THE QUESTING OF JACK DULUOZ

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The Questing of Jack Duluoz

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ABSTRACT

The novels of Jack Kerouac should be read as one vast prose epic, which the author called *The Duluoz Legend*. Beginning with Visions of Gerard and concluding with Vanity of Duluoz, Kerouac traces the life of his protagonist/narrator, Jack Duluoz, from birth to middle age.

To unite his individual works into a single, greater work, Kerouac dispatches Duluoz on two lifelong quests, one for love and the other for knowledge. Each of the eleven novels that make up Kerouac's legend concerns itself with either one or the other of these quests, or both. Kerouac introduces Duluoz to love and sex in Doctor Sax and Maggie Cassidy, sets him actively pursuing his love ideal, the fellaheen saint, in On the Road, The Subterraneans, and Tristessa, and finally leads Duluoz to confront the failure of his love quest in Big Sur and Vanity of Duluoz. Kerouac also introduces Duluoz to the seductive power of knowledge in Doctor Sax, preparing him for his adult search for knowledge in On the Road and The Dharma Bums. In depicting this second quest, Kerouac draws on the legend of Faust, both Goethe's and Marlowe's versions. Kerouac has Duluoz seek out and follow Mephistophelean figures who seem to possess a knowledge that is intuitive and absolute. Big Sur describes the inevitable fall of the Faustian hero.

The most important devices used by Kerouac to connect the novels are foreshadowing and prophecy. Numerous prophets populate

The Duluoz Legend and they rarely speak falsely. Moreover, in one novel, Doctor Sax, Kerouac gives his reader a prophetic text to the legend. Doctor Sax anticipates the trials and tribulations Duluoz will encounter in his quests.

Most of Kerouac's critics have either not seen or ignored the interrelatedness of his novels. In doing so they have neglected the logical starting point for serious examination of his work.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

> My work comprises one vast book like Proust's Remembrance of Things Past except that my remembrances are written on the run instead of afterwards in sick bed. Because of the objections of my early publishers I was not allowed to use the same personae names in each work. On the Road, The Subterraneans, The Dharma Bums, Doctor Sax, Maggie Cassidy, Tristessa, Desolation Angels and the others are just chapters in the whole work which I call The Duluoz Legend. In my old age I intend to collect all my work and re-insert my pantheon of uniform names, leave the long shelf full of books there, and die happy.
>
> Jack Kerouac
> (Intro. to Big Sur)

i

The starting point of my thesis is the honouring of Kerouac's request that his novels be regarded as one vast prose epic--*The Duluoz Legend*. Though the legend's date of conception is a matter of contention, the legend was certainly not the afterthought Seymour Krim suggested it to be in his 1965 introduction to Desolation Angels.[1] Kerouac, himself, says that the idea of "novels connecting into one grand tale"[2] came to him in 1943 when he read the Forsyte Saga. If so, he put the idea aside when writing his first novel, The Town and the City. That book, with its omniscient narrator, he would later exclude from the legend, replacing it in his final years with the first person narrative, Vanity of Duluoz.

More than likely, the legend's masterplan took permanent hold of Kerouac's creative mind in 1952 while he wrote Doctor Sax in Mexico City. He had read Proust by then, and in Doctor Sax he acknowledges his literary debt to the French "great rememberer":

> A shudder of joy ran through me--when I read of Proust's teacup--all those saucers in a crumb--all of history by the thumb--all of a city in a tasty crumb--[3]

It is also worth noting that following the completion of Doctor Sax, Kerouac quickly embarked on its chronological successor, Maggie Cassidy. Doctor Sax presents Jacky Duluoz passing through the crisis of physical maturation, and in Maggie Cassidy he has his first love affair.

If, in fact, the writing of Doctor Sax marked Kerouac's decision to launch *The Duluoz Legend*, then The Town and the City, published in 1950, and the rough drafts of Visions of Cody and On the Road are his only novels that pre-date that decision. The Town and the City Kerouac had already mentally repudiated, and Visions of Cody is practically a legend unto itself. But Kerouac anticipates the inclusion of On the Road in the legend, even making reference in Doctor Sax to the IT for which On the Road's protagonists quest. The remainder of Kerouac's novels were written after Doctor Sax and all fit into the framework of *The Duluoz Legend*.

In comparing Kerouac's *Duluoz Legend* with Proust's Remembrance of Things Past, Krim finds Kerouac's architecture wanting. Speaking of the legend's novels, he comments, "they have only the loosest structure when taken as a whole."[4] I feel that Krim's critical eye is wanting, despite the fact that the entire *Duluoz Legend*, save Vanity of Duluoz, was available to him in 1965. I cannot dispel the suspicion that very few of Kerouac's critics--even those in the Beat camp--spent a great deal of time reading the Lowell novels, novels in which the foundation of *The Duluoz Legend* is strikingly laid out. By examining all the "chapters" of the legend, I hope to show that though Kerouac's novels may not join one another as effortlessly as do Proust's,

The Duluoz Legend is no Procrustean bed in which Kerouac forces his works to lie.

For the purposes of this study I take a cue from Neal Cassady, Kerouac's much beloved colleague and author of The First Third,[5] and divide *The Duluoz Legend* into chronological thirds. They break up as follows:

FIRST THIRD: (Jack Duluoz from birth to seventeen years)
Visions of Gerard, Doctor Sax, Maggie Cassidy

SECOND THIRD: (Jack Duluoz in his early twenties to late thirties)
On the Road, Visions of Cody, Tristessa, The Subterraneans, The Dharma Bums, Desolation Angels

FINAL THIRD: (Jack Duluoz, approximately age 38-45)
Big Sur, Vanity of Duluoz

This chronology is not taken from Kerouac biography. As noted in Doctor Sax (DS, p. 16), Jack Duluoz is born in 1922 and his life can easily be charted by the dates Kerouac gives us in the other books of *The Duluoz Legend*.

The three Lowell or youth novels of the first third form the least problematical portion of *The Duluoz Legend*. We actually have Jacky Duluoz narrating all three novels, and together they form a nicely bound trilogy of Jacky Duluoz's formative years.

