underlying this is the real irony, which again Lawrence points out so well -

it isn't freedom. Rather the reverse. A hopeless sort of constraint. It is never freedom till you find something you really positively want to be. 17

This illusory quest for freedom is the aim of the Moresbys, who as Americans seem to wish to re-escape to a new land in which they can find what Bowles has called a 'lost childhood'. But, as Lawrence points out, freedom has to be a positive act and cannot just be an evasion. For the Moresbys, like all Bowles's characters, carry their culture within them and their minds house the reality of what has to be confronted. As Bowles told Daniel Halpern,

characters set in motion a mechanism of which they become a victim. But generally the mechanism turns out to have been operative at the very beginning. 18

For the Moresbys this 'mechanism' is their own individual inner turmoil and self-disgust.

Travelling, therefore, becomes an effort to escape the 'mechanism',
but Port is still 'unable to break out of the cage into which he had shut himself...' (SS, 100) and so is still trapped by the illusion that to move on is to seek freedom. Heidegger recognised this as a sign of modern man's emptiness and termed it 'uninhabited hustle', which George Steiner translates as 'frenetic inertia', suggesting the way man flails about emptily, appearing busy but going nowhere inside. 19

Port's urge to be touched 'by solitude and the proximity to infinite things' (SS, 100) is still an evasion of his self, for as Lawrence has written,

men are free when they are in a living homeland, not when they are straying and breaking away...obeying some deep, inward voice...when they belong to a living organic, believing community...not when they are escaping to some wild west.... 20

Port remains homeless and searching, 'belonging no more to one place than to the next' (SS, 14), a malady at the heart of the novel and developed from ideas already revealed in some of Bowles's stories, especially 'A Distant Episode'. Bowles has said the novel 'was a workingout of the professor's story...the same story retold; it described the same process in other terms'. 21

Port is radically alienated from both people and place, feeling no relationship to either. They exist merely as objects around him:

Humanity is everyone but one's self. So of what interest can it possibly be to anybody?...You're never humanity; you're only your own poor hopelessly isolated self (SS, 95).

He has taken this 'isolated self' and built his life around it, layer upon layer to protect himself from the intrusions of involvement. Governed by his reason only, Port is constantly examining his own situation and relating it to an ideal standard that he can never hope to attain. Unable to discover this ideal, he has only himself and he feels

alone, abandoned, lost, hopeless, cold. Cold especially - a deep interior cold nothing could change. Although it was the basis of his unhappiness, this glacial deadness, he would cling to it always, because it was also the core of his being; he had built the being around it (SS, 140-141).

His self is built upon a terrible deceit and pretence which protects his
real profound unhappiness. He is like the sheltering sky hiding its emptiness behind, but all the time imprisoning himself in an elaborate cage of lies.

At the beginning of the novel Port recalls a dream he has had about a train journey on which he has the choice to re-live his life. He wants to do this but realises 'it was too late, because while I'd been thinking "No!" I'd reached up and snapped off my incisors' (SS, 18). The dream is very revealing about the novel, since it suggests the journey to come, but more importantly, Port's particular dilemma. His unsatisfactory life looks back, subconsciously, to a time when things were different - 'the way it used to smell when I was a kid' (SS, 18) - his childhood. Unable to reach any feeling of fulfilment as an adult, Port is attracted by a regressive movement back into childhood where he had less of the responsibilities and anxieties he has as an adult. The dream suggests Port's obsession with thinking to the point where it prevents him reliving imaginatively his life again and all that remains is a frightening Freudian image of impotence. Port is made impotent by thought since it prevents him responding to his feelings and so excludes him from the possibility of renewed hope.

When Port himself reviews the dream he exhibits just these rational powers which stifle his existence since he tries to 'solve' the dream, explain it away until it cannot disrupt 'the core of his being'. Port convinces himself that 'he had long since come to deny all purpose to the phenomenon of existence - it was more expedient and comforting' (SS, 75). The dream becomes 'a little problem' he was 'pleased to solve' (SS, 75). This is typical of Port's self-evasion, for as Bowles has said,

Dreams do clarify your life completely...they tell you much more than anything else could possibly tell you, about what you really want and how much you're willing to sacrifice to have it and what it entails, you know, to help you decide and cut everything else out. Only a dream can tell you that, it seems to me. 23

But Port is unwilling to risk such a revelation and prefers to exist on
the outside of everything protecting his isolated self from all around it.

The dream which Port tries to dismiss here also suggests his belief that fate can be chosen. He says at one point, 'I was thinking that if I wanted to, I could live over again...' (SS, 17). The existential idea that Man creates his own fate, although attractive, may stem from the very kind of arrogant rationalism that Port exemplifies in the novel. Bowles, unhappy about the label of 'existentialist' given to him by many early critics, has said in relation to *The Sheltering Sky* that 'Sartrean Existentialism seemed too positive a stance; I had to make it real for me by tempering it with fatalism...'.24 Fate is not chosen, for it is connected with the past and with memory - as Mallea's epigraph suggests - and Man is not master of his fate, as an earlier epigraph25 put it. What Port discovers during his journey is that although he can employ his maps and technology to direct his actual route, his fate is tied to more illus-ive concepts, uncontrolled by reason and the scientific mind. One of the novel's great ironies is that the vagaries of chance play such a part in Port's eventual fate. His diseased physical decline typifies this for it is something over which he has no control whatsoever. Bowles has said:

You don't make a choice. You follow a scent...If you stop to make a choice you lose track of the scent and then you're lost. You can see how that can be. The unconscious is the only thing there is to trust in....26

All Port's trust is in his power of reason and he ignores the unconscious, as he does in this dream and in his wife's atavism, and the cost is his own life.

Port's extreme egoism is maintained by existing in a 'cage into which he had shut himself...to save himself from love (SS, 100) and all other external forces. However, as Paul Tillich has written, the individual 'is self only because it has a world, a structured universe, to which it belongs and from which it is separated at the same time'.27 But Port denies any connection to the world; 'My world's not humanity's world. It's
the world as I see it' (SS, 95). He rejects all 'relative values' and sees the only way of coping with life is 'to refuse participation in it' (SS, 74). He has no true relationship to his wife Kit, for love must be a sharing of being and a commitment which he is incapable of. Similarly there is no sexual contact between them in the novel since "ecstasy" is "existence", the going out of oneself. In the sexual relation the individual goes out from himself to the other in a unity of being-with-the-other. Whenever Port needs sex it has to be detached and without responsibility in a situation where he can preserve his own self totally, because above all he 'dreads the emotional responsibilities [love] [will] entail' (SS, 105).

Thus his relationship to Kit is detached and she exists as a means of supporting his failing sense of purpose. Unable to offer love to her, he offers a kind of rational presence which balances out her emotive existence and which gives him, at least, some sense of being alive. When he awakes from his non-being of dream, it is Kit who provides him with some semblance of location in an otherwise alien environment:

In the next room he could hear his wife stepping about in her mules ...this sound now comforted him...[because] mere certitude of being alive was not sufficient (SS, 11).

She is the only thing that gives pattern to Port's existence but 'she relied on him utterly' (SS, 83), and so, despite his urge towards the emptiness of the Sahara, there is a faint hope of a renewal of love. She would 'become whatever he wanted her to become' (SS, 100) if it would bring them closer together, in fact, she believes, 'if she were able to become as he was, [he] could...find his way back to love' (SS, 100). But even this malleability in Kit, a willingness to dissolve herself into her husband, is not truly possible since it would involve an invasion of Port's isolated self. He has shut everyone out to preserve his ego and even when he admits that 'he had...a definite desire to strengthen the sentimental bonds between them' (SS, 105) he cannot act upon it.
Once again it is Port’s fear of commitment which prevents any bonds being formed.

At times he said to himself that subconsciously he had had that in mind when he had conceived this expedition... into the unknown; it was only at the last minute that Tunner had been asked to come along, and perhaps that too had been subconsciously motivated, but out of fear; for much as he feared the rapprochement, he knew that also he dreaded the emotional responsibilities it would entail (SS, 105).

Port’s existence has become like the sky which dominates the novel, 'a solid thing up there, protecting us from what's behind' (SS, 101), except he is protecting himself and Kit from all that appears to threaten them. To the man whose ego is everything and who wants to have knowledge of the world and always be in control of his life, the immense threat is the dark possibility that he might not be of any significance. The 'nothing... darkness. Absolute night' that Port believes exists behind the sky is the tantalizing knowledge he desires from his journey. He is like Poe’s characters tormented by a desire to know the unknowable and in so doing deny 'the very life that is in them; they want to turn it all into talk, into knowing. And so life, which will not be known, leaves them.'

Port is keen to control Kit’s active unconscious because he connects it with the forces which exist behind the sky. But his cold treatment of her only intensifies and widens the distance between them so that 'their respective aims in life were almost diametrically opposed' (SS, 100). He says,

I hate cold countries, and love the warm ones, where there's no winter, and when night comes you feel an opening up of the life there, instead of a closing down,

but Kit cannot agree with this for she says,

I'm not sure I don't feel that it's wrong to try to escape the night and winter, and that if you do you'll have to pay for it somehow (SS, 99).

As Bowles has said, woman is the 'stronghold of atavisms... in touch with what Jung calls the 'night mind', as opposed to the individual subconscious, which can go no farther back than conception'.

Port wants to control these forces of 'night and winter', what Edgar Allan Poe calls the abyss
or Jung the 'night mind', because he fears its power to overwhelm his isolated self. Just as Kit warns that 'you'll...pay...somehow', so does Jung for 'he must learn that he may not do exactly as he wills. If he does not learn this, his own nature will destroy him.'

Despite his final dissolution, Port constantly tries to shield himself from 'night and winter' by using reason to justify his own isolated, cold self just as he had with his earlier dream. At one point he is 'unaccountably nervous' and so 'he set himself the task of tracing it to its source' (SS,130), a typically scientific, rational approach. He traces it to the fact that everything depended on him. He could make the right gesture, or the wrong one, but he could not know beforehand which was which...reason could not be counted on in such situations (SS,130).

Confronted with a dilemma involving choice and responsibility Port is anxious for there existed 'an extra element, mysterious and not quite within reach'. For the man of reason whose world is carefully constructed to forbid the unknown this is potentially shattering since he 'had to know, not deduce' in order to maintain security. The only way he can overcome the fear 'of his own ignorance' is to rationalise and 'conceive a situation for himself in which that ignorance had no importance' (SS,131). Whenever he feels his self threatened by forces outside of his control, either reason or a retreat from those forces is employed to protect him:

Whenever the thread of his consciousness had unwound too far and got tangled, a little solitude could wind it quickly back (SS,131).

But the further he plunges into his interior the more difficult it is to hold his protected self together. It is like

a baseball player winding up, getting ready to pitch. And he [Port] was the ball. Around and around he went, then he was flung into space for a while, dissolving in flight (SS,200).

Port fears being unravelled and yet continues to move into the interior because he is fascinated by the possibility of knowing what lies behind the Sheltering Sky, and within himself. It is what Poe called 'the Imp
of the Perverse', when 'we act, for the reason that we should not...

Our first impulse is to shrink from the danger. Unaccountable we remain' on the edge of the abyss, longing to feel annihilation totally. It's the desire to surrender the self for some 'never-to-be imparted secret, whose attainment is destruction.'

Yet set against this desire for release is his fear of having to face the elements of his own self that he has left hidden for so long. It is the desert's power that it forces him, through its disintegrative energy, to admit the 'other' into his life.

He knew how things could stand bare, their essence having retreated on all sides to beyond the horizon, as if impelled by a sinister centrifugal force. He did not want to face the intense sky, too blue to be real... he could not bring them into any focus... So he would not look at them (SS, 160-1).

Port cannot confront himself 'standing bare' because it would mean coming face to face with his own centre, his 'core of sadness', which for so long he has taken for granted and built his life around. If he cannot bring it under his control ('focus') he simply retreats from it and refuses to 'look'. This egotistical detachment from the world makes him an outsider in life. Indeed both he and Kit exist on the edge of existence because he is afraid of the unknown and the idea that his reason cannot control his own destiny, while she fears the overwhelming presence of atavistic, unconscious forces dominating her fragile life. They amount to a similar dilemma viewed from different viewpoints, as Port himself recognises,

'we're both afraid of the same thing. And for the same reason. We've never managed... to get all the way into life. We're hanging on to the outside for all we're worth, convinced we're going to fall off at the next bump (SS, 101).

They are like voyeurs observing others rather than participating themselves. They watch as 'a venerable Arab prays and Kit wonders 'Do you think we should watch like this?' (SS, 101) and later she feels 'life was suddenly there, she was in it, not looking through the window at it' (SS, 247).
Port too exhibits a certain voyeurism as he 'watched fascinated as always by the sight of a human being brought down to the importance of an automaton or a caricature' (SS,54). He is divorced from the world and looking on with a deluded sense of superiority stemming only from his extreme isolation.

As Port is gradually destroyed and moves closer to the 'centre', the imagery of sight is used, as elsewhere in the novel, to highlight Port's condition. Here it indicates the closing of the gap between his detached view and what actually is. Waking into his final vision, Port 'had a moment of vertiginous clarity...where the connection between each thing and the next had been cut' (SS,227). Yet his mind still struggles to divide him from the world, and seeks 'the thought in itself' (SS,227). Voyeurism separates the watcher from the activity itself, encases the watcher in thought alone, but ultimately depends on distance and alienation. As Port dies what disintegrates is division of all kinds; distance dissolves into an undifferentiated whole.

Port's decline is prepared for in his night journeys or descents which epitomise the dual nature of his character - partly involved in a desperate search and partly trying to lose himself. In his first visit he is taken by Smail to see Marhnia, a young native girl and told the story about the girls who desired only to take 'tea in the Sahara'. O.B. Hardison has written that it is a 'prophecy of...the characters...being drawn to their destiny in spite of themselves [and] their conscious efforts to escape merely advance the process'.34 The girls' journey, like that of Moresby's, is a search, but because they are always moving to find the highest dune in the desert they merely move further into danger and eventual death. Their deaths come as a result of deceit in the sense that they believe they can see the highest dune whilst failing to see their gradual movement beyond safety. They are never fulfilled, but become
victims of their own quest, victims of themselves.

In so many ways this parallels and predicts the fate of the Moresbys whose feelings of dissatisfaction lead them further and further into an environment they are unfamiliar with and cannot control. This latter point is certainly central to Port's experience with his visit to Marhnia, for he wants sex without responsibility, but with total control. The girl appeals to him because she is 'docile' (SS,40) and silent and can be controlled through the purely economic nature of their liaison. Port's power comes from the money he has to bargain with, but when she tries to steal his wallet he feels threatened, almost as if his strength is being challenged. No longer in control, he is forced to run away; he 'yanked...stumbled...rushed' as his reason and control are disrupted and he is forced to act instinctually. This moment prefigures his later and final movement when he can no longer maintain even an illusion of control under the sheltering sky.

In Port's second night journey, which concludes Book One, he is again obsessed by a young girl; 'strangely detached, somnambulistic' with 'impersonal disdain in the unseeing eyes' (SS,137). She resembles a 'mask' to the extent that 'what emotion lay behind the face...was impossible to tell', and Port is attracted to her. The fact that she is blind does not change his view, because she seems to be even more like Port himself - enclosed within her own dark world. This forms part of the blindness/sight motif within the novel since he too is blind in his refusal to see beyond his own isolated self and the girl's similar condition 'without eyes to see beyond the bed' (SS,140) and so 'she would have been completely there, a prisoner'. Port could be in control: 'he thought of the little games he would have played with her' and 'of the countless ways he could have made her grateful to him' (SS,140).

This scene is a perfect contrast to his inability to have any relat-
relationship with his own wife who ironically is characterised by 'the intensity of her gaze' to the extent that 'once one had seen her eyes, the rest of her face grew vague...only the piercing, questioning violence of the wide eyes remained' (SS, 15). Later Port returns to a solitary place alone because Kit 'would not understand...or perhaps...she would understand it too well' (SS, 103). It is as if Kit can see into him, or that he fears the very atavism that her eyes reveal with their 'piercing, questioning' of his sheltered self. He would rather avoid Kit because her nature may expose him to the very things he has tried to shut out of his life. Instead he sees submission, service and gratitude in the blind girl as the components of an ideal love, since when he cannot have her he thinks 'that he had lost love itself' (SS, 140). Port rejects Kit's love and had 'shut himself' into a 'cage he had built long ago to save himself from love'(SS, 100) because as Aristophanes said, 'love is simply the name for the desire and pursuit of the whole. In finding a lover a man was therefore discovering the other side of himself...'. For Port this 'other side' is exactly what he must consciously control and so he turns instead to prostitutes like Marhnia or the blind girl who he aims to dominate and control on his terms. One means to achieve this, as we have already shown, is through money. Like the Professor in 'A Distant Episode' and Norton in 'Pages from Cold Point', Port uses money to protect himself and enable him to escape a 'mechanized age' he dislikes. Bowles tells us that Port, 'since the death of his father...no longer worked at anything, because it was not necessary' (SS, 199), and this is a further part of his malaise. Deprived of the ability to love and the need to work both 'rooted in the integration and strength of the total personality', Port is further removed from a true authentic relationship to the world and his self. Erich Fromm defines this work as not work as a compulsive activity in order to escape aloneness, not work as a relationship to nature which is partly one of dominating her, partly one of worship of and enslavement by the very products
of man's hands, but work as creation in which man becomes one with nature in the act of creation. 38

Without these two principal forces within this life, and with no sense of belonging to a place or to a culture, Port is forced back into his own loneliness and anxiety. In all his actions Port resembles a man seeking protection from anxiety, as defined by Karen Horney. He secures 'affection in any form [prostitution]' with the belief that 'if you love me you will not hurt me', even though the nature of the 'love' is purely an economic contract. He seeks power because 'if I have power, no one can hurt me' and 'he wants nothing to happen that he has not initiated or approved of...[since] everything falling short of complete domination is felt as subjugation'. 39

Port's anxiety and alienation is best shown in the novel's opening scene. Port emerges from sleep, 'immersed in non-being' (SS,11) but it is as if he is being born. He emerges from a kind of pre-conscious security into a dislocated, alien environment where 'the room meant very little to him' (SS,11). The opening establishes a kind of pre-rational joy, similar to that of the womb's condition, from which Port is forced to emerge, like a child into the glaring light of life. Leaving the bliss of the dark, secure womb the individual is cast into the world, the place where Port's 'infinite sadness' is dominant for it 'was reassuring, because it alone was familiar.' His only 'certitude' is the 'sadness at the core of his consciousness' (SS,11) which he carries around eternally inside him, unable to evade. He lacks the 'energy' and 'desire' to do anything about it and instead lives with the sadness, rationalising and justifying it. Bowles symbolises Port's psychological state in the room where he is trapped with its 'huge apathetic designs stencilled in indifferent colours' behind the 'closed window...'. He is enclosed in the room, as he is within his own self, as his own self is within the sheltering sky, and his only hope lies in the future. Bowles reveals it as a series of possibilities and procrast-
inations; 'Later he would climb down... would remember his dream... there would be air...' (SS, 12). Port's search is to where 'the dream would be': literally a recollection of his own dream and figuratively the potential dream of a new existence. His journey in the novel, which begins with this jolt into the waking world, is characterised by this tension between his future, with all its inherent risks, and a retreat into an imagined unity. Erich Fromm defines it in terms of birth:

Each step into his new human existence is frightening. It always means to give up a secure state, which was relatively known, for one which is new, which one has not yet mastered... We are never free from two conflicting tendencies: one to emerge from the womb, from the animal form of existence into a more human existence, from bondage to freedom; another, to return to the womb, to nature, to certainty and security. 40

As Port journeys deeper into his own emptiness he sees his own inability to sustain any happiness or achieve any 'freedom' and so his dominant desire is to re-enter the womb. 41 When he asks himself what he wants He was not sure, but he thought it was merely to sit quietly in a warm, interior place for a long time (SS, 159).

His journey to the 'interior' becomes identified with a drive back to the only contentment he has ever known, in the womb. In the mind of Port the extreme push beyond the sheltering sky is seen as a desirable end which will relieve him of the burden of consciousness by allowing him to return to the womb where

we are imbued with that instinctual knowledge of our own past, our own beginnings, the state of unity toward which we ever after yearn. But to attain that state after being banished from it by our birth - this is to court, to seek, to embrace destruction. The life in which we seek that unity is by its nature incompatible with the unity we seek, and to gain the one we must forfeit the other, either way. 42

Port's desire to lose his troubled self is related to an idealistic view of the past through his pioneering ancestors (as we have seen), and even more so to a memory of childhood. Like many of Bowles's characters, Port associates childhood with an idyllic time when the self had not been crushed by the world. In one of his revealing dreams Port explains that all life's pains would be worth suffering again 'just to
smell the spring the way it used to smell when I was a kid' (SS, 18). As the journey advances Port regresses with both Kit and Armignac referring to him as an 'adolescent' (SS, 97, 156) and Port himself seeking out the company of submissive young girls. He also avoids a series of older men in the novel who all suggest possible fathers and seeks instead the comfort of 'a plump, middle-aged matron' (SS, 142) - clearly a mother substitute. Indeed, as Port grows weaker he relies more on the atavistic presence of Kit, who begins to resemble a mother rather than a wife. At one point he says 'you don't have to talk to me as if I were a child' (SS, 203), and later, as he is dying, she 'watched his lips opening and shutting against her knuckles, and felt the hot breath on her fingers' (SS, 217), as if he is a baby feeding at her breast. But Port is connected to Daoud Zozeph's dead baby, whose milk he drinks (SS, 213), and his regression is related to destruction rather than creation.

In fact Port exhibits elements of 'uroboric incest' as defined by Erich Neumann, in which man desires reentry to the mother and to be 'dissolved and absorbed...into the pleroma'. Port desires psychologically what Eric Lyle, who so obviously disgusts him, achieves in his physical incest with his mother. Such a retreat, whether psychological or physical, indicates a retreat from responsibility and a desire to extinguish consciousness.

The Great Mother takes the little child back into herself and always over urobic incest there stands the insignia of death, signifying final dissolution in union with the Mother. As Port plunges into that which he has seen as sheltering - the sky - he seeks to reenter the Mother, since anything big and embracing which contains, surrounds, enwraps, shelters, preserves and nourishes anything small, belongs to the primordial matriarchal realm. Only here 'before the formation of the ego...in the time of existence in Paradise where the psyche has her preworldly abode' and where 'there is no time...only eternity...no space, only infinity', can Port find the
'silences and emptinesses' and the 'proximity to infinite things' (SS,100) that he desires. But as Daniel Hoffman has said, to attain that state of being is to embrace destruction since 'the life in which we seek that unity is by its nature incompatible with the unity we seek'. 48 Port's conscious effort to grasp this final comfort comes as he 'stopped being human' (SS,214) and is totally submerged, becoming 'a tiny, defenseless speck, enveloped and helplessly dependent, a little island floating on the vast expanse of the primal ocean'. 49 In the final death visions he is allowed a glimpse of his 'core', the self he had sheltered for so long.

He followed the course of thoughts because he was tied on behind. Often the way was vertiginous, but he could not let go...it was always new territory and the peril increased constantly (SS,222). He is 'whirling down his own dark halls towards chaos' (SS,217), at last seeing inside himself and then 'he opened his eyes and saw what was really there, and knew where he really was' (SS,221). He is seeing two selves, the 'false' and the 'true', as he calls them - the former dominates; 'gigantic, painful, raw and false, it extended from one side of creation to the other... it was everywhere' (SS,222). Against this all-encompassing falsity exists a 'true' self like a 'tiny, burning black point...' (SS,222). This suggest Port's existence built upon a false, self-deceiving background with only a tiny, true self struggling to exist.

What Port is really seeing is the insignificance of any self in relation to the immensity of nature: 'it was an existence of exile from the world' (SS,222). As his ego-bound self continues to disintegrate he tries to cling to familiar means of escape:

It seemed to him that here was an untried variety of thinking, in which there was no necessity for a relationship with life.'The thought in itself'... (SS,227).

But thought is useless now - reason can no longer rescue Port. All certainty is gone, but he still desires some security.

To stay behind. To overflow, take root in what would stay here. A centipede can, cut into pieces. Each part can walk by itself. Still more each leg flexes, lying alone on the floor (SS,227).
Like the insect, Port is disintegrating, but he cannot continue to exist. Everywhere his final vision is of a destructive fragmentation: 'clusters of round spots...Lighter agglomerations, darker masses...expanding globules of matter' (SS, 228). Even his hearing is divided into two screams which move closer until 'the difference was the edge of a razor blade, poised against the tips of each finger. The fingers were to be sliced longitudinally' (SS, 228). The Surrealist image recalls the title of Book Two, 'The Earth's Sharp Edge' and associates the interior and exterior worlds together in Port's death.

As the end beckons he sees existence is 'unmodifiable, not to be questioned' (SS, 223) and that his cherished distance has been closed down until he 'was no longer wholly outside in the open, no longer able to consider the idea at a distance' (SS, 227). The world is now immediate, as with the Professor in 'A Distant Episode', and cannot be evaded. It actually invades his body, 'the metal pinning him to the stone' (SS, 232), in a terrifying immobility so that 'the pain was all of existence at that moment'. Bowles has opened him up to the world until 'his bleeding entrails [were] open to the sky' (SS, 232) and his inner core is revealed. Characteristically Port tries to run but he cannot escape now since there was 'never a door, never the final opening'. As ever he tries to protect himself - 'holding his hands over his abdomen to protect the gaping hole there' and looks to the sky itself for ultimate protection - 'the thin sky 'split' revealing 'what he never had doubted lay behind' (SS, 233).

In his final vision Port reaches out for the possibility of 'repose' through annihilation in the darkness beyond the sky, in the zero point 'without time or space, the condition of entropy...with no separation of objects...no chronology...a timelessness...'. Here the organic and inorganic meet - 'a raw bright blood on the earth' (SS, 235) - and all Port's certainties are dissolved to emphasise 'the human self and self consciousness are not the centre...man is only a privileged listener and respondent to existence'.

50

51
Port's disintegration acts out Bowles's warning that a Westerner who aims to lose himself in an archaic culture is following a 'romantic desire' which is 'disastrous' (see epigraph). It is the dream of 'a region of self-negation and...regaining a state of innocence', whose attainment is impossible. Port's escape and quest is an effort to find some meaning and to deny the possibility of life's limitations. However, the journey commits him to a confrontation with everything he has sought to deny; the unconscious, uncontrolled fate, anxiety and death. Man cannot delude himself about his unlimited power and status, as Bowles has written:

one must accept one's own limitations as one accepts life and death, pain and pleasure...Resistance cripples. 53

Port cannot accept his limitations and so tries to push beyond the sheltering sky, only to be destroyed by the very act of trying. Port is a 'complicated animal' longing for whatever he 'cannot know and...cannot even have meaning'. He is constantly searching and so is 'by nature condemned to live in the imaginary and the unfinishable'. 54 Port tells Kit

Death is always on the way, but the fact that you don't know when it will arrive seems to take away from the finiteness of life...But because we don't know, we get to think of life as an inexhaustible well...it all seems limitless (SS,238).

The novel dramatizes the disintegration of these ideas in the character of Port Moresby and demonstrates Bowles's growing sense of man's arrogance and stupidity. Bowles has said that 'it was not the characters in the fiction that were to be purified; they were already victims. The world itself would be purified if man no longer existed.' 55 Port's delusions represent those of the age and society that produced him and it is against them that Bowles levels his attack. A terrible human arrogance dwells in Port and in the world he inhabits and Bowles roots it in his body which is slowly and terrifyingly destroyed in the final moments of chapter twenty-three until 'the two elements, blood and excrement, long kept apart, merge' (SS,235). Everything merges; waste
with life-giving blood, until all Port's order and all his taboos are broken in the shattering of his self.

The interior corruption at the centre of Port Moresby's life is reflected and amplified through the characters of the Lyles who drift in and out of the novel. When Bowles said 'I am writing about disease ...because I am writing about today' he was using the idea to suggest forms of corruption which he saw afflicting society. The Lyles, like Miss Ferry at the end of the novel, epitomise the worst elements of a humanity which Bowles saw as uncaring and destructive.

Both mother and son are sinister people; she is 'large, sallow-skinned', with 'fiery' hair and 'the glassy black eyes of a doll' (SS,53) and he is a 'filthy toad' who looked like 'a young Vacher...who wandered across France slicing children into pieces' (SS,53-4). Eric, obsessed by hygiene, is ironically riddled by disease and takes a 'ghoulish pleasure...in describing...dead bodies' (SS,59). These characteristics highlight their repulsiveness, but Bowles wants them to be more than just 'monsters'(SS,64). They represent a corrupt family structure in which Eric depends on his mother for money: 'He's never done a day's work in his life. I have to pay all his bills' (SS,70), and in return he provides companionship, even to the point of incest: 'he pretended the woman was his mother...but I caught them together' (SS,143). The circularity of their lives is a form of protection to keep out others, who they regard as 'a stinking, low race of people' (SS,71), but is also an imprisoning enclosure. It is a corrupt, diseased enclosure maintained out of 'fear...[and] greed' (SS,91) in a vain effort to achieve some human contact in a world they find eternally isolating.

Her life had been devoid of personal contacts, and she needed them. Thus she manufactured them as best she could; each fight was an abortive attempt at establishing some kind of human relationship... [Port] decided she was the loneliest woman he had ever met...(SS,73-4).
This inwardness, corruption and isolated desperation typifies the Lyles who drift aimlessly through a land which they claim to hate as 'filthy' and degenerate, and yet which offers them at least some relief from their own inner loneliness and despair. They are the extreme extension of the Moresbys' journey and represent in microcosm the kind of society that Bowles developed and examined more in *Let It Come Down*. 56

Eric Lyle is connected to Port in the story through a mutual love of maps (SS,60) and by the fact that he actually steals Port's passport. This taking of Port's identity comes at the point where he is making his final plunge into the interior. Eric has never broken away from his mother and so remains dependent on her for everything. It is as if he has never left the womb. He represents, in the symbolic structure of the novel, the danger inherent in Port's final yearning for dissolution or regression to prenatal security. The self has to find its place in the world - balanced between reason and atavism, but it cannot exist in 'bad faith', shirking the responsibilities of living, even if these are unpleasant. Eric tries to and as a result exists in an inhuman limbo - a 'monster...toad' who 'disgusted Tunner 'so deeply' that 'he could hardly bring himself to look at him or touch his hand' (SS,259). In stealing Port's identity (his passport) it is as if the two have merged, with Port becoming as corrupt as Eric Lyle, suggesting Bowles's theme of social and individual corruption.

The body's integrity is the foundation for our sense of order and wholeness. When we sicken, so it seems does the world...The body is our most intimate cosmos, a system whose harmony is felt rather than merely perceived with the mind. Threaten the body, and our whole being revolts. 57

Just as Lyle must be exorcised by the violence of Tunner at the end of the novel, so must Port be through his own disintegration and death.

When Port dies he can no longer bolster his wife's existence and so she enters a new phase in her own life in which she must live with her
own mind and make her own choices. But she has a 'subconscious wish to be dominated, to be released from responsibility, to be destroyed without dying, to move past the world of consciousness into whatever lies behind the sheltering sky'.

To exist without Port unleashes the full force of her dread and makes the burden of consciousness too much for her to bear. Kit's final journey is a further escape from this burden into the extremes of sexual possession and insanity, where all choices are negated. The war within her 'between reason and atavism' (SS, 44) was held in check by the presence of Port, but without him she moves further away from any sense of stability.

Whereas Port tries to be directed precisely by the maps he cherishes, Kit looks on them 'with amusement and exasperation' because 'maps bored her' (SS, 13). She is governed by intuitions and instincts which do not respond to such rational direction, but seem to exist beyond her control. Despite her substantial difference from Port she offers him a strange kind of security since he can contain her inner fears and stabilise her life. Even when he 'abandoned himself' (SS, 24) to his night journeys, he kept 'a faint vision...[in] his mind' of Kit because

the validity of his existence at that moment was predicated on the assumption that she had not moved...it was, if only she knew when he would turn around and walk the other way (SS, 24).

In a world of shifting values and situations, Kit provides Port with a curious location, enabling him to feel he has a purpose and point to his existence. Bowles ties them together in a mysterious, symbiotic way, as he later did with the Slades in Up Above the World, both through the novel's action and its narrative structure. For example, when Port recounts his dream at the café he recalls the 'terrible dream sobs that shake you like an earthquake' (SS, 18), and as he finishes, Bowles comments that Kit 'was crying' too. His dream becomes objectified in her reality. Later on, after Port's visit to Marhnia, Bowles parallels chapter one's waking of Port with that of Kit. Just as he had 'stumbled noisily' to escape Marhnia (SS, 40), so Kit 'stumbled up' (SS, 43) and seems to super-
naturally respond to his chaos with her feeling of 'doom hanging over her head like a low rain cloud' (SS, 43). She acts out the extremes of all Port is lacking: replacing his cold rationality with an acute and sensitive response to a 'system of omens'. 'The struggle that raged in her - the war between reason and atavism' (SS, 44) is a war which she tries to win by 'imitating mechanically what she considered rational behaviour' or by being 'always the proponent of scientific method' (SS, 44). But Kit cannot suppress her unconscious nature, it is far too strong, and it surges into her everyday life until 'it was as if she had been stricken by a strange paralysis...her entire personality withdrew from sight: she had a haunted look' (SS, 44).

She exists in a false position, vainly trying to imitate rational behaviour and suppress a vital part of her self, like Port, but constantly finding her life impossible to manage in such a situation. Rather than face these feelings she tries to rationalise them into categories of omens, good and bad. Yet it is the omens which rule her until 'her entire personality withdrew' and she is simply 'haunted' by the presence of an authentic existence. Whereas Port wants only to control his life and that of others, as a means of bolstering his ego and his rationality, Kit is overwhelmed by her inability to balance her life between reason and atavism to the point that she exclaims, 'other people rule my life' (SS, 45). Her 'destiny' is not her own, for she has abandoned it to outside forces. She has denied her own self-determination and become reliant on the support of her husband: 'everything depended on him,...she was merely waiting for some unlikely caprice on his part...' (SS, 45). She later admits that 'a section of her consciousness annexed him as a buttress, so that she identified herself with him' (SS, 83) and 'she relied on him utterly'.

Her dream is 'the distant light of a possible miracle: he might return to her' (SS, 45). But she cannot act to bring this about, instead she believes in the idea of 'sitting tight, of being there' (SS, 46). Tragically,
but from a different perspective, Port is the same, caught up in his own world, unable to act to break out of it and achieve any real commitment. They are both caged selves, separated and distant, but still engaged in an elaborate search for a perfect solution to their neuroses. It is 'futile because the search forces the human to disintegrate, to become an inhuman or unhuman nothing.'

Whereas Port's dream of a complex train journey is quickly 'solved' by his dominant rational mind as merely 'an epitome of life' (SS, 74), for Kit it becomes a lived reality. Bowles's language emphasises the psychic turmoil of Kit:

the train shrieked and plunged into a tunnel. Kit hastily put the eggs into the basket and looked apprehensively at the window... she could feel it constricting her lungs (SS, 78).

She is overwhelmed by her sense of doom and without Port there to offer her the temporary comfort of his rational mind, she turns to Tunner who was 'very different from Port' (SS, 79). In him she finds 'the magic object which was going to save her' (SS, 79), but ironically her lack of judgement plunges her into a sexual surrender which prefigures her later surrender to Belquassim. Indeed earlier we are told that 'what at first sight might seem a propitious sign could easily be nothing more than a kind of bait to lure her into danger' (SS, 43). Just like her husband, Kit is caught up in an elaborate escape from herself which in reality only succeeds in pushing her further into danger and disintegration.

Theirs is a classic neurosis:

instead of seeing and accepting a challenge to change something within [they]... go on shifting the responsibility to the outside world and thereby escape facing [their] own motivations. 61

The terror of the dark night journey on the train isolates Kit from the 'buttress' Port has always provided and begins to examine the world behind her fragile protection. As she enters the fourth-class carriage Bowles confronts her with a microcosm of Arab life and 'for the first time she felt she was in a strange land' (SS, 84). All Western culture
is gone, as later in the novel, and she is thrust into the dislocation of the dark carriage, into a 'welter of amorphous bundles' (SS,84), finding a yellow louse on her neck and watching a native eating locusts. This subterranean experience culminates with a 'wild faced man holding a severed sheep's head...' (SS,85). This is not the Tourist world, but a real and extraordinary North Africa with an immediate and disturbing effect on Kit which cannot be rationalised away. It culminates in the vision of 'the most hideous human face she had ever seen' (SS,85), diseased and deformed and 'where his nose should have been was a dark triangular abyss...' (SS,85). Kit asks herself why this diseased face disturbs her when all around is 'interior corruption' (SS,86). She consoles herself by imagining Port's rational answer that 'in a non-materialistic age it would not be thus. And probably he would be right.' (SS,86). Ironically they are both victims of 'interior corruption' because they refuse to face up to what they really are, preferring instead to exist in an elaborate world of deceit.

Temporarily on the train Kit finds a moment of comfort, when 'she had become a static thing suspended in a vacuum' (SS,86), outside time and outside human response. To live is to be anxious for Kit and her only comfort is to become inhuman, or object-like. This moment informs her later, final plunge into the desert because there she dissolves the burden of consciousness into a timeless objectivity, existing only for others, not for herself. Here she submits to Tunner who assumes control over her so that she 'did as he told her [and]...she could no longer think, nor were there any more images in her head' (SS,87-88). Kit can reach no personal balance, preferring to submit totally rather than confront the 'images' which the night journey have revealed to her.

Kit's terror is the very thing which Port finally longs for - 'nothing...darkness...Absolute night' (SS,101). Whereas she views it as omens of dread, signifying the horrors of life waiting to threaten her, Port looks
to 'infinite things' as a source of release or liberation from the 'cage' of his existence. Port is thrilled by the prospect of all that lies behind the sheltering sky and longs to experience it, but Kit sees in it only the abysmal threat of destruction. But both misinterpret things, because they view them through distorted eyes. Port's attraction for the infinite is governed by his desire to reach 'a region of self-negation' and so regain a lost innocence, but this is as much a delusion as the girls in Smail's story discovering the highest dune in the Sahara. Kit is the opposite, trying to avoid all contact with the unknown in order to protect herself from the things she fears - emptiness and death. As a result, both are distorted, anxious people: 'all she could hope to do was eat, sleep and cringe before her omens' (SS, 126).

Bowles's use of Eduardo Mallea in the epigraph to Book One suggests his belief in memory and the past as important determinants of the present and future:

"Each man's destiny is personal only insofar as it may happen to resemble what is already in his memory."

That is, what is already within us makes us what we are, creates our destiny. This is something central to Bowles's work and to the Moresbys here. They cannot recognise 'memory' and instead try to evade it or push beyond it in a quest for some new meaning. Kit does this aboard the train when she submits to Tunner in order to 'avoid the wreck' (SS, 66) - by which she means the wreck of her chaotic thoughts - and afterwards sees that 'instead of the wreck there had been another experience which perhaps would prove more disastrous in its results' (SS, 125-6).

Kit also tries to disguise her atavistic fears by surrounding herself with consumer products of a scientific and rational society. Port's cynicism sums up her actions as 'her building her pathetic little fortress of Western culture in the middle of the wilderness' (SS, 162). This superficial order can help her to assert an identity: 'I'm still an American you know' (SS, 161). In this 'neat' closed world of objects she feels in
control and she can project on to them the order she desires in her own life.

This forms one of the many threads of deceit and self-deceit which Bowles explores in the novel. Characters constantly lie and pretend to each other, and themselves, in order to disguise their true feelings. On their journey to Ain Krorfa, as Port grows increasingly sick, Kit has to lie in order to find some seats on the bus, and the irony of her remark 'I hate deceit' (SS,177) is compounded by her memory of leaving Tunner behind - 'an unpardonable act of deceit' (SS,178). Her life, her relationship to Port and his to her, are all governed by deceit to the point that even her language 'was a screen to hide the fear beneath' (SS,180). Armignac sees this in Kit and 'did not believe a word she was saying; he considered it all an admirable piece of lying' (SS,225).

Kit's deceit becomes more central as she is forced to accept more responsibility for her self as Port sickens on the journey. As the bus journey progresses, Kit reflects on the 'windswept emptiness' (SS,180) around her and feels only images of harshness and dislocation: 'the earth's sharp edge...the brink of space...hard and unreal...dryness...silence...' (SS,180). The landscapes seem to mirror her fears of all that lies within her and within the world waiting to destroy her completely.

As they arrive at El Ga'a, Kit's despair continues, thrusting her into the 'maze' (SS,189) of streets in the 'breathless sunlight' (SS,189) trying to find a hotel. She is without Port to guide her and instead is reliant upon an Arab boy, in a town 'without any visible sign of European influence' (SS,187). Her anxiety is based on her inability to know what is going to happen, like on the train where she would have preferred stasis, but what is now clear is that 'time would bring about a change which could only be terrifying, since it would not be a continuation of the present' (SS,207). Without Port, it is 'as if an entire section of her mind were numb' (SS,208) and she wishes everything would stand still. However,
she soon recognises the inevitable; 'nothing could stop; everything always went on' (SS,208).

As Port dies Kit becomes aware of the world more than she ever has before whilst under his protection and she recognises that 'the whole, monstrous star-filled sky was turning sideways before her eyes. It looked still as death, yet it moved' (SS,226). It is not a static world, but one in which things change and move on, and once again it is the sky which provokes the recognition. The sky which shelters also imprisons and for the first time Kit sees the need for individual action rather than to continue as 'part of the void she had created' (SS,226). But Kit has grown too dependent on the strength of others and even without Port she is quick to turn to Tunner to relieve her of the responsibility for herself:

she sensed that this was a situation beyond her control...she saw nothing ahead of her but Tunner's will awaiting her signal to take command...what delight, not to be responsible - not to have to decide anything of what was to happen!' (SS,231).

She cannot bear to take action for herself except in wild, impulsive moments which plunge her deeper into unmanageable situations, like running from Port's death or joining Belqassim. Although Port's direct influence is gone, Kit cannot face up to herself and so still inhabits a world of deceit.

After Port's death she enters 'a new existence' (SS,237) in which 'she was conscious of nothing outside or in ' (SS,236) and which is dominated by timelessness. She feels as if it were 'she who [had] ceased to exist ...[and] entered partially into the realm of death...' (SS,237). Her normal world is shattered and replaced by 'the empty region which was her consciousness' (SS,238) into which moves the idea of escape, exacerbated by the rhythmic drum beat in the oasis.

The numbness she feels permits action without anxiety, so that 'her actions should go on so far ahead of her consciousness of them' (SS,246). She has entered into a state very different from any she had known with
Port, but one which is in itself deceptive too. It is a physical world, of sensations and instincts in which she feels connected to life: 'life was suddenly there, she was in it, not looking through the window at it' (SS, 247). She has been liberated from the voyeuristic distance she had always experienced with Port which kept her outside life and its sensations, but this deludes Kit into believing that she has made a new existence and has in some way conquered her past and reconnected herself to life. She actually believes this and says 'I shall never be hysterical again' (SS, 247).

To underline symbolically her new self she bathes naked in the moonlight, a scene redolent of baptism into a new life. In this perfect moment she feels a 'solid delight...recaptured' and feels that she has attained what she had always known existed 'just behind things... the joy of being ...' (SS, 248). Yet Bowles is always undercutting these moments with an irony based on the fact of Kit's self-delusion. She has been lead, almost hypnotically, to this moment by the drums which she had earlier mistrusted totally, saying to Port, 'I don't feel any part of those drums out there' (SS, 166). Secondly, she has lost all concept of time, so vital to her and Port's life, 'drowning' in a 'sudden surfeit of time...' (SS, 237) and symbolised by her actually losing her wrist-watch as she bathes. Thirdly, in the 'unmoving silence' (SS, 226) of the desert, language itself begins to lose its meaning, prompted by her sensation of its inability to express reality: 'no idea about death has anything in common with the presence of death' (SS, 237). Finally, Bowles refers to the experience Kit undergoes as a 'trick' (SS, 247, 248) played on her by time, in which 'absurd things... happen' (SS, 247).

In fact, what Bowles shows here is the capacity for self-delusion working at the other extreme of Kit's life. Freed from the controlling influence of Port she turns away from her past only to submerge herself in another set of overwhelming and unbalanced feelings. She represents
Erich Fromm's notion of 'freedom from', like the Eden myth which provides his first example. Man was

alone and free, yet powerless and afraid... he is free from the sweet bondage of Paradise, but he is not free to govern himself, to realize his individuality. 62

Kit is caught in a perpetual escape, a freedom from her past, from Port, from herself, but unable to confront the 'burden of freedom'. She cannot, in Mallea's words, see her 'destiny' as related to her 'memory' and so would rather lose herself in the desert and seek the 'elimination of this burden: the self', 63 through a submission to another power - Belqassim.

The opening of Book Three, Kit's story, clearly demonstrates the delusory nature of Kit's escape, for Bowles's choice of language and image once again highlights her predicament. She cannot grasp her life because she refuses to accept her past and only wants to evade it:

she could begin remembering all that had happened... but she was comfortable there as she was, with that opaque curtain falling between. She would not be the one to lift it, to gaze down into the abyss of yesterday and suffer again its grief and remorse (SS, 267).

She wants only the present or to be static or suspended and not have to make decisions or take responsibilities. Instead 'she turned her mind away... bending all her efforts to putting a sure barrier between herself and it' (SS, 267). The images culminate in that of a 'cocoon' with its wall built to keep everything outside it. Ironically, Kit's desired escape has made her a prisoner, trapped within herself, within a present governed not by her, but by the forces she submits to.