The second third, which I call Duluoz's "questing years," presents minor problems of identity. Here we have the Beat novels On the Road, The Subterraneans, and The Dharma Bums, in which Jack Duluoz goes by the names Sal Paradise, Leo Percepied, and Ray Smith, respectively. As Kerouac indicates in his introduction to Big Sur, this was not of his own choosing. However, because Kerouac died before he could find a publisher willing to re-issue *The Duluoz Legend* with uniform names, it falls upon the reader to make the substitutions Kerouac wanted. In this study the narrator of the novels will always be referred to as Jack Duluoz,

with the original personae names (Paradise, Percepied, Smith) noted in parentheses where necessary. The Dean Moriarity of On the Road will be identified as Cody Pomeray, the name preferred by Kerouac. Sal's aunt in On the Road will be identified as Jack Duluoz's mother. All other characters, however, will retain the names they assume in the novels being discussed. For example, I discuss Mardou Fox only in reference to The Subterraneans, so I see little reason to substitute the name, Irene May, which Kerouac allotted her in Book of Dreams.

My selection of novels for the final third, which depicts Duluoz's fall and the aftermath of it, may be problematical to some readers of Kerouac, but I will try to anticipate and answer the objections that might be made to it. First, I certainly feel that a case can be made for including Satori in Paris in the legend. The book is not only in keeping thematically with the novels chronologically preceding it, but also its portrait of the narrator fulfills prophecies uttered in the first third. However, I have excluded Satori in Paris because Kerouac gives the narrator his own name, and says that, like Lonesome Traveler, Satori in Paris is autobiography. Secondly, some readers might contend that Vanity of Duluoz belongs between the first and second thirds of the legend, covering as it does, Jacky Duluoz's life from adolescence to young adulthood. I agree that, important to the unity of the legend, Vanity of Duluoz fills in the gap between the protagonist's Lowell days and his road days, but a forty-five-year-old Duluoz narrates, addressing himself to his wife, and with frequent asides he philosophises or simply complains about the way the world has changed since his youth. As a result the reader's attention is focussed more on the teller than the tale. For this reason, I regard Vanity of Duluoz as the final chapter of *The Duluoz Legend.*

ii

The purpose of this study is to begin an analysis of *The Duluoz Legend's* structure. I say "begin" because to date (1983) virtually no published critical work has dealt with the legend as a whole, and because the elements that unite Kerouac's novels into one grand tale are many, the analysis of them all being beyond the scope of this study. My primary focus will be on two quests, one for love and the other for knowledge, engaged in by Kerouac's hero/narrator, Jack Duluoz. In the following chapters of this thesis I will examine the unfolding of these quests, which I feel unites Kerouac's individual works into the greater single work he intended. Kerouac establishes the origin of the quests in the Lowell novels, sets Duluoz actively seeking his ideals in the Beat novels, and has Duluoz confront his failure in the final third of the legend.

A secondary concern of my paper is the special role of one novel in *The Duluoz Legend*, Doctor Sax. Of the dozen books in *The Duluoz Legend*, Kerouac liked Dr. Sax the most. Many of his readers have shared his opinion or at least held that novel in high regard. Malcolm Cowley sensed its value and greatly regretted not forcing Viking to publish it.[6] French-Canadian author and critic, Victor-Levi Beaulieu, calls Doctor Sax "the best documentation we possess on Franco American life in the 1920's and 30's."[7] But Doctor Sax has an importance that goes beyond itself, an importance hinted at by the knowledge that in all probability it was the first novel of the legend to be written, that it is Kerouac's only novel to employ fantasy, and that it carries the rather weighty subtitle, "Faust Part III." It is my belief that Doctor Sax is the seminal novel of *The Duluoz Legend*, that it acts as the legend's prophetic text, laying out the pathways of Duluoz's life and anticipating his destiny.

iii

Chapters One through Three of this study chronologically outline Duluoz's search for love: the ordeal of his physical maturation in Doctor Sax; his first love in Maggie Cassidy; his pursuit of the three fellaheen women, Terry, Mardou, and Tristessa in On the Road, The Subterraneans, and Tristessa; his spiritual sexual climacteric in Big Sur. Chapters Four through Seven, describing Duluoz's quest for knowledge, examine the idea that in *The Duluoz Legend* Kerouac consciously reworks the story of Faust. In Doctor Sax, On the Road, and The Dharma Bums, Duluoz seeks out and follows a Mephistophelean figure who seems to possess a knowledge that is intuitive and absolute. I explore the relationships of Duluoz and his temptors/mentors, trace the paths they take in search of knowledge, and examine the damnation of Duluoz which occurs in Big Sur.

In charting the paths of these two quests I will identify the factors that make the individual novels both sequential and interrelated. Kerouac is hardly niggardly in his dispensing of signposts to help his reader follow the course of the legend. In particular, prophecy plays a major role in *The Duluoz Legend*. Numerous characters offer presentiments of things to come, and their foresight is infallible. When one of Kerouac's oracles speaks, the reader should listen.

iv

Two points concerning my critical approach to *The Duluoz Legend*: First, the preoccupation with the Kerouac legend since the time of the author's death has been at the expense of our understanding *The Duluoz Legend*. Readers have tended to regard Kerouac's books as straight

autobiography, neglecting to distinguish between narrator and author. In fact, however, Kerouac was highly selective in his fictionalization of real life experience. Comparison of any of the several Kerouac biographies with *The Duluoz Legend* reveals that Duluoz is both something less and something more than his creator. If useful critical work is to be done on *The Duluoz Legend*, the attraction toward speaking of Kerouac and Duluoz as one must be resisted. Secondly, at present there is little critical work on Kerouac despite the flood of media attention he has received. The criticism that does exist can be divided into three groups: (1) that which examines On the Road; (2) that which examines Kerouac's "spontaneous prose"; (3) that which is criticism in name only--the mindless attacks of Kerouac's enemies and the equally mindless eulogies penned by certain friends. No published criticism presently exists that addresses itself to *The Duluoz Legend* as a whole. This being the case, my examination of the legend must involve breaking ground.

But though the extant critical work has been of minimal direct assistance to me in my study, the best of Kerouac's critics--John Clellon Holmes, Warren Tallman, Timothy Hunt, among a few others--have been helpful in a more general, fundamental way. They have given me insight into the way one should read Kerouac, in the way one can look into the "Balzacian hive in a jewel point" (DS, p. 208) and see the life teeming there. And it is my hope that my thesis will serve other Kerouac readers in the same manner. If *The Duluoz Legend* depicts the road of Jack Duluoz's life, I would like to think of my thesis as a rudimentary map that will assist the reader in making his way from the beginning of that road to its end.

PART ONE

THE QUEST FOR LOVE

Chapter One

LOVE'S BEGINNINGS

i

"the Snake was coming for me!" (DS, p. 138)

Doctor Sax is a complex, multi-leveled novel, but most immediately it describes a boy's physical maturation and the accompanying guilt and fear he suffers.* For any youth the biological rites of passage can be difficult, but for Kerouac's adolescent protagonist, the sensitive and artistic Jacky Duluoz, who also happens to be a Catholic, they are apocalyptic. He does not know whether what is happening to him is good or bad, and this terrifies him. In order to cope with his flooding sexuality and to resolve his moral dilemma, Jacky creates a fantasy world of monstrous proportions, setting the stage for an ultimate confrontation between good and evil. In having Jacky descend into an inferno to come to terms with his sexuality, Kerouac establishes a foreboding beginning for the older Duluoz's love quest.

Jacky's childhood introduction to sex is less than healthy. Destouches, who runs the corner store, is rumoured to be a pedophile--"he played with the ding dangs of little boys . . ." (DS, p. 15)--and when Jacky enters the store to buy candy he is "mystified and horrified" (DS, p. 15). Jacky's first exposure to the sexual act comes through a chance encounter

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*Allen Ginsberg has said that Kerouac considered Doctor Sax to be a "myth of puberty."[8]

along the banks of the Merrimac River. He sees "fat lovers disentangling huge dimpled lady legs and hairy man legs out of an intercourse in a litter of movie magazines, empty cans, rat rags, dirt grass and straw . . ." (DS, p. 64). As for the consequences of such pagan activities, Jacky can only half imagine them from knowledge of a book possessed by his father--"a health book with syphilitic backs" (DS, p. 97).

As with most boys in early adolescence, Jacky's sexual desires find outlet exclusively in masturbation. The guilt he feels in enjoying this activity is hardly alleviated by the confessional box ritual that good Catholic boys like Jacky must endure:

> At the age of seven a priest had asked me in the confessional, "And did you play with your little gidigne?" "Yes, mon père."
> "Well, therefore if you played with your little gidigne, say a whole rosary and after that do ten Notre Pères and ten Salut Marie's in front of the altar and after that you can go."[9]

To add horror to this guilt, Jacky witnesses the disturbing spectacle of a mentally retarded youth masturbating before an audience of Jacky's friends:

> Ali Zaza indeed--a moronic French Canadian sex fiend he is now in a madhouse--I saw him masturbate in the living room one rainy afternoon, he did it in public to amuse Vinny who watched at his leisure like a Pasha and sometimes gave instructions . . . "Come on Zaza madman, faster--"
> "I go fast I can."
> "Go, Zaza, go--"
> The whole gang: "Come on Zaza, come!"
> "Here he comes!"
> We all laugh and watch the horrible sight of an idiot youth pumping up his white juices with his jerking fist . . . (DS, p. 70).

It is unlikely that the sensitive Jacky would not see his own private activities mirrored in the sexual frenzies of Zaza.

As a final blow to Jacky's sexual development, his first moment of sexual awareness coincides with the abrupt announcement that his dog, Beauty, has been run over by a car:

> I heard the news of its death at precisely that moment in my life when I was lying in bed finding out that my tool had sensations in the tip--they yelled it up to me thru the transom, "Ton chien est mort!" (Your dog is dead!) and they brought it home dying . . . (DS, p. 121).

The older narrating Duluoz comments, "Beauty dies the night I discover sex, they wonder why I'm mad" (DS, p. 121). In the first phrase of this statement, Kerouac makes a multiple comment. First, playing on the dog's name, he prefigures the Duluozian notions, fully explored in the following novels of the legend, that sex defiles beauty and that boyhood is the only beautiful time of life. Second, he identifies at least one source of the Duluozian maxim, sex equals death.

Given that Jacky associates his autoeroticism with death, that it gives rise in him to feelings of guilt and horror, it is not surprising that his imagination gives birth to a creature symbolic of sex, sin, and death alike, the World Snake. Duluoz recalls, "I was a scared kid. It was therefore easy to see the Castle on that hill and to prophesy the Snake" (DS, pp. 150-51). To create Jacky's nightmarish fantasy, Kerouac draws on the prophecy of Revelation that "the old serpent," Satan, will be loosed after one thousand years of confinement in "the bottomless pit."[10] The scenario is this: The World Snake, Satan, once hurled into the "unspeakable central dark depths" of the earth, has been "for all the ages of man . . . inching, inching, inch an hour up, up to the sun . . ." (DS, p. 234). The point at which he will emerge through the surface of the earth lies hidden beneath the Castle, an ancient, presumably uninhabited mansion in Lowell. In fact, however, unknown to the general populace of Lowell, all the evil forces of the world have

come to the Castle to greet the Snake. They have even dug a pit through the floor of the Castle to accelerate the Snake's progress. Once through the earth's crust, the Snake will have but one purpose, to destroy the world.

The world that the Snake threatens to destroy exists only in Jacky's mind. But as the Snake rises, the real world of Lowell reflects Jacky's mental turmoil by experiencing its own catastrophe. The Merrimac River has flooded, endangering the existence of Lowell's citizens. Like the Snake, the Flood is used by Kerouac to symbolize Jacky's nascent libido, but as a biblical archetype it dramatizes the cleansing of the earth, the washing away of sin. Jacky's mixed response to the flood corresponds to his ambivalent sexual feelings. At first he welcomes the Flood: "We wanted the Flood to pierce through and drown the world, the horrible adult routine world" (DS, p. 171). Later he has a change of heart: "I began to dislike the flood, began to see it as an evil monster bent on devouring everyone---" (DS, p. 179). This latter description identifies Flood with Snake.

Though Jacky can do nothing to check the surging waters of the Merrimac, he can, at least initially, direct the drama unfolding in his own mind. Out of an old house on a hill infested with garter snakes he conjured up the Castle and the Snake. Toward a resolution of his moral dilemma, Jacky must produce a foil for the Snake, a powerful being on the side of good. Enter Doctor Sax.