Unable to reach for any true freedom, Kit merely remains 'floating on the surface of time' (SS, 273) and now begins her own disintegration. Deprived of time, language and her own past, all shut out of her cocooned self, she is like the Professor in 'A Distant Episode' and has no connection with her environment. She even has to pretend to be a boy in Belqassim's house, as if she is surrendering her very identity. The desert's power to deceive is again true here - just as in Smail's story - for it 'promises a change', but 'it is only when the day has fully arrived
that the watcher suspects it is the same day returned once again' (SS, 268).

She is falling under the desert's spell, something Bowles knew and found in Brion Gysin's paintings:

The S [Sahara] is the place of the great lie, where nothing is true save that light makes it so...shadow can have more reality than rock, the sky can be more solid than the earth beneath...Distance is so deceptive as to be a non-existent element...perspective is anarchic...the perspective of a nightmare. 64

Her journey, although appearing to be governed by her new sense of 'no doubts...certainty...utter conviction' (SS, 268-9), is in fact equally deceptive:

several times it occurred to her that they were not really moving at all (SS, 269).

She even asks herself, 'am I dead?', at one point (SS, 269). Against this confused and deceptive state, she submits to Belqassim because his 'animal-like quality...affectionate, sensuous, wholly irrational' (SS, 272) seems to be all that Port was not. He is a 'perfect balance between gentleness and violence' but his values are not hers, his culture distant, his language separate. Her judgement is impaired by her unreal, unbalanced state in which she was 'conscious of making the gestures of love only after she had discovered herself in the act of making them' (SS, 273) and in which 'she had grown accustomed to acting without the consciousness of being in the act.' (SS, 276). Her conscious control has been subsumed in Belqassim and the desert's 'half-conscious presence'.

As she submits totally to Belqassim, she becomes his property, and responds only to the sexuality that dominates her existence, to the extent that it is 'like a drug' (SS, 292) and she feels 'it was impossible not to do his bidding...she grew used to it and no longer questioned it' (SS, 291). The world is 'closing in upon itself to form a circle from which she would not escape' (SS, 289) and Belqassim is at its centre, in total control. Kit 'did not know anything - neither where nor what she was' (SS, 286) and the 'nights and days became confused in her mind' (SS, 292). In seek-
ing to escape her past she has become less than human, just as Port
did, and cut herself off from any world she belongs in. There is no
romantic noble savagery for Kit, since abandoning her own responsibility
can bring about no change except to plunge her further into 'mindless
contentment' (SS,292) in which she is just an object like the items in
her handbag. But like her, these objects which had earlier signified
order and civilization, are now barely recognisable, 'each one was a
symbol of something forgotten...[and] she could not remember what the
things meant' (SS,291).

Reduced to a conditioned animal, responding only to the 'stimuli'
of sexuality, Kit is like a William Burroughs junky who

would lie, cheat, inform on your friends, steal, do anything to
satisfy total need... you would be in a state of total sickness, total
possession, and not in a position to act in any other way. 65

It is this 'need' which forces her to escape.

All through the novel, Kit's condition has been associated with sus-
pension between thinking and feeling, atavism and reason and so it is
appropriate that her final escape is marked by a similar image. In the
dream she is 'suspended between sky and sea' with a perfect, but precar-
ious balance and yet terrified of the inevitable descent in which 'the
balance would be broken' (SS,299). Ideally she would wish to remain
static and so avoid any change, but this cannot be - she must take action.

Kit's choice is limited by her own mind; to remain would be to do
without Belqassim who is losing interest in her, but to move forward is
to reconnect her with the past that she has been running away from -
'the other side', she calls it (SS,304). Yet it is the latter she chooses,
committing herself to the possibility of total disintegration. To admit
the past back into her enclosed self would be to confront herself with
all she was and this would 'pry open the wall she had built and force
her to look at what she had buried there' (SS,304).

What she fears is the recognition of her self: to be the observed,
rather than the observer and to see herself exposed, outside the sheltering layers of deceit provided by her own mind and Port's protection.

She fears it like 'a great mirror, saying to her: "Look!"' (SS, 307) and throwing 'a merciless beam' illuminating her as she really is. This is the consequence of her escape, brought 'defenceless, before the awful image of herself' (SS, 310) and it destroys her. As consciousness returns, what she sees is the terrifying emptiness that Port finally observed, and like him she sees it as the sky:

For an endless moment she looked into it. Like a great overpowering sound it destroyed everything in her mind, paralyzed her (SS, 312).

She looks for the first time truthfully at what she is and sees 'the solid emptiness' and 'the giant maw' (SS, 312) that lies behind the layers of protection. Her response is a retreat into the comfort of insanity where all conscious thought is destroyed and the self can be hidden away.

Earlier Kit, in conversation with Port, said

I used to think life was a thing that kept gaining impetus. It would get richer and deeper each year. You kept learning more, getting wiser, having more insight, going further into the truth... (SS, 165).

But what she has discovered is that this journey into 'truth' reveals the self's vulnerability when detached from the world and how it believes that it alone has the right to 'wisdom'. Such a burden is an arrogance exposed only when the layers of deceit are disintegrated and the self stands naked in the world.

Bowles's brutal disintegration of Port and Kit Moresby is like a vivisection of a diseased and corrupt society. It is unrelenting in its probing of human frailty, but this is because Bowles felt 'you must watch your universe as it cracks above your head' so that others might learn from it. At the end of The Sheltering Sky we must feel some sympathy for the characters whose actions, though extremes, do perhaps represent natural human responses. Their urge for freedom, for an unattainable truth and for some kind of relationship echo common human desires,
but it is the world which cripples them and their society which has
distorted them and made them the victims they undoubtedly are.

The novel's final chapter is a sad coda to the whole piece, for it
contains another comment on humanity in the character of Miss Ferry,
the official sent to collect Kit Moresby. If d'Armignac offers a poten-
tially balanced, happy picture of a man who has come to terms with him-
self and his life and been able, as a result, to present the sole example
of familial joy in the novel, then Miss Ferry is direct and stark in
contrast. She is the society Kit and Port have been running from, she
is its official representative. She lacks compassion, referring to Kit
as the 'damned old idiot' (SS, 313) and speaks for the materialist world
when she says 'there's something repulsive about an American without
money' (SS, 313). Character is measured and judged by economic wealth and
social status and so she cannot see 'what possible attraction the parched
interior of Africa could have for any civilized person' (SS, 313). Miss
Ferry's understanding stems only from her experience and to her that is
the norm against which all insanity is measured. In her Bowles focuses
his disgust at the narrow and limited view of the world so prevalent amongst
Americans and other Westerners.

Miss Ferry deals in appearances; she was 'conscious of her own clothes'
(SS, 314) and cannot help noticing Kit's 'black cotton stockings and...
worn brown shoes' (SS, 315). She exhibits deceit in appearing friendly
whilst thinking 'she must have every known disease' (SS, 316) and 'she's
damned lucky to have all this fuss made about her' (SS, 316). Finally, it
is her 'presumption' in informing Tunner of Kit's whereabouts that con-
firms her uncaring nature. The memory of the past which Tunner so pain-
fully embodies only serves to push Kit further into herself and once
more forces her to run away.

As Kit disappears onto the crowded streetcar, all that awaits her
is 'the end of the line' (SS, 318) and the final irony that the street-
car's symbolic u-turn suggests Kit's destiny. Wherever she goes she
cannot escape what is within her. What remains is Miss Ferry and all the worst arrogance that Bowles's novel has set out to destroy in the Moresbys' world.
CHAPTER FOUR

Let it Come Down: The Game of Society

THE PROCESS OF DESTROYING
THE MEANING OF LIFE

THIS GAME OF WORLDWIDE
REFUSING TO BE ONESELF 1

If people refuse to play the game of society at all, of what use are they?...society has got to go on being played (and quietly directed)... 2

One cannot escape oneself. That is fate. The only possibility is to look on and forget that a game is being played with us. 3
Bowles started to write *Let It Come Down* because he was missing Morocco and as he told Daniel Halpern, 'I created my own Tangier'. It was a novel which Bowles planned very carefully: 'I worked it out - the sequence of events, the patterns of motivations, the juxtapositions...', because it was 'a completely unreal story and the entire book is constructed to lead to this impossible situation at the end'. The novel is more controlled and studied than *The Sheltering Sky*, but it deals with a smaller geography and a network of interconnected characters. It is about Tangier, but one which Bowles has 'created' to suit his purpose in the novel, that of exploring a basically corrupt society governed only by deceit and mistrust. The single metaphor which dominates the novel, and helps to illustrate this society, is that of the game. Tangier is an elaborate game in which all the characters are involved, desperately trying to win. The game, however, is a sinister one in which people are used and manipulated in the attempt to proceed further within the game structure. This metaphor is allied in Bowles's mind with the overwhelming desire to gain power and control over your opponents at any cost. This game, like all games, is an artifice constructed by Man and 'played' according to the rules he makes for it. Tangier, in the novel, is a world of pretence sustained on the illusions and duplicities of its players. Yet the game played in the novel is a brutal, callous one in which the stakes are very often about survival. Daisy de Valverde tells Dyar it is 'the Age of Monsters' and compares modern society to the story of a woman crossing the tundra with a sled of children while being chased by wolves. As the wolves come closer she tosses a child off the sled to placate them, and this continues as the wolves chase her. Daisy's comment typifies the horrific society that Bowles is writing about in *Let It Come Down*. She says, 'It's terrible because it's so desperately
true. I'd do it, you'd do it, everyone we know would do it...(L,238).

Bowles uses Tangier as his location because it has always been a place of illusion and where anything seemed to be possible.

It is a pleasant thing to be in a place where one can at least have the illusion that the individual still has charge...It is a toy cosmos whose costumed inhabitants are playing an eternal game of buying and selling. 8

Part of the game metaphor is connected to the notion of deceit, as the above quotation suggests, since winning at any cost usually involves an element of deception. In *Let It Come Down* characters assume roles, equivocate and are duplicitous in their effort to win the game and nothing is what it appears to be. Nelson Dyar, the central character, stays in a hotel which symbolises the precise nature of Bowles's Tangier; 'completely surface-built, down to the details of the decor, choice of symbolic materials on the walls and so on'. 9 The hotel is a 'flimsy edifice'(L,77) with 'decorative plaster mouldings'(L,13) to make it appear grand, but a closer look would reveal 'great cracks...and here and there a floor tile was missing'(L,13). The novel does take a 'closer look' into this world and reveals behind the surface of this society and its 'game' an immensely corrupt and frightening place where treachery dominates and everybody is prey for somebody else in an interconnected network of manipulation and power. Here, Bowles was writing not about people, but about the system and society that they were a part of, and doing it in a way that William Burroughs would later develop in *The Naked Lunch*. 10 This desperate game-society of power and control is symbolised through Burroughs's concept of 'the pyramid of junk' with 'one level eating the level below'. 11 Burroughs knew that drugs were 'big business' and that 'junk is the mold of monopoly and possession... profane and quantative like money...Junk is the ideal product...the ultimate merchandise'. 12 Bowles's Tangier is the perfect market, trading in anything, but above all grasping for power over other people.
The novel explores a world like Burroughs's 'pyramid of junk' where everyone uses the person below them in an unending stream of connections and dependencies. Kafka, in an interview, paralleled this type of system with Capitalism itself.

Capitalism is a system of relationships, which run from within to without, from without to within, from above to below, from below to above. Everything is relative, everything is in chains.\textsuperscript{13} Capitalism is a condition of the soul and of the world.

It is no coincidence that Dyar is trying to escape his work for a New York bank only to become involved in an illegal currency exchange in Tangier. However, the kind of system he enters in Tangier is a microcosm of Kafka's world where money dominates everything and power determines your place in the pyramid. Dyar's expectation of freedom in North Africa is pure illusion since Bowles's Tangier is a metaphor for Man's propensity to lie, to demand control and above all to exploit those below him. When searching for a word to describe the atmosphere of the novel, Bowles decided upon 'treachery' because it also explained his choice of the title from \textit{Macbeth}.

\textit{Treachery} - that's the word! It seems to me that the quotation (the book's title) shows the exact kind of treachery that we find in Tangier on the part of the people. It's an atmosphere of treachery. Everyone's working behind everyone else's back and you never know when the blow is coming ... \textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Macbeth} is about 'winning' or ambition and about Macbeth's self-deception and its consequences on the world around him. It is easy to fool yourself when those around you no longer expect the truth or dare to speak it themselves.

\begin{quote}
I dare not speak much further, 
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors, 
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour 
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear, 
But float upon a wild and violent sea 
Each way and move. \textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

At one point in \textit{Let It Come Down} the question is put simply - 'can't anyone in this town tell the truth?'(L,93).
In this environment no one can be trusted on a personal or business level; as Eric Mottram writes, 'the basis of tolerable life - confidence and trust - is utterly eroded. Dyar distrusts himself, others, and all possible states of trust.' Like the characters in Melville's The Confidence Man, Bowles's characters 'are the constituents of an appalling human world: a radically 'fallen' world, and a splintered one; a wolfish world, wherein the crafty and utterly self-regarding denizens are intent chiefly on fleecing one another.' The language used here does suggest many of Bowles's descriptions of the novel's world and its people. But once again he draws us back to the notion of power and money as its instrument.

Tangier is little more than an enormous market...the city was a market where diplomatic information was bought and sold... William Burroughs, a one time resident of Tangier, saw it in a similar way:

The Composite City where all human potentials are spread out in a vast silent market...Gaming tables where games are played for incredible stakes...games where only two players in the world know what the stakes are...A hum of sex and commerce shakes the Zone like a vast hive.

Burroughs's Interzone is clearly based on his experience of the International Zone of Tangier and resembles the corrupt market that Bowles uses as the background for Let It Come Down. This environment is mapped out for us in the novel,

It was one of the charms of the International Zone that you could get anything you wanted if you paid for it. Do anything too, for that matter - there were no incorruptibles. It was only a question of price (L,21).

The life revolves wholly about the making of money. Practically everyone is dishonest (L,126).

The place is a model of corruption! (L,127)

Amid such a world there is one governing objective of the game people are forced into playing and that is not to lose - everyone knew a winner on sight; he was a respected citizen of the International Zone (L,155).
This entire framework of values and ideas provides the basis upon which Dyar judges himself. This is the scale against which he measures his achievements throughout the novel.

His great problem... was to escape from his cage, to discover the way out of the fly-trap, to strike the chord inside himself which would liberate those qualities capable of transforming him from a victim into a winner (L,176).

Dyar relates all this to the determination of his own individual being. His 'will to be' is dependent upon his will to succeed in the game set out around him. As elsewhere in the book Bowles ironically criticises the Western obsession with monetary success through suggesting that what we might choose is usually restricted, and often determined, by our economic status. Very early on in Let It Come Down Bowles firmly shackles economics and destiny together and so suggests the nature of Dyar's plight and points ironically at the underlying quest of his hero - to be 'completely free' (L,17).

He was really here now; there was no turning back... A man does not change his mind about such things when he has less than five hundred dollars left (L,12).

Later too Dyar becomes connected to Thami because of money: 'he had borrowed a hundred pesetas from an Arab, which meant that he had to see the Arab again' (L,77). When lack of money threatens his self-preservation he must choose again - whether to accept Ashcombe-Danvers's attractive offer or Madame Jouvenon's. Each step, ostensibly to remove him from the 'cage/fly trap' of his troubled self merely twists him further into the hands of others and away from self-determination.

It is against this background that the action of the novel takes place, but as ever in Bowles's work the characters do not exist independently from their environment or culture:
I think of characters as if they were props in the general scene of any given work...all these elements are one - the characters are made of the same material as the rest of the work. 20

Nelson Dyar's quest in Morocco is to try and release himself from the 'demoralizing sensation of motionlessness' (L, 15) he had experienced in New York. His life was a 'dead weight' characterised by 'intense hopelessness and depression' (L, 15) and he has the expectation of some substantial alteration in his life in Morocco. He rejects one society, aptly described by his father as 'unhealthy' (L, 15), only to move into one which is even more diseased. Dyar's journey through Tangier is a corrupt pilgrimage in search of some sense of 'being alive' that he has never felt in New York. His quest, in true picaresque tradition, involves him with a host of characters which all reveal the world to him. It is a place of corruption and illusion in which the hapless Dyar can only reinforce the qualities he had hoped to escape in leaving New York. The game he becomes a part of is a dark vision of life in which his naivety and self-ignorance are quickly absorbed into the savage power struggles of Tangier. Believing, as he does, that life can be ordered and controlled, he sets out to accomplish the 'sum' of his life, but events prove that life is not a straight line to be followed. Instead it is 'parts' which may happen by chance or accident over which the rational self has no control. An attempt to impose or demand a pattern on this can be disastrous, as Dyar discovers. He arrives in Tangier with expectations of some new sense of freedom, but is immediately described as 'prey' (L, 12) and feels that he cannot go back even if he wanted to: 'He was really here now; there was no turning back' (L, 12). He is now entering an unknown world under the delusion that his choices are determined only by himself and that he has moved outside the world of his New York cage through exercising his freedom.
Bowles's use of irony quickly establishes that this is perhaps not the case, for in typical Bowlesian style we see Dyar confined at the very moment he thinks he's free.

But now that he was here, straining to see the darkness beyond the wet panes, he felt for the first time the despair and loneliness he thought he had left behind (L,12).

As Dyar becomes aware of this returning feeling of despair he turns away from his self, in which he has so little faith, and seeks guidance from others; 'He decided to let the driver determine for him where he would stay' (L,12). Dyar shows a willingness to allow others to 'determine' his existence rather than make the choices himself. Like Port and Kit Moresby, Dyar's fate is determined by a variety of factors; his past, his memory, those around him and chance but least of all, it seems, by the decisions he believes he alone is making.

Bowles reinforces Dyar's own deception through the environment in which he exists. The Hotel de la Playa is like a cage, 'an enormous concrete resonating chamber'(L,13), which in itself is a towering example of the deceit implicit in the human world. The 'flimsy edifice' (L,77), both 'cheap and new' is crumbling to reveal the reality of 'intense and pure shabbiness' through the 'great cracks [which] had already appeared in the walls'. The 'decorative plaster mouldings around the doorway had been chipped off...' (L,13) uncovering the real condition below. The Hotel symbolises Tangier and more importantly the false and deceptive world in which the novel takes place. It is an environment in which nothing is what it seems, all is pretence and duplicity.

Dyar lying within his room, within the crumbling hotel feels the 'danger point' of his condition (L,14). Again it is the environment that emphasises his psychological state for there is no light and he is 'looking out into the blackness'(L,13). Without orientating light
and the security it gives, Dyar feels as if 'it was almost as though he did not exist' (L, 14). Again we are forced to focus on the fact that he is uncertain of his self and its relationship to the world around it. His dilemma is that he wants above all to establish a self of free action in the world, but he is constantly doubting his own decisions. He has made the step away from New York and 'renounced all security' (L, 14) in the process, but he has to keep rationalising his decision.

Nobody's meant to be confined in a cage like that year after year. I'm just fed up, that's all (L, 14).

As Dyar explains his past we begin to see the way others have always determined his life and how he has been a passive acceptor of his fate. He had found a job during the Depression but 'it was only his father's friendship with one of the vice-presidents which had made it possible for him to be taken on at such a time '(L, 14).

Dyar fears being trapped and longs, like all Bowles's characters, to be free, but in New York his father's advice is to 'let (life) take care of itself' (L, 15). His son wants to believe that he can govern his own life and make things happen from his own choosing and this is the expectation of going to Tangier. His is an existential desire to choose 'one's own values, utilize one's freedom in an authentic way, create one's own essential self...' 22 But Dyar's New York life is haunted by the 'absurdity' of time; 'Each empty, overwhelming minute as it arrived pushed him a little further back from life '(L, 15). His father again provides the summary of Dyar's existential crisis when he calls him part of an 'unhealthy' generation 'mooning around about life not being worth living' (L, 15). Dyar is troubled by the seeming pointlessness of his entrapped existence, or non-existence, and Bowles represents this in images of him as static victim or prey, encaged and economically dependent.
In New York he followed 'an accepted pattern'(L,16) of dull, unsatisfying routine, whilst maintaining a duplicitous relationship with his parents; 'He was polite with them but inwardly contemptuous'(L,16). They could not see his 'emptiness' and the 'paralysis' which was progressively stifling all life out of him.

He sees the move to Tangier as a new beginning and an escape from his cage;

he had told himself that it was the healthy thing to have done, that when he arrived he would be like another person, full of life, delivered from the sense of despair that had weighed on him for so long (L,16-17).

Realising this is not so he relates it to the 'necessity to earn his living'(L,17) and sees this as the reason for his despair. Freedom in Dyar's mind is clearly associated with economic independence. Without the ties of economic dependence he would 'not be compelled to exchange one cage for another' and could become 'completely free'(L,17). This thought is a lasting one in Dyar's mind and provides the driving force in his eventual stealing of the money. The search for freedom demands that he be economically independent.

Underlying Dyar's predicament is the essential notion that freedom is not just a matter of choice since a person whose mind is enchained can never be free. Escaping from one cage does not automatically make you free if that cage is something you carry within you. This is a theme already explored in The Sheltering Sky. Bowles has written that

...there can be no escape ever, no matter where you go, (since all anyone really hopes to escape from is unfulfillment, the feeling that he is not making total use of his potentialities)...23

Dyar, a Western Everyman, believes in individuality and the need for each person to discover in himself his real nature, even if it means being cut-off from other people. What he fails to realise is that this process of estrangement and inwardness can alienate the individual
to such a degree that he loses all contact with the world around them and becomes radically dissociated.

In concentrating upon the existential dilemma of Nelson Dyar, Bowles leads us into a two-fold examination of common themes - through the individual and through the society which the individual exists in and so represents. Ultimately, Bowles' attack is upon the culture itself rather than on the human individuals which are its products.

If it were only possible, I should write without using people at all...because they obstruct the view... 24

It is something Dyar suggests when he says at one point, 'You might say there's only one person and we're all it '(L,31). Dyar's social and cultural background is middle-class America with the rationalism of the Bank where he worked and the certainties of belief held by his parents. Dyar's existence was a 'progressive paralysis'(L,16) in which meaning was drained from him until he seemed alienated from his own self:

the worst and final form of alienation, toward which indeed the others tend, is Man's alienation from his own self. In a society that requires of Man only that he performs competently his own particular social function, Man becomes identified with his own function, and the rest of his being is allowed to subsist as best it can - usually to be dropped below the surface of consciousness and forgotten. 25

The cage in which he works at the bank seems to define his existence, confined and unhappy. Dyar finds no satisfaction in the society which his family believe in, or in his own limited self and it is the denial of these limits which drive him into the relative insecurity of a job in Tangier.

Alienated from his self, Dyar moves to North Africa in an effort to reconnect himself with life. It is like a return to childhood's hopes and dreams rather than the unfulfillment of adult life. Unfortunately Dyar bases his search upon a set of ideas about selfhood which are firmly developed from a particular social perspective:
economic independence, success, winning and individualism expressed through direct, positive action. Applying these rules, Dyar tries to formulate a self in Tangier and becomes involved in the sinister and deceitful machinations of its inhabitants.

Even Daisy de Valverde, who some critics\(^{26}\) have suggested is the most 'virtuous' of Dyar's acquaintances in Tangier, is introduced as a representative of an illusory world. Throughout the novel she is obsessed with her appearance, and we first see her 'making up' under 'pitiless' lighting. Later Daisy's make-up is so carefully applied that Dyar is deceived into thinking she is wearing none (L, 89-90). She insists on old Ali serving at the dinner table in a 'magnificent Moorish costume' because 'his appearance impressed them more than the superior service the two Europeans could provide' (L, 21). She also persists with 'the anachronism of having electricity in the rooms where tapestries were hung' (L, 22) and so creates a comfortable environment but with the appearance of an old Moorish castle.

Dyar thinks of Daisy as 'well preserved' (L, 22) but 'fatuous' at first, but gradually realises there is more to her.

He had never met anyone like her; she gave the impression of remaining uninvolved in whatever she said or did. It was as if she were playing an intricate game whose rules she had devised herself (L, 25).

Dyar stumbles upon a very important observation, for her uninvolvemen is a sign of her deceit. She can live a life in which she pretends to be something she is not. Her 'game', one of many in the book, is clearly connected with the idea of duplicity and illusion that Bowles sees as fundamental to the modern world.

During the dinner at the Valverdes', Bowles includes two highly symbolic episodes which emphasise Dyar's position and the novel's themes. Firstly he describes a fish tank that Dyar 'found himself watching... as he ate' (L, 24). The fascination of the tank for Dyar relates to its
perfectly controlled environment, caged and restricted but comfortable and safe which resembles his own life in New York.

The second episode is with Daisy's cat which Dyar helps tend. It begins when Daisy tricks Dyar into helping her by not telling him what he is to do. Wilcox's comment, 'You don't know what you're letting yourself in for...' has a prophetic irony in relation to the future involvement of Dyar with Daisy. The cat itself resembles Dyar in many ways, its eyes are 'huge and empty' and like Dyar it is acted on not active itself and 'doesn't seem to feel anything'(L,27). But just as Daisy wants to save the cat she also wants to save Dyar later. She even calls him 'pet' and 'dear lamb' and 'specimen' during this scene. Her interest in him becomes clear and her comment that he 'is completely out of contact with life' (L,27), is very perceptive.

From these revealing scenes more of Dyar's view of life is given;

I suppose I want to feel I'm getting something of it...I want to feel alive, I guess. That's about all (L,31).

But these drunken attempts to utter some truthful thoughts about how he feels merely provoke derision from Daisy which causes Dyar to think 'he should have answered anything, rather than trying to say what he really meant '(L,31). There is no room for truth in this world and so Dyar is immediately forced into thinking about telling lies and being duplicitous. Dyar appears naive in the presence of experienced schemers like Daisy but he does sense her interest in him.

In her bedroom, 'a vast round greenhouse'(L,33) which echoes the aquarium, Dyar again comments on 'this act' Daisy is playing out and realises it was 'a game they were in together'(L,33), concluding 'it might be fun to play around a little with her...'. The proliferation of the game images suggests that Dyar is already caught up in something that he does not perceive as sinister, but which is as likely to control him as Daisy controls the aquarium or her cat's life. The tame sexual
game of Daisy and Dyar is a form of a more immense game that the novel unravels in which all the characters are entwined and all exploiting one another.

Wilcox, Dyar's employer, is not immune either. We are told during the dinner that 'he needs [Dyar] far more'(L,29) than the travel business, and this casts doubt on Wilcox's motives. Later when he avoids telling Dyar anything about his new job the latter thinks he's 'playing cat and mouse' (L,35). All around Dyar Bowles is outlining an elaborate game of illusions and deceits which is gradually moving in on him. As Daisy tells Dyar, 'Tangier, Tangier...You'll follow soon enough, my pet'(L,29). His emptiness seems perfect fodder for the insidious powers operating there. As Daisy comments to Dyar 'You have an empty life. No pattern. And nothing in you to give you any purpose...' (L,30). Later she thinks 'He has nothing, he wants nothing, he is nothing...' (L,31), and adds a warning.

You have an empty hand, and vacuums have a tendency to fill up.
Be careful what goes into your life (L,239).

Dyar is a vacuum, a child-like emptiness as he enters Tangier, but rather than come to any new self-determined vision of the world he is quickly enmeshed unwittingly into other peoples' games. The control of his own life, the very freedom from others' dominance, parents, employers, institutions, and social roles imposed by America's cage which he sought, has been denied him and replaced by a far more devious machinery of corruption which prevents him ever making choices that are his own.

After this important scene at the Valverdes' Bowles rapidly introduces other significant characters in the novel. Thami is identified within his domestic environment, but it too provides a kind of cage for him whose boundaries are determined by his economic position:

That was the worst part of being married, unless you had money,—a man could never be alone in his own house...(L,36).
For Thami, as Dyar, money seems to offer the possibility of an escape and throughout the novel his actions are often determined by this particular belief. Thami is certainly obsessed by money and complains about the European use of it -

Most of them had no real desire, apart from that to make money, which after all is merely a habit. But once they had the money they seemed never to use it for a specific object or purpose... He knew exactly what he wanted...His dream was to have a small speedboat: it was an absolute necessity for the man who hoped to be really successful in smuggling '(L,40).

What Thami reflects is a definite purpose and an honesty about himself which separates him from most of the novel's characters, and especially Dyar. We are told of Thami later that despite all his failings 'he could not pretend' (L,282) whereas everyone else does constantly. It is part of the novel's bleak vision that Thami is destroyed by the central character Dyar.

It is with the introduction of Eunice Goode that Bowles truly personifies the most decadent qualities in the novel. She is a static character totally embroiled in herself and her concerns who is described as a monstrous presence:

Her torso bulged...her arms and legs were gigantic and her hyper-sensitive skin was always irritated and purplish...she was a thing rather than a person...(L,104).

She lives almost entirely within her hotel room and stays in bed behind 'her fortress of pillows' (L,48). As a would-be writer she longs for pure contact with 'inner reality' (L,48), but is quite content to ignore all the 'reality' around her like a volcanic eruption or having to look into the face of a deformed beggar (L,63). She actually uses her own appearance and 'comic character' to protect herself from the world around her. As Bowles writes,

She accepted the fact and used it to insulate herself from the too-near, ever threatening world (L,105).

Her life is an elaborate game of evading reality and pursuing her
illusions sustained only by her own total control of her environment. Within her room she is like a queen, ordering servants and ordering reality with the enormous power conferred on her by financial wealth.

Goode, like other characters in the novel, creates an artificial world around herself and prefers to look back to a past which she regards as 'a vanished innocence, a nostalgia for the early years of life...her lost childhood' (L, 56). But Bowles casts doubts on this past by connecting it with images of decadence which he had already explored through the Lyles in The Sheltering Sky. Goode's memory of childhood has overtones of lesbian incest and repulsion against male sexuality since she relates childhood to 'where she and her mother slept' (L, 49) and how the relative bliss of that moment was broken by her father telling them of the eruption of Stromboli. The phallic significance of the volcano with its 'vomiting flames and lava [which] poured down its flanks...crimson with the rising sun' (L, 49) is greeted by her mother's cry of 'Dis-gusting' (L, 50). As Goode becomes involved with the young Moroccan girl Hadija in the novel, it is clear that the girl reflects, as child and lover, the implicit moral corruption of Miss Goode as well as the obsessive need to recover her lost childhood. At one point the incestuous nature of her relationship to Hadija is made explicit when she is described as 'like a mother preparing her only daughter for her first dance' (L, 112) and 'they looked...like doting mother and fond daughter...' (L, 112).

Miss Goode's money, incestuous longings and general corruption typify the society Bowles is describing in Let It Come Down and which Alfred Chester knew well.

They come here to buy our strength and our youth. Without us, they would wither and die. We renew them. We make them healthy again, young and pink and fat. 27

Tangier is a parasitical society based on all the worst qualities of Western life which had come to rest there.
Eunice Goode recounts, in flashback, how she met Hadija at the aptly-named Bar Lucifer and Bowles reveals more about her from her conversation with the owner Madame Papaconstante in which she 'answered by improvising falsehoods' (L, 52). She is false and determined to possess Hadija at any cost:

to her mind her aims were irreprouachable, she rarely hesitated before trying to attain them... (L, 53).

She barters for Hadija who she has already de-humanised by referring to her as 'a delightful creature' (L, 53). Eunice's money gives her the power to 'buy' Hadija with 'a little gift' (L, 55) and in doing so to feel 'the world outside herself... as something in which she almost felt she could share' (L, 57). But her movement outside herself is purely on her terms, for she sees that world as her possession, just as she sees Hadija.

The rest of the world was there for her to take any moment she wished it, but she always rejected it in favour of her own familiar little cosmos (L, 56).

Goode's corruption extends to a Sadeian delight in her own power over people-as-objects:

If the objects who serve us feel ecstasy, they are then much more often concerned with themselves than with us, and our own enjoyment is consequently impaired. The idea of seeing another person experience the same pleasure reduces one to a kind of equality which spoils the unutterable charms that come from despotism... Any enjoyment is weakened when shared. 29

Eunice represents for Bowles obsessions with power, control and a selfish pursuance of possessions - all aspects of modern society. Her avaricious and egotistical character is an extreme form of many characters seen throughout his fiction. She has no intention of sharing the world, she wants it all for herself.

She did not hope Hadija would be able to share her sensations; she asked only that the girl act as a catalyst for her, making it possible for her to experience them in their pure state (L, 56).

Eunice's usual belief in there being 'little time left in the world...
served only to paralyse her faculties', but her relationship with Hadija 'had started her off in a certain direction, which was the complete ownership of the girl, and until she had the illusion of having achieved that, she would push ahead without looking right or left' (L, 162-163). But having acquired this object, she guards it jealously and begins to imagine that Hadija might carry on her other life (as whore) regardless of Eunice. Eunice wants total control over Hadija and whereas 'her happiness had rested wholly on falsehoods ...'(L, 59) before, she was now prepared 'to seek out deception and confront it'. Bowles's irony is based on the simple fact that Eunice's whole relationship with Hadija is economic even though her idealised and romantic illusion sees it as something quite different. Her jealousy assumes fidelity in a prostitute and the elaborate scene Eunice imagines of conflict and reconciliation is pure romantic slush. The 'excitement' (L, 60) she feels at all this harks back to her earlier statement that 'sexuality is primarily a matter of imagination...'(L, 57). For her the lesbian attachment with Hadija assumes massive romantic proportions within her illusory view of things, whereas in reality (Hadija's view) it is purely a business arrangement.

Hadija had learned several things during her short acquaintance with Eunice Goode, perhaps the most important of which was that the more difficult everything was made, the more money would be forthcoming when payment came due (L, 68).

Appropriately Bowles inserts a brief scene at this point which shows Thami and Dyar at a pornographic film show. The juxtaposition of these episodes suggests a parallel between them in the sense that pornography is as much a form of corruption, exploitation and perverse commercialism as Eunice's relationship with Hadija.

Just as pornography is an expression of sexuality/money/power so Eunice recognises similar factors in her own visits to the Bar Lucifer.

The feeling of power that money gave her was augmented to an extent which made the getting rid of it an act of irresistible voluptuousness (L, 63).
Through her again Bowles suggests many of his persistent views on society - seen throughout his fiction and culminating in *Up Above the World*. Eunice's determination to catch Hadija with another person draws her to the Bar again and this time the narrative structure allows the first connection of the Goode and Dyar plots. The connection is through Hadija whom Dyar - in his semi-drunken state and fresh from the pornographic show - is immediately attracted to ('I could use a little of it, all right' (L, 67)) and so 'buys'.

When Eunice overhears Dyar and Hadija in the next room her jealousy reaches a peak and she 'told herself, "I'll kill him"' (L, 70). But her anger over Hadija's profession is not through a sense of true affection, rather through a need for power over her. Her ultimate aim is for 'the pleasure of feeling that Hadija was wholly dependent upon her' (L, 72) and now Dyar has proved an obstacle in the way.

At this point Bowles has widened his narrative in order to portray, through Eunice Goode, the characteristics of a corrupt society as well as to show a further dilemma in Dyar's pursuit of freedom and self-determination. He has fallen from Daisy's illusory game into another, more vicious game, that of Eunice Goode's and at every stage he has had no true control over his fate.

The chapter closes with the clever, simple image of a large brown rat [which] crept from a doorway opposite and began to make its way along the gutter in the other direction, stopping to sample bits of refuse as it went. The rain fell evenly and quietly (L73).

The sordid behaviour of the humans in the novel makes the rat seem quite harmless by comparison. The juxtaposition is a good example of Bowles' ability to under-play his themes and leave conclusion to his readers. Images of disease, parasitism and corruption are constant throughout the novel, but they always reflect upon the human world not upon the natural one.
As Dyar's relationship with Hadija draws him into the sinister world of Eunice Goode, and Daisy Valverde is about to involve him in her 'enormous favour' (L, 79), it remains for him to become bound up in the schemes of Wilcox, his would-be friend and employer. In this world all trust is gone and everyone is 'prey'.

Wilcox is clearly involved in some very dubious business deals already hinted at by Daisy when she comments about his job at the travel agency,

My dear, if you think he makes even his luncheon money there, you're gravely mistaken (L, 28).

But it is through his contact with Ashcombe-Danvers that we are allowed a fuller portrait of this double-life. Bowles immediately establishes another level of the control and manipulation structure in the novel, since it is clear that Wilcox is being 'used' by Ashcombe-Danvers who is described appropriately as a 'buzzard' (L, 86). Although Wilcox appears a winner to Dyar he is clearly just a victim too and bound up in the environment of treachery.

'You must have somebody around you can trust for a half-hour.' 'Not a soul' (L, 75).

Yet the chain of manipulation quickly moves on as Wilcox thinks of using Dyar;

Dyar was the ideal one to use in this connection: he was quite unknown in the town, his innocence...was a great advantage...and would not have to be paid any commission at all... (L, 76).

It is Dyar's turn to be exploited and become inextricably bound up in a manipulative and economic relationship. It is significant that as Ashcombe-Danvers explains the 'business' to Dyar the latter feels 'he had behaved exactly as though he had been paying him for his services' (L, 85). Dyar does not expect payment since 'the principal reason a man does not want to be paid for such things is to avoid being put into the position of an inferior. And he was in it, anyway' (L, 85). Dyar
is an 'inferior' and feels like a whore being bought and used. Within the framework of the novel's society, economics determine relationships and people are submissive to the power of money. Dyar is just like Hadija and Thami but without the comfort of a strong and assured self and a realisation about what it is they are involved in. Dyar's ignorance of the world closing in on him can be seen immediately after these episodes as he convinces himself that 'when it [the job] stopped he would be free '(L,86).

Dyar's relationship with Hadija is highlighted in his picnic with her. Bowles shows that Dyar, like Eunice Goode, is concerned with having power over Hadija:

She was not a real person; it could not matter what a toy did (L,95). But at the same time his loneliness and peculiar morality forbids him from seeing their relationship as a purely economic one, not unlike that of Eunice and Hadija. It is his money which interests the girl not his affection for her. She is a product of a world in which goods are bought and sold without emotion, and sex is just another possible commodity. So when young boys make obscene gestures and remarks to the couple, it is Dyar who is embarrassed, not Hadija, because she accepts their liaison for what it is, a business transaction. Dyar, with his illusory romanticism, wants her to be something she is not. Later this illusion that Dyar creates about Hadija is shown when Eunice Goode provokes him by blatantly calling her a whore. Dyar says 'For my money she's a damned nice girl' (L,173). The ironical nature of this statement is not wasted on Eunice who 'snorted' 'For your money, indeed! Very apt! That little bitch would sleep with a stallion if you made it worth her while '(L,173).

Whereas Eunice wants to reclaim a lost childhood with Hadija, Dyar wants to fill up his inner emptiness with some expression of affection which his adult life has denied him. He wants to control the situation
to achieve a sense of himself as 'winner' and so he goes to Hadija with a pre-defined expectation of the outcome.

He rolled over and held her in a long embrace, expecting to feel her body hold itself rigid for a moment, and then slowly soften in the pleasure of surrender...(L,100).

He wants to believe that Hadija will submit to his authority in the sexual act, but the reality is that she, an experienced prostitute, assumes control and denies him even the illusion of being in command.

...But things did not happen like that. There was no surrender because there was no resistance (L,100).

And within moments she is instructing him, 'You lie down...Leave dress alone', and Dyar, an inferior again, 'obeyed'.

Dyar's view of Hadija as a 'toy' that he might control is all a part of his illusion about himself and when he thinks that 'for her it was all a game' (L,101) he is showing that this is a game he cannot win and he is merely at the mercy of the rules she dictates. Hadija is a further element within a deceitful and uncertain world to the extent that Dyar cannot tell the difference between 'an expression of friendship or a meaningless grimace' (L,101).

As Book I ends Eunice Goode asserts her authority over Dyar by plotting her revenge on the man who threatens to take Hadija from her. As ever, money gives her power - 'the man had no money...it could be strongly in her favour. Poverty in other people generally was' (L,106). She intends to destroy Dyar, who she sees 'as vulnerable, as easily crushed, as spoiled children are' (L,107). In her brief meeting with her opponent she acts out perfectly a role as gracious host and beneficent 'mother' to Hadija. Below this role, played as elaborately as Lady Macbeth's to Duncan, 32 she is plotting to thrust Dyar into an even more dangerous game that he is already involved in. Eunice Goode believes Madame Jouvenon might find Dyar 'very useful...'(L,112) to her.
The encirclement of Dyar in Book One, with the corrupt, treacherous forces of Tangier, has left the reader with a narrative maze to unravel. Indeed it is the writer's game with his readers to make us puzzle out the threads and connections between his network of characters. But Bowles, in Book Two, 'Fresh Meat and Roses', brings together many of the characters in one place - the Beidaoui Party. It helps us to see the careful enclosure of Dyar which is taking place.

The Party itself is another example of the sham-world of Tangier, for it pretends to be a social gathering of Moslems and Europeans but in reality it is all show; 'it was pleasant and democratic while it lasted, which was generally until about nine '(L,117). The Europeans like to see it as an example of their 'intimacy' with the Moslems, but the truth is that the Beidaoui brothers had a life totally separate from the Europeans 'in a part of the house where no European had ever entered'(L,118). The whole event demonstrates the illusory nature of Tangier and the capacity of people to deceive themselves into believing exactly what they want to, regardless of the truth. Bowles writes,

there was a peculiar deadness about the gathering which made it difficult to believe that a party was actually in progress... it was somehow not true (L,129).

The unreality of the event resembles a film 'surrounded by dead people-or perhaps figures in a film that had been made a long time before '(L,133).

As these forces gather around Dyar it is significant that he should think

he was vaguely aware of having arrived at the edge of a new period in his existence, an unexplored territory of himself through which he was going to have to pass (L,121).

Ironically it is through his involvement with all the various people around him that he will go over that 'edge'. It is they who seem to be pushing him into a new territory even though he wants to feel
it is all under his own control.

Dyar 'felt smothered and out of place' (L, 123) at the Party as the net of characters hover around him; Daisy, Eunice, Hadija, Madame Jouvenon and Thami, who, we learn, is an outcast Bedaoui brother. Everything and everyone seems inter-connected as if the whole society is an inbred, almost incestuous world. It is the perfect environment for the treachery that Bowles wanted to convey - a world of predators and prey, winners and victims.

One guest at the Party brings Dyar's position into perspective and that is Mr Richard Holland who draws the parallel between New York and Tangier because 'life revolves wholly about the making of money. Practically everyone is dishonest...each man's waiting to suck the blood of the next...' (L, 126-127). He not only states the already proven corruption of the city but he emphasises the trap that Dyar is in. After all he left New York for something different, but finds Tangier a very similar place - he has exchanged one cage for another.

Holland also echoes other themes in the novel when he says that 'morality must have a religious basis, not a rational one. Otherwise it's just playacting' (L, 134) and 'man is rational now, and rational man is lost' (L, 134). Both comments reflect on Dyar and the thought strikes him too - 'he did listen, perhaps because in his profound egotism he felt that in some fashion Holland was talking about him' (L, 135).

Dyar with Hadija showed signs of a false morality and he has always exercised a definitely rational approach to life in the secure world of New York and in his practical, sensible concerns for money, jobs and love.

Compared to Dyar, Thami seems to be more realistic and unhindered by the illusions which surround the American - he realises Eunice's wealth and wants to exploit it. Bowles conveys this, using further predatory animal imagery: 'there is only a certain amount of flesh
on any given carcass' (L, 144). Thami also penetrates the illusion with which Dyar and Eunice surround Hadija and he realises what she really is: 'Like most girls with her training, basically Hadija thought only in terms of goods delivered and payment received...' (L, 144).

Finally and appropriately it is only Thami who can see through Eunice's deception in having Hadija pretend to be Greek at the Party; 'the game was up' (L, 138). Like Hadija, Thami represents qualities of stability and clear-sightedness which do not exist in other characters. Despite their life-styles they do not deceive themselves about anything, instead they try to live life within the parameters of a stable and supportive faith, a faith which gives purpose and pattern to all they do, however 'immoral' it might be to others. This pattern and meaning is the very stability or 'core' that Dyar lacks in his life and which he is searching for in the novel. All Dyar has is his emptiness:

He still felt coreless; he was no one, and he was standing here in the middle of no country. The place was counterfeit, a waiting-room between connections, a transition from one way of being to another, which for the moment was neither way, no way (L, 151).

He feels 'counterfeit', because he has not achieved any real understanding of himself. He has instead accepted other people's versions of what is right or true and so once again evaded any real confrontation with his own emptiness. He has moved from New York, but like Port Moresby and all of Bowles's Americans, he carries his dilemma within him.

He was like a prisoner who had broken through the first bar of his cell, but was still inside. And freedom was not on sale for three hundred and ninety dollars (L, 151).

The realisation that freedom cannot simply be bought is ironic since money will be the factor that pushes Dyar on towards his fate, appearing as it does to offer him some freedom.

The problem for Dyar is that he is surrounded by a world of appearances, inauthenticity and mistrust where he can gain no real sense of himself. Wilcox, whom Daisy has already warned Dyar about, saying 'Don't get involved
in any of his easy money schemes,' is clearly identified as a 'fake'
(L,153). He lives a double life aimed at maintaining an appearance
of wealth even if it were not true

...the town had agreed with his decision that he was one of the
big shots, one of those who automatically get the best whether
or not they can pay for it (L,154).