Sax is not a new creation of Jacky's. He has been around since the boy's early childhood. Sax has always appeared as a shadowy figure lurking, now here, now there in the twilight Lowell landscape. When Jacky, at the age of nine or ten, begins reading mystery magazines,

Sax takes on the face of crime-fighting agent, The Shadow. By setting Sax against the World Snake, Jacky redraws The Shadow's crusade against evil. Unconsciously, Jacky may also be hearing "Sax" as "Sex," (a play on words no doubt enjoyed by Kerouac) for he senses that Doctor Sax can help him with his "boy problems" (DS, p. 175).

Of the many masks worn by Sax in the course of his relationship with Jacky, the mask of sex counsellor suits him least. Sax's make-up includes more than a little of the mid-western evangelist and a concommitant puritanical streak that oversimplifies both Jacky's problem and its solution. Having monitored the sexual activities of Jacky and his gang--the episode with Zaza, a "juvenile homosexual ball" (DS, p. 68)--Sax decides to "kill the Snake of Evil" (DS, p. 68). The herbs, powders and incantations he prepares to achieve this purpose are not unlike the Salut Maries and Notre Pères that the Catholic priest tells Jacky to perform. Sax actually seems less tolerant than the priest of Jacky's autoerotic practices. When Sax first appears to Jacky, he scolds, "'. . . you just stood here at nightfall with your mouth hanging open and fisting your entrail piece--'" (DS, p. 193). The phrase "mouth hanging open" recalls Zaza, and Jacky senses that a comparison is being made. He blurts out defensively, "'Not all the time!'" (DS, p. 193). By making Sax insensitive to Jacky's sexual confusion, Kerouac forewarns the reader that his hero, finally, will have to face his boy problems alone.

Miscast as sex counsellor, Sax is also unequal to the role of snake-slayer. Magician and entertainer that Sax is, however, he puts on a wonderful show. He leads Jacky into the Castle and through a maze of trap doors, corridors, and rooms to the pit. In the Freudian nightmare that follows, the Snake erupts from the hole in the Castle floor: "Milky white horror flowed in the air" (DS, p. 232). Straddling the parapet

of the pit, and offering a final magical prayer, Sax drops down his herbs and powders on the head of the ascending Snake. His potions explode in a Fourth of July-like spectacle of "blue mist" (DS, p. 238). But his histrionics hardly phase the Snake, who continues to rumble upwards, crumbling the Castle around him. Sax vanishes in the explosion of emerging Snake.

Sax, it turns out, is no more capable than the priest of ridding Jacky's world of the Snake of Evil. The next time that Jacky sees Sax, the would-be vanquisher of snakes appears as an ordinary shabby mortal in street clothes. All Sax can say is, "'Goddam it didn't work'" (DS, p. 240). Sax's failure to destroy the Snake corresponds to Jacky's seeming loss of control over the fantasy world, and intimates that he will not survive the bizarre rites of passage into adulthood that he has imposed upon himself. He will be overcome by sexual guilt. But of course this does not happen. Kerouac's allegory stops short of making sexual maturation fatal. One way or another, Kerouac assures his reader, boys make the transition from boyhood to young manhood.

The plotline of Jacky's scenario being fairly well exhausted, a deus ex machina must be produced to save Jacky and resolve the drama. Like the angel in Revelation that flies down from the heavens to dispose of Satan, a giant bird descends from the skies above Lowell, and picks up the Snake in its beak; then "Bird and Serpent [ascend] into the Unknown" (DS, p. 245). Sax comments, "'I'll be damned . . . . The universe disposes of its own evil!'" (DS, p. 245). Kerouac seems to be saying that the universe has a self-regulating mechanism that promotes the continuation and growth of its creatures. Jacky's physical maturity has become an unalterable fact, and his sexual guilt, like the Snake who

vanishes into the Unknown, will gradually disappear (or fade into his subconscious, if you will) allowing him to carry on with his life.

Jacky's maturation enables him to begin exploring physical love. However, Kerouac leaves ambiguous the lasting effects of Jacky's ordeal. The conclusion of Doctor Sax would lead us to believe that Jacky has arrived at maturity intact. With the Snake gone, Jacky walks home on Easter morning to the sound of the "ding dong bells" (DS, p. 245). By connecting the words "ding dong," which connote sexuality,* and "bells," which are the voice of the church, Kerouac suggests that sex need not be sinful and that Jacky now understands this. Moreover, that the Snake's ascension occurs on the day celebrating Christ's resurrection suggests that Jacky has been reborn. However, the after effects of the Flood, which Kerouac uses as a secondary symbol of Jacky's maturation, are less certain. The final line of "Book V, The Flood," reads, "'But the damage has been done'" (DS, p. 180). In the subsequent novels of *The Duluoz Legend*, Kerouac allows this pessimistic note to drown out the sound of the "ding dong bells."

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*Kerouac uses the words "ding dong" in Visions of Gerard, Doctor Sax, and Maggie Cassidy as a translation for the French, "gidigne." And in The Subterraneans, the narrator states that "life is simply the man entering the woman and the rubbing of the two in soft--that essence, that ding dong essence--"[12]

ii

"Maggie lost" (MC, p. 151)

> Later we simply forgot dark Saxes and hung ourselves on the kick of sex and adolescent lacerated love . . . whereafter the fellows disappear . . . . There was a great big whore called Sue, 200 pounds, . . . who would sometimes throw her dress up to show herself when we made cracks from a distance. The existence of this huge woman of the world reminded me that I had a father (who visited her purple doorways) and a real world to face in the future--whoo! It showed on shroudy New Year's one two three as we laughed about that! (DS, p. 71).

In the above passage from Doctor Sax, Kerouac cues the next novel in *The Duluoz Legend*. Maggie Cassidy opens on a snowy New Year's eve scene. The imaginary world of Doctor Sax and the Castle gives way to the "real world" of Lowell, wherein Jacky will try to establish a new adult identity. Particularly he must experience love and sex, and come to realize their oneness. Unfortunately, for the "kick of sex" he will turn to prostitutes, while with Maggie Cassidy he will discover only "adolescent lacerated love."

To understand the thematic position of Maggie Cassidy in Duluoz's quest for love (and in the legend as a whole), we must answer two questions posed by the older narrating Duluoz: '(1) Why was his love for Maggie doomed to fail?' (2) Why was the failure of this love, a puppy love by all accounts, such a crucial factor in his destiny? The answer to the first question can be found in Jacky's post-Saxian, post-pubescent condition. The answer to the second, in good part, explains the direction he takes in his subsequent love quest.

Kerouac lets us know that Jacky's love for Maggie is ill-fated from the outset for the simplest of reasons: he is a year younger than she. They meet at a New Year's Eve dance and almost immediately Maggie zeroes in on the importance of the seemingly small difference in their

ages. "'But you're only sixteen years old, you're younger than me, I'm seventeen-- . . . That makes me old enough, ha ha'" (MC, p. 24). Maggie, of course, means of legal age for sexual intercourse, not subject to statutory rape laws. It is implicit in her truth-in-jest remark, however, that Jacky, by contrast, is not "old enough." Though he may be of legal age, and physically capable of sex, he is still somehow a boy. The narrating Duluoz confirms this, recalling that he was "still a kid, suddenly as big as a man. . ." (MC, p. 24) and Jacky, in his dealings with Maggie, goes on to prove his immaturity again and again.

In terms of individual growth, the disparity in their ages amounts to much more than a year. Jacky is still in high school, an incorrigible dreamer, with adolescent expectations of a glorious future. Maggie has left school, babysits, and looks forward to having children and a home of her own. Her expectations are small and realistic. Moreover, if Jacky's fantasy encounters with Sax and Snake have given him a new awareness of sex and love, he does not exhibit that awareness in his relationship with Maggie. Untutored in actual experience, Jacky regards sex as a frightening mystery. Maggie, on the other hand, is sexually confident. She has had some previous sexual experience, though we don't know the extent of it. She warns Jacky, "'Don't let nobody tell you nothing about me'" (MC, p. 61). Jacky hardly desires to probe her past: "'If they did I wouldn't lissen . . .'" (MC, p. 61) he answers, not wanting knowledge of a sexual precedent that would oblige him to perform. Maggie bemoans the fact that he is not older. When Jacky askes her why it should matter, she replies, "'You'd know more what to do with me--'" (MC, p. 60). Jacky's naivete does not lessen nor his daring increase as their relationship progresses:

> One night by the radiator in March she'd started huffing and puffing against me unmistakeably, it was my turn to be a man--and I didn't know what to do . . . (MC, p. 127).

Doctor Sax had not prepared him for this.

Jacky goes away to New York to attend a high-powered prep school, and while there, loses his virginity to a prostitute. When he returns to Lowell for the Christmas holidays, he celebrates the first anniversary of his affair with Maggie. She makes a somewhat unexpected request:

> New Year's Eve Maggie wants me to do to her what I did to "them girls in New York"--
> "Aw Maggie I can't do that to you!" I say . . . (MC, p. 141).

Kerouac exposes Jacky as a sad victim of his own double standard. Jacky still thinks of sex as something sinful. Heroically, at least in his own mind, he will risk the consequences of his own erring ways, but he can't defile the virtuous Maggie. As already noted, however, Maggie's virtue is a moot point, and Jacky's reasoning, though perhaps not unusual for boys his age, is romantically naive. Looking back, the narrator rues this adolescent deficiency of "not understanding joy and personal reverence" (MC, p. 30).

A second interfering factor in the love of Jacky and Maggie is the boy's ambition. Both Jacky and his parents have great hopes for his future, and his football scholarship to prep school seems to confirm his merit. His mother, especially, though sympathetic to his feeling for Maggie, cautions him not to jeopardize his future: "'You've got to finish school to fix up and prepare yourself for your times.'" More pointedly she warns him, "'Don't hurry, girls nowadays invent all kinds of troubles'" (MC, p. 142). Her advice falls on ears wanting to hear. On the one hand Jacky voices a desire to marry Maggie, but on the other he wants to run from the responsibility it would entail. When Maggie accepts his

invitation to the spring prom he has a sudden sinking feeling of impending entrapment:

> Ah, terribly sad the look of writing on her envelopes. In the dust of my black books I saw the moons of death. "Wow," I told myself, "is it true I want a woman--" I felt sick, "Ruin all my--" (MC, pp. 142-43).

For her part, Maggie hates football and has shown little interest in the knowledge to be gained at school. One of her competitors for Jacky's affections remarks, "'she can't come to high school because she was too dumb to graduate from Junior High--'" (MC, p. 48). But if formal education has not touched her, the experience of the world has. Kerouac's characterization of Maggie is that of a young woman of infinite practical wisdom. She has realistically appraised the possibilities available to the daughter of a railway worker, and accurately identifies what can be hers and what can't. Penetratingly she intuits that she can play no part in the scenario of Jacky's "grand future." Her intuition is proven correct when she attends the spring prom at Jacky's prep school. With his academic and athletic talents Jacky can at least temporarily and superficially bridge the economic gap between himself and his schoolmates. But Maggie is painfully out of her element. When she realizes that she has waited too long to play her hand--"'I shoulda never let you go away from home'" (MC, p. 147)--she accepts her loss of him and returns to her Lowell life.

> [She] went home on Monday morning after a night's sleep, Maggie to her porch, her kid sisters, her swains coming a visiting down the road, her river her night--I to my whirlpools of new litter and glitter--(MC, p. 148).

Jacky sacrifices love to his ambition.

Kerouac might have ended the novel at this point, but instead he adds a four-page epilogue. Three years after their parting at the spring prom, Jackie contacts Maggie to attempt a belated consummation of their

love. In the interim he has been in the merchant marine, traveled across America, "had women" (MC, p. 153). Maggie agrees to see him, we can suppose, because she is willing to consider the reopening of their relationship. When he comes to pick her up, she asks whether he wants to see her parents. His reply, "'Nah, nah come on--'" (MC, p. 154), makes obvious his sole motive in seeing her: "to put the boots to [her]" (MC, p. 153). In thinking that Maggie is going to be an "easy lay," Jacky reveals that he has underestimated her integrity and misunderstood her original motives in being the sexual instigator in their romance. Maggie does have a simple, unarticulated understanding of sex as "joy and personal reverence." She rebuffs his advances. He has promised himself on the way to meet her, "'I'm gonna find out about you at last--'" (MC, p. 153). But he does not find out. To Jacky she remains unknown. Kerouac's intention in adding this postscript is two-fold. First, he points out that Jacky's world experience has not enhanced the young man's understanding of sex and love. Second, he gives Jacky grounds for later establishing Maggie as the love ideal against which to measure all loves. Maggie's rejection of Jacky and the integrity of that act, make it easy for him to exalt her.