Despite Wilcox's duplicitous personality he is the epitome of the
'winner' and his life defines the way one must live within the elaborate
'game' played out in Tangier.

...everyone knew a winner on sight; he was the respected citizen
of the International Zone. If one was not a winner one was a
victim, and there was no way to change that...it was a matter
of conviction, of feeling like one, of knowing you belonged to
the caste, of recognizing and being sure of your genius (L,155).

As Dyar 'reflected confusedly'(L,155) on these rules of the game he
decides that to be anything he must be a winner too. It is this
which plunges him into the intrigue of Madame Jouvenon. He accepts
distorted definitions of how to attain satisfaction which only serve to
drive him further away from any lasting, authentic existence.

Daisy's second warning concerns Mme Jouvenon, 'a Russian agent'(L,143),
but Dyar does go to see her, an arrangement made by Eunice Goode who
has told her that Dyar has a post in the Diplomatic Service. Espionage,
seen by Daisy as 'a perfectly honourable way of making a living'(L,143),
is typical of the world of Tangier - a world without trust or confidence.
When Dyar too sees it as 'a completely honourable activity'(L,156) it
suggests he has become ensnared in the deceits and double standards
too. The money she offers Dyar 'buys' him into her control and into
the entangled network of corruption, even though Dyar still believes
he has control over his own fate and that it is just easy money. His
desire to be a winner clashes with his own sense of himself as empty
and unreal, causing him to feel 'smothered by an oppressive unreality'
(L,158) until 'the feeling of unreality was too strong in him, all
around him...a great smear across the lens of his consciousness' (L, 161).

This feeling like 'vertigo' resembles Sartrean nausea or 'angst' and it brings Dyar to the point - via a series of self-interrogations, 'What...Why?' (L, 161) - of thinking;

But things don't happen...You have to make them happen. That was where he was stuck. It was not in him to make things happen; it never had been (L, 161-2).

Existentialist thought believes that in order for Man to discover his being and his true self - Dyar's goal - he must he 'responsible for what he is'.

Man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world-and defines himself...If Man...is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later and then he will be what he makes of himself. 36

Dyar has lived within a world where he has not made things happen, but they have happened to him, just as they do in Tangier. Other people have impinged upon his existence and jested control away from him and he has been submerged in their inauthentic world. As Evans has written, 'Dyar does not know himself, for he has never been confronted with a real choice; his life hitherto has been of unquestioning acceptance'. 37 While he refuses to work through his own emptiness and anxiety he will never establish any sense of true being.

Instead of listening to the voice of nothingness within him, he lets others tell him his place and who he is. He escapes from the burden of having to be himself by escaping to the safety of the 'they'...Man's tendency to flee from anxiety forces us to understand inauthenticity as the usual mode of human being. 38

Dyar must find his own being, as John Macquarrie puts it,

Man fulfils his being precisely by existing, by standing out as the unique individual that he is and stubbornly refusing to be absorbed into a system. 39

But this is precisely what Dyar cannot do and instead becomes absorbed in the corrupt 'system' of Tangier by the very fact that he is trying to outplay them at their own game. Meanwhile he deludes himself with 'a blind, completely unreasonable conviction that when the moment
came if nothing happened some part of him would take it upon itself to make something happen' (L,162).

Ironically Dyar moves away from any individual act of will or existential choice which will define his self and instead believes something inside him will do it for him. Not only does Dyar therefore contradict true existential experience, but he also reveals that he is radically split between his conscious self (willful choice) and his unconscious self ('something inside him...'). The need for a conscious control and choice is something Dyar desires, but finds difficult to put into action. Ironically, in the end Dyar's fate is decided by chance rather than by choice, just as Port and Kit Moresby's in *The Sheltering Sky*.

As Dyar wanders through the 'vault-like tunnels' of Tangier like 'the tortuous corridors in dreams' (L,179) Bowles creates a symbolic environment which allows an objective correlative for Dyar's mental state. As he tries to find the direction to the Bar Lucifer he resembles Port Moresby trying to lose himself in the native quarter rather than face up to the responsibilities of his life.

Initially being lost gives Dyar 'a strange sensation of security' because he is away from the pressure of others upon him, but his lack of true location makes him see 'he was further from being free than he had been yesterday at this time' (L,178). This thought troubles him greatly and he begins to pursue his memory 'like a film being run backwards', going over his recent experiences. It is Holland's ideas he settles upon and particularly that he should be 'feeling rather than thinking', since as Holland prescribed 'rational man is lost'. Through the 'tortuous corridors' of his thoughts, Dyar has flashes of revelation about himself and his situation culminating in a central concern of the novel:
He was trying to lose himself...his great problem right now was to escape from his cage, to discover the way out of the fly-trap, to strike the chord inside himself which would liberate those qualities capable of transforming him from a victim into a winner (L, 179).

He wants to win at the game and believes only self-willed action can achieve it, but in reality he is like the fish in Daisy's aquarium, controlled and trapped. All things in this world are not equal.

Consequently it is an illusion to believe in the 'comforting idea' that he was 'going to take [himself] in hand' (L, 180) because 'it assumed the possibility of change. But between the saying and the doing there was an abyss into which all the knowledge, strength and courage you had could not keep you from plunging' (L, 180). What Dyar begins to realise is the 'absurd and untenable' (L, 180) position he is in, whereby he wants to act and believes it is the only 'escape' from his 'old uneasiness' but he cannot because others are in command of him. The gap between 'the saying and the doing' is the point at which self-delusion is most powerful, for it is there that one must lie most convincingly to oneself in order to continue. As Dyar sees later, 'But the effort required to leap across the gap from knowing to doing, that he could not make' (L, 269). Macbeth, another man wanting to be a winner but unsure of committing the act that will propel him forward faces the same dilemma, as Lady Macbeth says

Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire... 40

And later as Macbeth plunges into self-willed (he believes) action he returns to the same point, saying

The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done... 41

But just as Macbeth, as a tragic hero, has long lost control over his actions and has fallen under the expectations and influence of others,
so Dyar is not ever in command of his own destiny. The existential choice he expects to provide his means of self-determination is not his to make;

You had to make a choice. But the choice was already made, and he felt that it was not he who had made it (L,180).
The 'choices' being made for Dyar are by Wilcox and Jouvenon who are both using him in their corrupt schemes, while behind the scenes Eunice Goode appears to be pushing him into further danger. Dyar, realising something of his position, is determined not to give up: 'that was the action of a victim...a victim always gave himself up if he had dared to dream of changing his status'(L,181). Dyar wants above all to change his status and find a more positive identity for himself, because he feels like 'an alien presence clamouring to be released'(L,188).

As Dyar stumbles further into the labyrinthine alleys pondering his new status it is appropriate that he is still totally dependent on others (and children at that) to show him the way out and guide him to safety. Whatever he may believe of himself, Dyar is never in control. This is immediately underlined by his summons by Wilcox—he is still dependent.

Book Three, 'Age of Monsters', takes us up to the actual day of the currency exchange and finds Dyar with his new determination to win. Symbolically the rain which has surrounded him since his arrival disappears and the sun deceives him into thinking 'it made a new world around him'(L,189). The oppression of the weather had earlier seemed to perpetuate the trap in which Dyar was caught, but now, in his new mood, he feels uplifted: 'the air's clarity and the sun's strength made him whistle in the shower...' (L,188). In his new relaxed mood he wanders to the beach when Ramlal's (the money changer's) shop is closed. Here Dyar finds a temporary comfort 'in a state of self-induced voluptuousness'. 
If you stayed long enough the rays drew every thought out of your head. That was what he wanted, to be baked dry and hard, to feel the vaporous worries evaporating one by one, to know finally that all the damp little doubts and hesitations that covered the floor of his being were curling up and expiring in the great furnace-blast of the sun (L, 193).

Dyar's mistake here is to trust his feelings in a situation in which, as we have seen, nothing can be trusted or believed in. The sun deceives too, or more accurately Dyar allows himself to be deceived into a sense of ease which forgets both his past circumstances and the 'game' he is presently deeply involved in. This deception, rather than 'evaporating' his worries merely increases them for it causes him to miss the Bank's opening hours.

During this momentary peace, however deceptive, Dyar dwells on his condition - 'he felt very close to himself' -

...perhaps because in order to feel alive a man must first cease to think of himself as being on his way. There must be a full stop, all objectives forgotten... life is not a movement toward or away from anything; not even from the past to the future, or from youth to old age, or from birth to death. The whole of life does not equal the sum of its parts. It equals any one of the parts; there is no sum (L, 194).

This is Dyar's appreciation of an instinctual way of life in which the present moment matters for its own sake and nothing else - 'unless he is a fool he will not look for reasons or explanations' (L, 194).

Rationalism is pushed aside - as Holland had already suggested, and we live 'life for life's sake, the transcending fact of the living individual' (L, 194). Referring back to Holland's cynical and bleak view of the world, Dyar finds some comfort in his pleasurable state on the beach, for he has escaped the continuum of time and the pressure of the winner-victim cycle that dominates America and Tangier. Yet for all the convincing statements made by Dyar here they are never more than part of the illusory and deceptive atmosphere of the novel:

He could pretend, if he needed, to be an American named Nelson Dyar... (L, 194).
But 'the best thing for him to do was to sit back and be, and whatever happened, he still was. Whatever a man thought, said or did, the fact of his being there remained unchanged'(L,195).

What Dyar has forgotten is that he is a part of 'a great mass of beings' which have made choices for him and around him and which are presently closing in on him. His thoughts influenced by the sun, which Lawrence aligned with 'anti-thought', detach him from people and connect him with nature.

He wanted, to be baked dry and hard [like an object]...First of all he was a man lying on the sand that covered the floor of a ruined boat, a man whose left hand reached to within an inch of its sun-heated hull...(L,194).

Nature's power has infiltrated Dyar, but he misunderstands this as a transformation when in reality it is deception. He has merely fallen under another power which is not controlled by him. Alone in nature he responds purely to the sensual side of his character and persuades himself he is 'no longer a member' of the masses. Bowles had written that 'to develop one's sensual characteristics...leaves one at the mercy of the physical world and its increasingly destructive onslaught'.

This 'bath of vague ideas'(L,195) lulls him into a feeling of ease and well-being which is purely illusory because Dyar is still 'caged'. Bowles is quick to shatter his dream with a barrage of realities which thrust him deeper into his fate. He awakes on the beach confronted by Time (the thing he has, ironically, left behind in the sun) since he has missed the opening times of the Bank. Secondly a message has been left from the American Legation, which sends a new feeling of guilt through him; 'he was paralysed'(L,195) and he is overcome with a sense of hunger, which symbolically suggests the renewal of Dyar's inner emptiness.

Dyar's ensuing problems stem from this time spent at the beach, for now everything becomes a muddle and a confusion of money-changing
and suspicious dealings with dubious characters. But Dyar seems to
drift along with thoughts of freedom and adventure:

"Today, of all days, he thought, he would have liked to be free, to rent a little convertible,...drive out into the country with Hadija, or even better, to hop on a train and just keep going down into Africa, to the end of the line...(L,199)."

He still desires freedom, but here he incorporates the possibility of a kind of reckless abandon reminiscent of Kit Moresby's journey in The Sheltering Sky. It is no coincidence that Bowles uses the same phrase, 'the end of the line', in both. For Dyar to surrender himself up to Africa suggests again his willingness and need to place himself under the control of other forces, even something as abstract as Africa: 'Africa was a big place and would offer its own suggestions' (L,199).

As Dyar enters again the corrupt world of Tangier it is the game image which Bowles uses. But now Dyar is a conscious player, whereas before he has always seemed on the outside of others' games. He has gradually become aware of, at least, some of the rules and is prepared to play along - so when he haggles over Ashcombe-Danvers' money we are told 'he was warming to the game'(L,202) and he observes 'it was a game, nothing more'(L,203)-'It's almost worth playing, just for the hell of it'(L,205). Though he plays, Dyar is not in control. Even though he believes he is winning, since he is haggling, he is not truly aware of the stakes or the seriousness of the larger scheme that he is part of. For Dyar everything is illusory now: 'He cannot find this connection, he is cut off from the outside...nothing was real' (L,203). He feels detached from the world around him and seeks a 'sense of balance'. Dyar's problem, as always, is that he has no true sense of himself and no concept of who he is or why he exists. Almost without realising it a vague idea flashes into his mind which recurs later on: 'He tried to imagine how he would feel at the moment if the money were
his own' (L, 203).

This idea is further added to by meeting Thami, who informs him than he now has a fast boat, and also that the Crédit Foncier is closed preventing Dyar depositing the money. Dyar thinks 'legally the money belongs to whoever has it. And I've got it' (L, 208), but it has come about through a series of accidents, not his strength of will. He is suddenly confronted with the possibility of having the money which he believes will enable his self to be free. Although he still feels 'inextricably bound up' (L, 208) in Tangier's corrupt world he thinks he is making a gesture of liberation in hiring Thami's boat to make his escape. Bowles ironically undercuts Dyar's decisive act by the fact that Thami's boat has been purchased with the money he has accepted from Eunice Goode. Inevitably there is no escape for Dyar.

The money, however, allows him some sense of power over Thami:

Dyar relaxed voluptuously, savouring the first small delights of triumph. It was already a very pleasant thing to have Thami rushing around out there, intent on helping him (L, 211-212).

Yet again Dyar is deluding himself because Thami is merely pretending to serve Dyar with the expectation of a large reward. Thami is playing his own 'game' and 'he had every intention of playing along until he satisfied his curiosity... of whether there might be some money in it for him' (L, 210). As Bowles establishes one relationship based on economics and power so he juxtaposes it with another, that of Daisy and her husband Luis. Bowles's view of humanity expressed in *Let It Come Down* is unceasingly brutal for he is reflecting a diseased world - as he told Harvey Breit 'I am writing about disease. Why? Because I'm writing about today...'. And the major aspect of this disease is the way in which people treat one another. We learn that Daisy had 'abandoned to the care of her father's family' her daughter but 'the fortune...she had kept' (L, 215). The juxtaposition emphasises
the fact that the wealth is more important and that human emotions can be pushed aside. Similarly her third husband, Luis, 'dry and hard and impersonal as a rock'(L,216) merely wants Daisy as an addition to his 'list of possessions'(L,217) and that their marriage was just 'to own her completely'(L,217). Daisy, for all her hard-heartedness, is another victim in the novel. To hide her feelings she indulges, like Dyar, in romantic fantasies like that of the 'great ragged Moor...looking at her evilly through slits of eyes'(L,186) whom she imagines entering her bedroom to ravish her. These fantasies help her to escape from the reality of her life with Luis who has affairs with other women, but which she permits 'as if by mutual agreement'(L,218).

It is upon Dyar who for all his 'ingenuousness' and 'innocence' Daisy has designs. She wants to tempt him during an intimate dinner and appropriately describes him as a kind of game that she can unravel; 'he was like an unanswered riddle, a painting seen in semi-darkness...'(L,220).

When Daisy gives Dyar his first experiences of majoun, and promises 'a forbidden way of thought'(L,224) he is sceptical, but it soon begins to work on him. Daisy describes personality, using the image of a house as a 'centre...your objective idea of yourself'(L,227) and that as long as you can see the house from anywhere in the grounds it acts 'like a compass' to reassure you of your direction. Majoun, she says, offers a new direction, but without disrupting the centre with all its comforting presence. Ironically, in mentioning the idea of a strong centre and a sense of location she touches upon the essence of Dyar's problem, for he has no sense of himself to begin with. The other places opened by majoun will only serve to panic Dyar further about his own relationship to the world around him. Furthermore, as the drug takes its grip on Dyar he loses control over his own illusions and is forced to see 'new places inside'(L,228). Just as money had seemed to give Dyar some power
and control, another external force (majoun) deprives him of this feeling. As Alfred Chester interestingly puts it, 'under kif, everyone becomes part of the network. Friends, lovers, all of them are agents of another power.' The freedom seeking Dyar is struck down again by a 'sense of uneasiness' and his paranoia makes him want 'to prevent Daisy from knowing what was going on inside him' (L, 230) and so 'his mind withdrew to a remote, dark corner of his being' (L, 232).

Sex offers Dyar an opportunity to prove to Daisy that he is in control of himself, but the chaotic and humorous scene which follows shows he is not.

He was floating in the air, impelled by a hot, dry wind which enveloped him, voluptuously caressed him (L, 232).

Daisy realises Dyar is not in control and feels 'he's scarcely human. He's not conscious of me as me...' (L, 232). Indeed when Dyar makes love with Daisy it is because he is still under the influence of majoun and in that condition his need for comfort is revealed openly. He identifies Daisy with a comforting Earth Mother providing warmth and protection for him, and offering a special natural freedom.

The skin of her arm was smooth, the flesh was soft... The soft endless earth spread out beneath him, glowing with sunlight, untouched by time, uninhabited, belonging wholly to him (L, 233-34).

In his hallucinatory state the sexual contact signifies a greater communion with the 'untouched' world of nature with which he associates freedom and it reveals in him 'a corner of existence... [he] had not been able to reach' (L, 235). The drug misleads Dyar and he has found no peace, except for the fleeting moment.

The most important thing in the world was to prolong the moment of soothing emptiness in the midst of which he was living (L, 235).

It is Daisy who identifies Dyar's dilemma when she says, 'you're not really alive, in some strange way. You're dead' (L, 238). She sees that he lacks all real connection to the world around him and that he exists only inside himself, bound up with all his fears. But she
associates him with the 'age', as Bowles does throughout the novel, since he is product of a society and a culture.

We're all monsters... It's the Age of Monsters... You're the greatest monster of all... With that great emptiness in your hand (L, 238-9).

She knows too that 'everything falls apart... the disintegration merely comes sooner, or later, depending on you. Going to pieces is inevitable' (L, 234). She applies this observation to another idea, 'Man muss nur sterben... That means we are supposed to have free will...'(L, 235).

Coming as these do at the end of Book Three, they provide a perfect comment on the novel and on Dyar. He believes in 'free will' and yet is constantly manipulated and he denies the inevitability of life through his desperate quest for satisfaction. Dyar seems to repress his real fears to try and keep the inevitable disintegration at bay, but the action of the novel has the effect of unleashing all the forces he has kept locked inside.

As Book Four, 'Another Kind of Silence', begins Dyar has made a choice to steal the money and to accept the responsibility for his actions. However as he takes this step he undergoes an important journey - both a literal voyage, in Thami's boat, and a symbolic journey into himself.

Through his memory Dyar moves back into his childhood,

He found himself entering a region of his memory which... he thought had been lost forever (L, 246) and to a sense of ease which he has never repeated as an adult. Through the security and protection of his mother Dyar had a relationship with the world around him which he has longed for since,

Like the sky, his mother was spread above him; not her face, for he did not want to see her eyes at such moments because she was only a person like anyone else, and he kept his eyes shut so that she could become something much more powerful (L, 247).

At the moment when he appears to be acting for himself Dyar has to refer
back to the security of childhood and the guiding presence of his mother, much like he did with Daisy and will do at the end. The vision of his mother, bound up with the comforting strength of nature, is used by him to reassure his action,

Her voice was above, and she was all around; that way there was no possible danger in the world (L,247).

His mother symbolises his attachment to the imprisoning world he seeks to escape and her comfort is at once a security and a cage around him. Dyar has broken that tie in leaving New York but the security it offers to the contingency of his present life is very attractive. As Hecate states in Macbeth '...by the strength of their illusion/Shall draw him on to his confusion...You all know security/Is mortals' chiefest enemy'. This 'security', supplied through his memory of childhood and the protection of his mother-as-guardian and choice-maker, allows Dyar to feel as if he was 'not being involved...left out, of being beside reality rather than in it'(L,248).Retreating into memory reflects his inability to stand alone and break free totally from his past and all those who direct his life. The mothering comfort is a deceptive evasion of the real situation he is in and serves only to prevent, like the drugs, a true perception of his condition.

However, as he rises to shout at the Jilali boatman he has a new feeling, firstly of the 'absurdity' of his situation and then the realisation that he has brought it about. This moment could be interpreted as a revelation of existential awareness, but Dyar's belief that he wanted to do this...it had been his choice. He was responsible...he could do nothing else but go on and see what would happen, and that this impossibility of finding any other solution was a direct result of his own decision (L,248), seems rather delusory. He has chosen to steal the money, but the circumstances leading to that moment were either manipulated by others or purely accidental, certainly not of his making. Dyar, in his new confident mood, believes that his life is linear and that he has, at last, taken command of it.
At last he was living, that whatever the reason for his doubt a moment ago, the spasm which had shaken him had been only an instant's return of his old state of mind, when he had been anonymous, a victim. He told himself...he expected now to lead the procession of his life, as the locomotive heads the train, no longer to be a helpless incidental in the middle of a line of events, drawn one way and another, without the possibility or even the need of knowing the direction in which he was heading (L,249).

Yet alongside what appears to be a 'new' Dyar, exists the basic contradiction that he is not in control, despite the apparent choices he has made because he had 'complete dependence on Thami'(L,270). Also 'he could do nothing else but go on and see what would happen'(L,248) which indicates that he has simply surrendered his self to the forces rather than take command of them.

Thami's confident self-possession is a stark contrast to Dyar's unsure condition and leads to an abiding paranoia that builds throughout these final scenes. Everything Thami does appears suspicious to Dyar:

the reply seemed devious and false...The bastard's planning something or other (L,251).

I can't even think in front of him...You're the one...I'm on to you (L,252).

Thami appears to watch him constantly 'like a man watching a film'(L,252). The image is appropriate and has been used elsewhere in the novel when Dyar 'pushed his memory of yesterday evening further, like a film being run backwards'(L,178). Dyar's life is like a film because it is an illusion which seems only to represent what is real in a distanced way. Secondly he is empty or blank like film waiting to have other people's impressions placed upon it. Later Bowles describes Dyar's mind as 'a gigantic screen against which things were beginning to be projected...' (L,303).

As Dyar nears the end of his journey his paranoia increases and the threatening landscape and incessant rain close in to add to a new feeling of imprisonment.

The heavy fog was like wind-driven smoke...Then with a swoop the substance of the air changed, because white and visible it wrapped
itself around their faces and bodies, blotting out everything. (L, 260)

Dyar who had sought freedom becomes caged again

The sky continued grey and thick, the rain went on falling, the wind still came from the east... (L, 258).

and in the increasingly disturbed mind of Dyar, Thami represents all the forces that have tried to cage him during his life.

He thinks he's going to keep me cooped up... He's got another think coming... Why does he want to keep me hidden? (L, 259)

Dyar perceives all Thami's actions as suspicious now and is involved in the novel's final game - a game of human confidence pointing out the immense gulf between the two cultures. Dyar outlines the rules;

The other must not suspect that he suspected. Thami was already playing the idiot: he too would be guileless, he would encourage Thami to think himself the cleverer... (L, 263).

He sees Thami's haggling over payment as a part of it too;

Was this haggling, genuine enough in appearance, merely a part of the game, intended to dull whatever suspicion he might have, replacing it with a sense of security which would make him careless? (L, 264)

It is just another economic relationship built on suspicion and a need to gain power over the other - as Dyar keeps telling himself 'I'm paying the bastard'(L, 266).

In order to conquer his fears of Thami he constructs an elaborate scenario in his mind based on 'all the Western films he had seen as a child(L, 272). Dyar finds no basis in reality, but must turn to the illusions provided through films.

He was conscious of distorting probability, and yet, goaded by an overwhelming desire to make something definite out of what was now equivocal (to assume complete control himself, in other words), he allowed his imagination full play in forming its exaggerated versions of what the day might bring forth (L, 272).

The nature of Dyar's view of things is equivocal because his own judgement is so illusory and unsure, but he longs for a 'definite' sense of 'complete control' even if he must imagine it. Thami, however, still threatens him and makes him feel 'like a rat in a trap'(L, 272), so Dyar turns to
Thami's kif-pipe for some relief.

He believes the drug might help to make the right kind of decisions because 'he wanted to believe he must not hesitate'(L,272). To avoid hesitation Dyar believes he has to make sure that 'he would act, and not think' (L,272). As on the beach earlier, Dyar attaches importance to direct action and the response to inner feelings. What he fails to accept here is that he is actually distorting his own feelings by using kif and later majoun. The drugs only offer Dyar a greater ease of deception, to the point that 'he had the impression that flying would be easy'(L,273).

Having broken free from Wilcox and Tangier by stealing the money, Dyar feels he is more in command of his own fate, although he recognises he is still in a 'cage':

It was possible he was still in the cage...but at least no one else had the keys. If there were any keys, he himself had them (L,273).

The kif deceives him into thinking that he is in control when in fact he is in danger of surrendering all decision making to the power of the drug. But as he has already commented, it gives the power to act, but not to think and so imbalances the mind in a hazardous way, allowing it to deceive itself. Alfred Chester has explained this.

When the Nazarene smokes kif, he makes the mistake of imagining he can see through the veil of illusion, through the intermediate letters out to Alpha and Omega...You see illusions as illusions, delusions as delusions. But the mind of the Nazarene, that restless searching mind, is built to go further. He thinks if he spots all the illusions and the self-deceptions, they will total up to a reality. It is like imagining that zero plus zero equals one. The Nazarene likes to draw conclusions...He makes an order and a logic out of his clues and picks a guilty party. Because he can see that all the letters from Beta to Upsilon are frauds, he imagines he is on the edge of Alpha-Omega...the Nazarene feels he is on the verge of a new understanding, a new consciousness...it is the Nazarene mind tricking itself back into illusion. 48

This suggests the way in which Dyar's mind works in these final scenes of the novel, embroiled in 'his game of mental solitaire'(L,275). It is as if the game which the novel has played out has become condensed into his mind now and there he must struggle with himself to find a winner. The competition is reduced to the single question of whether
Dyar can take control of himself and his fate, or whether he must continue being ruled by external forces.

As Chester writes, Dyar becomes confident about his future and thinks 'he was going to get out of the trap' (L, 272) and yet he is clearly under the influence of the 'deceptive landscape' (L, 276) in which 'what looked nearby was far-off'. As the kif takes effect Dyar's uneasiness returns to the surface and becomes amplified until every hope seems to disintegrate:

- at this moment he was conscious that the props that held up his future were in the act of crumbling (L, 288-9)

and

- a part of the mechanism that held his being together seemed to have given way (L, 289).

Bowles once more points out the fragility of Dyar's state of mind and ironically suggests that any control he believes he has over his own fate is illusory.

The next movement towards the novel's violent climax is the Jilali dance that Dyar accidentally stumbles into at the height of his anxiety. The dance's hypnotic appeal engages Dyar in 'complete domination' (L, 294), a feeling common to his existence. He is not, however, sure about the dancer because 'it was hard to say whether they were commanding him or he them' (L, 294). The parallel to Dyar's own circumstances is very apparent and it helps to focus his mind onto the question of his own grasp on life. He feels a sense of 'participation' in the dance and recognises 'that the man was dancing to purify all who watched' (L, 294). It is as if Dyar feels the mutilation he witnesses is happening to him and the blood spilt is purging him of all his uneasiness and allowing him to be 'liberated' (L, 295) into 'a world which had not yet been muddied by the discovery of thought' (L, 294).

On leaving the dance he feels a new sense of directness so that 'whatever awaited him out there had to be faced' (L, 295), but as Eric Mottram has written, 'he is western; he has no experience of satisfying pattern,
only a stimulus to clear action..."\(^{49}\) Thinking himself to be 'purified', Dyar rejects his 'childish and neurotic...fear' about Thami's possible threat and adopts a more friendly attitude to his companion. All through these scenes Dyar has been under the influence of kif, that 'treacherous stuff'(L,298) which 'at least made the present moment bearable'\(\text{(L,298)}\). Appropriately the word 'treacherous' connects the drug with the other characters who have been manipulating Dyar in the novel and adds to the sense that he is never in control.

In the final scenes it is not kif, but majoun which Dyar takes, as he did with Daisy earlier. Its immense power exposes him further to external control, for once he has taken it he has abdicated himself to its 'magic':

\[
\text{as he swallowed the magical substance he was irrevocably delivering himself over to unseen forces which would take charge of his life for the hours to come (L,299).}
\]

The majoun, taken to liberate his mind like the Jilali dance seems to have done for a moment, actually only unleashes what is already inside Dyar. As Bowles has written 'kif is simply the key which opens a door to some particular chamber of the brain that lets whatever was in there out'.\(^{50}\) Bowles's symbol of the door is used exactly in Dyar's hallucinatory sequence, for it comes to epitomise the way out of the 'magic room'. To reach the door Dyar has to contend with 'a tortuous corridor made of pure time'(L,307) along which he must pass to arrive at the door. Yet in his anxious mind the door may not just be a way out, for it might also be the way in for forces seeking to destroy him.

It was not sure, it could not be trusted. If it opened when he did not want it to open, by itself, all the horror of existence could crowd in upon him \(\text{(L,307)}\).

Bowles returns to the cage image, for Dyar has to choose whether or not to risk making a choice for himself and in so doing moving beyond the relative comfort of his 'magic room'. Dyar's fear is of having to choose;
he would prefer a kind of calm, static world: 'if only existence could be cut down to the pinpoint of here and now, with no echoes reverberating from the past, no tinglings of expectation from time not yet arrived!' (L, 276). But he chooses to go outside briefly before returning to the room with its reassuring feeling that 'time was slowly dissolving' (L, 307).

In the womb-like security that Dyar yearns for, Thami now is an intruder and a threat who in his drugged mind becomes associated with all the forces which threaten his security. Dyar focuses again on the door, rattling but only just keeping out the world: 'If it opens...if it opens' he says to himself.

In his mind Thami and the door fuse as the means by which the threatening world might enter and so in his final act Dyar murders Thami by driving a nail into his skull and so fixing the world into a stasis. The action, aimed at securing his magical world, is deeply ironic because the effort of choice and the assertion of free will that this act might appear to be is severely compromised by the fact that Dyar is not actually in control of himself - the drug is. Secondly, the act does not free Dyar at all, it merely destroys the means of escape totally since Thami was the man who could help him out of Morocco. Thirdly, the act is committed both under majoun but also by a man in a deep regression, babbling like a child:


Dyar has retreated from the responsibilities of his adult self, of which he has never been in command, to the relative peace and tranquility of childhood where choices are made by others. He has always felt that 'childhood had come to an end when he was not looking' (L, 277) and that 'he had always believed that, although childhood had been left far behind, there would still somehow, some day, come the opportunity to finish it in the midst of its own anguished delights' (L, 277). Under the power of kif Dyar tries to make that connection along 'the hidden filaments of
memory' (L, 277) to childhood because it is there he needs to 'finish'. Ironically he foresees his final movement into the irresponsibility of childhood as a kind of liberation from his own unfinished existence.

Having killed Thami his mind becomes a jumble of childhood memories and images all redolent of his fear about being trapped.

Someone had shut the bureau drawer he was lying in and gone away, forgotten him (L, 309).

Dyar has identified his fears with his rational mind and believes 'that warm, humid, dangerous breeding place for ideas had been destroyed' (L, 310). But Dyar's violent act cannot free him, or purify him as the Jilali's mutilation did because he remains alone and devoid of community.

As the novel ends Dyar is described as totally alienated and broken, existing in a timeless, fragmented state.

Today was like an old, worn-out film being run off—dim, jerky, flickering, full of cuts, and with a plot he could not seize. It was hard to pay attention to it (L, 311).

As before in the novel the film image is appropriate to summarise Dyar's unreal, detached state and here merely underlines the fact that despite his final, dramatic act he 'could not seize' the moment. Ironically Dyar had always disliked films because they 'made the stationariness of existence more acute' (L, 15). By the end he has really achieved nothing himself, he has remained stationary like a film.

As Daisy arrives to try and persuade him to return, Dyar is 'behaving like a small child' (L, 312) and refuses to listen to her pleas. Alone and broken, he begins to see the deceit all around him and in his own life. He tries to pretend that Thami is not dead, but he can no longer deceive himself, 'he tried to play the old game with himself...It would not work...games were finished' (L, 317). The game of deception has ended but only at the cost of shattering Dyar's life and revealing to him the falsity of the world in which he had existed. Only now can he feel he has 'a place in the world, a definite status, a precise relationship with the
rest of men. Even if it had to be one of open hostility, it was his, created by him' (L,318).

The novel's final irony is that Dyar's action, which gives him some sense of a 'definite status', is an a-social one which pushes him outside any human community. As Bertens correctly writes, 'Dyar perversely reaches his goal, but in the process he has severed all links with humanity and can only wait for the end that seems inevitable'. He has reached what Daisy had earlier predicted, the inevitability of life-disintegration. Dyar's desire for selfhood and individual satisfaction has driven him beyond humanity and into an act of violent, hallucinatory transgression. It is only there within the realm of unlimited pure ego that western man can achieve satisfaction, only there can Dyar, as Western Everyman, be free. Unable to find any true relationship to the world, Dyar's only course is a regression to an illusory and negative freedom in a pre-conscious realm. His final journey through childhood takes him to the womb itself and a 'magic room' where he can be both himself and not-himself. But to yearn for such a state is to rob him of his humanity as a being-in-the-world and so to deny him existence. Ironically Dyar's drive for selfhood has forced him back to the perfect irresponsibility of the womb, but the regression is itself disintegrative since man cannot exist at such an extreme point without becoming inhuman. It is only in the moment of transgression, when Dyar kills Thami, that he has any sense of freedom because it is then he has acted and the 'warm, humid dangerous breeding place for ideas had been destroyed'(L,310). In this limbo state he has entered 'another region, a place quite different from all places', where time does not exist. But at that precise moment when thought is destroyed (literally Thami's brain is attacked) and Dyar feels liberated from the anxiety of his own adult consciousness, he lets into his 'magic room' 'the inhuman night'(L,310). To achieve his goal Dyar has become inhuman; 'He was not real, but he knew he was alive' (L,310).
Only at this moment does he truly experience what he had thought about on the beach:

The whole of life does not equal the sum of its parts. It equals any one of the parts; there is no sum. The full grown man is no more deeply involved in life than the new born child... (L, 194).

His search for the 'sum' has brought him to this violent moment of liberation when he is appropriately seen as a new-born child and beyond that as an embryo within the protective womb. Yet his 'liberation' is severely limited by the fact that he is alone, since to attain 'his unshakeable certainty, his conviction that his existence and everything in it was real, solid, undeniable' (L, 317) he has had to instigate 'the raising of a great barrier... impenetrable and merciless' (L, 318). As William Barrett has written,

In seeking for security we seek to give our existence the self-contained being of a thing. The For-Itself [Sartre's pour-soi] struggles to become the In-Itself [en-soi], to attain the rock-like and unshakeable solidity of a thing. But this it can never do so long as it is conscious and alive. Man is doomed to the radical insecurity and contingency of his being...

Bowles dramatizes in this final scene the futility of an egotistical quest for the self, for the effort to fix any single concept of the self is to deny its immense variation. The rational effort to rigidify the self and secure it within a definable moment actually destroys the essential nature of the thing itself. But Dyar's delusory moment cannot last and he must become conscious of his action and in doing so he is forced to admit the impossibility of his own real freedom. When Daisy arrives the next day Dyar felt 'there was not enough of him left to feel strongly about anything; everything had been spent last night' (L, 311). Dyar's cherished self is disintegrating as the world closes in around him leaving him alone.

He sat down in the doorway and began to wait. It was not yet completely dark (L, 318).

He has fulfilled Holland's statement about modern man and modern society:
The species is not at all intent on destroying itself. That's nonsense. It's intent on being something which happens inevitably to entail its destruction, that's all (L,133).

Through Dyar's journey Bowles has once again been attacking the belief of rational, egocentric man that he somehow has an inalienable right to exist within the world. The disintegration portrayed in *Let It Come Down* is of the questing individual striving for a selfhood defined by free will, but within a world where freedom is impossible. The culture and society which perpetuates individualist theory of the self has created the kind of New York and Tangier outlined in the novel and also the kind of distraught and empty personality of Nelson Dyar. The novel's action is a way of 'attacking in words' the kind of social structure which permits people like Dyar to perpetuate its values and ideologies. Bowles's aim is clear:

If a writer can incite anyone to question and ultimately to reject the present structure of any facet of society, he's performed a function...I want to help society go to pieces, make it easy. 55
The Spider's House: A World of Lies.

Nothing was what it seemed, everything had become suspect.¹

What you do is nearer to what you are than what you think is.²
Between 1949 and 1952 Bowles wrote three stories which indicate the areas that his work was moving towards: 'Doña Faustina', 'The Delicate Prey' and 'If I Should Open My Mouth'. They suggest many of the themes and ideas which emerge in The Spider's House and Up Above the World as well as develop from the work he had already completed in his earlier novels, stories and poems. The particular focus in these stories is on various types of power and its application within the world, an idea at the heart of both his next novels. They continue to examine the influence such obsessions have on the human character and how its distortions are reflected in the form of society that they perpetuate. In the epigraph to a collection of stories published in Britain for John Lehmann, A Little Stone, Bowles suggested the ramifications of this idea.

Once and for all, where is the cause of these pains and cries? Who has twisted you and within you twisted all the order of the world, all ideas, the sky, your acts and your least distractions? It is a small object, a little stone, a bad tooth. And it made you vibrate in every fibre, like the whistle fitted over the column of steam.

As ever, Bowles was expressing a belief in the inner self having a substantial importance in the 'the order of the world' and if one was distorted or 'twisted' then so would the other. In these three stories and then in the more enlarged form of The Spider's House, Bowles examined the essence of power as the 'bad tooth'.

In 'Doña Faustina' the desire for power is realised through witchcraft in a story which owes a great deal to Bowles's interest in myth and magic. Doña Faustina, as her name suggests, is a female Faust who seeks mastery over the world by murdering little children and collecting their hearts. Her sole motivation appears to be the excitement of power and a need to retaliate against a society that consistently judges her as 'antisocial' or 'a little mad' (CS,206). Her magic gives her the look of a 'demon' (CS,208) and when she gives birth to a son he is 'the child from the Devil' (CS,213) who inherits all her accumulated power from the murdered
children - 'the power of thirty-seven' (CS, 213). This eating of children is a common element in many stories of witchcraft and in European folklore is most readily connected with the figure of Lilith, Adam's first wife, who wanted to be his equal and when rejected sought only to reverse the order of things in a male-dominated society. To do this she had children with demons, like Doña Faustina, and preyed on normal children for their strength. Lilith is also connected with the Lamia who devoured children and seduced sleeping men. In this tradition, to which Doña Faustina clearly belongs, woman is violent, lustful and the opposite of the comforting mother. She is instead 'allied with the powers of evil ... turning the world upside down... kill(ing) and eat(ing) babies instead of loving and nourishing them...'.

Her own evil power-obsession is transferred to her own son, Jesus-Maria who she hopes will become respectable and 'never bring dishonour upon us' (CS, 215). However, having risen to a position of authority within the social system his mother has transgressed against by becoming a colonel in the army, he cannot resist the need for greater power. To achieve this he must transgress the law of the society like his mother by releasing prisoners from his command. Ironically there are thirty-seven prisoners, corresponding to all the children murdered by his mother, and it is their 'freedom which gives him a supreme feeling; 'the only time he had ever known how it feels to have power' (CS, 216). The story dramatises the nature of power and the obsessive need to experience it outside the boundaries set down by social law. Power, in this story and in other Bowles works, is a law unto itself pushing men beyond social law in an urge to experience a sensation of mastery over their world. It emerges as a consequence of Man's arrogance and his desire for control, and it is highly appropriate that the power crazed Jesus Maria should be the child of a Terrible Mother - the perfect image of perverted natural forces.
Another story about the obsessiveness of power and about a human need to experience it, regardless of its consequences on the person or on the society, is 'If I Should Open My Mouth', in which Bowles portrays the mind of a man intent on mass murder. Ironically the power the man seeks is over his own mind through the extreme exercise of logic over the world in order to deny the power of his subconscious. Like Grover Soto in Up Above the World, he feels threatened by dreams because they come from a part of his mind over which he cannot exercise control. He writes in his diary that, 'I have tried desperately to find a door into the dream; perhaps if I could recall it, get back there, I could destroy its power' (CS,257). But all his efforts at 'logic and probability' (CS,257) do not seem able to destroy his subconscious which is 'an entity in itself, aware of my efforts to find it, and determined to remain hidden...[in a ] region within' (CS,257).

His plan is to poison vending machines and so take his revenge on the world for his own isolation and for all the ills of a society heading for 'the sheer, obscene horror' of the future (CS,256). Ironically he condemns totalitarian power, 'the influence...that one mind can have over millions ... (CS,256), and machines, 'these senseless toys' (CS,251), but seeks to impose his own mind over the world through an act of murderous logic. He represents, like Grover Soto, the extreme condition of the rational mind exercising its desire for control, order and ultimately power. A repressed unconscious mind, once again associated with the female ('Mother and then Anna...always seemed somehow to prevent me from indulging...' (CS,253) ) and a fear of its influence on his 'understanding of the world' (CS,258), lead him into an obsessive quest for power to 'forsake logic for magic' (CS,257). His inability to find a satisfactory balance within himself leads him to a brutal, destructive relationship with the world outside him. He is a typical Bowlesian victim of his own self, turned inward in anger by the society which appears only to alienate people so that all
'cords that could connect me in any way with the life have been severed ...' (CS, 258). He is like Nelson Dyar in *Let It Come Down* whose violence is a moment of contact which both liberates and destroys at the same time.

The last of these stories, 'The Delicate Prey', reveals a world in which all trust has gone and in which friendship is abused in the pursuit of power. It is a simple story of deception, murder and revenge but it contains within it a vision of humanity as calculating and brutal, without the qualities of trust and friendship upon which to build any future. The tribal differences between Driss and his killer, the Moungari, are emblematic of the colonial situation that Bowles explores in *The Spider's House* and in 'The Time of Friendship', because both examine the basis upon which people can live together with dignity.

In 1955 Bowles published his third novel *The Spider's House*. It used as background the events in Morocco following the removal of the Sultan Sidi Mohammed by the French occupiers and so became Bowles's most direct statement on the colonial-nationalist struggle in Morocco. Yet the book is about other events which are brought to a head by the wider political problems. There is a complexity of ideas in the novel involving the meaning of Islam, of political change, of self-discovery and of friendship, but underlying much of this are familiar Bowlesian concerns. Perhaps one of these least written about is the question of power. Bowles hints at an aspect of this in his notebooks:

> Bring up sins are finished motif – if no sin, everything is sin. If man can decide for himself. What is sin, what is not, he has committed the ultimate sin, that of striving to become God. 6

The end product of Man's striving for power and control in Bowles is to be God, to assume totalitarian authority over Man and Nature. As E.F. Edinger has written, 'Power motivation of all kinds is symptomatic of ego inflation. Whenever one operates out of a power motive omnipotence
is implied. But omnipotence is an attribute only of God'. It is most clearly demonstrated in Grover Soto in *Up Above the World*, but Bowles was working towards this concept in his earlier novels and none more so than in *The Spider’s House*. When man assumes control of everything, leaves nothing to other forces - call it God (Amar does in the book) or nature or magic or whatever - then he is truly alone with awesome responsibility for his actions. A connection between man/culture and God/Nature is seen being destroyed in the novel, through the character of Amar and the society in which he lives. As Bowles has said,

> It's simply an evocation of that which has been lost. We'll never have it again. It's finished, it's smashed, it's broken. We've killed God and that's the end of it. There won't ever be that again.

Bowles is, however, careful not to blame Colonialism alone, but also the willfulness of the Nationalists who are partly responsible for the destruction of the old system in Morocco. In a sense the two sides represent a typical power source, both keen to gain control and exercise authority, and it is those caught between who will always be its victims - the powerless. Stenham's view is probably Bowles's on this point, that is, 'both sides were wrong' and

> the only people with whom he could sympathize were those who remained outside the struggle: the Berber peasants, who merely wanted to continue with the life to which they were accustomed and whose opinion counted for nothing. They were doomed to suffer no matter who won the battle for power, since power in the last analysis meant disposal of the fruits of their labour (SH,163).

Ironically, Amar, who is caught between these sides, believes he has power - traditional religious power, *baraka*, that Bowles has defined as 'white magic...the power, to work beneficently...' and D.F. Eickelman as 'A concrete manifestation of God’s will'. For Amar, his initiation in the novel is away from a certainty in his Islamic faith and in the value of his *baraka* when faced by the vicissitudes of a real, political world beyond his experience. As the novel begins, Amar's faith is total, his *baraka* 'was very strong, so powerful that in each generation one man had always made healing his profession' (SH,25). As he becomes increasingly
aware of his 'gift' he spins fantasies about his own power and 'wisdom'

enabling him to advise the Sultan and 'with no hesitation...step in and
take control', solving problems 'by staking everything on his own force'
(SH, 26). The irony is that Amar's power, resulting from tradition,
faith and surrender is being superseded by the world of 'politique'.

His father has taught him that politique is lies and that outside of
Islamic law, 'beyond the gates of justice lay the world of savages,
Kaffarine, wild beasts' (SH, 115).

This is what he remembers at the end of his experiences in the novel
when he has grown hateful towards the French Colonial power and been
betrayed by the Istiqlal Nationalists too.

The government and laws they might make would be nothing but a
spiderweb, built to last one night...the world of politique was
a world of lies...

As the revelations crowd in on Amar he sees his own power is nothing
against the belief in this world of lies.

He felt supremely deserted, exquisitely conscious of his own weakness
and insignificance. His gift meant nothing; he was not even sure
that he had any gift, or ever had one. The world was something dif-
ferent from what he had thought it. It had come nearer, but in coming
nearer it had grown smaller (SH, 378).