Kerouac makes the failure of Duluoz's first love a crucial factor in his life to follow. The reasons for this are somewhat more complex than the factors that doomed the relationship itself. One reason, which we have already touched upon, has to do with Jacky's ambition. In forsaking Maggie for his ambitions, Jacky establishes a precedent from which he can never break away in later years. His love quest is always undermined--sometimes humourously, often tragically--by his need to be doing something else. The second reason, which demands some explication,

involves the nature of Jacky's loss. What does Kerouac imply that Jacky has lost in letting Maggie slip away from him, and why can Jacky never recapture it?

Maggie offers Jacky a life of simple rewards and pleasures:

> "--be a brakeman on the railroad, we'll live in a little house by the tracks, play the 920 club have babies--I'll paint my kitchen chairs red--I'll paint the walls of our bedroom deep dark green or somethin--I'll kiss you to wake up in the morning--" (MC, p. 60).

It is an existence similar to that led by Jacky's parents, that of the working class family in America, though admittedly idealized in a way that sweetens its appeal to both young Jackie and his older retrospecting self. More importantly, it is a life within nature's continuum in which sex leads to rebirth:

> . . . the sweet future of it with Maggie and I getting home late at night tired from a party, and going up the dark steps along rosy wallpaper to the dim velvet darkness of the room upstairs where we take off our coats of winter and put on pajamas and in between in the middle of both garments the nudities of bouncing bed. A bouncing boy with Christmas in his eyes . . . Maggie's baby in the reality--mine, my son in the snowy world--my house of brown--Maggie's river making muds more fragrant in the spring (MC, p. 117).

In the final line of this passage Duluoz compares the woman, Maggie, to the earth and, indirectly, lovemaking to the planting of the seed in spring. The "bouncing bed" makes the "bouncing boy." There is a sense of fulfillment in this process and Jacky imagines the "sweet future of it." But the real future will find Duluoz alone, reiterating the words of a Buddhist wise man: "No more rebirth." By comparing the two futures, the imagined and the real, we begin to understand what Duluoz has lost in his failed love with Maggie.

In losing Maggie, Jacky has also lost Lowell. Loss of love and loss of hometown are, in fact, one and the same event. And for Jack Duluoz,

leaving Lowell re-enacts his leaving of the womb. In Doctor Sax, he describes his feelings when setting out from Lowell on a hike, at the age of eight:

> I judged I was being torn from my mother's womb with each step from home Lowell into the Unknown . . . a serious lostness that has never repaired itself . . . (DS, p. 111).

Only Maggie has the power to redeem him, to spare him from the irreparable lostness by keeping him in Lowell. By forsaking Maggie, he finalizes his departure from his hometown, an act as irreversible for Jacky Duluoz as was birth itself.

No Maggie, no Lowell--the third factor in this sequence is "no love." Just before describing Jacky's first meeting with Maggie at the New Year's Eve dance, Duluoz tells his reader, ". . . the only love can only be the first love . . ." (MC, p. 21). The statement can be read as a Duluozian maxim and prophecy. It can also be read as a kind of judgment passed down on Jack Duluoz. If we believe the statement--and Kerouac intends that we should--then the failure of Jacky's love for Maggie leaves us but one possible conclusion: any further pursuit of love on Duluoz's part is axiomatically doomed to fail as well. Kerouac here sets up the dramatic irony of Duluoz's active love quest in On the Road, The Subterraneans, and Tristessa. Making his reader party to the prophecy of which Duluoz is the unknowing victim, Kerouac sends his hero off on a search for love that is hopeless from the start.

In Doctor Sax and Maggie Cassidy, Kerouac exposes all the factors that will figure in the failure of Deluoz's love quest. Some of those factors have their source in Duluoz's character: his repressed sexuality, his all-consuming personal ambition, his fear of assuming responsibility for another. Another important factor is his betrayal of Maggie for which

Duluoz must atone in later years. Finally, Kerouac implies that Duluoz's love quest is doomed, at least in part, by the historical times into which he is born; that is, the arrival of the war and the bomb acts to preclude the possibility of permanent love. Because Jacky's love with Maggie exists before "the world would turn mad" (MC, p. 18), it holds out the promise of becoming an eternal bond. After the war, lovers no longer believe in the permanence of anything.

Kerouac allegorically addresses the upheaval of people's lives by the bomb and the war in his creation of the World Snake and the Flood in Doctor Sax. One of the many things the Snake symbolizes is the bomb: the Snake's purpose is to destroy the world; "evilists" and "dovists" (DS, p. 232) debate the Snake's significance; most importantly, the Snake threatens to pre-empt Jacky's discovery of love. The Flood symbolizes the war. It destroys homes and uproots families. The concluding line of "Book Five, The Flood," "the damage has been done" (DS, p. 180), speaks not only to Jacky's difficult sexual orientation but also to the state of America following World War II. Though no battles were fought on American soil, nor any bombs dropped on American cities, post-war America was, as Warren Tallman describes it, "a civilization in ruins."[11] Out of the ruins Kerouac sends his hero Duluoz on a noble but futile quest for love.

Chapter Two

FELLAHEEN SAINTS

On the Road succeeds Maggie Cassidy in *The Duluoz Legend* chronology, and offers the first chapter in Jack Duluoz's adult love quest. But between the two time frames in which the novels are set, we have a seven-year interim. Maggie Cassidy, excluding the brief epilogue, ends in the spring of 1940; On the Road begins in 1947. Kerouac's first novel, The Town and the City, covers this gap, but Kerouac did not include it in *The Duluoz Legend* for obvious technical reasons. The omniscient narrative, the borrowed prose style, the impossibility of matching Duluoz with one character only--precluded any attempt to fit The Town and the City into the legend's first person, confessional framework. Therefore, in the last years of his life, Kerouac reworked The Town and the City material into Vanity of Duluoz. Vanity of Duluoz, though most important, in my estimation, to the final third of the legend, does inform the reader of the adventures of Jack Duluoz from his high school football days--1937 (overlapping the Maggie Cassidy time period) to the death of his father in 1946.

What Vanity of Duluoz does not tell us much about is Duluoz's search for love. The narrator explains: "I'm not talking in detail about my women or ex-women in this book, because it's about football and war."[13] Duluoz marries in the novel, but the event is passed over with less description than that given to a single kick-off return. We learn that Duluoz's wife, Johnnie, is a rich girl with the looks of Mamie Van

Doren--and not much more.