In reaching this point, Bowles reveals much more about the 'loss' he
referred to earlier, and what he has described elsewhere as

the ancient pattern of concord between God and man, agreement between
theory and practice, identity of word and flesh (or however one
prefers to conceive and define that pristine state of existence we
intuitively feel we once enjoyed and now have lost). 12

It is the 'concord between God and man' which Bowles reveals in Amar and
which is gradually disrupted by 'knowledge' so that it replaces his 'gift',
his 'natural wisdom' and at the same time dispossesses him of a vision
of the world which is at once enchanted, mysterious and harmonious. The
loss makes the world 'smaller' because it reduces everything to knowledge,
to brutal facts, calculations and a rationality that precludes the flights
of imagination and the wondrous presence of 'baraka'.

This provides the basic movement of Amar in the novel, but Bowles
dramatizes his ideas around three characters; Amar, John Stenham and Lee Burroughs. Stenham, an American, wants to believe that he is closer to the Islamic view of the world and to a more primitive way of thinking. He provides vital terms within which the novel moves:

The key question...was that of whether man was to obey Nature, or attempt to command her...To him wisdom consisted in the conscious and joyous obedience to natural laws...(SH,152).

Whereas, his friend Moss believed 'man's very essence lay in the fact that he had elected to command...[and] wisdom is a primitive concept...what we want now is knowledge' (SH,152-3).

The modern world, associated with Moss here, is one of knowledge, but the novel focuses on its disadvantages through Amar's alternative wisdom. Many of Amar's friends have been to school and so 'had decided what the world looked like, what life was like, and they would never examine either of them again to find out whether they were right or wrong' (SH,23). Knowledge is seen as reductive, cutting off the mind from its true relationship with the world - a relationship which for Amar is one of wonder: 'in his heart he felt that they (the animals and birds and flowers) all belonged really to him...' (SH,21). His friends have been taught 'what the world means' (SH,23), and Amar believes 'no one can understand it completely' (SH,23). Amar's 'wisdom', his physical agility reached not 'by imposing any conscious discipline, for he had no conception of discipline', but by 'simply allowing his body to express itself, to take complete command, and develop itself as it wished' (SH,89) and his all-encompassing faith can be seen as the total power of baraka as Clifford Geertz defines it,

the best analogue for 'baraka' is personal presence, force of character, moral vividness. 13

It is this attraction which brings Amar and Stenham together in the novel - again Bowles structures this ironically. Stenham sees in the boy the recipient of immense 'natural' power and harmony which he, a cyn-
ical and disillusioned American has long ago lost. This is seen in the fact that Stenham's only yearning is for the past - both historically for a more primitive cultural base and personally for a lost childhood. In this he is typical of Bowlesian heroes who yearn for the remembered innocence of childhood and a connection with the forces of nature and the informed pre-rational mind. Indeed the two states have a deep psychological connection, as E.F. Edinger has pointed out. 'Children share with primitive man the identification of ego with the archetypal psyche and ego with the outer world. With primitives inner and outer are not at all distinguished'.

Occasionally Stenham recalls from his past moments of 'unquestioning happiness' and sometimes for the space of a breath he could recapture the reality, a delicious pain that was gone almost as it appeared, and it provided him with proof that there was a part of him which still lay bathed in the clear light of those lost days (SH,183).

At least part of Stenham's interest in Amar is because he recognises in the boy a presence and enchantment which he no longer feels in the face of the world. In this sense Amar typifies so much that Bowles's characters are searching for, youth, vitality, vision and a special relationship within himself and with the world around him. Ironically it is part of Stenham's contradictory nature that he cannot truly respond to Amar's inner strength and instead remains outside as an observer and exploiter.

For Amar, Stenham becomes a protection sent by Allah to help him through the disrupted city of Fez, but also he becomes a means by which Amar is exposed to more of the world 'beyond the gates of justice' where the boy's codes, so admired by Stenham, must be questioned. The familiar collision of worlds brings forward a cruel irony: that Stenham yearns for Amar's view of the world but is not strong enough to accede and that Amar is forced by a world which has produced Stenham's very disillusionment to question and maybe even to abandon the very bases of his inner
strength. It's the book's ironic and bitter twist that its conclusion should be so bleak and so empty.

Although the novel centres on the relationship of Amar and Stenham, the inability to reach any binding of cultures or brotherhood, stems from Stenham's character itself. He is a man built on contradictions, torn between a 'yearning for' and a 'living with.'

Stenham's life in North Africa, like Port Moresby's and Nelson Dyar's, is an effort to escape from the cage of Western values which he claims to despise and which he feels have given rise to his own anxiety. This disillusionment with the Western technological society is often expressed in the novel: the West is 'rational and deadly' (SH, 320) and he hated Moslems who allied themselves with Western thought...[and] prated of education and progress, who had forsaken the concept of a static world to embrace that of a dynamic one - he would have gladly have seen them all executed...(SH, 209). It is this desire for a static world, without change of any kind, which Stenham wants, for it prevents the need for personal choice if everything remains the same. This was the state his own mind preferred because 'the part of his consciousness which dealt with the choosing of sides had long ago been paralysed by having chosen that which was designed to suspend all possibility of choice...[which] enabled him to remain at a distance from both evils...(SH, 325). Without choice he can avoid the 'poison of the present' (SH, 24) and remain 'at a distance' and on the outside of life, uncommitted: he 'would have like to prolong the status quo because the decor that went with it suited his personal taste' (SH, 274). This is epitomised in his view of Fez as an 'enchanted labyrinth sheltered from time, where...he had at last found a way back' (SH, 163). But as Lee comments later living in the city 'would be like being constantly under the influence of some drug' (SH, 151). That is what Stenham wants, to be anaesthetized against any intrusions into his static mind/world from out-
Here lies the root of Stenham's dilemma. He wants to be a part of Morocco, but without involvement, and wants everything to suit his own demands. He sits between two worlds, without making a choice, but he expects the benefits of both to be his if he desires them. It is this cold arrogance of Stenham which Bowles demonstrates throughout the novel and which prevents him becoming a particularly sympathetic character. As we are told, 'in the end, it was his own preferences which concerned him' (SH,274). To understand him it is necessary to examine his contradictions as they appear in the novel.

Stenham's admiration for Amar is expressed clearly: he had been struck again and again by the boy's unerring judgement...[it] derived its strength rather from an unusually powerful and smoothly functioning set of moral convictions. To have come upon this natural wisdom...was incredible (SH,313).

But the way in which Bowles goes on to comment about Stenham's apprehension of it is more revealing. Stenham, the man who reviles the attitudes of the modern world, looks upon Amar's wisdom as a commodity, 'the first nugget' and 'hidden riches' (SH,313). The imagery is clear and suggests Stenham views Amar's wisdom as a mineral to be mined, taken from its natural state and 'used' in the world. Regardless of his intentions or claims, Stenham is still the product of his age; materialist and exploitative. We see this again in his relationship with Lee Burroughs which sounds like an elaborate power game rather than 'love' as has often been claimed.

The problem was not to discover who she was, but rather to assume that he knew, and make her willing to confirm the identification. She must never feel that his conversation was attempting to unfold her. Later...he would be granted that necessary glimpse into her mind that would tell him what he wanted to know (SH,174).

The tone of this suggests Stenham's deviousness and also his selfish need to possess. At the Djebel Zalagh festival Lee feels Stenham treats her 'like a piece of property being guarded against thieves...' and that it was part of his need to 'establish a sort of mesmeric control' (SH,303).
He resembles a parasite who takes from others, only to return to safety without ever truly communicating or committing himself. Stenham's way is summed up in the epigraph to Book III: 'To my way of thinking there is nothing more delightful than to be a stranger...I mingle with human beings...in order to be a stranger among them.' What counts is not what he claims, that is,'the conscious and joyous obedience to natural laws' (SH,152), but rather what lies behind it, the fact that 'nothing had importance save the exquisitely isolated cosmos of his own consciousness' (SH, 189). Despite Stenham's 'infantile hope that time might be halted and man set back to his origins' (SH,328), his major concern is not for Man as such, but for himself.

He had no compulsion to save the world...He merely wanted to save himself. That was more than enough work for one lifetime (SH,327). As a result of these contradictory forces, Stenham is torn, with a 'basic cleavage somewhere in him' (SH,190), between an awareness of the world's troubles and an inability to do anything about them or become involved. His way out is to become detached or retreat from the wreckage before it really affects him.

The 'cleavage' in Stenham is most obvious when he reveals his need for superiority over those around him, and particularly the Moroccans.

They're far, far away from us...We haven't an inkling of the things that motivate them...The mere fact that he could then even begin to hint at the beliefs and purposes that lay on the far side made him feel more sure in his own attempts at analysing them and gave him a small sense of superiority... (SH,11). (My emphases).

People become objects of study for Stenham, and 'pretending to know something that others could not know...was a little indulgence he allowed himself, a bonus for seniority' (SH,11). Secretly he admits 'a certain amount of hypocrisy in this attitude' (SH,11) and recognises it is ultimately an 'unbridgeable gap', and yet he is able to maintain an intellectual relationship with the Moroccans' culture. He is excited because they represent everything he is not:
After all, if they were rational beings, he thought, the country would have no interest; its charm was a direct result of the people's lack of mental development (SH, 203).

Stenham's distance allows him to judge people and apply his intellect in a way which reduces people to 'interesting' specimens trapped in a culture which he sees as worthwhile. Lee Burroughs comments that Stenham's is 'the point of view of an outsider, a tourist who puts picturesqueness above everything else' (SH, 182), and who fails to appreciate the needs of people themselves.

Relationships exist only as parts of his theory, and everything belongs to a studied intellectual approach which Stenham adopts to all things. Ironically he tries to see himself as closer to a non-intellectual tradition, calling 'the intellect...the soul's pimp' because it constantly seduced the soul with 'knowledge when all the soul needed was its own wisdom' (SH, 297). However, he is deceiving himself, for he is a writer with a need to possess not only the people around him but also to possess intellectually their world as well. To live in such a way is to be cold, 'only an onlooker' (SH, 266) as Amar comments, and to write books which reveal 'a militant detachment that bordered on the clinical' (SH, 284).

His fascination with the Moroccans is that they have not fallen prey to the intellect and to knowledge - the things he admires in Amar - and they are 'subject to no moods or impulses started by the mirror of the intellect' (SH, 319). Their attraction is precisely this irrationalism which he looks upon from a distance as 'therapeutic' because they embodied the mystery of man at peace with himself, satisfied with his solution of the problem of life... (SH, 210).

But Stenham knows 'the attempt to fathom the mystery was an endless task' because to do so meant 'to change oneself fundamentally in order to know them...to think as they thought, to feel as they felt...' (SH, 210). He realises it is 'a lifetime's work, and one of which he was aware he would some day suddenly tire.' (SH, 210). Like many of Bowles's characters,
Stenham has lost an 'anchorage in the eternal' and yet admires those who still possess it themselves, like Amar. However, Stenham's paradoxical position is that of a man who condemns the West as 'rational and deadly' and yet lives his life in the 'light of rationalism', watching others with an urge only to 'save himself'. Behind Stenham lies, what Amar calls 'the black wall of certainty', that is the inherent knowledge that if things go wrong he can 'move on to another place...not yet assailed by the poison of the present' (SH,224) and still feel the certainty of his touristic world. Stenham's certainty, underlying everything, is located in his ego and his self is the hub of reality and so, as George Steiner comments, he 'relates to the world outside itself in an exploratory, necessarily exploitative way. As knower and user, the ego is predator.' Lee calls him a 'selfish, egotistical, conceited monster' (SH,290) and Moss calls him 'selfish and inhuman' (SH,211).

When Moss says to Stenham 'from the moral viewpoint you're fundamentally a totalitarian' (SH,189), he touches upon a major element in the novel and within Bowles's work. In Up Above the World this becomes a central theme, but throughout his work he has shown the growth of control and cultural domination as elements of a wider totalitarianism and reduction in variety which are its symptoms. Here a single character, Stenham, is totalitarian because he

had come to execrate the concept of human equality...because the human heart demanded hierarchies (SH,189).

But within an individual psychology totalitarianism takes the form of an overwhelming ego sustained on the belief in itself as fundamentally right and true. This is Stenham's position since,

he had found no direction in which to go save that of further withdrawal into a subjectivity which refused existence to any reality or law but its own...Nothing had importance save the exquisitely isolated cosmos of his own consciousness (SH,189).

With this basis to his personality Stenham views the world without compassion and sees it either romantically, as he does the old Morocco, or
contemptuously as he does the new version. As Moss says he has 'no faith in the human race' (SH,204) which is later echoed by Lee who calls him 'a hopeless romantic without a shred of confidence in the human race' (SH,230).

From Stenham's belief in himself and his superiority 'flows that impulse which defines the modern situation, to dominate earth through scientific classification and technological use'. Despite his claims to the contrary, Stenham is never willing to 'fathom the mystery' of the world he says he admires, because to surrender - which is the rudiment of Amar's faith - is impossible for the egotist who believes ultimately in the supremacy of his own culture. He explains this in terms of 'one of his basic beliefs',

that a man must at all costs keep some part of himself outside and beyond life. If he should ever for an instant cease doubting, accept wholly the truth of what his senses conveyed to him, he would be dislodged from the solid ground to which he clung and swept along with the current, having lost all objective sense, totally involved in existence...A man cannot fashion his beliefs according to his fancy (SH,197).

Stenham's own superiority and control stems from being 'outside' and so able to remain aloof and detached from any full involvement in the life around him. The difference between him and Amar is that Amar is naturally 'swept along with the current' of his faith and his culture whereas Stenham fears it as a dissolution, a 'dislodging' of his secure ego. When the prospect of being 'totally involved in existence' emerges, Stenham retreats to the certainty of his own ego and Lee Burroughs's 'new world'. He wants to be in control, to risk nothing of himself, even though it attracts him.

This is seen at Djebel Zalagh where Stenham takes Lee Burroughs to escape Fez's troubles. Here amid the cult of Pan, with all its rites aimed at liberating the unconscious, elemental being, Stenham is confronted with the reality of losing his dominant ego. Lee is adamant that she
will not be influenced and so employs her conscious control to convince herself that 'it meant nothing' (SH,299). She knows, however, it 'represented an undefinable but very real danger' which would force her 'to go back, back...many thousands of years...' (SH,299) into her deepest unconscious. She recognises the inherent dangers of such a psychological journey to her own security and 'identity' and so is 'actively conscious' in her efforts at 'remaining that person' she wanted to be (SH,300).

As Lee continues to be resistant to the rhythmic dance and drum-beat of the festival, with its promise of 'another world, wholly autonomous, with its own necessities and patterns' (SH,304), it becomes clear to her that Stenham is 'succumbing'. Her analysis again draws our attention to his intellectual embrace of Morocco and his unwillingness to fully submit to its flow:

He was going to let his enthusiasm for the idea of the thing carry him off into a realm whose atmosphere was too thin for rationality to exist in it, and where consequently everything could be confused with everything else - a state of false ecstasy, false because self-induced (SH,305).

Stenham's ecstasy does not genuinely spring from the natural laws he claims to admire, but from a self-induced need to join the 'writhing mass'. But like many of Bowles's characters he exhibits only 'counterfeit emotions' (a motif advanced in Up Above the World) and wants only to 'use' the moment as a means of escaping his own anxiety.

This anxiety is defined by Stenham as not knowing 'where reality was, inside or out' (SH,191) and so in the rhythmic dance he finds a clarity which allows him to hide momentarily from himself. But he cannot avoid his continuing consciousness and so must emerge from the dance as the same person. He emerges, only to try once again to 'possess' Lee Burroughs who has been disturbed by the wild, unconscious elements of the dancing. Showing no new understanding from his contact with 'another world', Stenham seems even more dominant and egocentric. Lee comments 'what sort of
man was it who would take such a blatantly unfair advantage' from her situation? (SH,310). Bowles describes Stenham as 'aloof' and 'looking down at her' (SH,310) as if he possessed a renewed power which made him 'triumphant', seeking 'some perverse sort of victory over her' (SH,311).

He is the totalitarian Moss accuses him of being. He desires a supremacy and power over the objects and people around him, without any cost to himself. He shows, in the novel, an understanding of power which seems to elude others and suggests his underlying concern for its value to himself. He thinks of the Moroccan war as 'a battle for power' (SH,163) and tells Amar that the French are 'trying to take your religion away... so they can have all the power' (SH,203).

His final joining with Lee Burroughs is an assertion of his sexual power brought about by her financial dependence on Stenham. She has given all her money to Amar to buy a gun and so is powerless to pay her own fare back to Fez. In going with Stenham she gives in to him and so his question, 'what does it feel like to have power of life or death over another human being?' (SH,334), contains extreme irony, for that is what he has achieved. She finds a comfort in him which permits her to leave the terrifying Djebel Zalagh behind, while the assertion of his authority enables him to evade his own anxiety and retreat to the safety and 'certainty' of a set of values which Lee is clearly identified with:

one of her basic beliefs upon which her life rested was the certainty that no one must ever go back. All living things were in process of evolution, a concept which to her meant one thing: an unfolding, an endless journey from the undifferentiated to the precise, from the simple towards the complex, and in the final analysis from the darkness toward the light (SH,299).

His flirtation with the 'unformed and unconscious...the darkness...of the original night' (SH,299–300) is remedied by her bringing him, in her words, 'from the darkness toward the light' and offering him, what Eric Mottram calls, an 'illusory mobility, the open road a parody of possible change' as they drive off finally leaving Amar alone on the road.
As Stenham and Lee drive away, they represent tourists who have been toying with another culture or playing a game which has no real significance for them. The game motif is very common in the novel, as it was in *Let It Come Down*, and suggests the attitude of Bowles's characters to the countries they just pass through. In *The Spider's House*, Amar observes that Stenham and Lee's conversation was 'like a game in which the players, through fatigue or lack of interest, have ceased to keep the score, or even attention to the sequence of plays' (SH, 268). Later Stenham views the disturbances in the city as 'all a game' (SH, 273), whereas the Moroccans themselves are clearly far removed from this cold, detached view. Amar's employer, the potter, reminds him at one point, 'what do you think's going on here, a game? Don't you know it's a war?' (SH, 54).

The difference is important, for it highlights Bowles's theme of power and control. The world of tourism is one in which cultures become toys and part of an elaborate game which the rich and powerful can play. The Western arrogance exhibited by Stenham is part of this game and involves toying with lives as an amusement or diversion before moving on somewhere else.

Stenham flirts with the idea of a new consciousness at Djebel Zalagh, but he is unprepared to risk himself fully in its embrace. Ultimately he is fixed within a process of thought which is predatory and imperialist, and as George Steiner has noted,

> if man does not learn to overcome this imperialist subjectivity, he is doomed. But such learning means that he must return to the sources of his humanity...re-think 'the sense of Being'. 21

Stenham cannot make this 're-think' a reality and so it remains only an intellectual idea. Like Moresby, Dyar and other characters from the stories the alternative perceptions of the world beyond the cage are not easy to attain. To plunge into an appealing culture is to risk everything you are and to destroy yourself in the process, which is basically a retreat from the necessary confrontation within the self. Stenham, like
Moresby and Dyar, is a disillusioned man seeking alternatives from the anxiety which makes him feel 'I am here, of nothing, free' (SH, 162).

But as Magda King reminds us,

Anxiety can lead man to himself; it can also lead him away from himself...[it] confronts man with either gaining or losing himself.

He refuses the challenge to himself, asserts his ego and power and simply moves on with the same problems rooted within him. The novel's conclusion, and its tone throughout, suggests a sense of doom; in Stenham's unwillingness to really change, in Morocco's changing culture and for the growing belief in a totalitarian and insensitive homogeneity within the world itself.

The world they lived in was approaching its end, and beyond was unfathomable darkness...the city slowly withering, like some doomed plant...slowly life was assuming a monstrous texture... (SH, 51-52).

Whatever come to pass now, the city would never be the same again. That much he knew (SH, 523).

the same disease...was everywhere in the world. The world was indivisible and homogeneous (SH, 204).

Stenham's failure represents Bowles's dark vision of a world tearing itself apart and losing, in the process, all the positive elements that belong to deeply held beliefs and traditions. The passing of a particular culture and time are marked in the novel and echoed in the relationship of Stenham and Amar. The ultimate failure of their friendship further marks Bowles's own break with any hope of a reconciliation of cultures or a learning between them. As Stenham leaves Amar behind and settles instead for a transient unattainable quest, Bowles's work makes a substantial change. His growing commitment to 'preservation' of Moroccan culture replaced any reconciliation of cultures and his vision of the modern world becomes even darker through his final novel and later 'Western stories' (of which there are very few).

It is to Amar that we must return finally. Standing alone on the road he becomes symbolic of Bowles's vision of an impossible friendship.
between the worlds the boy is caught within. He is deserted by Stenham and Lee Burroughs because, in the end, they are unsure of his motives and their trust in him. There is no confidence between the two worlds.

Amar's journey through the novel is an initiation, a questioning of his position, of his *baraka* and of his whole concept of faith and life. He is an 'anomalous shadow from the world of yesterday' (SH,104) who possesses a natural power and wisdom seen nowhere else in the book:

> When Amar stepped out the door there was the whole vast earth waiting, the live, mysterious earth, that belonged to him in a way it could belong to no one else, and where anything at all might happen (SH,33).

This quotation indicates his special relationship to the earth which arises from his natural wisdom, but also suggests that the novel will involve him in a strange initiation into the new world around him. When Bowles commented that the novel was 'about the moment when the old is destroyed and the new breaks the shell and sticks its ugly head out', he had in mind Amar's traditional concepts of life, as well as his special vision suggested above. Stenham's anxious yearning for a way out of twentieth century life leads him into a nostalgic and naive fascination, or flirtation, with Morocco, but the real people like Amar are themselves being moved inevitably into that which he seeks to escape. Bowles has always been alert to the irony that modern man's dissatisfaction with his life attracts him to cultures which are themselves being consumed by the very products of the culture he is seeking to escape from. Stenham and Amar cross on this very same path.

Amar's mystical power allows him to achieve a contentment which Stenham envies, and to see

> the world behind the world, where reflection precludes the necessity for action, and the calm which all things seek in death appears briefly in the guise of contentment... (SH,132).

He is without yearning because he has surrendered to his faith and accepts that only Allah can command the future:
to be preoccupied with the future, either pleasantly or with anxiety, implied a lack of humility in the face of Providence, and was unforgivable (SH, 262).

This condition is impossible for Stenham whose anxiety is based on his own dissatisfaction with what he is and where he is going in life - for Amar that is 'mektoub', 'written' by Allah, and so not his to worry about. Stenham feels that Moslems embody the mystery of man at peace with himself, satisfied with his solution of the problem of life...accepting existence as it arrived to their senses fresh each morning, seeking to understand no more than that which was directly useful for the day's simple living...(SH, 210).

The West's great weakness is 'seeking to understand' and pursuing knowledge which forces it into a need to gain control, both over its own destiny and over the world itself. Westerners, like Stenham, believe they can control their destiny and that of others, and so can never truly embrace the culture of Morocco with its notion of surrender to greater forces. Indeed it is this challenge which Amar must face himself. Confronted with powers outside of faith, the French and the Nationalists, he is forced by circumstances to reassess his own position. As William Barrett comments, extreme situations provoke reactions:

Habit and routine are great veils over our existence...When the social fabric is rent, however, man is suddenly thrust outside, away from the habits and norms he once accepted automatically. There, on the outside, his questioning begins. 25

Amar is literally outside the walls of the Medina, where his existence is safe, when he meets Stenham and Lee Burroughs. It is here he is exposed to violence, treachery, plotting and friendship - all of which force him, in different ways, to examine his own existence. He witnesses a murder, meets a Nationalist leader Moulay Ali and begins to resent the French presence in his country. How can he remain apart from these issues?

The climax of the novel for Amar shows him betrayed by the Nationalists, suggesting once again that power drives men to treachery regardless of the human consequences. Amar's education in the novel presents him with the world of lies and betrayal by Moulay Ali and finally by Stenham who leaves
him on the road. Amar's view of the world is shattered because a harsh reality has entered it, bringing the very 'knowledge' he had managed to avoid for so long. It comes to him after his betrayal by Moulay Ali when he recognises 'an enormous piece of the puzzle had fallen unexpectedly into place...' (SH,378). When all the puzzle is complete all that is left is the 'black wall of certainty' where 'he would know, but nothing would have meaning, because the knowing was itself the meaning...' (SH,378). He is seeing the world Stenham wanted to escape, but failed to, and which the Nationalists desire for the new Morocco; a world where knowledge is all and wisdom and the truth are irrelevant. To enter this place is to lose the vitality of enchantment because it is destroyed by the 'politique' and the callousness of its systems of thought.

As Amar recognises this he still hopes Stenham, who he believes is a friend, will help him to return to the Medina, his family and his old self. But the second recognition is that there is no true understanding between him and Stenham and ultimately Stenham is 'embarrassed, annoyed... angry' (SH,383) with Amar and simply wants to get rid of him. Ironically, Stenham's words 'there's no time' suggest his rush to move on and to escape the uncomfortable possibilities of change. He fails to see the impact of all this on Amar who is finally abandoned, having lost his 'wisdom' in the terrible education the novel offers to him, and who is condemned to remain in a limbo beyond his world. He is left feeling like the character in the epigraph to Book One.

I have understood that the world is a vast emptiness built upon emptiness...And so they call me the master of wisdom. Alas! does anyone know what wisdom is?

Brought crashing into the modern world, Amar experiences a world of deceit where 'nothing was what it seemed, everything had become suspect' (SH,52) and where value is placed on power and a knowledge which strips things of their true meaning and worth. All that Stenham admired in Amar has been eaten away by this knowledge and the result is disillusionment,
emptiness and the loss of meaning and purpose to his life. His 'baraka',
the source of spiritual power, has been destroyed and instead other, greater
powers have been victorious. As Thomas F. Curley has written, Amar 'at
the end...is caught up in, and left behind by, progress, by time...Time is
always the destroyer...'. 26

The disease (of dissatisfaction) within Stenham has in turn exposed
Amar to a vision of life in which his traditional powers are of little
importance. Stenham's disintegrating self simply moves on to continue its
rootless dissolution elsewhere, but behind it is left a society already
infected, already being destroyed by a perverse desire to be like the world
Stenham claims to despise. Unable to ever break totally free from his
society and its values which he so dislikes, Stenham carries them around,
like Valéry's 'little stone', gradually twisting him and 'the order of the
world' until all that remains is the sad, distorted place dominated by a
restless desire for power. It is as if only the assertion of the self,
regardless of its consequences, can offer Bowles's characters some tem-
porary comfort in a world in which they find no real place or purpose.

Stenham's position in The Spider's House reflects the irresponsibility
of colonialism which for all its good intentions infected nations with its
own diseases. Colonialism can be seen as an extension of a human urge
for mastery over the world and its application as an exercise in the
extreme workings of the rational mind. Bowles has written

I think it's quite clear that humanity in its arrogant urge to prove
itself outside of and superior to nature has destroyed most of its
supreme accomplishments...cultures that took millennia to form are
annihilated in a generation. Colonialism can be blamed for most of
this, since even though the worst outrages have been perpetrated in
post-colonial times, they would never have come about if those respon-
sible had not been subjected to the injustices and insanities of
colonialism. 27

The individual, convinced of his basic superiority, bolstered by the tech-
nology which his scientific mind produces, and a society which actively
encourages the exercise of power, all combine to create a supreme arrog-
ance which allows Man to destroy his relationship with nature and his fellow Man. Colonialism is an outflowing of this mentality and this will to power. As Heidegger wrote, 'Western technology has not been a vocation, but a provocation and imperialism.'

Stenham's role in this process is developed through the ultimate arrogance of Grover Soto, and Bowles's concern for the destruction of cultures is taken up in his later stories, but one story reflects these ideas most cogently - 'The Time of Friendship'. The story was originally to be called 'The War of the Wise Men', a reference to the story's subject of a clash between the 'wisdoms' of two established cultures; Christian and Muslim. Interestingly it further connects the story to The Spider's House, since Book One of that novel is called 'The Master of Wisdom' and carries the epigraph,

I have understood that the world is a vast emptiness built upon emptiness...And so they call me the master of wisdom. Alas! Does anyone know what wisdom is?

The story and the novel both reflect upon the pointless clash of 'wisdoms' and the futile search for absolute truth which can only destroy the searchers and devalue the world as a whole. For Bowles the question 'does anyone know what wisdom is?' sums up the waste of those whose lives are dominated by an impossible illusion of wisdom.

'The Time of friendship' examines, like The Spider's House, aspects of colonialism through the relationship of a Westerner to a North African. Fraulein Windling loves the past and believes that the serenity of the Sahara and its people is something to be cherished. She recognises that the anti-colonial wars threaten to bring these communities into the modern day, to be 'infected by the virus of discontent from the far-off north' (CS,337), and does all she can to keep the people in the past, even to the point of discouraging the use of empty oil tins for carrying water. She sees the people in a romantic way, as 'in touch with life' (CS,338); 'What we have lost, they still possess' (CS,33').
Her desire is to feel close to this 'life' through the people, just as she likes to escape to the 'abandoned village' with primitive drawings in the rock. However, she wants them to remain static, so that they preserve for her a sense of being forever connected to the world. Colonialism by the French maintains a comfortable status quo which suits her own romantic view of Africa and allows her to maintain her superior position in the desert town. It is in her contact with Slimane that her true position is revealed, for she wishes to educate him, discipline him and win his 'respect bordering on adoration' (CS, 342). Her education of Slimane is a typical colonialist action, undertaken for his benefit, but ultimately intending to teach him about Western history and society, about 'Jesus, Martin Luther and Garibaldi...' (CS, 342). Her intentions may be good, but her assumptions make her just as much a part of the imperialist machinery as the French authorities. She builds a Christmas crèche so that Slimane may recognise 'its poetic truth' (CS, 347) and fails to see the irony when she comments on 'the social degeneracy achieved by forced cultural hybridism. Populace debased and made hostile by generations of merciless exploitation' (CS, 344).

Slimane destroys the crèche because it means nothing to him except the food it is made of and only then does she see that her desire has been to make him 'very nearly like herself' (CS, 354) and that this was a 'dangerous vanity' based on the assumption that 'his association with her had automatically been for his ultimate good, that inevitably he had been undergoing a process of improvement as a result of knowing her' (CS, 354). What Fraulein Windling realises is that there is a distance between cultures which cannot be bridged and is best left alone, with people allowed to exist as they are. 'In her desire to see him change, she had begun to forget what Slimane was really like' (CS, 354). She is as guilty as anyone seeking to impose their views and assumptions on someone else, because she has failed to allow for their wishes. She realises 'it
has been too much head and high ideals...and not enough heart' (CS, 354).

As the story ends she senses 'the time of friendship is finished' (CS, 355) and she is entering a 'new era' in which a static society can no longer be maintained. Slimane, her hope for change, leaves her to join the army fighting the French, and so commits himself to the future and rejects her romantic past. Their 'friendship' has been based on her control and money just like colonialism itself, but however tranquil the society it produces might be, it cannot ultimately last, for it is built upon exploitation and power. Once again, as in The Spider's House, Bowles suggests that the desire for power alters all friendship and destroys trust at whatever level. Fraulein Windling's cultural imperialism is one aspect of arrogance which destroys friendship when it views other traditions as romantic examples of 'prehistoric religion' (CS, 341). There is no true meeting point, but only a kind of mutual understanding and consideration for other cultures far removed from any romantic notions of brotherhood or unity. Friendship, it appears, can only be, at best, a moment of understanding before the desire for power intrudes to alter it totally. Bowles wrote about this idea in his story or 'fable' 'The Hyena', in which the seeming 'friendship' of the unlikely hyena and stork symbolises the struggle for power between opposing forces. The hyena is said to possess a magical power which can paralyse its prey, but the stork believes 'magic is against the will of Allah' and 'Allah has power over everything' (CS, 292). When the stork is injured, the hyena offers friendship and tells the stork that 'I am like anyone else in the world' (CS, 293). At that moment the hyena kills the stork and confesses he has no magic, but 'something better...a brain' (CS, 293). The hyena's intelligent cunning deceives the stork's persistent belief in Allah's power and suggests the real power of 'anyone else in the world' is the power to deceive and to exploit the weaknesses of others. 'The Hyena' is a fable of power, more brutal and terrifying because of its simple,
accurate vision of man's callousness.

This period marks a change in Bowles's writing, with 'The Hyena'’s bleak message suggesting much of his increasingly dark vision of man and society. The concern for the preservation of Moroccan culture became more and more important to Bowles, while his own fiction concentrated more on the typical human dilemmas which arose as a consequence of a disintegrating culture in a rapidly changing world.
CHAPTER SIX

Up Above the World: The Final Warning

There will be many people who will see the utility of the electrical and chemical techniques I have been talking about and will want to use them, as the Western, scientific mind has always wanted to use them, for their own power and their own control... The next step, and I warn you it is not far off, involves some fellow using electrical implants and drugs to control consciousness. Then, dear friends, it may be too late.
Bowles's sweeping critique of the human predicament through the individual crises of the Moresbys, the social corruption and personal chaos of Dyar and the arrogance of Stenham all culminate in Up Above the World. This is, by far, Bowles's most extreme vision of the world in which everyone is a victim in a colossal and terrifying power game. The imperialism witnessed in The Spider's House and the Western desire of the perfect and absolute totalitarian position become centred on the figure of Grover Soto. Yet the novel is far more complex because it involves the absurd collision of Grover's obsessive nightmare world with that of two typical Bowlesian characters whose lives are defined by distance, doubt and deceit. They flee from a disintegrating Western society in search of some new place of freedom only to find themselves plunging deeper into the chaos of their own relationship and the malevolence of Grover Soto's plots.

The collapse of the Slades in the novel represents the fragility of their society and their selves when confronted by the hollowness of their lives and the immense power and technology of Grover Soto's world. People are endlessly vulnerable in Bowles's vision of a grotesque, self-destructive world in which no one can win and in which everyone is a victim. Up Above the World provides an elaborate and complex metaphor for a world rapidly disintegrating from within and plunging inexorably into an abyss of its own making.

In the novel, Bowles creates another couple, the Slades, who leave behind their physical environment in search of some new experience, but who carry the seeds of their society within them. They are creatures of patterns time and order who hope to experience South America whilst remaining in control of their own selves. For them time determines everything, but in a way best defined by Paul Fraisse,

Temporal pressure is constricting, but it is also the framework within which our personality is organized. When it is absent we are disoriented. There is nothing to bind the sequence of our
activities; we are alone. From this confusion there arises not only a feeling of emptiness but also a vague fear; we are afraid of facing unarmed the compulsions that the socialization of behaviour usually inhibits or makes us suppress. When some people fervently seek new occupations to 'divert' themselves from their anxiety and others bind themselves to rigid timetables, their actions arise from the same need. Human equilibrium is too precarious to do without fixed positions in space and regular cues in time. 2

This organising principle in the Slades' lives is already under threat as the story opens, with them 'more asleep than awake'. 3 Fraisse writes that 'the entire human organism, both conscious and subconscious, is affected by the day-night rhythm', 4 and this indicates the extreme dislocation undergone by the Slades. Once this vital hold on their socialized selves is loosened then other patterns of thought and action can be called into question.

Bowles wrote in his autobiography that 'my feeling is that humanity invented the concept of time and speed in order to reinforce its basic delusion that the experience of life can be considered from a quantitative viewpoint'. 5 This is supported by his admiration of Moroccan cafes which 'came into existence before time was reorganised as an economic factor'. 6 Bowles saw time as an element which had become synonymous with production, profit and capitalism. Life seemed to be guided by a reference to time's relation to production, that is, to 'things done in time'. As a result 'the concept of measuring according to quantitative, separate, unrelated units, or fragments came to dominate the social world as well as the world of nature'. 7 The Slades carry with them a view of time deeply rooted in their own culture and it is this which the novel attacks.

Under the strain of this disorientation, Mrs Slade becomes obviously anxious, a point emphasised through the absurd exaggeration of her statement about missing their ship: 'I'll kill myself if we miss it' (U,11). In reacting to his wife's extreme outburst Dr Slade is almost caught in a fit of temper, but his 'Oh, God...' is corrected, by the realisation
of the volatility of his wife, to a reassuring 'we won't miss it' (U,11). Like Port Moresby, Dr Slade feels he must balance out the anxiety of his wife through the application of his own reason and good sense. However, this repression of true emotion between them once again highlights the recurrent theme of deceit in Bowles's fiction.

The tension within the world of human time is contrasted to the natural world outside, where the precise, specific details of the Slades' routine is replaced by the diffuseness of 'the morning mist' which 'dripped from banana leaf to banana leaf' (U,11). The leisurely motion and the all-embracing qualities of the 'mist' and 'the wet greeness' of the lawns amplify the distance between the Slades and the natural world. They exist in another world entirely, where 'the clock over the sideboard ticked fast and loud. Time bomb, Dr Slade thought...' (U,11). The implications of his idea of a 'time bomb' is that things must be achieved within a set pattern at the risk of some ultimate disaster. His fate is linked intimately with the temporal structure that he maintains for his everyday life, so to see it disrupted confuses him.

Like all Westerners, to maintain his confidence he must assert himself within time, he must control the diffuseness of nature and exploit its leisure through the assumption that he commands time. Of course, Bowles has already proved that Slade is susceptible to the fear of time passing him by, so his assertion that 'we've got plenty of time' (U,11) is clearly ironic. In fact time is manipulated in the novel by Grover Soto and this enables him to control the Slades.

All through this opening scene Dr Slade tries to maintain the kind of order that he expects from life, even to the extent of repressing his real feelings. However, the tension is always present, here suggested by a yawn that is not 'an ordinary yawn' but 'a light trembling one that came up convulsively from the bottom of his stomach' (U,11). Again the implication is that Dr Slade is caught in a tension between his own
anxious inner self and the outer rational social self which he displays to other people, including his wife. When the mask slips he is seen enraged; 'where the hell is that coffee?', he cried in a sudden fury...' (U,12) and in his confused state of disequilibrium 'mutters' in Spanish to the proprietor's wife when she has 'already greeted him in English' (U,12).

The scene builds upon Bowles's double perspective on Dr Slade, fluctuating between the rational and the neurotic, demonstrating a basic instability in his character which seeks predictability because it prevents spontaneous, and therefore, dangerous outbursts. Slade is forever formulating his next piece of speech in his mind, so an answer to his wife is planned: '"I trust that was a useful trip', he would say' (U,12). Language, thought, action must all be defined within an orderly pattern or framework, otherwise they present a threat to equilibrium. The framework for Slade is structured by time,

When you're really pressed for time, there's an art in making each second count. You fit each thing you've got to do into the right bit of time (U,12).

Of course, Slade is expressing his quantitative approach to life, dividing it into measurable units to determine an economy of existence, which Bowles has called the 'basic delusion' (WS,264). Slade, like other Westerners, uses time as an instrument of command over nature, and to regulate his impulsive self, but such an attitude ultimately draws him further from nature and his self.

Slade believes he must maintain a calm exterior so that he shelters his wife from her own inner feeling, but throughout this early section it appears that she is less anxious than her husband. He cannot accept his actual impulsive self, but must tie himself to his wife as her guardian, while being concerned only for himself. Slade lives at a totally deceptive level; toward his wife, the world around him and most dangerously to himself.
Bowles delicately weaves a series of tensions in this first chapter which are primary to the consideration of the Slades' position in the novel. They are bound to their cultural conditioning, and from it they have gained a totally duplicitous outlook on life, best represented in the very deceitfulness of their marriage itself. Their contact is distant and cold. When Mrs Slade arrives, laughing 'more to herself than to him', the rational Dr Slade demands an 'explanation', but 'Mrs Slade seemed not to have heard him, and plunged into her food with gusto' (U,13). In Dr Slade's 'experience the world was a rational place' (U,14) and as a result he seems to lack feeling or compassion, such as when he tells a small girl who has asked if there are sharks in the sea; 'of course there are, dear...fall in and see what happens' (U,18-19).

The same rational mind determines that he must protect his wife from her own anxieties and so Slade uses language to further disguise the truth, using it 'to set her (Day Slade's) mind at rest' (U,14). In front of Mrs Rainmantle he modifies his 'scandalised' inner feeling about lending her money so as not to upset his wife: 'hearing his voice, he tried to alter his tone, and with discernibly false gentleness continued...' (U,14). This is typical of Slade's conscious repression of his feelings and his perpetual need to say only that which is expected. For example, when Mrs Slade remarks to Mrs Rainmantle that she has plenty of time to catch the ship, Dr Slade says, '"I hope so"... His inflection made it sound as if he had said "I hope not"' (U,14).

Yet Day Slade's effort at communication with her husband is equally doubtful, since she speaks to him with a 'voice...calculated to calm a small child' (U,14), or else totally ignores him, for example, when she is with Mrs Rainmantle and he sits silently alongside and 'looks at her apprehensively to see if she resented his long silence, but she seemed not to mind' (U,24). The truth is she does not notice his silence, because their usual conversations are totally fatuous. This is made apparent
as they disembark and like the fog all around them their banal chatter was 'just decoration' (U,13) to ward off any deeper self-observation.

In Heidegger's analysis of inauthentic existence, he writes of 'the groundlessness of idle talk', that is, spoken without reference to its object, and so divorced from its truth, rather talk-for-talk's-sake. He adds that such a process 'amounts to perverting the act of disclosing (which is language's original and true function) into an act of closing off...'. It is a 'closing-off' because such talk accepts unquestioningly what is said and so 'discourages any new inquiry and any disputation, and in a peculiar way suppresses them and holds them back...'. For Heidegger and Bowles such language demonstrates man 'cut off from its primary and primordially genuine relationships-of-Being towards the world ...'. He is 'uprooted' and 'groundless', that is, totally divorced from the vital sustenance of the earth, of the origin and authenticity of all things.

The Slades' language typifies their lives which seem to lack any genuine contact and instead rely upon gestures and glances for communication. The novel constantly describes how 'his wife merely looked at him' (U,15), or she gave him 'the furious glance' (U,16) or tried 'to catch his eye' with 'tiny agitated movements' (U,16). All of these act as cautionary gestures in their system of self-control: 'she glanced at him...he recognized his error' (U,17). The rules are often more concrete, for example, concerning Dr Slade's first wife, Ruth, who 'by tacit mutual consent they never spoke of' (U,43). If this 'tacit mutual consent' is broken it signifies a serious need in the speaker:

Mention of the first Mrs Slade was thus uncommon enough to make Day now look up...she understood that he had been expecting exactly that reaction, had provoked it purposely in order to be able to catch her eye and smile encouragingly at her (U,43).

Everything they do is circumscribed by a framework of order perpetuated through a system of rules and time schedules which deny spontaneity and
real inner expression. They are products of a society built on dangerous repression whose selves have evolved in a distorted and inauthentic way.

This is clearly seen in their relationship, which like the Moresby's, lacks real human contact.

It was sometimes possible for two people who were close to one another to be very separate indeed... and the word touching took on an unaccustomed, disturbing dimension... (U, 15).

Separation exists at the heart of their marriage and what the novel reveals is a symbiotic relationship existing because Slade uses his wife as a support to his gathering age and she uses him as a support for her immaturity and naivety. However, his age, sixty-five, gives him an ambiguous position in relation to his wife who, he says, 'could be my daughter. Or even my granddaughter...' (U, 16). He exhibits paternalism and admiration towards her, almost as if she is living sign of youth and vitality which he is rapidly losing. At one point, 'he knelt proudly beside her, conscious of the other sunbathers' interest' (U, 15). As a result of this attitude Slade views her as a vital possession which he must guard with his rational self providing a father-figure of support and protection. However, this paternalism introduces a confusion of roles since he is also her husband.

Mrs Rainmantle's entry into the novel further disrupts the Slades' relationship and exposes Dr Slade's personality. Bowles had originally intended to develop the relationship between Day Slade and Mrs Rainmantle as a lesbian one - 'a sexual adventure', he called it - at least seen from Dr Slade's point of view. Although the lesbian relationship is omitted from the novel, Slade feels threatened by the intimacy of the two women. He notices 'his wife lay her hand on the older woman's arm as they went through the door...' (U, 32). His response is related to his own lack of intimacy with his wife, and his fury against Mrs Rainmantle is caused by his intimation of her threatening his sexual role.
When Mrs Rainmantle is to share a room with Day, Dr Slade immediately thinks,

It had been his hope to sleep in the same bed with his wife, at least for a part of the night. The past two nights they had been on the ship, where the size and disposition of the berths had discouraged any project of love-making (U, 36).

His 'project' defines the rigidly mechanical outlook which he extends even to sexual matters, but which is so disrupted in his mind by the intervention of Mrs Rainmantle. When Day finally goes to her room with Mrs Rainmantle 'she was looking at him sadly, as if she suspected that there would be no swift forgiving of her treason' (U, 33). The severity of the word 'treason' defines the laws by which the Slades live and the importance which is attached to Mrs Rainmantle's appearance in their lives.

Throughout the early chapters Bowles describes the Slades as remote, disconnected people, with this image of them at one point,

partially undressed...relaxing, absently exchanging half-thoughts across the no-man's-land between the beds (U, 26).