When Duluoz (Sal Paradise) begins On the Road with the statement, "I first met Dean not long after my wife and I split up. . .,"[14] we learn about all we need to know concerning his affairs since the loss of Maggie. That is, the conventional love relationship, sanctified by God and society, has not worked out for him. If Kerouac had not written Vanity of Duluoz, the leap from Maggie Cassidy to On the Road would not be inordinately difficult. He has even provided a bridge for the reader in the form of a prophecy made by Maggie. Sensing that she will lose Jacky to the world beyond, Maggie warns him: "'You'll be on your own, you'll see. They won't throw shirts at ye when it starts raining in the mountains'" (MC, p. 146). Fulfilling the prophecy at the beginning of On the Road, Jacky Duluoz finds himself alone, standing on Bear Mountain in the rain, trying unsuccessfully to hitchhike west.

Vanity of Duluoz does offer, however, one insight that helps us to understand the progression of Duluoz's love quest from Maggie Cassidy to On the Road. Jacky forsakes Maggie for the world beyond Lowell. That world is defined by many things--college, the merchant marine, war. But most importantly, the world beyond Lowell is the city. Kerouac identifies this dichotemy in the title of his first novel, The Town and the City. The city, of course, is New York, and in Vanity of Duluoz we see Jacky Duluoz abandoning himself to New York's social, intellectual and artistic scenes. His old friends are forgotten and replaced by young, sophisticated urbanites, artists, drug addicts, and outright criminals. Finally, however, New York overcomes Jacky, as Maggie predicted it would. On the verge of physical collapse, he has no choice but to stop and evaluate his city experience. His conclusions cue his next move:

> I took so much benzedine that year out of those cracked tubes, I finally made myself real sick, developed thrombophlebitis, and by December had to go to Queen's General Hospital . . . . I began to bethink myself in that hospital. I began to understand that the city intellectuals of the world were divorced from the folkbody of the land and were just rootless fools, the permissible fools, who really didn't know how to go on living (JD, p. 272).

Compare the above passage with the second sentence of On the Road:

> I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about, except that it had something to do with the weary split up and my feeling that everything was dead (OR, p. 3).

Included among the "city intellectuals" is his wife, Johnnie. In marrying her he has formally thrown in his lot with those "who really don't know how to go on living." His sickness, his feeling that "everyting was dead," is linked not so much to the split-up as to the marriage itself. To become well again, to search for renewed life, Duluoz has come to understand that he must reject his wife and the New York existence. And he does.

Kerouac plays here on a common motif in classical drama: sickness in the city. Kerouac offers Duluoz as the hero who seeks to reawaken or rediscover the life force buried in the nihilism of the times. To accomplish this task, he will, on the one hand, attempt to find IT, a holistic understanding of mortal existence and, on the other, search for perfect love. Though Duluoz's quests are immediately personal and intended to cure his own ills, the reader senses that the destiny of those "city intellectuals of the world," and in a sense, Everyman, rests on his fortunes.

Because Duluoz does not want to be "divorced from the folkbody of the land," it is not surprising that the next love of his life, like the first, will be part of that folkbody. In On the Road, Duluoz (Sal Paradise)

meets his first fellaheen woman and falls in love with her. What appears to be a chance occurrence, Duluoz's meeting of the Chicano woman, Terry, on the bus, is actually an inevitable occurrence in his destiny. She will be the first of three brown-skinned women to whom Duluoz opens his heart, to the exclusion of all others.

Kerouac took the term "fellaheen" from Spengler's Decline of the West:

> Life as experienced by primitive and fellaheen peoples is just the zoological up and down, a planless happening without goal or cadenced march in time, wherein occurrences are many, but in the last analysis, void of significance.[15]

The fellaheen is differentiated from the primitive by his proximity to civilization. Primitive man is removed from civilization but fellaheen man is exposed to it but remains essentially unaltered. Occasionally Kerouac makes the term fellaheen synonymous with "folkbody," which includes the American working class. Cody, Duluoz's mother, Maggie Cassidy's family--are all at some point described as fellaheen. But generally, Kerouac applies the term to a special part of the folkbody, those with Indian blood. (Kerouac himself claimed some Iroquois ancestry.) Of all the peoples of America, the Indian is most committedly outside "the march of time."

Maggie Cassidy, as the daughter of a railway worker, is actually one step removed from the fellaheen. That is, the railroad acted as the first civilizing and organising force in the American west, cutting the land into divisions, giving birth to the communities along its path that were bound together by the comings and goings of the "iron horse." For many Americans, the railroad was all the civilizing they wanted. They built their houses near the tracks; the men went to work switching or braking

or repairing the rails; the families enjoyed the simple pleasures of life. This railroad family way of life continued basically unchanged for a hundred years while ever new civilizing forces changed the face of America around it. Because Maggie Cassidy comes from this kind of family, Duluoz sees her as offering something lasting. When Duluoz goes from Lowell to New York, from Maggie to Johnnie, he sacrifices the permanent for the impermanent. However, his illness forces him to confront the self-destructiveness of his choice, and his response is to run from the high civilization of New York, to travel west. In searching for a love to replace the sophisticated Johnnie, he runs to the opposite pole. With her Indian roots and her modern day peasant existence, Terry represents the first Americans, the aboriginal peoples that the railroad displaced.

i

TERRY

Prior to his meeting Terry on the Los Angeles-bound bus, Duluoz (Sal Paradise), has all but given up on his life. He has found the west to be, for the most part, a morbid parody of his book-founded expectations. But in Terry he sees a life force that could redeem him. Trying to summon the courage to approach her, he tells himself, "You gotta, you gotta or you'll die!" (OR, p. 81). Duluoz reaches out for something living and real. Unlike the city intellectuals, Terry does not have to invent her hardship and suffering. She comes from an impoverished family of grape-pickers; she has a husband who beats her; and she is physically ill-equipped to endure the blows of either husband

or world. For Duluoz, the symbol of her suffering is her Caesarian scar:

> I saw her poor belly where there was a Caesarian scar; her hips were so narrow she couldn't bear a child without getting gashed open. Her legs were like little sticks. She was only four foot ten (OR, p. 84).

Yet while the city intellectuals succumb to existential angst, Terry carries on the best she can. She offers a lesson in living that Duluoz wishes to relearn.