Any potentially sexual situation is overcome by the sense of sterile distance, of unconnected space between them. Later, as we have seen, Dr Slade is shocked by the 'disturbing dimension' of the word touching when he tries to relate it to his wife and himself. Usurped from his central position in Day's life, his mind immediately turns to 'wondering what a single man's sex life would be like in Puerto Farol' (U, 25). Yet even in his sexual life he requires a specific, organized arrangement as he indicates by criticising the 'few sad sick whores' of Puerto Farol because 'these people read no books' (U, 25). His concept of human relationships, like his view of all things, is determined by a bookish detachment in which life follows a structure in order to reach the end with everything neatly explained along the way. His book seeks a romantic scenery of 'moonlit idyls under the palms while the surf rolled over the warm sand nearby' (U, 25), but he fails to see the reality of life around him. The sad sick whores present a truth which he would rather not have to contem-
plate, for they would unsettle his neat pattern for life.

The Slades represent a system of living in which nothing is ever admitted to threaten the inert basis of their lives. They travel because it appeals to their belief in freedom, but resent the label of tourists.

I don't think you could call us exactly tourists... We just move around where we please, when we please... Group travel's a degradation. The whole point is to be free. Not to have to make reservations ahead of time (U, 101).

They are like the Moresbys who consider themselves free because they can move from place to place, but fail to connect it with what they really are inside, enclosed, isolated and anxious. They fill up their vacant selves with experiences, sights and objects to furnish them with meaning, so that they are like voyeurs who seek through tourism a contact with the world which their own existence denies them. They watch from outside, grasping experiences to bolster their failing lives and discarding them when they are no longer of value. Their notion of freedom is bound to this acquisitive, consumeristic gluttony which assumes the world is the field for human plunder, open to their itinerant desires.

Once again, Heidegger supplies the frame of reference, in his term 'curiosity' (Neugier), which is a factor in inauthentic being and described as,

...seeing, not in order to understand what is seen... but just in order to see. It seeks novelty only in order to leap from it anew to another novelty... Therefore curiosity is characterized by a specific way of not tarrying alongside what is closest... it... rather seeks restlessness and the excitement of continual novelty and changing encounters... curiosity is concerned with the constant possibility of distraction. 11

The kind of tourism of the Slades is a flight from themselves, a 'distraction', or what Heidegger defined as 'uninhibited hustle',12 'a simultaneous frenetic busyness and emptiness'.13 They travel and seek in order to evade the responsibilities of confronting their inner emptiness, but it is always inside them waiting to emerge as anxiety.

Bowles shows that freedom cannot be an outward gesture, but must involve an inner understanding and integration of the self in the world.
The freedom the Slades believe is theirs becomes another example of their self-deception since there can be no freedom unless the self is free; as Camus writes "man must feel himself inwardly free, and only then can he struggle externally for freedom." Grove undermines their 'freedom' through a consistent manipulation of them and their rigid beliefs. It is ironic that Day should comment on the 'wonderful feeling of freedom' (U,54) that Grove's apartment gives her. Like everything in Grove's world, it is false, but she cannot see this, because freedom for her is space and light and movement and unconnected to the self.

In Chapter 7, Bowles engages the Slades in a dramatic incident which reveals their self-deceptive view of freedom:

They had chosen a narrow, well-lighted alley to walk in rather than a street; suddenly they found themselves...on a boardwalk above a swamp...here it was dark (U,29).

What they 'choose' becomes entirely reversed by chance, suggesting they are never truly in control of their actions because they had 'chosen' a 'narrow well-lighted alley' but 'suddenly' 'found' (both words being signs of surprise and so indicate a definite intentional form, or conscious control in the situation) it was not an 'alley', but 'boardwalk', not a 'street' but a 'swamp', and not 'well-lighted' but 'dark'. Their conscious choice has been transformed beyond their control, into a treacherously random situation, which reveals their personalities outside the confines of meticulous pattern. Without this pattern their composure is broken and their freedom to choose destroyed by the power of chance. Grove personifies in a more sinister form the kinds of external forces which expose the Slades' concept of freedom and the limitations of their routinized lives.

Mrs Rainmantle too disrupts the Slades' world of pattern and rule, challenging the freedom they believe they have, forcing Dr Slade into her allocated room with its 'deformed bed' and general 'chaos' (U,35) - both of which offend his precise devotion to order. His reaction to this
loss of dominance is 'a mute protest' of leaving his belongings in Day's room, 'a way', he believes, 'of refusing the room existence', so that 'when morning came he would dress and walk out of it empty-handed, as if he had never been aware of it' (U, 36). He seeks to deny the chaos and the loss of control, just as he constantly suppresses these things inside him, but Mrs Rainmantle has disrupted their lives in a more far-reaching way than he can presently know.

The suspenseful atmosphere of the novel is maintained as Day recollects her night spent with Mrs Rainmantle as having 'been long and bristling with nightmares' (U, 37), while emphasising the condition of her mind at the time. She has been drinking with Mrs Rainmantle and 'the whiskey's acid flame [was] still flickering in her stomach' (U, 38), and is very nervous of the 'possibility of being seized and paralyzed by her own nightmare' (U, 38). She wants only to 'dispel the forming tornado of dreams' (U, 38) to which end she almost takes Seconal, but is too afraid of the 'scorpions and centipedes' she senses in the darkness. Alongside these personal factors, Bowles places her in the very tenuous, 'suspended state between sleeping and waking' (U, 38) amid the outside forces providing a 'screaming metallic backdrop'. Under these conditions of possible drunkenness, nervousness, fear, daze, with the room itself pulsing with sound, Day Slade is caught in a chaos of senses where nothing is certain. This scene parallels her drug-induced state later in the novel. Initially, her uncertainty focuses upon a vague notion of there being 'a third presence' in the room (U, 38), but this seems an extension of her nervous state in which she exaggeratedly describes the sound of an insect as 'the monstrous hairy darkness that clicked and pulsed out there from its black insect throat' (U, 38). Even after waking the 'nightmare' remains with her and like her husband she cannot rid herself of the powerful presence: 'it was as impossible as trying to retch up the night; the night was still there, and the fiery sourness still inside her' (U, 39).
As Day wakes in the shadowy half-light she is 'trying to be certain of what she has seen' because in 'that instant of faint light, and with the draperies of the mosquito net in the way, she could not be certain, but it seemed to her that Mrs Rainmantle's eyes had been open' (U,40). Bowles continues to refuse us a definite perception, and insists upon maintaining the air of uncertainty around the whole scene. The language, full of qualifications and doubts, forces us to feel unsure about Mrs Rainmantle and also about Day's state of mind. She manages to control the image for a moment so that 'the eyes seemed to be shut this time' (U,40), but it returns 'like a chromolithograph of Jesus where the closed lids suddenly flew open and the eyes were there, looking straight ahead' (U,40).

One of Bowles notebooks contains this statement, 'but care must be taken to leave a loophole so that there is the unspoken possibility of something else having happened as well, that she does not tell her husband.' The 'unspoken possibility' is Mrs Rainmantle's death, and Bowles's concern to maintain such 'loopholes', demonstrates his careful control of his material in the creation of suspense. A further note adds, 'But we are only given a brief, confused glimpse of the possibility', suggesting the reader's involvement in an act of detection, being given 'glimpses' from which we must pursue the truth about the characters. Like all suspense fiction, he 'suspends' us between certainty and doubt, making us reach for the truth through a process of disclosure. Bowles wanted the novel to be hard work, and for this reason was worried about misunderstandings by reviewers: 'I don't expect it to be a best-seller: the reader has to work too hard'. What Bowles wanted was what he most admired in Kafka, as Oliver Evans put it: 'What Kafka leaves out is ever so much more important than what he actually says. You do most of the work yourself.'

Tension is created when Day conceals the night's terrors from her
husband, because she is afraid of his mockery and is then caught between wanting to confess to her husband what she has seen and of facing the terror of Mrs Rainmantle's haunting image.

She would have been happy to sit back and tell Taylor how strange Mrs Rainmantle had looked, and how it had made her feel at the time...it would have been a relief to describe how she had kept thinking of it since. But if she began to talk about it, she would see again the discoloured wall...she put her hand quickly to her face to keep the picture from forming (U,42).

Dr Slade felt 'that what he called negative emotions immediately ceased to exist once they had been exposed to the blazing light of reason' (U,42), but she cannot accept this glib rationalism and so avoids him. However, she does not trust her intuitive senses either and so remains inertly 'hoping to find an answer to an unformulated question' (U,42). She would prefer it to remain 'unformulated' rather than to 'put it into words' because 'they might only make it all the more real' (U,42). She does not want to be seen to be neurotic in his eyes. Similarly, Dr Slade's first reaction on hearing the official report of Mrs Rainmantle's death is concealment, 'Day mustn't see this...I've got to keep it away from her' (U,47).

It is upon these failures to confide that the Slade's fate turns, since any mutual exchange of views could have excluded Grove from their lives by rearranging events, and disclosing suspicions. It reveals them as victims of self-deceit, secretiveness and repression of truth, each central to the culture from which they come. So Day Slade is worried because she may have 'failed to conceal her nervousness' (U,43), and instead of searching her self for that 'unformulated question' engages in a banal monologue about the local food; 'I don't really mind this sort of bad food. There's so little difference here between good and bad, it doesn't matter much one way or the other' (U,43). Words are not the revealer of truths, but the façade behind which the self may retreat, 'closing-off' the speaker from the more severe and urgent unspoken lang-
Day believes she can hold her subconscious world of images in check if she can control language and prevent her husband's 'prying it all out'. But what she fears is 'her mind working there in her head all by itself' (U,42) without a definite restraining force. Bowles knows too well the immense force of the subconscious, and how easy that conscious control may be lost. Here he demonstrates it in an ironic way, with Day lulled hypnotically by the 'rhythms of the train' until they had 'taken over her consciousness' (U,44), opening her mind to the urgent turmoil within her. Her husband asks of Mrs Rainmantle: 'I wonder if she got in touch with her son today' and Day 'heard [implying an eerie detachment from her voice - it is the inner self speaking] her own voice saying unsurely, "No..."' (U,44). Her inner voice, freed for a moment, must be hastily corrected: 'I don't know any more than you do about it. I was thinking of something else' (U,44). Moving further from Puerto Farol only appears to make the image of Mrs Rainmantle less significant in Day's mind, but she still fears silences when her unoccupied mind may turn to thoughts of Mrs Rainmantle. Indeed, though Bowles makes no specific reference to the incident, he uses an image which makes obvious reference to the murder of Mrs Rainmantle. 'There were long periods during the night when the silence was like a fine needle in her ears' (U,45). Silence brings images rushing into her head again, images which she cannot bear to confront.

Throughout the first ten chapters of the novel, the reader is held in a suspenseful tension between knowledge and deceit because it is at this level that the Slades live their lives. The purpose of their own relational failings are to emphasise Bowles's view of the human condition, but also to increase the tension between their actions and the reader's
perception of events. The novel itself takes the form of a suspense story, building upon the murder of Mrs Rainmantle and how this single act affects all those connected with it. The Slades are drawn into the circle of the murder's influence through their accidental acquaintance with the victim, and their consequent fate provides the tension in the book. The reader questions Grove's motives, and whether the Slades will suspect them, even though the Slades never acquire the privileged information we possess.

The elements of the detective story in *Up Above the World*, which Stewart has examined in some detail, become materials in Bowles's concern to maintain a fluent, lively suspense story. The detective story, as such, must employ a detective, but Bowles does not, instead he places the reader in the role of detective. The reader must unravel the complex plots and counterplots in the novel and simultaneously will discover that he is being drawn into a greater detection involving a penetration into the nature of totalitarian power, of free will and determinism, and a close revelation of the human personality. Bowles uses the suspense form to engage us in an unusually revealing and prophetic book. As Patricia Highsmith has written, the beauty of the suspense genre is that a writer can write profound thoughts and have some sections without physical action if he wishes to, because the framework is an essentially lively story. Indeed, as we become absorbed into the 'lively story' Bowles leaves hints and clues along the way which at the time may seem unrelated, but in the context of the murder become vitally important. For example, we are told the Slades leave their window open (U,26), that the insects are like 'a kind of soundproofing' (U,28), that Dr Slade heard 'men's voices...two men...he got the impression that they were sitting over a bottle...' (U,32), and, of course, Day's notion of a 'third presence' in her room (U,38). Each becomes a vital clue in the eventual murder, but are used initially to create an atmosphere of uncertainty. Bowles
has written that the novel 'was dressed as a suspense story, like someone who goes to a masquerade...but very few critics bothered to unmask it and describe what was underneath the disguise'.\(^{21}\) In doing so, one reveals the horror of its vision.

The Slades remain unaware of the cause of their involvement with Grove, so the reader is placed in the position of having to work alone to detect Grove's motives and comprehend his plans. But this is Bowles's purpose, to make us work, to involve us thoroughly in the workings of Grove's system. Because of this unusually serious use of a light form Bowles was worried about its reception, but maintained he 'didn't want to write a light novel' since he 'wrote it just as seriously as [he] would have any other...'.\(^{22}\) To this extent Bowles has also told Stewart,

> I was thinking of publishing it under another name, when I started it, because it was not a typical novel. I considered it a light novel, an entertainment, as opposed to a novel - what Gide would have called a *sotie* as opposed to a *roman*. I thought, 'Now I'm going to write a suspense story, not a serious novel - something else, something that I haven't tried...''\(^{23}\)

The reference to *Up Above the World* as an 'entertainment' prompts a comparison with Graham Greene, a writer Bowles admires, who named certain of his works in such a way because 'they do not carry a message'.\(^{24}\) Greene's 'entertainments' are less dogmatic or philosophical than his novels, and consequently the 'message' is not stated, but emerges through the reader's involvement in a situation of adventure. These books make 'use of film and thriller conventions [which] explains a good deal of the entertainment, but he is never merely entertaining. He uses popular conventions as elements in a complicated technique that transcends its components...'.\(^{25}\) Similarly, the form Bowles uses in *Up Above the World* has been described as cinematic\(^{26}\) since it builds tension upon individually powerful scenes and upon ambiguously glimpsed relationships, each offering the perfect occasion for an interpretation on film. *Up Above the World* has been called a 'psychological thriller',\(^{27}\) and like Greene,
Bowles has used the conventions of the popular genre and tried to expand its workings to examine more significant themes than those usually explored.

The second part of the statement above supplies a further possibility in the search of his formal techniques in *Up Above the World*, for here he compares it to Gide's notion of the sotie as opposed to the novel. Bowles is a life-long reader of Gide and has a particular affection for *Les Caves du Vatican*, Gide's most famous sotie. In *Up Above the World*, Bowles preserves a light form with a very serious intent, just as Gide in his soties, which like other works by Gide, ... require the readers' collaboration. Their very mysteriousness has a specific purpose. A work must make us work - make an effort; it must not leave us as we were when we began it, it must instruct us, 'broach' us, as Gide says, and in order to do this, is not the best way to disturb us? 'A splendid function to assume; that of disturber', he writes in the *Nouvelle Pages de Journal*. 28

Like Gide, Bowles wanted to involve the reader in the book's mystery and uncertainty by continually disturbing our assumptions as he undermines the supposed reason of the Slades, their concept of freedom and their culturally conditioned security in themselves. Grove presents a further disturbance to the Slades and to the reader because he is an equivocal, suspicious figure with a cold, brutal nature, and we are placed in a position of reconciling this with his superficial charm. Gide's purpose was as disturber, and Bowles has spoken of his own writing as an effort at 'broaching' the reader:

To attempt to explain it first is immediately to limit its meaning; for, if we know what we wanted to say, we do not know if we were saying only that - one always says more than THAT. And what particularly interests me is what I have put in without knowing it - that unconscious share which I should like to call God's share. 31

The unconscious, as ever, fascinates Bowles and provides the element of disturbance and mystery which makes the novel so unusual. Much of the disturbance emerges through the failure of language, and its misuse in human relations. Bowles intentionally clipped his dialogues to a minimum,
fragmented conversations and made others totally artificial, but under-
neath, the reader is required to plunge into the unsaid. Here lies the 
mystery of the book, its sinister power, because here Bowles locates the 
inertia of his characters and the impetus for their victimization. People 
suffer because of their agonising inability to exist authentically. Again 
Hytier supplies the framework.

A mysterious book grows even deeper upon rereading; it develops its 
implications and...it is not impossible that the author's thought 
may then be followed...even beyond his own awareness...[Gide] did 
not intend to lose that surplus of intentions which the book might 
include even without his knowledge. 32

Willed on by Bowles's techniques of suspense, he takes us into a 'surplus 
of intentions' which demand our gravest concern, and where we will dis-
cover the 'dangerous and unpleasant truths'33 which are veiled in all 
soties.

Chapter 10 marks a vital point in the novel, for it is the end of the 
Slades' central position in the structure, and more importantly the end 
of their supposed freedom. From now on, their lives become inextricably 
bound up with the machinations of Grover Soto, to the extent that they 
will never move beyond the environment which he controls.

Day's first encounter with Grove finds her obviously attracted to him 
Enough to 'form an opinion'. She believes,

if a man was wholly and dramatically handsome, she looked for a 
character defect. To her way of thinking no man could look as this 
did and not have ended by taking unfair advantage of it (U, 48).

The suggestion of 'taking unfair advantage' indicates both Day's sexual 
playfulness and a more sinister overtone, since Grove's likeable and 
hospitable personality completely dominates and manipulated the Slades 
in the book. At this early stage Day's intuition is completely submerged 
by her sexual interest in Grove to the point whereby she hardly notices 
the 'equivocal scene' with an 'ambiguous' conversation in which 'his smile 
was there, but it said nothing' (U, 50). She is blinded by the sexual
motive she wishes to interpret in the scene, and so becomes a part of an elaborate game, but always under Grove's control. She is immediately submissive to him.

'You understand I've got to go to the hotel', she began, trying to make the words sound like a command and immediately aware of her failure (U,51).

Bowles has developed the game motif from *Let It Come Down* in order to express his notions of control and power. Grove's control has a sadistic pleasure for him, and its implications are horrendous.

You imagining what it would be like to be kidnapped? Snatched by somebody who hasn't got money on his mind at all, never gets in touch with anybody, just keeps you there, on and on? Now, that would be something to worry about (U,51).

While Grove is thrilled by the implicit menace of these words, Day and the reader cannot realise the full import of their meaning, yet the reader may begin to see a sinister aspect in the young, affable man whose 'equivocal' and 'ambiguous' character has already been hinted at earlier. But as Mottram points out, Day 'is too insular to understand the implication of his suggestion' and merely responds with: '"I'll worry about it when I come to it", she said crisply' (U,51).

She falls further under Grove's charm when lured to his apartment which echoes Grove's need for control over the inanimate as over the animate. Grove is the external, godly force which reconciles the man-made and the natural in a single environment of harmony. The plants and rocks may be natural, but they are not naturally to be found in 'a large white building' which 'towered above...a steep green slope where a few dozen high pines grew' (U,51). The building exists against the natural form of the land as a constructed realm wherein Grove has created an artificial paradise up above the world. Its artificiality is defined by the terrace with its 'grotto with a pool of water inside it, and a stream that ran in a crooked course, winding among the chairs and tables' (U,53).

The contents of the apartment continue the sexual atmosphere of the
scene through their fetis histic 'leather, fur and glass', and Day, who has already declared it 'magnificent' (U, 53), is seen running her hand 'tentatively over the vicuna skin that covered the couch where she sat' (U, 53). Indeed, she has entered his world of deceptions and illusions without any real knowledge of the man himself - her reply of 'Go on... I can't stop you' (U, 52), to his insistence that she have 'a quick vodka martini' (U, 52) implies his dominance far beyond this isolated incident.

In an oddly ambiguous remark Grove says, 'When you've got the scenery in front of you, you take advantage of it, no?' (U, 53), suggesting nature is to be used like all things in Grove's world. Day is caught in this unreal atmosphere whereby, 'the wall in front of her was entirely hidden by a barrage of trees and vines that reached to the ceiling' (U, 52) and 'gave her the feeling of being at the edge of a forest' with the 'sweet smelling mountain air...stirring the upper tendrils and fronds' (U, 53). This moment eerily predicts her own death later in the novel. Just as her own marriage is contained within a system of pretence and artificiality, so is the glamorous, appealing world offered to her by Grove, and without any capacity to recognise its duplicity, she is drawn in. Her entire character is focused in her own basic blindness to her self and so to the world around her. Bowles points to this ironically with her exclamation that Grove's apartment gives her 'such a wonderful feeling of freedom' (U, 54). However, she cannot be free since she carries within a system of deceptions and repressions which reflect the society from which she comes. Her collision with Grove further emphasises her lack of free will and amplifies the extent of her victimization.

She is overwhelmed by Grove's domain and by his charming appearance so much so that she doesn't see anything odd when he refers to 'You and Dr Slade' (U, 54), when no names have been exchanged or used up to this point. She is unaware of this anomaly, but it is clear she is completely engaged by Grove to the extent that he is already ordering her life; 'I'd like you to meet Luchita' (U, 54) and 'I'll pick you up right here', 'Why
don't I phone you...' (U,54).

Grove's assertiveness is contrasted to Dr Slade who watches his wife from 'behind a screen of climbing plants' (U,55), believing he is giving her 'privacy and freedom of movement' (U,55). It demonstrates the conscious and artificial nature of their relationship, because despite his apparent concern, he is chiefly motivated by his jealous fear of competition for his wife's affection. We are told 'of the beam of ownership in his eyes' (U,56), suggesting his jealous possession of her - a mood which totally contradicts any superficial notions of liberal freedom and privacy he might think he has.

Ironically, his persistent questioning about Grove's invitation to Day provokes her anger and determines her course of action.

Up until then she had felt indifferent to the invitation. Now that he seemed on the point of refusing it, she found that on the contrary she was rather eager to go (U,57).

Their lack of communication, enlarged here to a curious antagonism, is seen again soon afterwards over a discussion about a night excursion.

They never went out at night without having a lengthy discussion afterwards whose point was to prove that the excursion had been an indefensible waste of time and money (U,58).

Their lives are governed by patterns, by rational decisions and by a desperate concern for the correct use of time and money. Against this background of restraint, Grove appears to offer a world of excitement and carelessness beyond time and money which seems to feed on the very distance and deceit at the heart of the Slades' relationship.

The second part of the novel reveals privileged information about the mysterious Grover Soto, which the Slades will never know, allowing the reader an insight to his tormented self and his manipulative relations with Luchita and Thorny. This distance between the Slades and the readers allows for cruel ironies, such as Day's remark, 'I'm not the kind that takes orders. My mechanism doesn't work. There's just no reaction' (U,134).
The irony is that Grove's purpose is to gain total control of that very 'mechanism' for his own ends. Each irony increases our sense of the Slades' delusion of freedom and their immense vulnerability, whilst emphasising the power complex and need for control which drives Grove.

Luchita is an element in Grove's meticulously arranged world whose personal freedom is entirely reliant upon his whims. She is obviously not a very intelligent girl, but this is all to Grove's advantage in his scheme of domination. He refers to her as a 'retarded Cuban girl' (U,95), and Day thinks of her as 'a mental case' (U,11) whose rows of paintings are 'the work of a bright child that has absorbed certain formulas from looking at comic books' (U,110).

Luchita is a commodity totally controlled by Grove who 'made some new laws' (U,61) for her to live by. His power is based upon controlling time through arranged people's lives and he has clearly manipulated her past and present. Their relationship is based upon a purely economic attachment from Luchita's point of view since through Grove she can acquire money to finance her return home to Paris. For Grove, she is 'pleasure', but as a 'permanent situation it was unacceptable' (U,82). She refers to her position in his world in terms of 'bargaining power' (U,61) and 'status' (U,62), both of which will decline when she is forced to submit (as she always does) to Grove's 'new laws'.

They both lie to one another - she over how many of her paintings she sells and he over exactly where he is going with Thorny. Here Bowles reveals Grove's capacity for deceit even to those who appear close to him. He phones Luchita and says 'We're in Mi Cielo, you remember?...' but 'behind his voice, in the background, a church bell had begun to ring ...' (U,71), which Luchita is quick to notice. After the call, she remembers 'San Felipe was a village with one small church, and she knew the sound of its bell...Vero was not in San Felipe at all...she was thinking only that he had lied to her and she did not know why' (U,71).
He enjoys the lies he tells Luchita - why ring at all, except to take a sadistic pleasure in his duplicity? This encourages us to remem-
ber the 'ambiguous' and 'equivocal' nature of his meeting with Day Slade. Later in the book Luchita again recognises Grove's deceit, this time with Day herself, but as is often the case, she cannot understand why he does so: 'She was convinced that once again Vero was lying, and it alarmed her because she could see no motive for it' (U,112). Indeed, Luchita remains absolutely ignorant of Grove's whole plot against the Slades, which is a mark of his supreme control over her.

Bowles delineates Grove's power over Luchita in three areas, all of which he uses to manipulate the girl and guarantee submission to his 'imposed...will' (U,81). Firstly, there is the promise which Grove has made - her return to Paris - and this he can use against her whenever her needs to. For example, when she has been defiant towards Grove, he merely reminds her of Paris; 'do you remember a restaurant near the Place de l'Alma called A la Grenouille de Cantal?' (U,168). The memory is intended as a threat to Luchita, reminding her that it is only through Grove that she can see it again. He asserts his authority through her economic dependence on him. The result is clear; 'Luchita wilted, melted, as if an invisible blow had been struck her' (U168), and quickly submits to him. Earlier she makes a crucial cultural statement related to Grove's control, saying 'I'm not civilized, am I? Because I haven't got the money for the ticket' (U,63). For her, civilization is money.

Secondly, Grove exercises a sexual control over her, in that she remains with him as he desires her, then he 'would decide whether he really wanted her with him...whether or not the intimacy he had to do without in his daily life was compensated for by the unusually high quality of her performance in bed' (U,82). When he kisses her 'she submitted miserably, not looking into his eyes' (U,72), and sex involves elaborate 'bed games' (U,84) each carefully planned by Grove. Indeed, his attitude toward
Luchita is a purely self-orientated one since she is used as another luxurious object in his artificial paradise. He even equates the effect of his mother's death in terms of potential sexual gratification:

it seemed to him that tonight could prove to be one of their really good nights; her tender outburst upon hearing about his mother suggested that (U,84).

Every fact, every emotion, which reveals human vulnerability is exploited by Grove and made to work in his favour, incorporated into his precisely balanced scheme of life.

The third and final major control is through drugs and tapes. As with the various other manipulative methods, each foreshadows or amplifies Grove's involvement with the Slades, but perhaps none more than this area. Through his administering of drugs to Luchita he keeps her subdued and obedient, if not reliant upon him. Copious marijuana is administered to tranquilize her and guarantee submission to his will.

In Chapter 12 Luchita makes an effort to obtain a higher status in her relationship with Grove, and to do this she tries 'to plan the course of the conversation they would have...' (U,62). But to even begin to have success in this she must do 'without smoking [marijuana] for hours beforehand' (U,62). Of course, her wish is to play Grove at his own game, that is, of arranging future conversations to assure perfection - but against this emerges his total control through drugs. She cannot achieve his 'perfections' simply because he has always the advantage of dominance. So, when she returns 'he held his cigarette case in front of her...she pulled out a fat grifa and lit it' (U,62). Her act is one of submission, as she explains,

Afterwards she thought it had been this gesture which had made her decide to accept the new laws and the change in her status they implied (U,62).

Any idea of the freedom of choice to 'decide' is mere delusion, for her whole existence is determined by Grove. She goes on to explain his rigorous regulation of her drug-use,
...the rule with Vero had been three times a week. She never knew which nights, because sometimes he liked them one after the other, and sometimes he spaced them (U,62).

Her need for the drug is geared totally to what 'he liked', and his whole approach is scientific, detached and sadistic because of it. Luchita's drug-use allows Grove a perfect weapon against her, even on the most trivial levels, such as her complaints about the coldness of the house, which he can dispel as her 'old teahead freeze' (U,160). Yet the fullest, most sinister possibilities of this drug-manipulation on Luchita are seen after her defiance of Grove (quoted above, U,168) following which she arrives for dinner. The text reports, 'now there was no sign of friction between Grove and Luchita' (U,170), but the reason is clearly her saturation with marijuana. Now, Day Slade, felt she was looking at a zombie. The girl's eyes were almost closed, and a gigantic, meaningless smile lay over her face. When she was spoken to, she appeared to have difficulty finding her voice in order to reply (U,170).

To defend his total control over his environment, Grove has induced a catatonic state in Luchita, depriving her of defiant speech, which is the very human act which could ruin him. The Slades' own superficial communication only serves to ensure Grove can control them more easily. When Luchita momentarily defies his organized 'game' of language, drugs are used to quell her.

Usually, Grove would have prepared for just such an occasion, because we have been told how his preoccupation is with taping imaginary dialogues so as to plot out future exchanges. As with his use of drugs on Luchita, his use of tapes also foreshadows the Slades' involvement with him. We learn very early on of how Grove 'had been preparing one of his discussions with Luchita' (U,94) and how he improvised these one-sided conversations, recorded them, and then wrote out notes on the more convincing passages. Using these, he plotted the course of a verbal procedure from which he allowed himself almost no deviation when the moment came for actual speaking (U,96).
a series of predictable, projected events under the rule of his disciplined 'procedure'. Similarly, Grove believes he dominates Thorny through money and drugs, seeing only a docility in his 'habit of unquestioning acceptance' (U,198), though Bowles interprets it in a very different manner, as we shall discover.

Underlying all of Grove's relationships of domination in the book, as they are expressed through Luchita and Thorny as well as the Slades, is his primary totalitarian wish. But this wish itself emerges from his own personality, and most importantly through his relationship to his parents. Throughout his life he had been 'exploiting the enmity between her [his mother] and his father; yet in the presence of each he had preserved what appeared to be a basic loyalty toward the other' (U,90). Caught in the middle of a broken marriage, he exploits both sides for his own material gain, while psychologically building up a hatred for all family life. He sees himself 'in the position of the head of a neutralist state' (U,92) playing each side against the other in an elaborate game. While his father still supplies him with money (U,82), Grove's mother, Mrs Rainmantle, embodies a still-existent force over which he has exercised no total control. She holds a supremely powerful position in his genealogy - after all, she is the very source of his life and being and thus represents the primary governing factors of human life. Grove wishes to be disassociated from his mother's control and her claim over his creation, because for the truly totalitarian being the ideal is a kind of mythic birth, or beyond that a self-creation. Grove's basic vision is a godly one, in which he presides over his paradise, and sits at its heart with no powers above him. The strongest God is the one born of himself, independent of the demands of family, with enough authority to order his world alone. The presence of his 'formidable mother' (U,78) signifies the possibility of her interference in his own life, and the assertion of hierarchical familial power, which Grove cannot tolerate.
Mrs Rainmantle represents for Grove a terrible threat. He sees her as "cunning and omniscient, with an undertone of implicit menace" (U, 88) who, "underneath the jovial flesh was the supremely calculating consciousness, the dark destroying presence" (U, 88). He believes by killing her he can free himself from all she represents, escape the cage of maternal power until there was 'nothing left to fear' (U, 92). But what Bowles shows in the course of the novel, is that Grove cannot simply erase his mother from his life for she is always a part of him regardless of his conscious decisions. By destroying her he is seeking to thwart an aspect of himself, the part which recognises the mutuality between him and his mother. Consequently, when the news of his mother's death is revealed to Luchita she says, 'You never loved your mother. You told me yourself', to which Grove replies,

What's that to do with it?...It's much more than that. She's inside you! And when she dies something happens. It's the way life is made, that's all (U, 80).

Grove's ambition is to 're-make' life according to his specifications, under his control and with him at its core. However, his ambition itself is tempered by the continuing overwhelming presence of his mother 'inside' him. What follows her murder is Grove's compensation for his basic error in believing he could truly escape her. The Slades become agents of persecution, representatives of his mother's presence to the paranoid Grove, and thus he must strike out at them too.

Grove's guilt and dread is captured in his long dream sequence which locates him enclosed within a 'glass cage' (U, 86). It is a nightmare of constraint wherein Grove's desire for freedom is totally denied. It is a world of distances, where he is 'poised high above an illimitable city' (U, 85), watching a 'television program' through an egg-like lens. It is an atmosphere of voyeurism, where he is only 'looking upon' events and any participation is just an 'illusion' (U, 86). The 'terror' is peculiarly Poesque in that it comes from a restriction of freedom; 'it was
a box, this chamber where he lay. He was enclosed; there was no air-conditioning panel...he imagined he could detect the stink of his own breath' (U,86). It is the terror of Poe's premature burials, wherein characters realise 'the rigid embrace of the narrow house', the 'unendurable oppression of the lungs' and the mind obsessed by 'the most gloomy imaginings...of thirst, famine, suffocation...'. Ultimately, it is the fear of time imagined as terrible deaths.

The function of Poe's countless chambers...is precisely to deny man lateral space. Although the victim can move, he cannot act, in the sense that he cannot do any of the things that would save him from whatever it is that threatens.

Under these conditions, Grove is forced into a 'paralyzed acceptance' (U,86), without freedom in a grotesque reversal of what he expects for his own life. This control is soon identified as female, speaking with 'remonstrance in her voice' making each word 'recriminatory' (U,87), and transforming with a 'dull horror' into 'its true identity, the one he now knew he had been expecting from the start - that of his mother' (U,88). The single enemy who he believes had him 'committed' (U,89) to his 'glass cage' arises in his dream as the 'dark destroying presence' from whom he can only run away into a Piranesian labyrinth. It is typically a network of 'corridors...circular staircases, down interior fire escapes and along galleries that overhung unlighted depths' (U,89), which Grove dreams of as 'a flight to save his life' (U,89), but as with Piranesi's original works, these are elaborate mechanisms leading nowhere. The labyrinth is a self-deceiving maze or trap into which Grove enters, a trap primarily of the self. The dream echoes his own life, in which he sought to remove his mother only to find himself forced into a closed labyrinth of self, plagued by the guilt and repressions of the maternal presence 'inside' himself. He cannot remove what is inside him. But Grove is like many Bowles characters who dream of a supreme liberation from the limitations of human life, except for him it has taken on sinister proportions. He
is the extreme vision of a self-obsessed humanity with a technology seeking to conquer the world around him in order that he might attain some sense of freedom. His mother and then the Slades appear to him as obstacles in his quest and so, as he tells Thorny, 'that's got to be changed' (U, 204).

Through drugs, sound effects and various disorientation techniques, Grove seeks to erase a block of time from the Slades' memories because they may recall something of his mother, Mrs Rainmantle. LSD, scopolamine and morphine are 'combined at different intervals so that you are going YANK–YANK back and forth with [memory]', 40 until they accept his reconstituted past. For Day Slade, the hallucinations challenge language and the ordered senses, the foundations of her normal world; 'she fell back almost voluptuously into a world of undifferentiated flapping things where words were silent and colors became textures' (U, 116). She is suddenly thrust out of her confident, secure self into a mêlée of 'blossomings and explosions... far down the coastline of her consciousness' (U, 116) into an unknown inscape.

In this unknown psychic land, words no longer hold their meanings; 'she heard each one separately; each was a point of departure for a new idea, something completely different' (U, 116–117). The disintegration of deceptive words reveals 'with the regularity of a nerve aching', that those around her are 'an unknown monstrous race' (U, 117) filled by a 'sinister distortion' of the world she normally inhabits. Her mind relies on shapes, forms and objects for its correct functioning, to lose these is to unhinge that mind totally. Bowles had learned this from the Surrealists and perhaps influenced his friend William Burroughs who wrote of human form itself dissolving under drug hallucinations:

...the lips and nose eaten away by disease. The disease spread, melting the face into an amoeboid mass in which the eyes floated, dull crustacean eyes...[until]...the human form can no longer contain the crustacean horror that has grown inside it. 41

The effect of the drug on Day is to destroy all certainty of form through
'the room becoming gelatinous' and 'the landscape flaking off, crumbling' (U,117), as if she were only concentrating upon a painting of reality and its shallow outer layer. It is the world of appearances, and superficial chatter, that surrounds the Slades' unsteady relationship. The drugged interval in Day's life pushes her mind behind that surface, and into a confrontation with the exposed angst of existence where many of Bowles's other characters had been. It is little wonder that Day 'clawed frantically at the sheet...trying to cover herself' (U,119), because she feels bare to the world.

Momentarily, she experiences existential anxiety at 'the edge of the abyss' (U,119), where 'nothing is stable, nothing offers man a place to stand or a sure sign by which to orient himself. In anxiety displaced man understands his utter insecurity and homelessness'. As Heidegger writes, 'anxiety brings Dasein face to face with its Being-free-for... the authenticity of its Being', but Anxiety can lead man to himself; it can also lead him away from himself. Authenticity and inauthenticity have their ground in anxiety, which confronts man with either gaining or losing himself. Day is unable to push beyond this anxiety, to a potential authenticity because she has lost any true contact with her sense of being and fallen under the external control Grove has over her experience. He can fill the vacancy with his reconstructed memories and return Day to an artificial stability and so pervert an idea of freedom for his totalitarian ends.

When Day sees for the first time, in a moment of intense anxiety, perched on a metaphorical and literal abyss, she is powerless to act because she has been deprived of individual power first by a system of values, laws and assumptions and secondly by a natural extension of them in the character of Grove. Her own self, lacking in certain contact with others or the world, has no way by which to fight back and so her moment of vision becomes her moment of destruction as she plunges into 'a further stage of decomposition' (U,119).
It was as though the world no longer contained anything certain. there was only unstable elements; everything had been cut free, was floating (U,131).

Beyond the possibility of a freedom, Day is 'decentralized' sensing everything inside and outside herself, but also...the fact that the disintegration was still in process' (U,119). Her final collapse is a surrender to Grove's conditioning, and her last struggle is appropriately 'to drive away the demon' (U,120), before she enters his organised hell. 

Inside, in the dark vault of her consciousness, there was an endless entry into Hell, where cities toppled and crashed upon her, and she died each time slowly, imprisoned at the bottom of the wreckage...

She is 'imprisoned' under the 'wreckage' of her self, and the social conventions and assumptions it depended upon. Unable to admit the falsities which dominate her life, she has opened herself to the brutality and manipulation of Grover Soto, himself a prisoner of his own consciousness.

Under the drug Slade, like his wife, undergoes the terror of dissolution and metamorphosis as the secure human form becomes 'monstrous' with 'a muzzle...[which] surely belonged to an animal', but 'fashioned from a nameless, constantly dripping substance' (U,106). As he tries to stabilise upon a fixed form, the 'whole jaw swiftly melted and fell away' leaving 'no muzzle, no eyes, nothing' (U,106). This transformative power is inherent in nature where 'leaves were pulsating with energy' and 'at any moment they could swell and become something other than what they were' (U,107), and seems to mock, as it had in Chapter one, the rigid patterns of existence of Bowles's characters.

The ultimate terror is self-dissolution because then man just becomes part of an undifferentiated mass of things, unable to maintain his superiority. For Dr Slade, as for Moresby in The Sheltering Sky, division precedes disintegration.

A part of him had been shut out and was trying in anguish to join the other part that was shut in, but there was not even a way of thinking about it (U,107).

The immutable self, essential to the rationalist, is being torn apart,
and he is actually unable to 'think about it'. The image is vital since it typifies the problems of the Slades, and other Bowles characters, who wander in the world trying to find a meaning, but who evade the significance of their own selves. What is 'shut in', the unconscious, repressed self, is not confronted because the part 'shut out', the rational, conscious self, suppresses it within. In his drugged vision, he experiences the model for this psychological topography—where the outer self confronts its 'Other', without the full command of 'thinking'.

At this climax of illumination, Dr Slade's mind slides into another phase of his psychedelic experience, a level of consciousness at which he takes on animal form himself, as 'a gill-like orifice gaped on each side of his neck; he could feel the pair of them opening and shutting regularly' (U,107). As Timothy Leary explains, the drugged person is 'trapped at the level of cellular reincarnation where they looked out and saw that their body had scales like a fish or felt that they had turned into an animal'. By 'cellular reincarnation', Leary means the experience under LSD, or 're-experiencing', 'human forebears, [by] shuttling down the chain of DNA remembrance' to uncover 'cellular diaries' which hold our racial histories. The evolution of the human form is relived under the drug, but to become 'trapped' at such a level produces panic in the user, since it is threatening his recognisable human structure.

What Leary reports as a possible consciousness-expanding force can also produce a state of terror based on the breakdown of established forms and the insecurity of fluid existence. 'There is that moment of terror—because nobody likes to see the comfortable world of objects and symbols and even cells disintegrate into the ultimate physical design'. It is at this precise 'moment of terror' that Dr Slade is caught, because he is aware of 'the vines and branches' which become
'the chaos of vegetation' (U,105-6) and the sounds of frogs rising to a 'chorus', singing 'together in rhythm' (U,105) until the whole jungle vibrates 'in exactly the same rhythmic patterns' (U,106). It is similarly described by Leary as 'the experience of being a one-celled creature ten-aciously flailing, the singing, humming sound of life exfoliating...'. From the primeval jungles 'you feel your backbone forming; gills form. You are a fish with glistening gills...', exactly as Dr Slade experiences it. 

He is no longer in control of himself, his ego no longer stands at the centre of his rationally organised world, instead he undergoes 'the LSD panic...the terror that ego is lost forever'. A situation which arises primarily because the 'user' is suddenly confronted by a vision of immense energy in which the human is but a tiny particle in 'a dance of particles', where you are 'horribly alone in a dead, impersonal world of raw energy feeding on your sense organs'. The self is broken, dissolved, scattered, just as the Slades' experience 'all objects [are] dripping, streaming...[their] substance and form still molten and barely beginning to harden'.

The effects are recorded on Dr Slade when we are told, 

...he was aware of the outside world rushing away, retreating before the onslaught of a vast sickness that welled up inside him, and he knew that soon there would be only the obscene reality of himself, trapped in the solitary chambers of existence (U,107).

Dr Slade's visions, force him beyond the boundaries of his artificially safe-world, and confront him with his own self. Bowles is repeating Moresby's and Dyar's confrontation. At the abyss, like his wife, Dr Slade is faced with the contingency of his life, and the terrifying inadequacy of his self. He glimpses the inauthentic nature of his being when he is removed from the pattern of an unquestioned social machinery in which he has confidently played his part. Like a cog in that machine, he has moved through life under the security of someone else's authority,
and now, for a brief moment, he is standing free of the machine in the glaring light of his inauthenticity.

Ironically, Bowles is fully aware that for Dr Slade the moment of illumination is also the moment of disintegration, because he has become a puppet under Grove's control. The drugs have allowed Grove to occupy Dr Slade's consciousness, demonstrating the totalitarian manipulation through chemicals, as Burroughs had discovered. The desperate gropings of the imprisoned Slade reflect also the pathetic floundering of his mind in the reconstructed memory Grove has implanted.

Dr Slade's decline is marked by the failure of his reasoned certainty, symbolically suggested by his stumbling through the dark interior of the house relying only on his senses: 'He listens...hears,' then smells ('the rooms smell old'), 'he looks out for an instant and sees stone pillars and arches' and 'he touches' (U,120-1). He is confronted by 'surfaces that supply varying sensations' (U,122). Although his rational mind has tried to orient itself in the 'unchanging silent house' (U,121), it becomes clear that for all his efforts he is really enmeshed in chance. Bowles's language records this fact; 'on the far side of one of the rooms he may find a door, and the door could open onto the garden' (U,121), and 'he believes that he is likely to find a way out of the house in one of these rooms up here' (U,123), but, 'he moves ahead uncertainly' (U,123). All is supposition, nothing is certain. Indeed his whole personality has become a confusion of reflexes and fears.

The 'transformation' is within Slade himself, and emerges as contradictions between his earlier self and that post-hallucinated self. For example, before his contact with Grove the air smells reassuring to Slade, 'Now, if you could make a perfume that smelled like that!' (U,99), he comments to Day. Yet in his new state it 'disturbs him' (U,122). Similarly, the inanimate world, which the confident rationalist dominates, has now become hostile. He stumbles into furniture, while walls, pillars and
arches crowd in to imprison him, until his only reaction is to 'strike out, smash the furniture...' (U, 121). Stumbling into an object he 'draws back and looks up' at a statue 'towering dimly above him' (U, 123), completely reversing the subject-object superiority, and causing Slade 'to lose his balance...' (U, 123). Slade is at the will of the seeming 'malice of the inanimate object' and the disturbing presence of 'they', who hide in the unchanging silent house... waiting to catch him' (U, 121).

They are coming up the stairs... without warning the room is bursting with light, as from a great altitude he gazes down upon the precise black-and-white landscape of the keyboard [of a piano] (U, 123).

Suddenly, Dr Slade is a minute figure in a 'landscape' of objects over which he is absolutely powerless, a world totally 'other' to his self, and one which seems under the auspices of his oppressors, ('they'), those who now 'guide him through the door' (U, 123), through the labyrinth he has taken so long to try and conquer.

Bowles's repetition of the concept of 'they' signifies the total abdication of self-determination, choice, responsibility to the others. Heidegger writes of inauthentic they-ness that, 'Everything is the other, and no one himself'. Individuality is sapped out, 'dispersed into the "they"' giving the sense of dehumanization, anomie or an object-like state: 'one belongs to the others oneself and enhances their power'. The submission of 'falling' into they-ness has the effect of the self becoming 'disburdened by the 'they' in the sense that there are no self-decisions to be made, since "they" presents every judgement and decision as its own' and consequently the individual has no responsibility. As George Steiner has remarked, it is 'the deepest, most unsparing [observation] that we have on the behaviour of 'they' under totalitarianism'. It is this which Bowles suggests with Slade's submission to those who 'guide' him.

They seem a little in awe of him, and he feels that this respect is predicated upon his complete obedience; at the first sign of divergence of opinion or behaviour on his part their attitude will change (U, 124).

It is the punishment-reward cycle in which man is conditioned to remain
obedient to the 'accepted view', the view sanctioned by those with power and who offer a 'reward'. To step outside this view is to 'diverge' and so risk yourself against the threat of punishment. It is a further enunciation of man's unfree condition as the 'you' is devoured by the 'they'.

He has always known the world is like this. There is no way of escaping. They come and get you and quietly lead you away (U, 124). The world is a Kafkaian nexus of power set like a trap and in the hands of a 'they' to which there is no accountability. This vision is the natural extension of Bowles's view of man as 'delicate prey' becoming a victim of other people or of the world itself. The language clearly delineates the directive power of 'they'; we are told 'they come and get you...they go down...they are telling' (U, 124), all against the passive, submissive 'he' - 'he must understand he is ill, that he must stay in bed' (U, 124). The repetitions underline the division of power, the domination of the active over the passive, the strong over the weak. The imprisonment is total; 'he is in a house, caught in the body of a man who is being kept in bed...' and even 'imprisoned in a muddy submarine world' (U, 127) of his inner self. The confident rationalism of Slade is broken, 'he looks up at them, waiting to be told...' like a dependent child while 'clinging mollusk-like to the underside of consciousness' (U, 127).

Emerging from their drugged states the Slades eagerly grasp the 'one unchanging scene' (U, 129) after the terrifying instability of their 'illness', but in doing so, accept only Grove's version of reality and with it a new complacency. Day, who 'assumed he was the doctor' (U, 128), accepts the notion that she is 'out of the tunnel now' and a lot better' (U, 129), because she inhabits a new 'soft world' where she 'idly' (U, 129) listens to those who surround her. Just as the Slades accepted their previous lives with all their glaring faults, they now appear to accept Grove's.

The story's suspense is maintained through Day's suspicion seen as 'the shadow of another question she could not even formulate' (U, 131).
Unwittingly she reveals truths about Grove, for example,

...she had a feeling that the young man had the answers to all possible questions written out and hidden away for safekeeping, and that under no circumstances would she ever get from him more than a small part of the truth (U,130).

The tension emerges because the reader is unsure if Day will ever 'formulate' her suspicions in time to save herself.

Day has become dislocated within the world and within herself and feels there was 'an invisible, total curtain between her and everything outside' (U,132). She needs a positive location in time and space which her condition forbids, and instead the components of her 'reality' have fallen under the control of Grove.

She knew that somewhere roosters were crowing, but because she could not remember how she had got to this high balcony in a town she did not know, the rooster's very existence was unacceptable (U,132).

Grove is now the master of time because he arranges what she should see, hear, feel in her prison of self. 'She felt her heart begin to beat very hard, like something wholly apart from her' (U,132), so that even within herself she is divided. The division forces doubts and questions into her mind, such as when she studies the apartment, and thinks, 'I've probably seen all this before...it even seemed to her that she recalled certain things, but it was more as though she had read about them or seen them in a film' (U,135).

Day Slade's association of her thoughts with a film is a relevant metaphor because her experiences have been re-ordered, erased (or edited) and added to by the directorship of Grove. When she remembers incidents they are as if on a film, she calls them 'static images' (U,135) or 'like a color photo in an advertisement' (U,136). Later, when Day has begun to doubt Grove and the blank space she finds in her memory, he tries to convince her of the gradual recovery of lost time. His effort is to convince her of one specific scene which he tells her is 'right in the middle of your blocked-out period' (U,163) and from there everything
will follow. It is clear that Grove assumes the role of director here, director of Day's memory, prompting her to specific scenes he has implanted in her mind. 'You know the part I mean' he says (U,163), and goes on to describe it in photographically static images and combinations of images; 'When the side of the building and the signboard seemed to buckle as you were falling, and the water in the harbour was flowing like a river?' (U,163). For Day the memory is totally uncertain, unreal 'like remembering a photograph she had once looked at rather than an experience she had lived through' (U,163).

Stylistically, Chapter 22 perpetuates this 'film reality',

There was the sky, and then trees went past, first nearby, overhead, with huge shining green leaves. The sky came again, and more trees far away on the side of a stony hill, gray, leafless, spiked, hundreds of them, while more of the hill came into view (U,138).

Each sensation exists separately because they are experienced as isolated static images by the perceiver - in this case, Dr Slade. He even describes the man with him as looking 'like a film star, and he spoke in the almost convincing manner of a character in a film...' (U,139), while Slade 'too was a character in the same film' (U,140). The 'almost convincing' manner of language suggests the duplicitous use of words in this scene, as in the whole novel, and it is upon 'some word...which would make the connection...' (U,140) that Slade pins his hopes of recovery. Of course, the very use of language has determined his state of mind, and the 'connection' he seeks is hidden in their power over him, instituted through language. When the man with him comments that 'the girls ought to be at Escobar around about now...' (U,140) he is manipulating Dr Slade's recognition. The language implies a mutual interest and friendship for 'the girls', and also a definite knowledge of place ('Escobar'), time ('about now') and motive (why they are going in the first place). All these components of language are used to enclose Dr Slade in the strategy Grove has mapped out for him, and which is conveyed in the man's answer to Slade's question, 'what were you saying a few
minutes ago? (U, 140), when he says, 'whatever it was, it was just an opening gambit...' (U, 140). They merely feed him a programmed language; 'landing in Puerto Farol with Day' (U, 141), and he responds, 'the names were enough; the contact was made' (U, 141). For him 'the darkness inside was banished' (U, 141) and he enters Grove's world of security and 'decided against asking all the other questions' (U, 142). He succumbs fully to 'they'.

Bowles perpetuates the suspense by the failure of the Slades to discuss the memory losses they both have experienced, even though individually they realise the importance of doing so. Dr Slade 'was convinced that between them they would be able to put together the jumbled pieces' (U, 155), while Day is 'certain that together they had a better chance of solving their difficulties than they ever could separately' (U, 159). Dr Slade is still bound by his need to present a rational, calm self to his young wife and so refuses to admit any loss of memory; 'he had no intention of admitting it to Day; it would deprive her of the very support she most needed at the moment' (U, 155).

Similarly, though Day senses the 'fundamental contradiction' (U, 156) in Grove, between his hospitality and his hostility, and begins to view him 'in a suspicious light' (U, 156) for the first time, the revelation remains held within herself. She will not discuss her feelings with her husband, being afraid of his reason dismissing her intuitions out of hand. Even though she is overwhelmed by knowing 'that everything depended on the word of this particular young man' (U, 155-156), she 'determined not to speak of it to Taylor, who already was treating her with a little of the condescension one shows to invalids' (U, 164). The Slades are victims of their own inability to relate and so they communicate 'more with mutterings than with words' (U, 153) and language is used to 'forestall discussion' (U, 150) rather than disclose truths. Indeed, the 'fundamental contradiction' in Grove's character has been obliterated from Dr
Slade's once-enquiring mind, until his position towards him has become totally favourable. Day asks,

'Has it ever occurred to you...to ask yourself why he brought us here?'
He looked incredulous. 'Why? My God, girl, he's just being hospitable! How can you ask why?'
'I can ask anything', she said (U,169).

Ironically it is Slade's last major dialogue in the novel, proving his lack of suspicion and the absurdity of his death. The absurdity is further suggested in his being thrown into the 'empty land', into the 'scrub mimosa and cactus at the foot of the cliff' where there are the 'terrible formless thickets of thorned bramble, like rolls of barbed wire'. His rational, superior self is absorbed, broken down into the natural world like anything else, since 'nothing lasted long down there'. He is worthless, destroyed by 'buzzards, flopping and tugging, and the ants hurrying in endless lines, night and day' (U,209) so that his being would disappear without trace, without purpose. For the Slades, the opportunities to detect truths about Grove are over and their final separation is imminent. 'It would have made her happy to lean across the space between the two beds and take Taylor by the arm' (U,164). It is with the ironic repetition of this earlier image that Bowles restates the unchanged distance between them, never able to touch, to communicate, always hampered by 'the space between' and the fatal procrastination.

For the Slades, who sought certainties and patterns in their lives, and for Grover Soto, whose wish it was to organise the lives of others into procedures, the intervention of chance is doubly ironic. It is upon a chance event that the Slade's fate turns, since Day accidentally sees 'the remains of a small bonfire' (U,172) which happens to contain scraps of Grove's typescript plans. She pays no attention to them but Grove's paranoia is enough to cause him great concern about what she may have seen. Exactly how inevitable the Slades' deaths now become is a point of discussion, but certainly Bowles builds upon this incident
The atmosphere of tension is focussed on the isolation of Day Slade with Grove, and heightened by the fusion with the increasing climatic changes around them until 'the wind had brought the wilderness into the room' (U, 177). Grove is 'master of the house tonight' having 'let the whole staff go to the fiesta' (U, 176). Even Luchita is back in Paris - and the effect of such news is immediately apparent upon Day.

She felt her eyes growing wide with dismay. To offset the impression that might make, she slowly let her face expand into a delighted grin (U, 176). Day is trying desperately not to show her fear and consequently wants to assume an air of unconcerned disinterest: 'I can't let him see I'm afraid' (U, 177).

What follows is a scene in which the language is a pure façade behind which there exists a real fear and terror. The whole scene is played out in an environment of deception, where the kitchen appears to be old to Day, but which Grove tells her is 'not old. It's just smoky...It looks old I'll admit' (U, 177). Later Grove plays his tape recorder with its 'dry metallic song of the forest night' (U, 183) compared to the real jungle noises outside. When Day speaks she is 'trying to laugh' (U, 176), or 'trying to sound pleasant' (U, 177), aware of Grove's close watch on her, 'as though he were waiting for her to betray herself' (U, 177). She is fully aware that she must play out the 'meaningless conversation' (U, 178) with Grove, but the sinister aspect to this dialogue refers to many others, equally artificial, between the Slades themselves. The point is, that to perpetuate lies and deceits, however trivial, is to allow oneself to be immersed in deceptions of a more tragic, serious nature. What is most powerful about this scene, and indeed in the novel itself, is 'the mastery of the unsaid' which Bowles exhibits. He places the reader in the position of interpreter, that is, existing within the tension of the conversation and interpreting the dialogue in terms
of what is implied or unsaid. We are interpreters of an interlinear conversation of terror which inhabits the world behind the mask.

Grove's mask is that of a charming, concerned host, but 'it was clear that he was thinking about something different' (U,179). Most dramatically, when Day cries, 'Of course I'm worried' (about Dr Slade), Grove's mask slips noticeably, and his violence intrudes with "But you're a fool" - he raised his hand -; before he checks himself (U,179). As Grove's anger increases the tight repression of his language slackens to the point where he admits, 'Yes. I have troubles' (U,181) and only afterwards 'considering its meaning' (U,181). It is a plea for understanding, which seems to come from deep inside him since 'his eyes shut for the past few seconds' (U,181) and as he turns to Day they are still closed.

When he opened them, he opened his mouth as well, and laughed once. It sounded like a young dog trying to bark (U,181).

It suggests Grove's need for understanding and confession represented by his open mouth 'trying to bark', but, as quickly as the occasion arises it is gone again, and 'he had clambered back inside himself and shut the door' (U,182). At this fragile moment Grove is exposed to Day, which both appeals to him and repels him because it subconsciously recalls his relationship with his mother. All his attitudes to women are tainted by his inner love/hate for his dead mother and both Luchita and Day experience this equivocal desire-repulsion. For Grove such feelings make him vulnerable and "only a drooling idiot would tell his troubles to a woman", he said suddenly, with some bitterness' (U,181). Grove's extreme reaction suggests that from now on he has decided to destroy Day, as he destroyed his mother. This idea is confirmed by Day herself later.

She thought of the terrible expression she had caught on Grove's face in the kitchen, and it seemed to her that all the forces which had made this present scene inevitable had come into being at that time, and that nothing had changed since then (U,216).
As he talks to Day, she is 'aware suddenly that there was a shadowy bond between them' (U, 182) based on their mutual fear. While hers is a 'physical fear', he is afraid of being nakedly truthful to her about himself - a situation he fears more than anything. For Day, however, there 'had been a fraction of a second that she had looked into his eyes as they opened after having been focused on an inner world of torment', and at that moment she had been 'caught up and drawn into orbit along with him' (U, 182). It is an 'orbit' where Day loses her self in another symbiosis, this time with Grove, and discovers 'the difference between them had been next to nothing' (U, 182). They are both inextricably bound together as victim and victimizer, but recognise also a similar desire for release from their enclosed selves. Just before Grove kills Day, they are seen in a hotel in San Felipe on 'a night of collective fear' (U, 190) standing on opposite sides of a cage. The image suggests the proximity of their dilemma, each a prisoner-victim trapped in a cage, each seeking freedom in different ways but both obviously failing. The absurdity and the human waste is clear from the parallel with the birds who 'fluttered and hopped among the branches of a dead tree' (U, 192).

In killing Day, Grove is destroying a woman, a potential mother and the earth, all of which he sees as forces which restrict him. He believes murder will liberate him, but paradoxically it makes him a less than human representative of a growing totalitarianism in life. Michael Curtis has written that 'the totalitarian concept implies that the authority of the dictator is total and all-embracing' and what more omniscient representation is there than a god? Ernest Jones wrote that 'The God Complex' was 'to be discovered in a colossal narcissism with omnipotence phantasies, (and) inflated self-esteem', which suggests Grove's personality, since he is seen considering 'his reflection... (concluding) it was perfectly clear to him...why any girl would be happy
to be in bed with him. He grinned lasciviously into the mirror of the footboard' (U,84-5). His narcissism is obviously 'colossal' and he is obsessed with 'omnipotence phantasies' and, as Grace Stuart comments, 'if identification with God is definitely a form of narcissism, we have an important clue to the better understanding of dictatorship'.

It is to such heights of power that Grove aspires in his self-created world, a universe which exists as a perfectly ordered extension of himself. The god-wish is expressed in describing Grove's apartment as 'Eden on all sides, with him at the heart of it' (U,85), where he has created an artificial paradise with nature transformed into pot-plants and organised vines rather than the violent jungle outside. Grove epitomises Bowles's vision of mankind in his crazed striving for dominance over life in all its forms, but especially in his supremacy over nature. Technological method and reason combine to enable Man to re-make the universe according to his own needs. In Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, General Cummings, the embodiment of totalitarian tendencies in the post-war world, clearly states this idea when he says,

Actually man is in transit between brute and God.
Man's deepest urge is omnipotence?
Yes...To achieve God. When we come kicking into the world, we are God, the universe is the limit of our senses. And when we get older, when we discover that the universe is not us, it's the deepest trauma of our existence. 63

Cummings reflects Grove's behaviour, for he sees 'the only morality of the future is a power morality, and a man who cannot find his adjustment to it is doomed.' 64

Grove's entire existence is geared toward the attainment of 'total perfection' (U,96), so that 'he wanted the basic pattern of each day to be as much as possible like that of the one before it' (U,82), in order that it might fit into his perfectly defined schedule. Every quality must be the product of his own 'discipline', something 'studied to attain' (U,83) and, therefore, self-created, otherwise he is open to external
forces. He is a modern Faust seeking beyond the boundaries of human life at the expense of his own existence. He wishes a perfection which over-reaches the sphere of mortal humanity, a perfection which dominates the vagaries of Fate:

We're machines for realizing the inconceivable, and we go on living like animals, being subjective, with personal tastes and preferences (U, 96).

It is to this transcendence of the subjective, 'animal' state which Grove seeks through his disciplined procedures. His attainment of 'tranquility' is described as,

...fairly easy: using an empirical system of autohypnosis he obliged himself to believe that the present was already past, that what he felt himself to be doing he had already done before, so that present action became merely a kind of playback of the experience. By ridding himself of all sense of immediacy with his surroundings, he was able to remain impervious to them (U, 83).

It is the conquest of past and future which permits Grove his greatest 'attitude of superhumanity' (U, 83), for here he can seemingly control Fate itself. Hans Buchheim writes that the totalitarian's claim to sole power 'corresponds to one of man's deeply rooted yearnings: the desire for a closed intellectual system, based on simple supposition, which explains all existence and offers the guarantee of being able to cope with fate...'

Through his use of tapes, drugs, memory erasure, and time distortion techniques, Grove creates a 'closed intellectual system' into which the Slades are placed. The past - the Slades' memories - fall under his control through his use of prolonged drug treatment and procedures to erase and replace whole periods of time; their present is totally contained within his synthetic 'hospitality' and their future entirely dependent upon Grove's plans. His existence and his plot for the Slades are predicated upon his subordination of fate, that is, his assumption of a god-like role in the total organization of events in time.

Grove's matricidal action is connected to his need to dominate time
and control fate, since as Neumann tells us 'the Feminine is also the Goddess of time, and thus of fate' in her symbolic association with the moon and skies, so that in menstruation 'woman is regulated by and dependent on time; so it is she who determines time - to a far greater extent than the male, with his tendency toward the conquest of time, toward timelessness and eternity'. By killing his mother, Grove usurps her symbolic control of time and fate, and replaces it with his own.

Bowles has written that 'Grover's penchant for Pre-Columbian sculpture and culture is of a piece with his preoccupation with the trappings of totalitarianism'. The Civilizations which dominated Central and South America are often judged to be of a totalitarian nature, with all power in the hands of a few Leaders, or Priest-Gods who were intermediaries between the people and their gods. Perhaps the overwhelming influence for this series of ideas in the novel is William Burroughs, a friend of Bowles for many years, who had already been consulted about the dosages and types of drugs to be given to the Slades. Burroughs's own work has long used the parallel of the Mayan control system in order to reflect upon a similar totalitarianism in the contemporary world. Their system was formulated upon the use of a calendar to predict seasonal changes, and consequently harvests and rituals amongst the people. This procedure came under the very few priest-gods who could read the calendar, and so govern time, and they maintained domination over the masses.

The Mayan codices establish or transmit knowledge...[a feudalism] whose usufructuaries used the religion as a skillfully manipulated instrument by which to seize and maintain power...[and] in whose hands therefore lie the life and death of the community - a political factor of the first order, dominating all questions concerning the individual or the rival collectivity...the omnipotence of the mediator, who by divine order and relying upon divine authority intervenes in mundane and political affairs, helps to determine them or himself makes the decisions... Compared with the priest, the public are minors; docile, without protest, they must submit to their guardianship.
The totalitarian possibilities of this terrifying system are realised in Burroughs's novels, and expressed most clearly in his book *The Job* where he tells how

The Mayan [priests] postulated and set up a hermetic universe of which they were the axiomatic controllers. In so doing they became Gods who controlled the known universe of the workers. They became Fear and Pain, Death and Time. 70

Certainly what Burroughs identifies in the Mayan system is a basis for all totalitarian systems; total control of environment through religious or political ritual, deification of leaders, the operation of definite punishment-reward cycles and above all, dominance of time. Von Winning wrote that 'some scholars have described the Mayans as being obsessed by time and this description might possibly be justified, for the preoccupation with time seems to have been interwoven with every religious rite...' 71 Burroughs also commented that 'the priests could calculate into the future or the past exactly what the populace would be doing hearing seeing on a given date. This alone would have enabled them to predict the future or reconstruct the past...'. 72

Grover Soto has himself 'postulated and set up a hermetic universe' and sees himself as a Priest-God, like a Mayan, or Aztec leader, 'willing to make human sacrifice in order to assert his own authority and using power over time to rule without resistance. It is interesting that in the hallucinating visions of Dr Slade, he describes Grove as 'chief' (U,125) wearing 'the striped mask' (U,125), who is 'larger and more officious' than anyone else, 'clearly their commander...a perfect imitation of a man' (U,125). This creates an image of Grove as a Mayan priest-god in all his superhuman glory.

The Mayan calendar, the Tzolkin, is replaced as time control by Grove's combined use of drugs and tape-recordings, which enable him to manipulate sequence and memory. Burroughs has called such tape control the ability to contain us within 'prerecorded preset time', in other words 'prerecord your future' and so annihilate fate. 73 Everything is in its
place, prearranged so that whoever holds the tapes and the drugs, holds
the power to 'influence and create events'. Grove's obsessive ambition
is to be like the enormous statue he has preserved, 'Xiülóc, god of the
life force' (U,160), whom he looks upon 'with respect' (U,160). His dis-
ciplined programmatic approach to life and to the particular problem
presented by the Slades is an indication of his preoccupation with this
ambition. Bowles pictures in Grove the totalitarian dilemma taken to
the most terrifying extent of the assumption of godliness, and a control
of fate.

Amongst Grove's books is one called Cybernation and the Corporate
State which suggests his interest in the 'new' science of cybernetics
invented by Norbert Wiener in the 1950s. Cybernetics is the study of
'what in a human context is sometimes loosely described as thinking and
in engineering is known as control and communication' in order 'to find
the common elements in the functioning of automatic machines and of the
human nervous system, and to develop a theory which will cover the entire
field of control and communication in machines and in living organisms'.
The theory uses elaborate technical ideas such as 'feedback', which means
'being able to adjust future conduct by past performance' through a
controlling mechanism. Surrounding the whole area of cybernetics there
exists the shadow of control which Wiener recognised.

Its real danger...is the quite different one that such machines,
though helpless by themselves, may be used by a human being or a
block of human beings to increase control over the rest of the
human race.

For Wiener the machine is governed by an input of 'tapes', which 'deter-
mined the way in which the machine is going to act in one operation' and
through 'feedback, in which past experience is used to regulate not only
specific movements, but also whole policies of behaviour'. What Wiener
outlines for machines, Grove seeks to implement for human beings, so that
'thinking' and 'control and communication' are brought under his single
command. Through the use of his tapes he seeks to 'regulate' the 'specific movements' and 'policies of behaviour' of the Slades. It is seen in Grove's attitude to the Slades that 'they counted as objects, not as people' (U,156) and even more clearly in a section of omitted dialogue in Bowles notebooks:

Who was she? Who is anyone, what is anyone, but a more or less inefficient machine for transforming experience into will. 80

With people seen as objects or machines they may be dominated and programmed in Grove's general plot for control.

In every aspect of Grove's obsessive personality there exists his fundamental detachment from humanity - he is incapable of human love, treats people as objects, has no respect for human life - but he is also detached from nature. Grove is the archetype of the emerging man, still with the age-old Faustian wish to be Lord and Commander of the realm of nature, but with the benefits of a technological, cybernetic culture at his disposal. The magic which Faust employed to force nature to his will is replaced by Grove's technological, pharmaceutical wizardry. Grove's attitude to nature demonstrates a fundamental tendency of arrogance toward life in general.

His superiority over nature and human life demands his total egoism, just as Faust realised.

If Christ is God and if I follow in his steps, even though it be on heavenly paths, I am no more than a shoe which is filled and trodden by his foot...If Nature is God, I am only a channel through which she passes in the interests of the whole race...I will firmly assert my stubborn self, sufficient to myself and undaunted; no longer in bondage or subject to anyone, I will pursue my path into myself. 81

To assert his 'stubborn self' Grove must be devoid of all conventional 'bondage'. Bowles translates this will-to-domination mythically in terms of Grove's murder of his own mother, since in matricide man annihilates his relation to Earth. Traditional mythic representations of the Earth Mother bind mankind into a reciprocal relationship with the ground,
literally the place from which he is born, and to which he would return at death. Mythically,

Earth is the primordial mother of life; she feeds all creatures out of her substance, and again devours all; she is the common grave. She clasps to her bosom the life she has brought forth, denying to it the unbound freedom of the celestial space. 82

The Mother is both the life and the death when related to the Earth. The cosmogonic birth of man, 'of having come from the soil, of having been born of the Earth in the same way that the Earth, with her inexhaustable fecundity gives birth to the rocks, the rivers, trees and flowers' gives him an attachment to the Earth, 'a feeling of cosmic relatedness'. 83

Yet this is precisely what Grove refuses to accept, for he sees himself outside of this process, and denies his relatedness to the common materials of life. He aspires to transcend human temporality, that is, resist the death implicit in maternal, temporal birth, and dominate Earth, Nature and Time through his willful self-creation.

Mrs Rainmantle embodies elements of the Earth Mother; her very name, 84 is 'precisely mythical', rain or water being a traditional symbol of life and death, and mantle being a womb-like expression for something that covers completely or envelops, such as the geological term earth-mantle suggests. She is life-giver and sustainer but also the boundaries of human existence, for she also includes death and the restrictive symbolism of a mantle which stifles and restrains freedom. For Grove the latter characteristics are those which describe his mother for she represents a threat to his independence and transcendence. She is a devouring mother to Grove seeking to engulf his ego into her 'formidable' being and mythically she is the Earth demanding man's respect and his eventual return.

Matricide breaks a natural bond of child and mother, it perverts society and displays its growing dissolution and violence. It signifies a disturbing challenge to parental authority in the obsessive move-
ment to total power which Bowles is concerned with in *Up Above the World*. Yet perhaps the most important aspect of the act is its mythic connotations. As Jung has written: 'The negative relationship to the mother is always an affront to nature, unnatural. Hence distance from the earth... Rejection of the earth, of what is below, dark and feminine... Flight from personal feelings.' Because of his unnatural act, Grove is removed from nature; he moulds it into precise patterns of interior decoration, reduces it to a 'frozen menace' (U,84) and lives 'up above the world'. The natural world challenges him because it is a constantly changing force, a flux of growth and decay, of unknowable, metamorphic patterns which his 'genius for perfection' cannot command. Grove is what Neumann defines as the 'male principle of consciousness, which desires permanence and not change, eternity and not transformation, law and not creative spontaneity...'. To Grove, the jungle is 'wailing', the sky is 'giant', the vegetation is 'reaching out from both sides' of the road and the 'forest...(is) black and rotting' (U,84). Nature effuses threat into the artificial paradise and offers the possibility of death, of darkness, of the unconscious encroaching into his meticulous, ordered and conscious realm. Nature combines death into itself, transcends time through its eternal return, and reminds Grove of his mortality and his fixity within the temporal world - the very thing he seeks to escape.

The landscape in *Up Above the World* suggests Grove's crime against nature, his breaking the bonds of the life cycle, consequently the 'rain-mantle' is gone from the earth to be replaced by the 'dry season' (U,164). The lack of water produces an atmosphere of tension in the latter part of the book where

all of nature seemed to be straining to pull a little moisture out of the sky, until one could feel the tension in everything, and the scorpions came out and the lightning flashed more each night, and human nerves grew taut (U,164).
Indeed, it is 'a landscape imitating death' (U,165-6), a 'wasteland' (U,166) a 'savage landscape' (U,174) that is governed by the presence of an obsessive ruler. As Day observes, 'the black hatred he had aroused spread to the house itself and the countryside around it... (U,186).

Another aspect of the natural world is, as Jung puts it, 'below dark, feminine'. As we have seen throughout, Grove is terrified of the dream manifestation of his unconscious because it presents an aspect of mystery which defies rational pattern and control. His need is to 'reconstruct the world of the little nightmare', because 'he had to understand whatever he was afraid of' (U,90). He must assert his conscious mind to dispel the threat of the unknown element within him, the feminine side. In the notebooks Bowles has written: 'There was no mystery to anything, he was thinking it could all be analysed and explained... But the dream itself embodies the 'dark destroying presence' of the feminine; a 'middle-aged actress' who becomes 'his mother' and the whole humiliation performed before an 'audience...made up only of women' (U,88), all there 'to seek vengeance' (U,88) on him. The unconscious side is the feminine, it is the unknown within man, the side closest to nature and it is precisely this which Grove seeks to escape. He destroys 'the first carrier of the anima-image' but what she represents can still emerge in others. In fact, for Grove, all women are not to be trusted, they are all potentially mothers, possessing all the qualities which so distress him. Consequently he has Thorny kill his mother, is sadistically cruel to Luchita throughout, and finally takes it upon himself to destroy the feminine by killing Day Slade.

Jung writes of the reaction to 'a mother who is wholly a thrall of nature, purely instinctive, and therefore all-devouring', who suggests the Feminine alliance with the unconscious realm. He identifies consciousness as masculine, which he sees as trying to free itself from the
material womb of unconsciousness. This is Grove's exact position, continually asserting his masculine intellect and consciousness over the environment, whilst denying and controlling all things feminine. Jung adds that at its deepest level, the masculine consciousness's 'first creative act of liberation is matricide...', but such an action does not truly 'liberate' but rather imprisons again. Grove kills his mother in order to liberate himself from her power, but in so doing he merely imprisons himself within the burden of guilt, the fear of detection and his reliance upon a force other than himself - Thorny. At a more symbolic level, he is destroying the feminine aspect of the soul and so succumbing to a totally conscious, rational approach to life, which as Jung has stated is to imbalance the self.

Man would do well to heed the wise counsel of the mother and obey the inexorable laws of nature which sets limits to every being... the world exists only because opposing forces are held in equilibrium. So, too, the rational is counterbalanced by the irrational, and what is planned and purposed by what is. All these psychological motivations with mythic forms are vital to an appreciation of the depth of Up Above the World and of Grover Soto as its central character. Behind all Grove's motives is the simple intellectual drive to escape fate, to have supreme free will to the extent of ordering the world to permit it. The unknown, in all its forms must be conquered by the light of reason, and the temporal position of man overcome through science. As Mottram has written, 'Bowles observes the consequences of an obsessive desire to know at as purely an intellectual level as possible', and beyond this, with Grove to a totalitarian control of fate.

Grove is, however, a human being, despite his ambition of superhumanity, and consequently is imperfect. He believes he can control the Slades completely, and yet Day's chance gaze at the charred typescript totally disrupts his programme. His actions are consequently determined by the implications of this chance event, rather than by his own will
over her. Indeed we are increasingly aware that while Grove becomes obsessed with dominating the Slades he is losing control over himself. Stewart has said that Grove does not see 'the severance from his mother is a fatal joining with his companion...', and it is through Thorny that we are given a totally evil character, 'like the nasty one in a Western' (U,187). Though he is under the command of Grove, there is always a definite sense of his potential evil given by Luchita and Grove's father who both disapprove of him. They see Thorny as 'taking advantage' of Grove and that his 'influence was not a civilizing one in Grove's life' (U,83). It is as if he is biding time, watching and waiting for Grove's mistakes. The guilt which Grove believes he is transferring to Thorny, by having him kill his mother, proves to be the very power Thorny needs as leverage in his desire for greater 'status' with Grove. Grove allows Thorny to see his weakness, his vulnerability about the murder of his mother, but Thorny has no connections of this kind. After killing Mrs Rainmantle he is more concerned about having run over a dog in his car, and everything he does is cold and brutal. When Grove has killed Day and is most exposed, he tries to command Thorny again, 'Go on home, will you?' (U,222), at which he rebels, demanding payment for his work. Grove's voice held 'an unfamiliar accent of confusion' (U,222) and 'it seemed the right moment to move for the establishment of a new status' (U,222). Grove is no longer a threat to him, no longer in control, he is 'black and faceless against the dying sky' (U,222), unable to command Thorny's attention. He claims a room in Grove's apartment and inspects the world he has inherited - 'it was the first time he had ever really looked at them' (U,223) - and assumes Grove's narcissism. It is coldness, a brutality which pervades the final lines of the novel as Thorny enters the bathroom and gazes into the mirror which 'played tricks with the image' (U,223). Now it is Thorny whose 'image' can change, who adopts the personalities and the masks to suit him, and who with all Grove's gestural
style 'began to cut his fingernails' (U,223). A process of evolution is underway in which Grove's control has diminished, to be replaced by an even more sinister figure, in the form of Thorny, a shadow-like presence in his master's personality, who represents a truly evil nature. That Thorny emerges from the novel without scars, with a 'new status' is vitally significant to the whole projection which it affords us.

Bowles sets the final confrontation of Thorny and Grove against 'the decaying light in the western sky' (U,227) because embodied within the novel is a vision of human vulnerability and corruption and its subsequent effect. Grove and Thorny have coexisted, almost as two interdependent beings, another symbiotic relationship developed in the novel, and now one half has been destroyed to the benefit of the other. Grove committed matricide as if to realise Jung's theory that it is the 'first creative act of liberation', but for him the act only serves to imprison him more. His hope of liberation from his mother, and all she symbolised in his mind, cannot finally overcome the guilt of the act. As Jung adds to his earlier statement, 'the spirit that dared all heights and all depths must, as Synesius says, suffer the divine punishment, enchainment on the rocks of the Caucasus'. Grove is 'enchained' finally, and not liberated; a victim of his own obsessive personality. The 'decaying light in a western sky' (U,227) represents Grove's final defeat, since the image represents the very forces he has sought to dominate, as Erich Neumann writes,

The sun sinks down in the West, where it dies and enters into the womb of the underworld that devours it. For this reason the West is the place of death, and the hostile and rending 'old woman in West' is an image of the Terrible Mother. Grove is reclaimed by his mother, by the earth and time, 'the place of the women, the primeval home, where mankind once crawled from the primordial hole of the earth'.

As the novel ends and Grove's power fades, he is replaced by Thorny, a horrendous vision of brutality, who exists at the pinnacle of Bowles's
bleak pyramid of human corruption. The Slades continue familiar themes about neurotic, duplicitous Westerners searching for meaning, and Grove extends themes of power and manipulation, but ultimately the novel, Bowles's last, is most devastating in its examination of totalitarianism as a natural consequence of human society. The extremes of violence, bad faith and exploitation reveal a terrifying vision of the world and of a diseased human mind.
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Later Works: He who Stops is Lost

I think there are some things we have lost, and we should try perhaps to regain them, because I am not sure that in the kind of world in which we are living and with the kind of scientific thinking we are bound to follow, we can regain these things exactly as if they had never been lost; but we can try to become aware of their existence and their importance. 1

Their [modern men's] neurasthenic craving for the latest novelty is a sickness and not culture. The essence of culture is continuity and conservation of the past; craving for novelty produces only anti-culture and ends in barbarism. 2

The world is closing in, you know. 3
In 1956 Bowles wrote a piece for The Nation called 'Letter from Morocco' in which he made important statements about his view of the way the modern world was moving. The statements inform the direction of his own career, when after years of writing his own fiction he moved towards 'preserving' the work of others and taking his own work in new directions. The article stresses the Moroccan folk music which was in danger of being lost forever and which Bowles desperately wanted to preserve. He believed, 'a recording project in Morocco [was] a fight against time and the deculturising activities of political enthusiasts...'.

To lose this tradition, or let it go so easily, would be to disregard something of great value in musical and cultural terms - but perhaps it also represented some connection to a time of innocence, when man still felt a more magical link with the roots of his culture, of his 'psychic soil', as Bowles had called it. To preserve this was an effort to recognise man's connection with his primordial self, to prevent its disappearance into the world of 'technique' and modernisation. Jacques Ellul wrote of this process too, 'Technique requires predictability... [it] must reduce man to a technical animal... Human caprice crumbles before this necessity; there can be no human autonomy in the face of technical autonomy. The same process Bowles felt attacking the psychology of humanity was responsible for the destruction of traditional ways of life in regions of the world where they had survived longer. The jungle and the desert, havens for the unconscious forces that rational man had pushed aside, were also the places under threat in Western Man's quest to impose his technique on other cultures. Bowles writes of 'the process of Europeanization', of 'mechanization' and 'urbanization' influencing the Moroccan way of life and forcing itself upon a 'vestige of antique civilization'. Bowles's eventual collection of folk music was an effort at the 'preservation of an art to which they (the emerging new Moroccans) have never given a thought in any case'.

The following year Bowles wrote the introduction to a photographic record of African tribesmen, Yallah and continued the point of view expressed in this earlier piece.

Here the population has not yet been attacked by the deadly virus which sends the victim to the nearest flea-market to purchase second-hand European or American trousers and shoes, in order to flaunt them before his less enlightened neighbour...the renunciation of native clothing is merely a symbol for the rejection of the entire indigenous culture. 12

Bowles uses the imagery of disease, familiar from his fiction, to express the spreading of Western thought and culture over the more primitive worlds of Africa, just as he later told H. Breit his work was about 'disease'. 13 The point of writing about this 'growing cancer of modernisation' and its effects, is that there is still time to learn a great deal about it while it still exists...we could learn from them about man's relationship to the cosmos, about his conscious connection with his own soul. Instead of which we talk of raising their standard of living! Where we could learn why, we try to teach them our all-important how so that they may become rootless and futile and materialistic as we are. 15

The modern world was 'rootless and futile and materialistic' for Bowles because it had lost its contact with its 'true past...the psychic soil of tradition in which the roots of culture must be anchored'. 16

The result of this split was exactly what the Surrealists worked against, what Jung and Freud and Heidegger all studied and sought to heal and which has haunted Bowles throughout his life.

Our gadget civilization has no visible connection with the past; it is not the continuation or outgrowth of any deep-seated myth, and however much the rational section of the mind may approve of it, the other part of the mind, the part that actually determines preferences rather than explaining them, is dissatisfied with it. 17

As early as 1945 Bowles made the profound connection between the desires of the European avant-garde and the resistance of certain cultures to the rapidly expanding monoculture of Western capitalism.

Indeed, this is what tropical America is all about. It offers the tragic, ludicrous, violent, touching spectacle of a whole vast region still alive and kicking, as here it welcomes, there it resists the spread of so-called civilization. The avant-garde is not alone in its incomplete war against many features of mod-
ern civilization; with it are the ponderous apathy and the potential antipathy of the vestigial primitive consciousness. 18

This 'resistance' was what attracted Bowles to Morocco and encouraged his active 'preservation' of its culture.

Bowles' fiction both examines this 'profound rift in our collective subconscious',19 and shows the extremes to which it forces those who try to escape from it, without truly confronting its implications. His own response has been to record, with growing bleakness, the 'disease' while simultaneously trying to find new ways of reopening the channels which man has progressively closed off from his own experience. He has done this through his Moroccan stories and translations and latterly in his 'history' of Morocco, Points in Time. 20 Bowles's continuing creativity resembles what Barrett said of the existentialists. He is

restoring to man his sense of the primal mystery surrounding all things, a sense of mystery from which the glittering world of his technology estranges him, but without which he is not truly human. 21

This means a number of things for Bowles, all of which necessitate a continuing movement beyond the accepted, rational interpretation of what is real, into a world which permits magic, metamorphosis, the interrelationship of dream and reality. Indeed it is the child's world which Bowles saw had been lost from America and societies with a highly developed and exclusive rationality. As it sought to impose its view of the world on all other cultures, in a drive to standardization, those countries who had maintained their child-like, open view were now also under threat.

If you are going to sit at table with the grown-ups, you have to be willing to give up certain childish habits that the grown-ups don't like: cannibalism, magic and all the other facets of 'irrational' religious observances. You must eat, drink, relax and make love the way the grown-ups do, otherwise your heart won't really be in it; you won't truly be disciplining yourself to become like them. 22

But all this 'giving up' is a great loss because it is reducing the variety of cultures and robbing them of tradition and replacing it with
an imposed rootless system.

The return to, or allowance of, a 'lost childhood' is always synonymous in Bowles' work with a journey back into the regions of the self which the adult conscious world had shut out in its desperate quest for meaning and power outside itself. Again William Barrett helps to clarify this when he compares the readmittance of the unconscious 'mystery'

with Aeschylus's Furies who are

childish and barbarous; attached to Clytaemnestra as mother...they stand for the childhood of the race before it won Hellenic culture, the barbarian phase of pre-Hellenism, the dark of the race and of the world...Apollo stands for everything the Furies are not: Hellenism, civilization, intellect and enlightenment. 23

Thus in Bowles it is the female who is closer to the atavistic past and it is the mother who connects us all with our childhood pre-conscious state, and with its ultimate expression in Nature.

Man cannot obliterate, and should not repress, the unintelligible emotions. Or again, in different terms, man's nature being what it is and fury being a part of it, Justice must go armed with Terror before it can work. 24

The Furies must have an equal place within us, just as they do in Aeschylus - if they do not they

shall let loose on the land the vindictive poison dripping deadly out of my heart upon the ground; this from itself shall breed cancer, the leafless, the barren to strike... (The Eumenides). 25

All these 'furies' exist in Bowles' fiction and represent his effort to provoke their reemergence, but in Morocco he found a traditional culture which had a wealth of music and oral literature bound up with a reality very different from accepted norms. Morocco was a world apart, although changing, and offered alternatives to a 'reality' rapidly being imposed through cultural standardization and its attendant version of the real. Morocco's cultural acceptance of magic, metamorphosis, altered states of consciousness and so on are all captured in the Moroccan stories - those translated and those Bowles created himself. They act as remin-
ders to us that alternatives can and do exist to our way of thinking as well as being preservations of a cultural tradition in decline.

Bowles felt, like Levi-Strauss in the epigraph to this section, that some things were worth regaining from what has been lost because as he wrote in Yallah 'there is still time to learn a great deal...while it still exists'.

Throughout his travel pieces, stretching from the 1940's to the late 1960's, Bowles repeatedly criticised the forces which sought to reduce cultural differences. He expressed this most clearly in the introduction to his collection of travel writings Their Heads are Green... in 1963, when he wrote:

human behaviour is becoming everywhere less differentiated...it may be, says W.H. Auden, 'that in a not remote future, it will be impossible to distinguish human beings living on one area of the earth's surface from those living on any other'.

In a letter to his publisher, Peter Owen, Bowles comments on his original title for Their Heads are Green, 'Far and Few', 'meaning that the people of one place become constantly more like the people of every other place...universal standardization.'

This view is shared with Claude Levi-Strauss who wrote about a similar dilemma in Tristes Tropiques (1953):

A proliferating and overexcited civilization has broken the silence of the seas once and for all...Mankind has opted for monoculture; it is in the process of creating a mass civilization, as beetroot is grown in mass.

In Levi-Strauss's concept of a 'monoculture' Bowles would have recognised his great fear of the reductive influence of 'westernization', making all men think in the same way and all desire the same things. In this closing down of human possibilities Bowles's vision of entrapment is made real and terrifying. It also echoes The Communist Manifesto's view of cultural and capitalist standardization as drawing 'all even the most barbarian nations into civilization...it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst...it creates a world after its...
own image'. It is like the sorcerer, who 'is no longer able to control the power of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells'.

Bowles himself expressed it equally forcefully:

One of the great phenomena of the century is the unquestioning worldwide acceptance of the accessories of Judaeo-Christian Civilization...it would seem that the important task is to get them into the parade, now that they have been convinced that there is only the one direction in which they can go.

The underlined phrases identify Bowles deep concern for a totalitarian drift into a way of life that threatens all cultures because it demands a rejection of traditional patterns of thought and traditional culture in return for the 'benefits' of technological culture and all its 'accessories'. It is the 'accessories' which will finally destroy all vestiges of traditional culture by making them conform to a new 'monocultural' pattern of thought which orders and normalises alternative tendencies. There can be no deviance from 'the parade'.

This international view of a flattening out of culture confirmed many of Bowles's fears about the development of humanity in the twentieth century. His work, which had always responded to his feelings about changes in the self and society, naturally looked for more direct ways to combat the devastating changes being wrought on traditional cultures throughout the world. It was a cruel collision of his personal life with his art which forced him into a new phase of his career.

In 1957 Paul Bowles's wife, Jane, suffered a stroke which radically affected his writing career. The time he now had to spend looking after his wife dominated his life, as he told Peggy Hicks,

'I've never had a problem like this and it occupies every moment of the day after twelve, and of the night until one or two. We're getting nowhere, I can't work at anything...'

Since then he has written only one novel, *Up Above the World*, and instead given most of his time to translations and short stories.

I wrote only one novel after my wife fell ill. During the years when she was here in bed, I had no time or privacy to embark on a novel. I devoted myself principally to translations, which can be
worked on for short periods of time without being damaged. These translations were chiefly from local Moroccan men who told him stories in Moghrebi, which Bowles taped and translated into English.

The translations, which began as early as 1952 with Ahmed Yacoubi's tale 'The Man Who Dreamed of Fish Eating Fish', became easier to record after 1956 and the arrival of the tape recorder in Morocco. Bowles rapidly worked on stories told by Yacoubi, Larbi Layachi, Abdeslan Boulaiach, Mohamed Choukri and Mohammed Mrabet, and as he writes in 'Without Stopping' they opened 'a whole new dimension to my writing experience'. The translations permitted 'a closer interest in Moroccan thought and behaviour' and a rare opportunity to enter into the traditional art of storytelling. Bowles felt towards the translations as he did towards his collection of Moroccan folk music, that he 'might be instrumental in preserving at least a few of them' as they were 'valuable because conditions are changing, and what exists today may not exist tomorrow'.

In a world rapidly slipping into a 'monoculture' and sameness of thought and action, the opportunity of preservation was a significant one for Bowles. Here was a vital traditional art form, a clear demonstration of the essence of a culture which was being destroyed by Westernization and which Bowles could actively preserve.

Naturally I want to preserve what remnants I can of the old way of seeing life. The translations seem to me a valid method of doing this. I also was eager to record the folk music while it still existed, and it was 23 years before the Rockefeller Foundation made it possible.

They represented not only examples of Moroccan folk art, but also a level of experience and perception that had for too long been excluded from Western literature. The nature of the stories was such that they permitted magic, metamorphosis, dream and witchcraft to become infused into the everyday. As narratives they expanded the regions of reality by allowing fewer boundaries to exist. Just as Bowles had enjoyed the liberating influence of myths and the Surrealists to stimulate
his early writings so now he fell under the spell of another powerful form.

Morocco is a world full of possibilities, 'a magical place', where the constraints of rigid thought disappeared. It was an exciting, vital place enhanced by

the idea that in the night, all around me in my sleep, sorcery is burrowing its invisible tunnels in every direction, from thousands of senders to thousands of unsuspecting recipients. Spells are being cast, poison is running its course; souls are being dispossessed of parasitic pseudo-consciousnesses that lurk in the unguarded recesses of the mind. 49

Rational man had repressed as 'nonsense' all connections with magic, but, as Bowles wrote, magic was 'a secret connection between the world of nature and the consciousness of man, a hidden but direct passage which bypassed the mind'. 41 To experience this 'connection' and open it up, both in his translations and, later, in his own fiction, Bowles was once more challenging the accepted patterns of thought. The whole concept of magic had long interested Bowles, as had all alternative systems of thought, but the translations provided a spur.

My interest in the every-day applications of magic began when I first came to Morocco in 1931. This still plays a major role in the lives of the illiterate public. There's no doubt that the translations I've made have increased my awareness of this facet of Moroccan life. 42

Magic, incarnations, the casting of spells, love potions and even death potions, are still a very important part of the fabric of Tangier's life, and it is not surprising that the young Moroccan artists...should draw upon this facet of the indigenous culture for their inspiration. 43

As the world was undergoing a process of 'universal standardization' Bowles felt it was vital to maintain whatever remnants existed of 'otherness'. As early as 1945 he wrote that magic could provide a crucial link with a way of thinking being rapidly forgotten.

The existence, alongside the Church, of a widespread system of practical magic, is an important phenomenon; it keeps the minds of its participants in a healthy state of personalised anarchy... 44

Magic is a reminder of the unknown and unknowable in life which has always appealed to Bowles. It was the 'anarchy' which had the capacity to
disrupt the dangerous complacency and security of any rigid patterns of thought. Not surprisingly Bowles used very similar language and ideas to describe his feeling about Tangier.

It is good to be in *No Country*, to feel, in this world of swiftly increasing social organization and hypertrophied governments, that anarchy is still a possibility... 45

These concepts of 'personal anarchy' confirm a belief in an openness and liberalism of thought, 'a vision of human community beyond...the need for the state as an apparatus of law and suppression; beyond the yardsticks of moral measurement; beyond the need, in fact, for the constraints of authority...'.46 The anarchic impulse in Bowles, therefore, grasped at magic as a means of challenging accepted and imposed patterns of thought, for as Irving Howe has written,

the anarchic impulse has a dread of a future ruled by functional rationality...a smooth strifeless world...[which] will prove to be a model of tomorrow, a glass enclosure in which there will be a minimum of courage or failure, test or transcendence... 47

This is Bowles's dreaded world too, of enclosure and restriction - a world of complete acceptance and unquestioning thought.

To be able to preserve something of worth and to explore alternative ways of seeing and thinking appealed to Bowles enormously, allowing him scope to enter the world of the 'fantastic' which lies behind closed systems, infiltrating, opening spaces where unity had been assumed. Its impossibilities propose latent 'other' meanings or realities behind the possible or the known. 48

For much of his career as a writer Bowles had sought to 'help society go to pieces...'.49 by what Robin Blaser has termed the 'magic of disturbance'.50 He wants to 'incite [us] to question and ultimately to reject the present structure... by bringing into doubt the very 'reality' by which we live. The fantastic Moroccan stories allowed him to do this because they exist as 'the inside, or underside, of realism, opposing the novel's closed, monological forms with open, dialogical structures...[they] are all that is not said, all that is unsayable, through realistic forms.'52
Although the translations are clearly not total fantasy-pieces, much of their power lies in their movement between a real world of everyday routines and events, and a magical fantasy world of spells, witchcraft and adventure. In terms of the translations' influence on Bowles's own writing, he has generally tried to deny it in interviews, but it is clearly fundamental to the developments in his later works.

I don't mind that my own stories resemble the kind of material I've normally translated. I neither reinvent folktales nor recount actual happenings as Moroccans do; my own tales are synthetic, although this might not be apparent to someone who has not spent long periods of time here. 53

Clearly Bowles's point is that his stories are not, and can never be authentic folklore pieces, full of the oral power which Mrabet's exhibit. But in the very 'resemblance' and more importantly the 'synthetic' process, Bowles assimilated the nature of mythic-magical stories and fused it with his own, more literary, style.

This fascination with magic and story-telling was directly connected with hallucinatory substances like majoun and kif. They were commonly used in Morocco and provided the means to enter into a 'world behind the world', 55 which so interested Bowles as a writer.

Through the translations and his own Moroccan works Bowles was moving away from his attack on America and its influence in the world, and becoming more concerned with 'preservation'. As he has written, 'my aim was generally to establish the reality of Moroccan psychic life and its importance in the social fabric of the country'. 56 But the very magical nature of the works, which dissolve the boundaries of the real and the imaginary, do also continue the kind of dislocative tendencies of his earlier work. The later stories often challenge patterns of thought in the same way that Bowles had destroyed them through the disintegration of his Western characters in his novels and earlier stories. Now the same effect is produced in a simpler, more tranquil displacement of assumptions and reversal of expectations. As Bowles admitted, 'inas-
much as these stories are aimed at the English-reading public, they could conceivably work in the same direction as the earlier material'.

It is impossible to generalise about the translations because they are all so different. However, in most cases they are the products of a rich Moroccan oral tradition, 'a repertory of Moroccan folk humor...' and a desire to entertain. All those men Bowles has worked with have a style and content which is clearly their own, but as Bowles has commented there is 'an underlying homogeneity among them' because 'they spring from a common fund of cultural memories; the unmistakable flavour of Moroccan life pervades them all'.

Mohammed Mrabet's stories have provided Bowles with most of his translations and he remains the man with whom the author has most contact. In Mrabet's autobiographical book Look and Move On he describes the translations: 'Some were tales I had heard in the cafes, some were dreams, some were inventions I made as I was recording, and some were about things that had actually happened to me'. Mrabet's range explains the lasting fascination Bowles has had with the storytelling and his mixture of real and unreal is typical of the style of many of the tales.

'The Lute' is a fairly good example of a Mrabet story and demonstrates certain important elements which Bowles has used in his own work. The story's narrative is a simple account of how Omar rescues a girl from her cruel jealous elder sister and marries her as his prize. The 'plot' is typically simple, but the 'telling' is full of magic, transformation, revenge and love - ingredients common to many of the translations. The younger sister's first love is punished by her jealous elder sister when she transforms her into a camel and chains her up in the garden of their house.

Omar is only able to reverse the spell of transformation with the
help of the crow who uses its ability to steal in order to retrieve the spell from the elder sister. In gratitude, the girl marries Omar. However, the desire for revenge is strong and the elder sister wants to take back her sister from her happy life with Omar. Only the lute's magic can protect them from her and does so again and again, until it finally takes its own action to kill the elder sister who has almost found a way into Omar's house. Magic here defeats the presence of evil and enables Omar's life to continue happily, following a conventional pattern set in many folk tales.

Mrabet's stories drew Bowles much closer to Moroccan life and there are clearly themes and styles which began to permeate into his own work. In 'The Witch of Bouiba Del Hallouf' Mrabet tells of the battle between the kif smoker and his deceptive visions.63 This was an area which Bowles explored in his own A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard,64 but which he had heard first through Mrabet and other storytellers. 'The Witch' combines this perennial problem with the other major concern of the active existence of a magical realm full of 'affrita' (spirits), witches and spells. Mrabet's Morocco shares much with the world Edward Westermarck charted in his study Ritual and Belief in Morocco in 1926.

The religious practice is essentially worship of spiritual beings, the magical practice is essentially coercion. The religious attitude is in its nature respectful and humble, the magical attitude is domineering and self-assertive. 65

This mixture of religion and magic persists in the translations and, as Bowles has written,

Ritual and Belief in Morocco is still perfectly valid, even though it describes an ever-decreasing segment of the population. The customs and beliefs it expounds still operate in the manner described by Westermarck. 66

The motivating force for Bowles was to capture the stories before they disappeared forever, but in doing so he assimilated the subject matter and style from Mrabet and others. Naturally the process of translation enlarged Bowles' understanding of Morocco. Bowles has written of Mrabet
certain of his tales are variations on traditional folk-stories. Some contain more personal invention, and others are either wholly invented or recounted from personal experience. The core of his consciousness is bound up in traditional Moroccan folklore, and this is even more evident in his graphic work. 67

The vitality found in these stories inspired a new phase in Bowles's career, but it was not the only factor in the experimentation of his later work.

Bowles's growing interest in Moroccan culture and his pursuit of all routes into understanding alternative perceptions of reality prompted Norman Mailer to write that Bowles 'opened the world of Hip'. 68 But just as Bowles had always disliked the literary labelling and fashionable groups like the Surrealists and Existentialists, he did not relish becoming a 'member' of any 'cultish' literary clique. However, this connection of Bowles with what became more commonly known as 'The Beat Generation' is not entirely mistaken. His exploration of altered states of consciousness did relate to the Beats' interest in drug experience and expanded consciousness, and his concern for the cancerous growth of technique and imperial power, with all its ramifications on nations and individuals, also found parallels in some of the Beats' work. Above all Morocco, with its relaxed views on drugs and homosexuality became a focal point for many of the Beats in the 1960's. Timothy Leary, who visited Tangier three times from 1961 onward, called Bowles 'one of the avuncular pioneers of the psychedelic age - ahead of his time.' 69 Bowles 'saw a good deal of him...[and] found him ebullient and sympathetic', but in the late sixties he felt Leary 'was not in contact with reality at all' and was 'rather like an ageing priest'. 70 Other visitors included Kerouac, Ginsberg, Corso and, of course, William Burroughs. 71

It was Burroughs who was most friendly with Bowles and who lived
in Tangier for a longer period of time, working on *Naked Lunch* there. Bowles met him in 1953 and they became friends in 1955-56 when Burroughs 'took only kif, majoun and alcohol'. But it was not the 'legend' that interested Bowles, but Burroughs's ideas, with which he had great sympathy:

> It was always Bill who attacked the intellect from all sides... it was worth hearing, and worth watching too... 72

Though, as I argue elsewhere, Bowles believed Burroughs' methods were not suitable for his own writing, he did - perhaps more than has ever been suggested - share many of the themes that Burroughs is famous for; altered consciousness, power and control, sexuality and so on. Bowles was instrumental in bringing together Burroughs with his long time friend Brion Gysin who was also a resident in Tangier. Later Gysin and Burroughs worked together on many projects aimed at expanding consciousness and creating a 'third mind'. As Gysin has written 'it was Paul Bowles who insisted that we would get on together. It was also Bowles who persuaded me to go with him to Morocco in 1950.' 73 Like Bowles, Gysin saw the magic of Morocco and tried to capture this in his haunting paintings. He has said that 'in Morocco, magic is practised more assiduously than hygiene... '74 and that 'magic is anathema to those who have just heard of logic. I was lucky enough to penetrate that magical world... my cabaret "The 1001 Nights of Tangier" was my effort to help it survive a minute or two more.' 75 Gysin, like Bowles, wanted to preserve something he saw under threat from those who would impose their culture and thought and their obsessive 'progress' on a remarkably enlightened people. This effort is found in Gysin's paintings as it is in Bowles's translations and later stories. William Burroughs has written,

> all art is magical in origin...I mean intended to produce very definite results...If the modern artist no longer expects to produce such direct effects in the so-called real world, he still intends to made something happen in the mind of the viewer. The paintings of Brion Gysin deals directly with the magical roots of art...designed to produce in the viewer the timeless ever-changing world of magic... 76
Similarly Bowles's own writing moved closer to this area of concern as he submerged himself further into the Moroccan world hoping to establish the reality of Moroccan psychic life and its importance in the social fabric of the country.

However, as Bowles became familiar with Moroccan storytelling he found within it a rich source of transformative energy and challenging irrationality which opened up a whole new world of creative interest and excitement. Choosing a different route, Bowles set out like Gysin and Burroughs to preserve a type of 'third mind' which had the power to resist conformity and project an alternative vision of life which did not simply consist of already established and accepted modes and concepts of thought.

Just as Morocco provided a 'magical place', and the translations a method of entry to its inner mind, so during the late 1950's and 1960's Bowles became more interested in the use of hashish or kif. He had experimented with various drugs during his life, but 'in the Moghrebi translations, however, kif was not only frequently the story's subject, m'hashish was invariably the state of the storyteller.'

The word m'hashish (equivalent in Moghrebi of 'behashished' or full of hashish) is used not only in a literal sense, but also figuratively, to describe a person whose behaviour seems irrational or unexpected.

Mohammed Mrabet has explained it thus.

God gave me a brain that can invent stories. And I feed it with kif...I smoke a little, shut my eyes, and then I begin to see everything. My head is like the electric power in a city...An empty room can fill up with wonderful things or terrible things...the story comes from the things.

Consequently kif provided another route into the unconscious and deeper self buried beneath established patterns of thought. In an article written by Richard Rumbold he described Bowles's use of kif to 'pass one's emotions in review...' and 'as a liberating therapy and catharsis as valid as the psycho-analyst's couch...of acquiring insight and self-knowledge...giving the unconscious an airing...a means of exploring the
the unconscious, of bringing you in touch with what's really inside of
yourself...'. 82 Talking to Lawrence Stewart, Bowles clarified this
point.

The kif is simply the key which opens a door to some particular
chamber of the brain that lets whatever was in there out. It
doesn't put anything in. It doesn't supply the matter. It
liberates whatever's in, that's all. 83

The attraction for Bowles's writing was the opening or liberating fun-
dction of the drug, not as any permanent utopian vision – far from it –
but a means of drawing aside the veil and glimpsing 'whatever was in
there'. It provided an altered state of consciousness which could
challenge the accepted rules and boundaries of the mind.

The first literary work by Bowles which clearly used these experiences
of translating and of kif-smoking, were the four tales which became
A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard. Bowles originally described them
as tales which

deal with aspects of mid twentieth century life in a region where
the pipe rather than the glass is the magical symbol of escape from
the phenomenological world. 84

It is interesting that he clearly connects the 'magical' with the kif-
smoking and that both presented means of moving outside of the ties of
the 'phenomenological world' into another realm. The purpose of these
'experiments' in writing were to 'get to another way of thinking, non-
causal...'85 and to create a universe in which the reader felt insecure
and disturbed about their own concepts of the 'real'. Whereas Bowles
had used geographical dislocation or the conflict of cultures in earlier
works, he now was using the world of magic and kif for the same purpose.

As Eric Mottram has written,

In these [stories] kif is the major agent of a dislocation from
reason, responsibility and social fear. It enables access to states
of consciousness which casually dispose of contingent daily life
and the assumptions of coercive social reality. The behavioural
programming of society's members is replaced by another programme –
an illusion of permissiveness. 86
A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard

The four stories in *A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard* are linked by kif in one way or another and involve a kind of victory, of sorts, in each. In 'A Friend of the World' Salam uses forbidden magic to avenge himself on his Jewish neighbours and tricksterism to score a victory over the insistent presence of the police — both ideas are brought on through the liberating use of kif. There are significant lines in the story such as, 'He felt the kif in his head, and he knew he was going to make it work for him'. For Salam's victory is the maintenance of 'freedom' — from the Jews and the authorities, and kif enables him to find a strength inside himself to achieve this; 'He was free again now...' (CS, 303) we are told at the end. As Bowles has said kif 'is the means to attaining a state of communication not only with others, but above all with themselves'. When social law and its apparatus, the police, threaten individual freedom then kif gives men 'the strength of a hundred camels' to fight back. The Moroccan stories of Mrabet, Layachi and Choukri often concern themselves with similar issues. Mrabet has said, 'my fights are always about my rights' and Layachi said in *A Life Full of Holes* that the authorities 'have the power. They do what they want' and 'we have a government of the wind! There's no justice anywhere in this country...'. It is against this knowledge that Bowles writes his own stories with similar themes of characters creating their own victories regardless of the law.

The whole theme of law is manifested in the central issue of kif smoking, since, as the stories all reveal, it is strictly illegal in Morocco. However, the law is rarely enforced except when it suits the police to do so: 'each time the police decided to enforce the law they had made against it, it grew very scarce and the price went up' (CS, 306). This ambiguity is apparent in the stories and if anything, adds to the mystique surrounding the kif smoker. As Roger Joseph writes,
In a society where social structure is devoted primarily to relationships between social groups, personal behaviour that does not affect traditional mechanisms of social order is not regarded as a dereliction. The use of kif remains an integral part of the culture and is regarded as no threat to community or group relationships. 91

Because of this the kif is seen as a personal communication, as Bowles has commented, and therefore rarely transgresses social or religious law - like alcohol does. Its liberation of the individual mind does reveal strengths of character that the social order may often seek to repress, and so in this sense it does offer a challenge.

In 'The Story of Lahcen and Idir', for example, kif is seen as a superior stimulant to alcohol since the latter makes men 'want to break things' but the former makes them want 'to stay quiet in their heads' (CS,305). This story dramatises this common folklore tale of drinker versus smoker and allows victory for Idir, the kif smoker who acts and wins the girl while Lahcen, the drinker is fuddled by drink and loses all.

The most fantastic of the stories, and the most complex is 'He of the Assembly' which is the closest to Bowles's definition of a 'typical kif story' as an endless, proliferated tale of intrigue and fantasy in which the unexpected turns of the narrative line play a far more decisive role than the development of character or plot. 92

'He of the Assembly' is full of 'fantasy and intrigue' provided by both kif - his imagined journey into another world through the spout of a kettle, and magic - a mysterious paper for Ben Tajah with strange words and his name on. The intersection of these worlds drives a wedge into the readers' concepts of reality and forces us either to adapt to new parameters or else become totally confused.

The power of the story is its merging of the real and the imaginary until it is almost impossible to separate them just as it is for the characters. He of the Assembly's problem is to unravel his kif-dreams, Ben Tajah's is to understand the words on the paper which he believes are evil. Both comfort each other in a curious act of deceitful friendship.
He of the Assembly lies to Ben Tajah, telling him the words are just a song overheard on the radio, while Ben Tajah knows He of the Assembly's problem is merely caused by kif and as it wears off so will his questions. They both, therefore, create a deceit, an illusion, with which to comfort the other - and both are successful. There is no single victory here - both are winners;

'You smoke too much kif, brother'
He of the Assembly put his sebsi back in his pocket.
'And you don't smoke and you're afraid of Satan...' (CS,323).

Everyone seeks a way out of the world, a means of understanding, but there is no single right way. The kif smoker, though often victorious, is troubled with a head-full of horrors verging on paranoia and the ordinary man is struck by a dread of the unknown. Some mutual understanding, some care and comfort is, perhaps, all we can hope for or achieve.

The final story 'The Wind at Beni Midar' confronts this problem even more directly by demonstrating different 'ways out of the world'; the ritual ecstatic dance of the Djilala, kif and magic. Bowles shows them all to have a value within their own terms, but each also contains the ultimate dangers of over-dependence and of a fanaticism which renders control away from the individual. As Bowles clearly demonstrates in *Up Above the World* a loss of control can lead to a surrender of the self to an imposed pattern of thought and action. Driss, the young soldier, sees this in the Djilala dance:

They did not dance because they wanted to dance...it seemed to him that the world should be made in such a way that a man is free to dance or not as he feels (CS,328).

and finds this lack of control repulsive. Ironically when Driss smokes kif to obliterate the violence of the dance, he loses his friend's gun and so has also lost control to another force outside himself. What is interesting about this is that Bowles uses this same image in relation to his own situation in *Without Stopping*.

I was made aware of a slowly increasing desire to step outside the dance in which inadvertently I had become involved. I would go on
taking part in it for an indefinite period unless I cut the thread
that held me. 93

This precedes his 'escape' to North Africa. Later Halpern asked Bowles,
'What does freedom mean to you?' and he replied, 'I'd say it was not
having to experience what you don't like.' 94

In the story, the cabran, Driss's superior, tricks him into believing
that the Djilala and the djinn (spirits) have the magical power to return
his lost gun and so save him. In desperation Driss believes him and car-
rries out the intricate scheme which is greeted as a huge joke by the cab-
ran. In the story's final movement Driss employs his own magic against
the cabran in the form of an elaborate potion which he believes will free
him from the 'dangerous world' of spirits. The cabran is poisoned and
Driss is convinced that his 'soul had been torn out of his body and that
the power was truly broken' (CS, 336).

What the story shows is that there are many ways out of the phenomen-
ological world, but all of them, if relied upon, demand a stealing of your
power. Although Driss breaks, what he believes, is the cabran's power
he only does so by employing magic beyond himself. As Bowles realised,
any over-dependence can be dangerous, or as Mottram puts it, 'in the bat-
tle between magic and society and its law, it is the djenoun who win.' 95
That is, the control goes outside the self. This particular possibility
had long troubled Bowles and was why he resisted John Huston's efforts
to hypnotize him: 'in my mind hypnosis involves a dubious action; the
absolute relinquishing of power to another.' 96

Bowles continued to use kif but was never as involved in the halluc-
inogen experiments that his friend Willaim Burroughs carried out. He
had realised early on, as Burroughs did, that an over-reliance becomes
a relinquishing of power and so another form of totalitarianism. Bowles
said,

I'm all in favour of the Dionysian stance...But apparently you can't
keep it up and not be mindless...I'm not in favour of mindlessness
...Any group that adjures rationality makes itself a useful tool for any conspiratorial group. 97

However, the combination of all these interests at this point in his life influenced the direction of Bowles's writing. These experimental works prepared the ground for the development of his later stories which brought together many of the important lessons he had learnt from translation, kif-smoking and Moroccan traditions.

**Things Gone and Things Still Here**

After publishing *Up Above the World* in 1966, Bowles worked mainly on translations, *Love with a Few Hairs* and *The Lemon* particularly, but his own fiction became clearly related to these Moroccan stories. When he published his work written between 1970-1977 as *Things Gone and Things Still Here* 98 the stories were his most directly Moroccan pieces and develop out of the work done in the 1960's. The stories are short pieces which resemble the oral styles of the translations in that they employ brief sentences and little characterisation to develop swiftly situations and dilemmas that must be resolved. They are perceptive flashes of Moroccan life in the same way that Mrabet's work provides an accurate glimpse into the world and mind of ordinary people. However, the stories cannot imitate the original translated tales and so Bowles does vary the approach within the collection.

In a significant group of stories; 'Things Gone and Things Still Here', 'Istikhara, Anaya, Medagan and the Medaganat' and 'Afternoon with Antaeus' Bowles deals directly with magic, customs and myths from Morocco. In 'Things Gone and Things Still Here' he examines various magical practices and how they have survived in Morocco. It is not fiction at all, but a form of anthropological study developed out of Bowles's own contact with Moroccans like Mrabet and Cherifa - a maid at the Bowles's house in Tangier.99 The story establishes the psychology of all the stories that
Bowles was now going to write - one in which there is a very thin 'frontier between the two worlds' (of reality and magic) and they 'can conceivably occur anywhere' (CS, 407). In 'Istikhara, Anaya, Medagan and the Medaganat' Bowles again uses certain tribal customs as the basis for an historical examination of changes in Saharan life. There is very little fictional narrative involved, and as with the first piece, it resembles the work he later published in Points in Time as an historical journey through Morocco.

Of this group, only 'An Afternoon with Antaeus' is truly a work of fiction since it takes a piece of Moroccan tradition, the myth of Antaeus, and transforms it. Bowles reverses the myth which claimed that Hercules was victorious over the African Giant Antaeus. Although not really succeeding as fiction, the piece has a symbolic importance within the collection. At this point in Bowles's career, with his dominant concern being with the preservation and representation of the Moroccan way of life, it is interesting that he should turn so adamantly against a great culture myth of Western Society. Hercules has at times been associated with Jesus, with the prototype of mankind and with man's discovery of the mind, but Bowles wants to upset the heroic definition of the myth by portraying him as a liar. In Bowles's version Antaeus has defeated Hercules who only wants to use 'his great system' (CS, 369) against him, rather than fight, but Hercules returns home only to pretend he has been victorious. Bowles is redressing the balance and reestablishing Antaeus over Hercules. Archibald McLeish saw Hercules as the epitome of 'man become God' seeking 'to master everything on earth and under it' with an obsessive 'egomania' and a 'will to power...a power that is murderous and destructive rather than creative and beautiful.' These very same elements were the forces Bowles had seen infecting Africa for years and which were rapidly destroying all aspects of Moroccan life. Hercules represents all the worst elements of the rational West; destructive, imperialist and arrogant and
so it is appropriate that Bowles's version of the myth should present an alternative view in which 'Hercules had to crawl out of town'. The story emphasises the way Bowles's work was moving, but also demonstrates his lasting desire to expose and attack the fundamental assumptions upon which dominant patterns of thought are based. The disintegrative thrust may have declined, but his work still has the power to challenge and disrupt 'the great system' which he sees at the heart of man's continuing rational arrogance.

These three 'stories' mark a clear territory of historical, anthropological interest which comes not from any cold, scientific standpoint, but from Bowles's genuine concern for and understanding of Morocco. A further group of stories in the collection show Bowles's own version of the tales Mrabet and others told him. In stories like 'The Waters of Izli', 'The Fqih' and 'Mejdoub' he establishes a tone and narrative style which derives from his translated works and from the power of the oral tale. Like some of Mrabet's tales, especially those published in Harmless Poisons, Blameless Sins many of these are stories about tricksterism. The trickster can be used to express the idea of opposition to the normal world or of the distortion of accepted human and social values and is a very common folklore figure in many cultures. In Mrabet's work he appears as Hadidan Aharam,

a character more or less forgotten by the urban population of Morocco ...the traditional rustic oaf who...manages to impose his will upon those who have criticised and ridiculed him...a kind of folk-hero... In 'The Waters of Izli', the clever Ramadi uses his trickery to ensure that his black mare is served by Sidi Bouhajja's stallion. He does this by ensuring that Sidi Bouhajja's wish to be carried to his burial place by the whim of his favourite horse works to his advantage. Using snakes to frighten the stallion, he directs it to his own house and his own mare. Thus Ramadi benefits greatly, as do the people of Izli who now enjoy fame as a shrine for the saint buried there. For the trickster there can be
no moral judgement 'since everything is decided by Allah' (CS,384).

In 'Reminders of Bouselham' the viewpoint is once again European, but it recounts the story of a family in Morocco and its contact with Bouselham. He is a gardener for the family, but like so many of the storytellers' heroes he is a survivor and an adventurer too. He soon becomes the lover to the English woman in the story - the narrator's mother - and tricks a rich businessman into marrying his sister. The cunning, but poor, Bouselham is victorious over the rich Englishwoman who buys him a Porsche, and the businessman who marries his sister. 'To him it was a business matter in whose success he took a healthy pride' (CS,391). The underdog is triumphant, like Hadidan Aharam or Ramadi, because he has learned to exploit the weaknesses of those around him.

'The Fqih' is a typical Moroccan story and demonstrates how much Bowles's style has changed in this collection. The content is largely domestic, concerned with the workings of a family: a mother and two brothers, one of whom is bitten by a dog and locked away by a local 'fqih' (holy-man). The other brother enjoys the power this gives him and insists on keeping his brother locked up for some time. Eventually the fqih releases the brother, but in fear and guilt the other brother runs away because he believes his cruelty will be avenged. It is the style of the story which is interesting, for it tells the story of sibling rivalry in a direct, almost matter-of-fact way. Characters are not developed because they are types, like those in the oral tale, who we feel we are already acquainted with; the trickster, the underdog, the jealous wife and so on. So the action is direct; 'One midsummer afternoon a dog went running through a village, stopping just long enough to bite a young man who stood on the main street' (CS,377), and stated without comment or judgement. The immediacy is vital to oral tales and this is clearly evident in Bowles's story. The shortness of his sentences quickly develop the action, as a story-teller would:

The boy thanked the fqih and left. He walked through the village and out along the road that led finally to the highway. The next
morning he got a ride in a truck that took him all the way to Casa-
blanca. No one in the village ever heard of him again (CS, 379).

In these stories Bowles has reached a simplicity which through its
very nature rejects the modern world and turns away from the European
or Western influences, to concentrate on purely Morocco situations. The
stories become the essence of that which is disappearing and which Bowles
wanted to preserve. They are direct, very human tales in which the world
still has a connection with its inhabitants and where the spirit has not
become totally crushed by the intellect. Bowles had found what Brancusi
wrote of when describing the artist's quest.

Simplicity is not an end in art, but we arrive at simplicity in spite
of ourselves, in approaching the real sense of things. Simplicity
is complexity itself, and one has to be nourished by its essence in
order to understand its value.

To an extent Bowles was 'approaching the real sense of things' because
the tales he had heard, translated and was now writing himself dealt with
fundamentals of the human spirit. There is no longer the baggage of deceits
carried by his Western characters, for these had been disintegrated and
their society dismembered in the earlier fiction 'when I was still in
touch with the United States'. Just as those earlier works were a form
of therapy to set against America and against the kind of minds it produ-
ced, so the later stories exhibit a calm, simple approach to the same
dilemma. What had been destroyed with Port and Kit Moresby and other
earlier characters is replaced by the simplicity of the later works with
their sense of people integrated 'in the social fabric of the country'
undergoing changes to their everyday lives.

The collection, although an important point in Bowles career, does not
produce any truly memorable fiction apart from one story 'Allal'. This
is as good as any of Bowles's earlier, more popular works and like the
later 'Here to Learn' and 'Kitty' represents the best of his most rec-
et writing. 'Allal' expresses, through the familiar Moroccan setting,
a continuation of Bowles's theme of social law and outsiderdom and its con-
sequences. Allal is an illegitimate boy whose mother has deserted him and left him to be brought up by a Greek family. Appropriately Allal is, therefore, motherless, cut adrift from the usual ties that bind families together or which establish emotional relationships. Instead Allal 'played alone' and was 'enclosed by a high blind wall of red abode', while 'everything else was below in the valley: the town, the gardens...' (CS, 409).

Allal, like so many of Bowles's characters is divided from society and forced to look on it from outside with a sense of longing. However, Allal is branded by his illegitimacy 'a son of sin' and laughed at by the people of the town who 'hoped to make him into a shadow, in order not to have to think of him as real and alive' (CS, 409). As an outcast Allal grows to hate these people who see him as 'meskhot - damned' and eventually moves from the town to his own small home in an isolated place nearby. Allal's isolation is broken by a snake catcher who has lost some of his catch and asks for Allal's help to recover them. When the snakecatcher is rejected by the townspeople, who fear his snakes, Allal feels a certain empathy and invites him to stay the night in his home. The catcher reciprocates the hospitality by explaining some of the secrets of the catcher's art; how 'you have to get to know them. Then you can be their friends' (CS, 411), and how a little kif paste and milk will render the snakes harmless and amenable to training.

To Allal, the snakes provide a point of contact with the world through which he might find 'friends' and he is overcome by 'a great desire to own' (CS, 411) one of them. Allal cleverly steals one of the snakes and proceeds to train it using the kif paste and milk until it accepts him totally. In the climax of the story, Allal, himself 'completely taken over' (CS, 414) by the power of the kif he has consumed, mingles with the snake until a strange metamorphoses takes place.

He put out his hands to touch the polished surface of the eye on each side, and as he did this he felt the pull from within. He slid through the crack and was swallowed by darkness (CS, 415).
As he awakes, Allal 'was looking at his own head from the outside...now he was seeing through the eyes of the snake, rather than through his own' (CS, 415). This magical metamorphosis allows Allal to see the world he despises from a new perspective - that of nature. It gives him a 'sense of freedom...to caress the earth' (CS, 415) and move amongst the boulders and gullies around the town.

Freed from his old self, Allal takes on an 'otherness' imbued with freedom, speed and power where all sense of division is gone from his life and he is both human and animal. Allal is now truly outside the rigours of social law and judgement, no longer 'a son of sin', but part of the perpetual motion of the natural world without any artificial social order. Without the coercive structures of human society Allal can now experience life in all its raw excitement, freed from the ultimate cage of the body. As a snake Allal has reached the point that many of Bowles's characters desire, which is to be beyond the constraints of the self and the limitations of the body. Allal reaches a union with the natural and non-human that Port Moresby unconsciously desired and which Nelson Dyar found only temporarily through kif before being destroyed.

Allal's transformation, however, is no glorious romantic merging with nature, for as a snake he is pursued and must defend himself violently. Allal's final act is a lashing out at the society that has condemned him as a human, with all the violent power his new shape has given him.

The rage always had been in his heart; now it burst forth. As if his body were a whip, he sprang out into the room. The men nearest him were on their hands and knees, and Allal had the joy of pushing his fangs into two of them before a third severed his head with an axe. (CS, 417).

In death, Allal achieves some compensation for his isolated life. His metamorphosis is 'typically violent and flies in the face of reason. It does not lend itself to assimilation into pleasurable or consoling schemes ...it has something typically ugly, monstrous, unabsorbable about it.' Bowles again suggests the alternatives to accepting the social law and
demonstrates the power it has to isolate and divide human beings until their only recourse is through violence. Allal's moment of 'freedom' and 'joy' comes beyond the self, beyond society, because both are corrupted by the expectations and taboos instilled within them. Only by transgression, here represented as metamorphosis, can Allal experience a radical alternative to the terrible enclosure of his life.

So even within the relatively tranquil collection of stories, Bowles is at his best when he returns to a familiar area of concern. Allal's own disintegration is an action born out of isolation and defined in order that he might escape his life and enjoy, if only briefly, the sensation of being outside self and society. Ironically, this is the position that Bowles arrives at in his quest for alternatives to the kind of self and society which modern man has produced.

The typical man of my fiction reacts to inner pressures the way the normal man ought to be reacting to the age we live in. Whatever is intolerable must produce violence. 114

**Midnight Mass**

Whereas *Things Gone and Things Still Here* established a new area of interest for Bowles and demonstrated his willingness to experiment with form and tone, his last collection *Midnight Mass* (1981) has a greater unity and cohesion. As a collection of stories it unifies and expands upon a range of motifs, themes and ideas which represent much in terms of Bowles' career as a writer. Above all, *Midnight Mass* uses Morocco as a measure of the continuing change in the world and of Bowles's growing fears about civilization. In many of the stories he dramatises the inevitable change taking place within Moroccan social life. One particular area which for so long represented the roots of Moroccan traditional culture, magic and medicine, gives Bowles a focus for many of these tales.

In 'The Little House', the subject is child-parent rivalry, but upper-
most in the story is the use of traditional poisons in a tajine of food. The traditional mother-in-law, who still dressed in the haik because she felt djellabas were a 'shameless custom' (MM, 23), uses poison to kill her opposite in-law. The count's judgement represents the modern view; 'You're a stupid, ignorant woman...Do you think anyone believes that nonsense?' (MM, 30). But she maintains its importance because, 'Everybody knows that Nazarene medicine works better if you take Moslem medicine at the same time. The power of Allah is very great' (MM, 30). Similarly 'The Empty Amulet' dramatises the conflict of the old ways and the new, the belief in baraka against the medicines of the hospital and the hold these traditional beliefs still have over the people. These beliefs are 'the darkness of ancient ignorance' ('The Eye'), but they become emblematic in the stories for one aspect of a changing culture. As these beliefs go, others are taken on which are governed not by tradition but by Western ideas and influence.

It is this which forms a second but connected thread of ideas in the stories - that is, the disruption of established patterns by outside forces. In 'The Little House' we are told that 'the town had crept up on all sides' (MM, 21) to alter the rural life of the people, and in 'The Dismissal' it is clearly the new commercial world of Tourist Morocco that intrudes and replaces a tranquil, ordered world of natural harmony:

He had vivid memories of the pine woods at Moujahididdine, the grove of high eucalyptus trees that covered the hillside at Ain Chaqf... All this was gone now; new villas covered the countryside...the country club, nestling in an oasis of greenery. Behind the clubhouse...the golf course... (MM, 35).

Against this world of order Bowles sets opposing forces which constantly challenge and disrupt it, as in 'The Dismissal' where Abdelknim's need to carry on traditional ways - smoking kif in the shade, meditation and drinking tea only lead him into trouble. His only desire was for shade, as he had known in his boyhood and the lack of 'one real tree' in the poorly designed modern garden had caused his problems.
So too in 'Madame and Ahmed' Bowles uses a garden as a central image. Ahmed is employed by a European woman to maintain her garden, but it is a place of artificial order and harmony: 'long tiled pools full of gold-fish...bounded by arbors sheltering small fountains whose water dribbled from the mouths of marble fish into basins' (MM, 99). It has become difficult to maintain this artifice against the real, natural world of wind and sun. As a result the woman employs an outside gardener to save the garden for her: 'each plant will be in the right place', he says (MM, 101).

This desire for order is sabotaged by Ahmed who sees his authority being undermined from outside. He destroys the new plants. Apart from the personal level of the story, about a boy's need to work and maintain authority it is also about the outsiders' new ways creating and maintaining an artificial world in which the old ways are pushed aside.

Perhaps the clearest representation of these thematic links is Bowles' emphasis on property in the stories. In the title story the house is a legacy from the past left to a son by his mother. The colonial past, now dead, lingers through its various manifestations - in this case an ironically decaying property with 'a huge white facade...[which] looked like a pavilion left over from a long-forgotten exposition' (MM, 10). But the colonial past haunts Morocco, and as we have seen, is a vital part of Bowles's own work. The story is built around the image of the house - filled with deathly associations; the dead past, mother, the dead childhood ('At lunch he tasted his childhood...The place was only a shell of the house he remembered', (MM, 9)) and as one character comments about a room, 'So this is where the corpses are buried'.(MM, 16). The story is about ending and beginning - hence the midnight mass itself - but of human hopes as well as cultural histories.

Another character looks out from the house to the straits of Gibraltar and comments, 'the end of the world' (MM, 15). Although literally referring to Homer's description of the 'Pillars of Hercules', it is also a
cryptic comment on the story's central theme of ending. Above all, the world which is ending is that of European colonialism. The decaying house, half closed down, half collapsing, is let by the owner to a young Moroccan whose 'very rich and influential family' soon move in too and take legal 'possession of the entire house' (MM,19).

Property passes from European colonial power to a force, which although Moroccan, is still 'rich and influential'. Bowles suggests the ending of the established colonial power by a newer and perhaps inevitable power from the wealthy élite in Morocco itself. There's a cruel irony in the exchange of power which always excludes the majority of people who merely have to survive under whichever regime is in the house.

Change, the clash between old and new ways, the Christian and Moslem, and the ending of a colonial influence in Morocco form the basis for these stories. They culminate in the image of Malika at the conclusion of 'Here to Learn' - a victim of history whose past has been erased and replaced by emptiness. Perhaps there is a bleakness in these stories, which Bowles has long understood but been powerless to prevent. A bleakness stemming from the fundamental weaknesses in man.

'Here to Learn' is a long story or novella which brings together many of Bowles's most persistent themes in a moving and conclusive way. It is a story about a Moroccan girl's journey into the world, a kind of picar-esque tale about her movement from simplicity to worldliness, from poverty to wealth, from rooted to rootless, from virgin to ruined widow. The story is set against the same background as all the stories in Midnight Mass, that of change, rapid development and massive alterations to traditional Moroccan life. Indeed, like the story 'Midnight Mass', 'Here to Learn' is infused with the sense of ending and is an appropriate one with which to conclude this examination of Bowles's fiction and poetry.

The story begins by describing the girl Malika's life in Tangier. It
is a life of domestic routine, governed by the presence of her mother, in which Malika has a very definite role. However, the girl is blessed by extraordinary beauty and from an early age this sets her apart from her peers, even to the extent of winning her an education at the local nunnery. Her father believes 'Allah has sent us here to learn' (MM, 43) and so encourages his daughter's education, which becomes the focus of the story. However, Malika also learns from her observations of the world around her and what she sees is a place dominated by Time. Her grandmother, once as beautiful as Malika, is now 'ravaged' (MM, 43) by the effects of old age. So too the town itself is described as 'derelict' (MM, 45) and 'smelled of the poverty in which the people were accustomed to live' (MM, 45). From the beginning Malika feels trapped by the constant flow of Time and by the horror of poverty. Her feelings are amplified by the fact that she could not see 'any indication that in some past era something more had existed' (MM, 45). Malika's desire is somehow to attain 'something more' and escape the trap that Tangier seems to present to her.

When her education with the nuns is completed she must return to the routine determined by the mother, which consists of a daily visit to the market. The lustfulness of men and the jealousy of women force Malika to cover up her beauty, but when a young Nazarene shows her some interest she sees a means of escaping her trap.

Ironically he is Tim (or Time) who enters the story as a representative of the modern, technological age in his 'long yellow car' with his 'camera' (MM, 47-8) and drives her away. It is particularly appropriate that Tim is taking photographs of the Moslem women and they tell Malika to tell him to stop, because the traditional belief is that a photograph will steal the soul away. Although the women protest, Malika allows Tim to take her photograph and so steal her soul. Throughout the story Malika measures her existence according to the magazines she reads and the phot-
ographs which demonstrate the 'perfect pose' to adopt. In accepting this form of reality, Malika enters a Western materialist world in which image or a superficial look, is more important than any authenticity in the self. The further she moves from Tangier the more she neglects her true self and any connection she has with her home. Bowles symbolises her growing superficiality and egoism through her desire for clothes.

She agreed to appear in clothing only because she had studied herself in the new clothes, and had found them sufficiently convincing to act as a disguise (MM,55).

As Bowles recognised earlier, 'the renunciation of native clothing is merely a symbol for the rejection of the entire indigenous culture'. 116 Her 'disguise' is to appear Westernized and to conceal her true Moroccan self so that she learns from 'models of elegance' (MM,24) and is judged by her appearance and style rather than her personality.

What Malika fails to recognise is that her desire to learn is pushing her outside her world and beyond the values and traditions which give her life a solid base and pattern. As she moves into a materialist world she becomes just another possession, a glamorous addition to the wealth of the Europeans and Americans whom she mixes with. She becomes an object; 'she's priceless', we are told at one point (MM,56).

Malika's drive to escape Time and to escape ugliness necessitates her movement away from Tim(e) into the arms of Tony, who represents a further element in her sentimental education. He also 'had far more money to spend' (MM,57) and is characterised for Malika by the facts that his 'clothing smelled delicious and his car...attracted more attention than Tim's' (MM,57). But her submission to Tony is a further movement away from her self for 'he enjoyed dressing her the way he wanted her to look ...and not because he cared about her' (MM,60). She is like a toy doll possessed and controlled by her owner.

The price of knowledge, escaping Morocco and escaping time is ironically presented as ravaging, for Malika is forced to lose any connection
with her past and its stabilising traditions. Symbolically her journey involves a movement further and further away from home: Madrid, Paris, Switzerland, Los Angeles, and her dilemma is stated clearly in two quotations from the thirteenth and fourteenth sections of the story. The first describes her reaction to flying to America:

She shut her eyes and sat quietly, feeling that she had gone much too far away - so far that now she was nowhere. Outside the world, she whispered to herself in Arabic, and shivered (MM, 76).

and secondly the feeling that dominates Malika's sad journey in the story: 'She knew only that unless she kept on learning she was lost' (MM, 73).

What she fails to see is that she is already 'lost' and has already moved 'outside the world'. She is 'nowhere' because the price of learning about the West, about its world of appearances and materialist wealth, is to become just one of its objects and to lose any sense of a real, authentic self. The rush to defeat time and escape the seeming ugliness of a backward culture turns against her and presents her with the hideous reality of a 'modern' world of technique where nothing has value and where people are empty and soulless and where time moves even quicker. As she comments about Los Angeles, 'she had left behind everything that was comprehensible...' (MM, 77), 'she could find no pattern to it. The people were always on their way somewhere else and they were in a hurry...She felt herself to be far, far away from everything she had ever known' (MM, 79).

The peculiar bustle of city life is something Bowies had spoken of years before to Oliver Evans when he compared it to the calm of Morocco where, people...just stand or sit all day while time goes by and people go by. That's the proof that life goes on, somehow, whereas in New York there isn't any proof. It's all going by, nothing going on. 117

This is Malika's fate as her journey removes her further from the quiet certainty of her old self into the rootless, frenetic world of modern technological America. Amid this new world the only comprehensible elements she finds are money and appearances, but she cannot fully enter this world without its language. Her final act of abandonment is to
learn English. With the death of Tex, her wealthy husband, she sees she has 'gone too far for the possibility of return...she saw herself as someone shipwrecked on an unknown shore peopled by creatures whose intentions were unfathomable' (MM, 84-5). Without 'anyone to rescue her' (MM, 85) she has to continue her learning as a means of not becoming 'lost' forever, since she believes knowledge will give her power.

Following the sudden death of her husband, Malika decides to return to Europe on an educational visit, a kind of Grand Tour which ironically echoes those traditionally undertaken by rich Americans, like those in the novels of Henry James. She views the trip with a mixture of 'excitement and apprehension' (MM, 92) because it will take her back to Morocco.

Malika's journey to escape Time and the ravages of age and change have engaged her in a new life which has demanded that she bury her old self and take on a new persona acceptable within that society. She has become Americanised on the outside, able to strike the 'perfect pose' in the right situation. Her search is parallel to Bowles's other questing characters like the Moresbys, the Slades, Nelson Dyar, the Professor and John Stenham, who all wished to flee from Time since it seemed only to cage them. Malika, however, moves into their culture, whereas they moved into hers.

Her journey was away from childhood, with all its intimate connections to tradition, ritual and to nature, because to her these things seemed worthless and without meaning. She judges people and situations by what she might learn from them and soon dismisses them if 'there was nothing to learn from them' (MM, 57). Early on she is described in relation to nature and fecundity; with her 'eyes like a gazelle...her head was like a lily on its stalk' (MM, 43), she rubs her face with mud to hide her beauty and sells eggs in the market. She fails to give this any value and instead she yearns for something better, something she erroneously associates with knowledge. Like so many of Bowles's characters she looks
for answers outside herself and sets off in search of some end and meaning, without recognising, until it is too late, that life is its own end and purpose. As Dyar realised for a moment on the beach in Let It Come Down,

In order to feel alive a man must first cease to think of himself as being on his way. There must be a full stop, all objectives forgotten...life is not a movement toward or away from anything, not even from the past to the future, or from youth to old age, or from birth to death. The whole of life does not equal the sum of its parts. It equals any one of the parts; there is no sum. 118

Malika's search brings her back to Tangier at the end of the story only to find that Time has changed everything. Her home is gone, her mother dead and her childhood destroyed into the mountains of rubble by the side of the new road. The world that she wanted to escape to, one of materialism and progress has caught up with her past and submerged it. In this final scene Malika, dressed in 'blue jeans' so 'she felt wholly anonymous' (MM,94), realises the terrible reality of her journey. In moving so far 'outside the world' (of her past) she has lost all connection with it and all that remains is 'a new landscape of emptiness' full of 'ashes and refuse' (MM,95). The modern world has eaten into Moroccan culture with bulldozers and money, pushing Malika into a limbo – alienated from her past and left grasping hopefully into some unsatisfactory future. As she walks away she slips and falls down into the rubbish where her home once stood, suggesting her own fall into knowledge in the novella.

...She scrambled up to the roadbed. A cloud had begun to move across the moon. She hurried down the hill toward the street light where Salvador waited (MM,97).

Ironically she rises up from 'tons of refuse', is reborn, 'having wished to be dead a moment before' (MM,97), from a houseless, motherless womb into her future. Her rebirth is ominously greeted by a clouded moon and only lit by the artificial glow of technological light which she hurries towards. This is the world of Time where everything changes and nothing is permanent. At the beginning Malika knows 'only Allah remains
the same' (MM, 44) and she has learned this to be true during the course of the story. All beauty is temporary and life is what we are and what we learn during our time on earth, but there is no knowledge which can push us outside of this inevitable circumstance.

In her moment of realisation Malika weeps 'for herself' (MM, 96), because it is that she sacrificed for a 'new landscape of emptiness' in which she is truly 'too far for the possibility of return' (MM, 84).
CONCLUSION

The contraction of man's horizons amounts to a denudation, a stripping down, of this being who has now to confront himself at the center of all his horizons. The labor of modern culture, wherever it has been authentic, has been a labor of denudation. 1

The disintegration and dissonance of this art are our own; to understand them is to understand ourselves. 2
In a notebook Bowles wrote,

The world! What it was and what it has become. We were invited by Allah into the world. We are meant to look and learn here before we leave. Instead of that we have forgotten we are guests. We think the world is ours, and that we will always have it. But life gives no guarantee to anyone...

This seems to be an unfinished piece of translated work, but it conveys exactly the mood of 'Here to Learn' and provides a very useful statement about Bowles's work as a whole. He adds in the same notebook that man 'thinks he has the world in his hands. He has nothing.' The message is clear and amplifies 'Here to Learn''s idea that intellectual arrogance is dangerous and merely distorts our relationship to the world. If we build a society and develop a self which relies upon a superiority over the world, then we are betraying our true position as 'guests', and so must suffer. Malika realises that she has lost her sense of herself and become 'anonymous' amid a monocultural world, and that is her punishment.

Jung recognised this very dilemma when he wrote,

Western Man has no need of more superiority over nature, whether outside or inside. He has both in almost devilish perfection. What he lacks is conscious recognition of his inferiority to the nature around and within him. He must learn that he may not do exactly as he wills. If he does not learn this, his own nature will destroy him.

Malika is guilty of losing sight of her relationship to 'the nature around and within' her, and in her effort to join the artificial world has become 'the helpless prey of every kind of suggestion' from the modern consumer age. She 'no longer lives in the present and for the future, but...is already in the future, defrauded of the present and even more of the past, cut off from [her] roots, robbed of [her] continuity...'.

In Bowles's most important essay, 'Windows on the Past', he wrote that, 'In the rush to learn how, we have forgotten that first we must know what', an idea extended in Malika's desire for knowledge at the expense of her authentic self. A total surrender to the mind is
a very dangerous thing for 'the intellect creates a narrow door for the spirit', a point Bowles made again in *Yallah*!

We could learn from them about man's relationship to the cosmos, about his conscious connection with his own soul. Instead of which, we talk about raising their standard of living! Where we could learn why, we teach them our all-important how, so that they can become as rootless and futile and materialistic as we are.

This is the point around which all Bowles's work has moved, because it is here that he sees the root of Man's dilemma. Man has set in motion a mechanism which demands a reductive view of the self, separated from the world and from his subconscious. Upon this mechanism societies have evolved and shaped the people within them, until only a few voices are raised in protest against what they see. Throughout his career, from the influences of the European avant-garde, through the 'warnings' of his stories to the disintegrative terror of his novels, Bowles has been just such a radical voice screaming against the formation of a world in which people had forgotten their true place within the cosmos and become arrogant and ego-dominated.

The vision in his last great fictional work, *Here to Learn*, reaches beyond Malika's story towards an apocalyptic view of Man's failure to learn, to keep 'open eyes and mind' for that 'is the truest measure for culture we have been able to find'. But we must always connect that to our overall place within all life on the planet. Ultimately Bowles believes Man has long ago moved, like Malika, to 'nowhere...outside the world' and is doomed by his own hand to suffer its consequences.

Bowles recognised that the failure of man's relationship with his world had begun a long time ago and it was foolish to believe it could ever be recovered. All he could hope to do was demonstrate this in his fiction and preserve whatever he could of more harmonious ways of seeing the self and society. He said in 1974,

...there is no such thing as going backwards, really. You can't identify with a culture that is several centuries behind what you know. If you were able to become part of a truly archaic culture,
it would imply something wrong with the psychic organism, I'm afraid. If a Westerner encounters an archaic culture with the idea of learning from it, I think he can succeed. He wants to absorb the alien for his own benefit. But to lose oneself in it is not a normal desire. A romantic desire, yes, but actually to try and do it is disastrous. 12

All through his fiction characters attempt to 'lose' themselves in unknown landscapes because they feel it will somehow cure them of discontent and release them from the enclosure of their own lives. What Bowles comments on above are the disastrous consequences of plunging beyond the self into the romantic notion of oneness with an alien culture or ideal which his characters, from Port Moresby to Malika, discover.

If we are 'guests' invited into the world, we must respect it and cherish it rather than exploit and abuse it. Bowles, like Theodore Roszak, has always encouraged a dialogue between person and planet, 'the most significant meaning of magic', 13 and his later works try to preserve this dialogue in an overt way. Throughout his career, however, Bowles saw that 'visions, myths and rituals are a way of knowing the world as our presence permeates that world; they are a humanly participative science', 14 but to lose sight of such contact further separates man from the world. The cost of losing this dialogue, however, haunts Bowles's work, for it highlights the distance between man and world which enables the feeling of arrogant superiority to grow. The condition of the self and of society, which Bowles traces through his work, are the products of this distance and separation from the world. They form the cages which surround us and which must be challenged, for they restrict our perspectives and reduce our understanding of the world by carefully defining, explaining and structuring our responses to it. As he told Halpern, ...

...there's not one meaning to life. There should be as many meanings as there are individuals - you assign meaning to life. 15

The threat of a totalitarianism in our lives and our way of thinking is primarily a threat to the possible 'meanings' which Bowles saw as essential to maintain. In each of us, and in our world, there should remain
elements of the unknown, mysteries that we need to discover which give our lives substance and shape. This is the therapeutic value of Bowles's art because, as he has written of himself, 'the day I find out what I'm all about I'll stop writing - I'll stop doing everything. Once you know what makes you tick, you don't tick any more. The whole thing stops.'

He applies a similar philosophy to our conception of the world in which we live. If we reduce it, define it and seek to rule it with prescriptive codes and assumptions we are building a world which becomes deadened and lacking in mystery. When Bowles began to write, this is the kind of culture he saw, and since his earliest works the situation has become intensified.

What power has the writer under such a system? For Bowles, the answer was to be 'a corrosive agent' against the system. In a translation of a work by Francis Ponge, Bowles came across a similar view:

Surrounded by the vast expanse and quantity of the knowledge acquired by each science, by the growing number of sciences, we are lost. The best procedure is to consider all things as unknown, to stroll or stretch out among the shrubs or on the grass, and start all over again from the beginning.

Ponge's romantic belief in a return to a new beginning is a way of casting aside the 'sciences' whose goal is to limit and reduce life's varieties through a calculating elimination of mystery and the unknown.

Bowles, by his own admission a romantic, knew that a more practical and radical contribution to a 'new beginning' was to help to destroy what existed and what people accepted. He would use his writing as a weapon, 'attacking in words', so that there might be a 'certain amount of questioning of values'. He has said that 'whatever is intolerable must produce violence' and there is a sense in which all his writing is violent because it is vehement in its response to an intolerable world.

Bowles's 'violence' is literary and aimed at a psychological level in order to dissect his characters' minds and strip away the self's protective layers. The purpose of the protest has been defined by John
If one is made to feel more or less deeply uncomfortable, it is because one is being confronted with facts that one hadn't known, or hadn't thought carefully enough about, or is still reluctant to feel intensely enough about. 21

This has been Bowles's purpose. As he told Daniel Halpern, 'I'm merely trying to call people's attention to something they don't seem to be sufficiently aware of.' 22

In this way, Bowles, whose life has driven him from America because of its central place in this detested consumer society, has continued a long, dark tradition in American literature. He has maintained Poe's violent attack on America and on the limiting perceptions of the 'real' which William Carlos Williams called Poe's 'movement, first and last to clear the GROUND...to begin at the beginning'. 23 Williams's language echoes Bowles's:

Poe 'saw the end'; unhappily he saw his own despair at the same time, yet he continued to attack, with amazing genius, seeking to discover, and discovering, points of firmness by which to STAND and grasp, against the slipping way...his attack was from the center out. 24

Poe's attack was against the 'unoriginal...the slavish, the FALSE literature about him...', 25 in an effort to create a unique and new beginning for a new nation's literature. He wanted a vision born of America which could penetrate below the social crust and discover a language of the self unhindered by the trappings of social niceties and cultural assumptions inherited from Europe. Poe looked away from society in order to concentrate on the self, because he wanted to write about the workings of the mind. For Bowles, writing in a post-Freudian world, the mind had become so much a part of its social situation that the two had to be examined together. However, his effort, like Poe's, is the effort to 'go back to the beginning; [where] it must all be done over; everything that is must be destroyed.' 26

Whereas for Poe, America was new and full of hope and potential,
Bowles's efforts are less likely to produce any sense of relief or hope beyond what they can help his audience see and learn.

It's part of the Romantic tradition for the past century and a half. If a writer can incite anyone to question and ultimately reject the present structure of any facet of society, he's performed a function... I want to help society go to pieces, make it easy. 27

Bowles's work possesses this disintegrative thrust and his writings tear apart the characters to reveal their contradictions, their fears and their distorted view of the world. Through this process of disintegration Bowles could perform a useful task, although not a pleasurable one or a popular one. No-one likes to be a literary witness to the dissection of a human being because ultimately the operation will reveal truths about the on-looker as well. What Bowles is doing is 'attacking in words' to 'call people's attention to something they don't seem to be sufficiently aware of' and to make them question 'their basic assumptions'. 28

The process is at the heart of all great art, but its urgency in Bowles reflects something Carl Jung wrote.

It is high time we realized that it is pointless to praise the light and preach it if nobody can see it. It is much more needful to teach people the art of seeing. 29

The 'art of seeing' what is happening around us may not change the world, but it may make us more aware and more willing to learn in the future.

Bowles's novels attack personalities and destroy egos but beneath this they aim to destroy the kind of societies which foster and develop such selves. Implicit in all his work is an attack on the America in which he grew up and which typifies a conditioned, technological society constantly divorcing itself from the magic dialogue with nature and the world. The anarchic urge to destroy society, 'to help society go to pieces', 30 stems from his belief that man, in his present form, has abused his invitation to the earth and failed to live satisfactorily on the planet and the only way 'the world itself would be purified (would be) if man no longer existed'. 31

The existence of man has corrupted the world and made it a place with-
out genuine comfort or security. It is only in Morocco that Bowles has felt any sense of real community where person and planet have any true relationship, because it is a 'country whose spirit has not yet been broken by the mechanical age'. He has tried to preserve elements of this disappearing connection in his translations and Moroccan stories, but even this has become increasingly difficult as the old ways are engulfed by a more Western view of things. Bowles's supreme moment of pleasure was a moment when his humanity dissolved and was replaced by a sense of belonging and wholeness with the earth itself, and with all things:

...le baptême de la solitude. It is an unique sensation, and it has nothing to do with loneliness, for loneliness presupposes memory. Here, in this wholly mineral landscape lighted by stars like flares, even memory disappears; nothing is left but your breathing and the sound of your heart beating. A strange, and by no means pleasant process of reintegration begins inside you...

In a gentle, powerful way, Bowles is describing the process he tries to reach for in his own writing. However, in order to begin any sense of 'reintegration' one must first undergo a disintegration of all that prevents you seeing and feeling a relationship with the world inside and outside.

Many of Bowles's characters travel in search of such a process, but they fail to realise that the journey must begin 'inside you' and cannot simply be found in contact with alien cultures. The self cannot be cured by simply swapping societies because the two things are intimately bound together. In fact, the effort to break away from the self in this way is, for Bowles, futile and disastrous. This is something D.H. Lawrence wrote of years before:

Men are free when they are in a living homeland, not when they are straying and breaking away. Men are free when they are obeying some deep, inward voice of religious belief. Obeying from within. Men are free when they belong to a living, organic, believing community... Not when they are escaping to some wild west. The most unfree souls go west and shout of freedom. Men are freest when they are most unconscious of freedom. The shout is a rattling of chains, always was.
In order to achieve 'a living homeland' man must obey the voice within rather than simply accept and follow the dictates of a social order. To achieve this demands a process by which the self and the society must be brought under scrutiny together. Bowles has gone beyond what Lawrence called a 'shout' and 'rattling of the chains' and instigated a terrible scream against society and the self. It is an 'exhortation to destroy' all that impedes the process of reintegration back into a true sense of man's relationship to the planet, of which he is a part. Bowles possesses a true anarchic spirit which sees a 'radical disjunction between social man and the natural world', with a consequent hollowing out of values. His desire is to 'break past the limits of the human condition...beyond the need, in fact, for the constraints of authority' and to reconnect man with a mysterious, but authentic relationship with his world. Only then can there be any true sense of harmony in life.

This is the process within Bowles's work, but as a realist he is fully aware that the outcome is a 'Romantic fantasy of reaching a region of self-negation and thereby regaining a state of innocence' which cannot be fulfilled. Instead, his work has moved in two ways. First, it has provided a 'warning' about self and society, but 'the warning is given too late to have any effect, since the disintegration has progressed, ...beyond the point where one could hope for a successful check to it.' However, he has continued to give the warning and to reveal the human consequences of continuing with our present structures and attitudes. Alongside this, Bowles has made a more overtly positive contribution by preserving elements of Moroccan culture threatened by the growing pressures of the modern, consumer society around it. What he preserves is not just stories or traditions, but a way of seeing life which connects people with their society and with their world in a direct, magical way. Jung wrote that 'the essence of culture is continuity and conservation of the past' and believed 'the craving for novelty produces only anti-
culture and ends in barbarism. Bowles's work has reflected a similar attitude.

The importance of Bowles's writings is that they have not only recorded the psychological climate of the post-war world but sought to involve the reader in the process of dismantling it. The will to destroy the conditions which define our present way of life go hand in hand with a clear, dedicated attempt to preserve and maintain alternative visions of existence. The artist's role, for Bowles, is as 'propagandist' because that function involves this dual purpose; to suggest and present new ways, whilst undermining or subverting the established forms. The subversive element is uppermost in Bowles's work for he knew that he had to win people's confidence before he could, in any way, influence their perception of the world. As he has said, 'the way to attack, of course, is to seem not to be attacking. Get people's confidence and then, surprise! Yank the rug out from under their feet.' He continues to work with a style of literature that engages the reader rather than isolates him, because he believes his primary aim is to attack and destroy our accepted patterns of thought. To do this his work has to belong to 'the tradition of story-telling' which bound the reader to the narrative and through the tale caused a questioning to begin.

Between the 'twenties, when the Revolution of the Word was everywhere, and the 'forties, when I returned to writing, I had come to realize that the place to begin the attack was not in the words, but in the ideas, at the heart. Start at the core and eat outwards; then maybe the whole apple will rot. But nothing can happen until the ideas have got across; for that only the clearest language will work.

The 'heart' of Bowles's attack was the self and the ego, for these concepts are essential to the established cultural order which he wanted to destroy. In undermining our concept and faith in the individual Bowles is subverting the ideological base of the modern age and suggesting 'a desire for something excluded from cultural order - more specifically, for all that is in opposition to the capitalist and patriarchal order which has been dominant in Western society over the last two centuries.' As Bowles
told Lawrence Stewart,

The destruction of the ego has always seemed an important thing.
I took it for granted that that was what really one was looking for
in order to attain knowledge and the ability to live, to know that
one's living life to the best of one's ability... 47

This is the subversive thrust running through Bowles's work and the simple
desire which motivates him. A writer cannot change the world, but he may
shift people's minds or alter their perceptions so that they might find
a satisfactory 'knowledge...and ability to live...to the best of [their]
ability'. His writings provide his effort at finding this 'ability to
live' and go some way to providing 'the first step, the indispensable one,
in the direction of knowing what we are to ourselves and what we are in
the world'. 47 His effort to journey into these areas in his fiction
opens them for others who might also learn from the experience and redef-
ine their relationships to themselves and the world. Ultimately, his
work is an unfinished scream in the face of the world and has to be for
Bowles, since, as he wrote in one of his poems, 'we must scream without
respite - he who stops is lost.' 48
Notes for the Introduction


9. The Paul Bowles Archive Collection at The Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas, Austin.


25. Bowles, 'Windows', p.34.
26. 'Windows', p.34.
27. 'Windows', p.34.
28. 'Windows', p.34.
29. 'Windows', p.34.
32. 'Windows', p.34.
33. 'Windows', p.34.
34. Bowles Archive, University of Texas.
35. 'Windows', p.34.
36. 'Windows', p.34.
37. 'Windows', p.34.
39. 'Windows', p.34.
43. Heidegger argues that technē has changed from the original idea of 'a bringing into true being', a mode of knowledge towards truth, to a debased form in modern technology. Hence man's treatment of nature which was once 'vocation', in concord with the world, is now 'provocation', an exploitation of it.
44. Steiner, p.133.
46. Letter from Paul Bowles to Graham Ackroyd, 21st May, 1950, in the
Bowles Archive, Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin.


50. 'New Notes', p. 49.


52. Baudelaire, p. 73.


55. Halpern, p. 165.


57. Lawrence, Studies, p. 70


59. Lawrence, Pheonix II, p. 396.

60. Pheonix II, p. 396.


64. Halpern, p. 171.


72. Paul Bowles's interest in Poe can be seen in his dedication in *The Delicate Prey*: 'for my mother, who first read me the stories of Poe'.


74. Halpern, p. 171.

75. Baudelaire, 'New Notes', p. 45.


77. Halpern, p. 168.


80. Evans, p. 10.

81. Evans, p. 10.


83. Anderson, p. xii.


89. Janov, p. 386.


91. Gore Vidal, 'Ladders to Heaven: Novelists and Critics of the 1940's'

92. Bowles Archive, University of Texas.


Notes for Chapter One: The Surrealist Influence on Paul Bowles


10. Mary Ann Caws, *The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism*, p.78, has written 'Breton's convinced that surrealist behaviour cannot coexist with the stability of personality we judge normal, he considers the shock that the realization of this personal duality produces to be a necessary one.'


13. Paul C. Ray, *The Surrealist Movement in Britain*, p.17, has written 'Freud exercised a kind of doctrinal imperialism over his material, reducing dreams and psychic activity in general to biographical facts or to a limited number of uniform mechanisms which transform these
facts to serve rigorously predetermined ends'.

24. In the interview with Daniel Halpern, p.161, Bowles comments, 'I had written a lot of poetry (I was in high school) and had been buying transition regularly since it started publishing. It seemed to me that I could write for them as well as anyone else, so I sent them things and they accepted them. I was sixteen when I wrote the poem they first accepted, seventeen when they published it. I went on for several years as a so-called poet.'
27. Bowles Archive, University of Texas.
33. Eugene Jolas, 'On the Quest' in transition 9, quoted in McMillan, p.28.
34. transition, 27 (1938), p.7
35. Eugene Jolas, *transition* 7 quoted in McMillan, p.29. C.W.E. Bigsby in Dada and Surrealism, p.26 wrote that, Dada was a 'sensitive reflection of an age which had no trust in the old dogmas and yet had equally failed to discover a new faith'.

36. Elliot Paul was joint-editor of *transition* from 1927-1928 and worked in the editorial department of the Herald Tribune in Paris where Bowles worked on the switchboard for a short time in 1929. 'I would see him, complete with beard and cane, going in and out...I used to imagine ways in which I might speak to him, merely to let him know I was there'. Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p.83. The phrase new nihilism comes from Elliot Paul's essay 'The New Nihilism' in *transition* 5.

37. 'Proclamation' in *transition* 16-17, (1929), p.17


40. McMillan, p.82.

41. Ray, p.72. *transition* published 'Hands of Love', a Surrealist manifesto to which Jolas attached his name, along with Aragon, Arp, Breton, Eluard, Ernst, Leiris, Masson, Peret and Elliot Paul.

42. McMillan, p.103.


44. Eugene Jolas, *transition* 9, quoted in McMillan, p.29.

45. Bigsby, p.6.

46. Bigsby, p.5.

47. Bigsby, pp.5-6.


49. Bigsby, p.11.


63. Schwitters' work had appeared in *transition* 3, 18 and 21 and Bowles wrote in *Without Stopping*, p.114, that he was the one 'among all Germans I wanted most to meet'. Bowles met him in 1931 when in Europe with Aaron Copeland.

64. Rubin, p.12.


68. Ray, pp.7-8.


70. Paul Bowles later dramatised this idea in his short story 'The Frozen Fields'.


72. Another poem 'Song' begins 'You will be slaves in a castle...' and goes on to 'for our freedom we have been chained'. Paul Bowles, *Next to Nothing*, p.27.

73. Bowles Archive, University of Texas.


75. Caws, p.80.

76. Bowles, *Next to Nothing*, p.27.


81. *Next to Nothing*, p. 10.

82. *Next to Nothing*, p. 12.

83. 'Spire Song' in *Next to Nothing*, p. 13.


85. 'Ballad' in *Next to Nothing*, p. 29.

86. 'Entity' in *Next to Nothing*, p. 18.

87. 'Elegy' in *Next to Nothing*, p. 10.


92. Caws, pp. 35-6. She writes the following about this concept. 'One thing is seen as potentially within another... opposites are joined and the distance between the present and the future is annihilated. The presence of one element is in some ways seen as predictive of the opposite element(s) by a deliberate and yet spontaneous stretching of vision... a collage in motion... The poles are endlessly recreated, as are the annihilation of the distance and resulting synthesis... (the) endless motion and vertige... are the true atmosphere of Dada and Surrealist poetry'.

93. Typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 29th July, 1981. Bowles wrote that 'the thicket image... means to be out of sight, not to exist as a part of the human collective consciousness...'


95. Caws, p. 28.


100. André Breton quoted in Ray, p.52.


102. Lautréamont, Maldoror and Poems, translated by Paul Knight. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978, p.65. Hereafter referred to as M. followed by the page number in the text. Lautréamont was the nom de plume of Isadore Ducasse.

103. Balakian, Literary Origins of Surrealism, p.73.


105. Balakian, p.69.


107. de Jonge, pp.2-3.

108. de Jonge, p.126.


110. Balakian, pp.69-70.

111. Halpern, pp.170-1.


116. de Jonge, p.52.

117. J.H. Matthews, p.94.

118. 'No Village' in Next to Nothing, p.40. In a letter from Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 29th July, 1981, he wrote that 'No Village' 'was written as a series of letters whose recipient was addressed as Astrea. The letters were sent, in exactly the same form and wording as they retain in the published version'.

119. Astrea suggests light and stars, as the Latin 'astralis' or 'astrum', or Greek 'astron' meaning star.

120. An image of entrapment and powerlessness which Paul Bowles used again in chapter two of Let It Come Down, London: John Lehmann, 1952, pp.24-5, when Dyar notices the aquarium and the fish sus-
pended inside it.


123. All quotations are from a typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 10th December, 1980.


126. Bowles Archive, University of Texas. Notebook entries on Paul Bowles's work on Lorca's *Yerma*.


130. In *View* October 1944 and December 1944.


135. Anais Nin, *The Journals of Anais Nin Volume 6 1955-1966*. London: Peter Owen, 1977, p.78, recorded the following about the film. 'Paul Bowles appears in it with his young Arab friend. Scene opens in an empty swimming pool, with piano, bed, telephone. Paul Bowles plays the piano and the Arab boy his flute. It was too deliberate, calculated and did not give the impression of a Surrealist dream somehow'.


137. Letter, 10th December, 1980.

138. In a typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 29th July, 1980, he explained something of the poetry's importance. 'The poems do have a certain relationship to the fiction, I've come to think, acting as nuclei of obsessive flashes of memory. These are repeated (in unrecognizable form generally) in the novels and stories. Thus in a sense the verse has served sometimes as a book of notes
for future use'.

139. Miro quoted in Rubin, p.68.

140. Matta is Sebastian Antonio Matta Echauren, born 1912 in Chile.


143. Lawrence D. Stewart, p.27.


149. Halpern, p.171.

150. Bowles Archive, University of Texas.


156. Marcel Janco quoted in Bigsby, p.6.


158. This idea is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Two.

159. Hans Richter, Dada: art and anti-art, p.64.

160. Quoted in Richter, p.60.

161. Richter, p.60.


163. Balakian, 'Andre Breton as Philosopher', p.44.

164. Bowles wrote, as late as 1982 in publicity material for his 'creative writing workshop', 'I should be offering not a body of knowledge, but suggestions on how to increase control of a function. I hope to help each student put down in clear language what he
has in his head, and if possible to find and develop his own individual "voice".

165. All quotations, Halpern, pp.170,171.
166. Halpern, p.170-1
171. Marcel Brion on Lautréamont, quoted in Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy, p.22.

Notes for Chapter Two. The Short Stories: Exemplary Tales

5. Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, p.36.
7. R. Jackson, Fantasy, p.22.
12. Ernst Cassirer quoted in Bell, Primitivism, p.8


22. Bowles Archive, University of Texas.


41. C.G. Jung, The Collected Works 12, p.329. Nietzsche recognised this need for a 'descent into Avernus' which William Barrett explains as man making 'contact with the archaic life of his unconscious. Without such contact he may become the Titan who slays himself'. Irrational Man, p.161.

42. Halpern, p.164.


46. Bowles writes in The Spider's House, p.182, that the Moslems didn't feel this: '...in their minds one thing doesn't come from another thing. Nothing is the result of anything. Everything merely is, and no questions asked...'


49. The story is reminiscent of D.H. Lawrence's The Plumed Serpent which Paul Bowles felt was his most interesting novel and 'changed his mind somewhat' about Lawrence as a novelist'. (Typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 3rd May, 1980).


54. Eric Mottram, Paul Bowles: Staticity and Terror, p.3


59. Cooper, pp. 26-27. Bowles's own childhood is full of such conditioning, from his father's demands that he 'fletcherize' his food (WS, 24), to the 'model school' he was made to attend where 'the teachers were all model teachers showing the teachers how to teach children who were supposedly all model pupils learning in a modern fashion' (Evans, p. 3).


62. Bowles has a mistrust of all authority. In a letter to his mother, 28th November, 1963, held in the Bowles Archive, University of Texas, he questioned events surrounding the Kennedy assassination and whether the police were involved in 'removing' Oswald to ensure silence. Later, after the Warren Report, he wrote that it was a 'fraud' and talks of a 'conspiracy' (Letter to Oliver Evans, 11th April, 1967, Bowles Archive, University of Texas). David Herbert in *Second Son*, London: Peter Owen, 1972, p. 124, wrote 'Paul is scared of any form of authority...'.


64. H. Breit, p. 19.


66. 'The Frozen Fields' (1957) is one of Bowles's most important stories because it is a purging of his feelings about his family and his past, and a confrontation with memory which freed him and allowed him to move, as he did, closer and closer to Moroccan life and culture.

67. Bowles describes in *Without Stopping* how his father once tried to kill him by leaving him exposed to a freezing night wind. It also describes Bowles's desire to kill his own father: 'I vowed to devote my life to his destruction...' (WS, 45).

68. Halpern, p. 166.


70. Bowles Archive.


73. Halpern, pp. 170-1.

74. Esslin, p. 416.
Notes for Chapter Three. The Sheltering Sky: The Obstacle Within


3. Evans, p.9.

4. Evans, p.6.


7. Halpern, pp.175-6. In a letter to Jane Bowles, 5th December, 1962 (Bowles Archive) he wrote, '...no work depends on the ability to find the perfect adjectives while one is writing it. And any process or formula which will make it possible to get the skeleton constructed (I know you always object to my terminology, because you imagine I mean a preconceived outline, as in school composition, which I don't) any method or trick or manner is valid, as long as one gets on paper. Then you can look for your precise words.'


16. Bowles Archive.


19. George Steiner, Heidegger, p.96.


22. Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams. London: Allen and Unwin, 1954, pp.385-6, describes a dream in which teeth are extracted signifying 'transpositions from a lower to an upper part of the body...of the genitals by the face...' and so implying castration in dreams of teeth extraction.
25. The Signet edition carried the epigraph "'G igherdh ish'ed our illi", "No man is master of his fate" - Berber Song'. The words do still appear in the novel, in Chapter 27.
34. O.B. Hardison, 'Reconsideration: The Sheltering Sky' in *New Republic* (September 27th, 1975), pp.64-65, p.64.
35. At the end of the novel, Port is 'pierced' in his death fantasy.
40. Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p.27.
41. Freud related such desires to impotence. 'It may be added that for a man who is impotent...the substitute for copulation is a phantasy of returning into his mother's womb'. In *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*. London: Hogarth Press, 1936, p.110.
43. We are told (SS,199) that Port Moresby's father's death has freed him from work and at various moments in the novel possible father-figures are denied (SS,98, 100, 119, 131) as Port searches for purpose in his life.
45. Neumann, p.17.
47. Neumann, p.12.
49. Neumann, p.140.
50. Jackson, pp.79-80.
51. Steiner, p.36.
52. Halpern, p.168. This is a parallel statement to that used as an epigraph to this chapter.
53. Bowles Archive.
56. Eunice Goode is very similar to Mrs Lyle and continues the theme of incest, disease and corruption in Bowles's early novels.
58. Hardison, p.64.
59. There is a similarity between Kit and Jane Bowles. Millicent Dillon records that 'Some of Jane's greatest fears were reflected in the forces of nature. "She was afraid of anything unknown, of the jungle or the mountains", says Paul,' and states that 'Paul drew upon many details of Jane's personality' for Kit's character. A Little Original Sin, pp.133, 175.
60. E. Mottram, Paul Bowles: Staticity and Terror, p.5.
61. K. Horney, p.49.
63. Fromm, Escape from Freedom, p.152.
64. Bowles Archive.

Notes for Chapter Four. Let It Come Down: The Game of Society

1. Bowles Archive.
2. Paul Bowles in 'Kif - A Prologue and Compendium of Terms in The Book of Grass: An Anthology on Indian Hemp, edited by George Andrews and


5. Halpern, p.162.

7. Evans, p.11.


9. Evans, p.11.


16. E. Mottram, Staticity and Terror, p.11.


21. The Spanish means 'beach', but it is possible Paul Bowles intended a further reference to the game metaphor here, as in 'player'.


23. Bowles Archive.

24. Bowles Archive.


28. Papaconstante suggests both a father-figure and incest since she 'supplies' the young, child-like Hadija to Eunice-Goode.


31. We are told that in New York Dyar had used prostitutes: 'they would pick up something cheap in the bar or in the street... and lay her in turn' (L,16).

32. Bowles used Macbeth to provide the novel's title and epigraph and felt that both works were about treachery, deceit and corruption of self and society.

33. Notebooks in the Bowles Archive reveal elaborate networks of character connections developed by Bowles whilst planning the novel.

34. The Party resembles E.M. Forster's 'Bridge Party' in *A Passage to India*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969 (1st 1924), Chapter five, where the black and white communities were brought together in an artificial atmosphere. It is a novel which Bowles knows very well and has re-read often (a fact reported in Philip French 'Writing at the Edge of Danger' in *The Observer Magazine* (March 9th 1986), pp.22-7.

35. The idea of counterfeiting is central to *Let It Come Down* as everyone is acting out a role or pretending to be something they are not. Some of the inspiration for this would have come from Bowles's reading of Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* (The Counterfeiters). The double meaning of illegal money and duplicity is relevant also to *Let It Come Down*. As Jean Hytier writes, 'any kind of hypocrisy introduces counterfeit coin into the commerce of men; and we are all, in some respect, counterfeiters' (Jean Hytier, *André Gide*, translated Richard Howard. London: Constable and Company, 1963, p.212), or as Wallace Fowlie has said 'In accepting the falseness of social convention, the novelist has depicted a travesty of men in their relations with one another' in *André Gide: His Life and Art*. New York: MacMillan, 1965, p.87. Bowles owes a significant debt of influence to Gide and in *Let It Come Down* he begins to explore some similar themes.


37. Oliver Evans, 'Paul Bowles and the "Natural" Man in *Critique* Volume 3 (Spring/Fall 1959), pp.43-59, p.51.


42. Eunice Goode refers to this idea: 'Sun is anti-thought. Lawrence was right' (L,49).

43. Bowles Archive.

44. Disease is a metaphor for Tangier's corruption and even Eunice Goode touches upon it when she says, 'all cities are points of infection, like decayed teeth' (L,57). It is also a motif which Shakespeare used in *Macbeth* to express the decay of Scotland and Macbeth.

45. A. Chester, 'Glory Hole', p.55.

46. In Jane Bowles's novel *Two Serious Ladies* in My Sister's Hand in Mine: The Collected Works of Jane Bowles. New York: Ecco Press, 1978, Mrs Copperfield admits 'I have gone to pieces, which is a thing I've wanted for years', p.197.

47. *Macbeth*, 1II vi 28-33. In Halpern, p.165, Paul Bowles says 'Security is a false concept', and in a letter to Neil Campbell, 14th October, 1980, he wrote, 'To destroy the sense of security is a writer's principal task now, it seems to me'.


49. E. Mottram, p.13.


52. Maurice Blanchot quoted in R. Jackson, *Fantasy*, p.79.

53. In Jane Bowles's *Two Serious Ladies* in My Sister's Hand in Mine, p.110, there is an appropriate section which throws light on Dyar and on all the searching Americans in Bowles's novels. Mr Copperfield writes to his wife, 'You...spend your life fleeing from your first fear towards your first hope. Be careful that you do not, through your own wiliness, end up always in the same position in which you began'.


55. Halpern, p.171.

Notes for Chapter Five. The Spider's House: A World of Lies

2. Bowles Archive.

3. These stories were first published in 1949, 1948, 1952 respectively. All quotations are from Collected Stories. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow, 1979, and referred to in the text as C.S. followed by the page number.


7. E. F. Edinger, Ego and Archetype, p.15.

8. Paul Bowles told Oliver Evans in 'An Interview with Paul Bowles', p.12 of his idea of God and Nature: 'Not caring. Unaware. And if you use the word God in place of nature, then I think you get even closer to it'.


15. Some critics have argued that Stenham finds a saving love with Lee Burroughs, which seems a far too simplistic analysis of their relationship. (J.H. Bertens, p.155).


17. G. Steiner, Heidegger, p.36.

18. Steiner, p.70.

19. The counterfeit idea runs through Bowles's work as part of the major theme of human deceit and pretence. In Let it Come Down Dyar is literally involved in counterfeit money dealing, as well as a 'counterfeit' society. Gide, whom Paul Bowles admired greatly, provides the sources for many of these ideas (see Note 35 in Chapter Four).


21. Steiner, pp.70-1.

23. 'Western' in the sense of being primarily concerned with the experiences of Europeans or Americans.


28. Steiner, p.132.

29. 'Time of Friendship' was written in 1962. All references to it in the text are from the *Collected Stories* and abbreviated to C.S. followed by the page number.

Notes for Chapter Six. *Up Above the World: The Final Warning*


4. Fraisse, p.27.

5. Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p.264. All future references in the text are to W.S. followed by the page number.


8. Port Moresby says the same thing in *The Sheltering Sky*, p.107: 'there's plenty of time'. Elsewhere characters are described in the following way: 'They conversed quietly, and in the manner of people who have all the time in the world for everything' (SS,13).


10. In the Bowles Archive there are examples of Bowles's ideas about this particular plot line. 'Mr Slade levels the charge of lesbianism at her. She is startled, furious. All you need is a good psychiatrist. When they get back to the hotel she leaves bedroom, goes to Mrs Rainmantle's room for a minute, returns and says that she has invited Mrs Rainmantle to share her room, and that he must sleep in other room'. Furthermore in a piece jotted for Dr Slade Bowles had written, 'He wondered if by any chance Mrs Rainmantle were a lesbian, perhaps an unconscious one. Still, he knew that certain aggressive matronly women had an unexplained
but generally admitted power of attracting very feminine women like his present wife...

15. Bowles Archive.
16. Bowles Archive.
17. Letter from Paul Bowles to Peter Owen, 30th March, 1966 held in the Bowles Archive.
18. Evans, p.9.
25. 20th Century Views, p.5.
26. T. Solotaroff, The Red Hot Vacuum. Boston: Nonpareil Books, 1979, p.258, wrote that the story was 'more appropriate to a good movie than a novel'. In fact the novel was bought by Hollywood but never filmed.
27. Solotaroff, p.258.
29. Evans, p.47.
31. Hytier, p.69.
32. Hytier, p.69.
34. Mottram, Paul Bowles: Staticity and Terror, p.27.
35. Paul Bowles wrote that the Grove character 'studied the tactics of neutralist politicians, and so he spent the winter with his father in the beach house at Puerto Pacifico...[summer with his mother]...'. (Bowles Archive).


37. E.A. Poe, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, p.70


39. Bowles had Piranesi very much in mind when writing Up Above the World and Grove refers directly to him on p.149, commenting on the constructions he has created. The labyrinthinal complexities of Piranesi are appropriate representations of the tangled lives of all his characters; Port Moresby, Nelson Dyar both wander in the narrow labyrinthine streets of Morocco. These also serve to represent a mood of horror and disorientation. Two of Paul Bowles's influences, Poe and Jorge Luis Borges made great use of this idea in their work.


42. K. Harries, 'Fundamental Ontology and the Search for Man's Place', p.75.


44. K. Harries, p.77.

45. Appropriately one of Grove's books is L'Enfer Organisé.

46. Timothy Leary, The Politics of Ecstasy, p.120.

47. Leary, p.24.


49. Leary, p.24. This also suggests what Bowles had learned from Surrealism and particularly from Lautréamont's imagery.

50. Leary, p.32.


52. Leary, p.21.

53. The statue is that cherished by Grove and is symbolic of his god-like dominance of Slade.

54. Heidegger, Being and Time, p.165.


57. Steiner, p.91.
58. This idea is used in *Let It Come Down* to suggest Dyar's unreal state.
64. Mailer, p.246.
68. In a typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 21st January, 1981, Bowles wrote, 'I went one day to Burroughs with my list of necessary effects and asked him to prescribe the drugs and dosages which would bring such effects about. In the end I retained only the names of the drugs used, and mentioned them in passing. Burroughs, however, wrote me out a complicated schedule of dosages and timing. All of this seemed important at the moment of writing, but even as I wrote it I decided to ignore the details. In a letter from William Burroughs to Paul Bowles, 15th April, 1968, Burroughs wrote he 'thoroughly enjoyed' *Up Above the World* and 'the LSD sections seem quite within the range of possibility' (Bowles Archive).
73. Burroughs, p.167.
74. Burroughs, p.162.
75. Typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 5th March, 1981. Bowles invented this title, but it belongs to a collection which all suggest
Grove's power obsession and his sadistic, hellish character.


79. Wiener, pp.24, 32.

80. Bowles Archive.


84. Mottram, p.27. In the Bowles Archive there are notes on the name, 'rain/matter', which suggest Bowles was fully aware of its significance.


87. Paul Bowles is drawing on T.S. Eliot's The Wasteland for appropriate imagery here.

88. Bowles Archive.


91. Jung, Four Archetypes, p.28.

92. Mottram, p.17.

93. Stewart, 'Up Above the World So High', p.263.


95. Neumann, p.158.

Notes for Chapter Seven. The Later Works: He who Stops is Lost


6. Paul Bowles, 'Windows on the Past', p.34


17. 'Windows on the Past', p.34.


21. William Barrett, Irrational Man: A Study of Existential Philosophy, p.244. Ultimately Paul Bowles could not accept Sartrean existentialism because it was purely conscious and so it 'inevitably becomes an ego psychology; hence freedom is understood only as the resolute project of the conscious ego' (W. Barrett, p.232). 'If you'd said Heidegger I'd have said there was no incompatibility', Bowles wrote in answer to this dilemma. (Typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 26th May, 1980).

25. Quoted in Barrett, p.163.
37. Bowles Archive.
43. Paul Bowles, 'Letter from Tangier' in *London Magazine*, Volume 1,
44. Paul Bowles, 'The Point of View', p.5.
47. Howe, p.52.
49. Halpern, p.171.
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51. Halpern, p.171.

52. Jackson, pp.25-6.


54. Typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 27th August, 1980. Bowles explained this ideas in more detail. 'I meant in its first sense: "putting together", building-up of separate elements into a connected whole"'.


57. Letter, 10th December, 1980.


60. Mrabet's stories have provided much work for Bowles's translations and this seems to be because of a genuine friendship and because Mrabet captures the essence of Morocco in his tales. Bowles described him in this way. 'Mrabet is a Riffian, and his ideas coincide with those of the Riffians. As to other subject-matter, certain of his tales are variations on traditional folk-stories. Some contain more personal invention, and others are either wholly invented or recounted from personal experience. The core of his consciousness is bound up in traditional Moroccan folklore, and this is even more evident in his graphic work'. Typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 27th July, 1980.


62. Mrabet, 'The Lute' in Five Eyes, pp.139-145.


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71. In Without Stopping there is a photograph of Ginsberg, Corso, Burroughs and Michael Portman at the Villa Muniriya, Tangier where Burroughs lived. Burroughs wrote the following about the time: 'Also present were Tim Leary, Allen Ginsberg, Alan Ansen, Paul Bowles, M. Portman and G. Corso...the psychedelic summer'. A Descriptive Catalogue of the William S. Burroughs Archive. International Center for Art and Communication. London: Covent Garden Press, 1973, p.78.


75. Letter: Gysin to Campbell, 23rd June, 1981.


77. Typed letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, 10th December, 1980.

78. Hashish is a blanket term for all parts of the Kif plant, but is also used to refer to candy made by boiling rejected Kif leaves with water and sugar. Kif is cannabis sativa and usually smoked after being chopped into a powder.


84. Bowles Archive.


87. All references in the text are to Paul Bowles, Collected Stories and shown as C.S. followed by the page number.

88. Paul Bowles, cover blurb for A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard.

89. M. Mrabet, Transatlantic Review, p.128.

90. Larbi Layachi, A Life Full of Holes, taped and translated by Paul


93. Without Stopping, p.274.


95. Mottram, p.32.

96. Without Stopping, p.268.

97. Stewart, p.127.

98. Paul Bowles, Things Gone and Things Still Here, Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1977. All references in the text are to the Collected Stories and given as C.S. followed by the page number.

99. Cherifa was a housekeeper in Tangier who exercised a good deal of influence over Jane Bowles and was a firm believer in magic potions.


102. Archibald Macleish quoted in Galinsky, pp.245-7.


107. This is clearly seen in the Berber tales Paul Bowles has translated, Antaeus 16 (Winter 1975), pp. 30-6. 'A man had a dream. In the morning when he went out into the street, he met a neighbour whom he had never liked or trusted. In spite of that, he could not keep from saying to him: Listen to this dream I had. Perhaps you can tell me what it means?'


111. Letter, 10th December. 1980.
112. In 'Kitty', which Bowles wrote for Jonathan Cott's anthology Wonders (Wonders: Writings and Drawings for the Child in Us All. London: Virgin/Rolling Stone Press, 1981), another lonely child is the subject of a magical metamorphosis. Kitty is transformed into a cat and only then gains the attention and love she requires from her parents. It's a modern myth about loneliness and childhood in which the adult human world is seen as cold and indifferent until shocked into a recognition through some disaster - in this case the 'disappearance' of Kitty.

113. Quoted in Jackson, p.82.

114. Halpern, p.166.


117. Evans, p.8.


Notes for the Conclusion


2. Erich Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, p.121.


8. Paul Bowles to Philip French in Observer Magazine, p.27


14. Roszak, pp.47-8

24. William Carlos Williams, p.222.
27. Halpern, p.171.
32. 'Windows', p.112.
33. Paul Bowles, Their Heads are Green, p.131.
37. Howe, p.46.
40. Jung, Collected Works 18, p.583.
41. Halpern, p.171.
42. Halpern, p.170.


47. 'Windows', p.34.

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Poetry by Paul Bowles
Non-Fiction by Paul Bowles


Translations by Paul Bowles

I have included only articles of translated work which have not been collected or included in a published book.

(a) Uncollected Translations


(b) Books of Translations and Collected Translations

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