Ironically, but logically, Terry wishes to escape the very condition that Duluoz pursues. Her hopes for the relationship are transparent. She remarks, "'I thought you was a nice college boy'" (OR, p. 82). Perhaps, she thinks, Duluoz can lead her away from her impoverished existence, if only temporarily. When Duluoz mentions New York, she is all for heading out immediately. Duluoz, however, procrastinates, maintaining that by getting jobs and earning some money they can go to New York in proper style. The result is that not finding work, he quickly uses up his funds. Coincidentally, this occurs "five miles outside Sabinal in the cotton fields and grape vineyards" (OR, p. 94). Duluoz, Terry, and her seven-year-old son, Johnny, whom they have picked up in their travels, take up residence in a tent, counting among their neighbours a family of Okie cottonpickers. Duluoz has realized his subconscious (if not intentional) goal of marrying into the folkbody of the land and living the life of the fellaheen. His attempt to support his "family" by cottonpicking at the rate of $1.50 a day, his ludicrous travels with Terry's brother, Rickey, and his sidekick, Ponzo, in search of the elusive manure trade--are, as Spengler has described, "just the zoological up and down, a planless happening without goal."

For Duluoz, the dollar-a-day tent he occupies with Terry and Johnny romantically eclipses even his dream of railroad shack domesticity with Maggie Cassidy:

> There were a bed, a stove, and a cracked mirror hanging from a pole; it was delightful. I had to stoop to get in and when I did, there was my baby and my baby boy (OR, p. 94).

In earning his daily bread (and nothing beyond that) by cottonpicking, Duluoz achieves a longed-for image of himself: "I was a man of the earth, precisely as I had dreamed I would be in Paterson [Lowell]" (OR, p. 97). Moreover, living in the tent home, picking cotton, being husband to Terry and father to Johnny, are means of therapy for Duluoz. The fellaheen existence rekindles his love for life.

Duluoz's "marriage" to Terry saves him. He has recognized her as a saint, one possessing spiritual healing powers, and she does not let him down. Duluoz states simply, "It was Terry who brought my soul back" (OR, p. 97). Sadly, however, Duluoz does let Terry down; in fact, he misuses her in a way that naivete cannot wholly excuse. Once he regains his soul, Duluoz quickly deserts Terry.

Kerouac's depiction of the Duluoz-Terry relationship makes it clear that at the age of twenty-five, Duluoz still lacks maturity, that self-interest still afflicts his relationship with women. He abandons Maggie out of self-interest, a vision of a big-city grand future for himself, and he abandons Terry the moment he feels "the pull of my own life calling me back" (OR, p. 98) despite the fact that in the cottonfields he thought he had found his "life's work" (OR, p. 96).

Kerouac first leads us to suspect Duluoz's motives in the relationship when Duluoz balks at heading to New York with Terry immediately after their first meeting. Going to New York would run against Duluoz's

interests in two ways. First, it would make him truly responsible for Terry because she would be out of her element. Second, going to New York would preclude the possibility of his living a fellaheen existence. The matter of the money damns him. When he first hitches up with Terry he says he does not have enough money for them to go to New York properly. Yet when he wants out of the relationship, when he is disgustedly "through with [his] chores in the cottonfields" (OR, p. 98), he simply wires his mother (aunt) for fifty dollars, and a few days later he kisses Terry goodbye, walks a few miles down the highway to Sabinal and picks up the money at the telegraph office.

What Duluoz has been doing with Terry, Kerouac insinuates, is playing a part in a movie. A bus trip to Hollywood begins their relationship and the "film." Duluoz compares himself and Terry to Joel McCrae and Veronica Lake, cinematic "down and outers" in "Sullivan's Travels."* Duluoz's "film" is filled with Hollywood cliches and sentimentality, lines such as, "They thought I was a Mexican, of course; and in a way I am" (OR, p. 97) or "manana, a lovely word and one that probably means heaven" (OR, p. 94). The topper is the closing shot of the "film": "We turned at a dozen paces, for love is a duel, and looked at each other for the last time" (OR, p. 101). When Duluoz leaves Terry he heads straight back to Hollywood before returning east. For him, the film is over.

Duluoz's desertion of Terry reveals several obstacles to his quest for love, problems first hinted at in Doctor Sax and Maggie Cassidy.

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*As Tim Hunt has pointed out, "Sullivan's Travels" is about a film director who takes to the road to find out what life is really like, precisely the role undertaken by Duluoz.[16]

His immaturity--manifested in his overt self-interest, his inability to take real responsibility for someone else, his role-playing at Terry's expense--is one problem. Another is his relationship with his mother. In On the Road, of course, Duluoz (Sal Paradise) has an aunt instead of a mother, and Kerouac, no doubt at the request of his publisher, downplays the strength of the relationship somewhat. But there is no mistaking that "Sal's aunt" is really Ange Duluoz and that her hold over her son Jacky remains very strong. When Duluoz returns home from Hollywood following his affair with Terry, the matter of the money pops up again in a casual but revealing remark. Duluoz says:

> My aunt [mother] and I decided to buy a new electric refrigerator with the money I had sent her from California; it was to be the first one in the family (OR, p. 107).

The money made in California has come from Duluoz's job as a barracks guard, a job he holds just prior to his meeting Terry. Duluoz works in the barracks while living with an old friend (and co-worker) from his prep school days, Remi Boncouer: "We'd been doing these things for ten weeks. I was making fifty-five bucks a week and sending my aunt (mother) an average of forty" (OR, p. 71). By my calculations, Duluoz has sent his mother a good four hundred dollars. Yet all Duluoz ever spends on Terry is the twenty dollars pocket money he possesses when they meet, plus their joint cottonpicking earnings. The dollar-a-day tent represents the domesticity Duluoz shares with Terry as compared to the new electric refrigerator that symbolizes the home life of Duluoz and his mother. Duluoz has made clear his preferences and priorities. He has a close and ongoing relationship with his mother that any woman will have difficulty challenging.

A final impediment to Duluoz's quest for love is his association of sex and death that still lingers from his adolescent, Doctor Sax days. Kerouac alludes to this psychological problem of his protagonist in his description of Duluoz's final night with Terry. Terry, at this point, is living at home while Duluoz occupies a barn nearby:

> She'd left me a cape to keep warm; I threw it over my shoulder and skulked through the moonlit vineyard to see what was going on (OR, p. 100).

Duluoz, of course, is playing Doctor Sax, re-enacting his tour of Lowell, in which he, unseen, peeked in on the lives of the townfolk. One of his visions that night was of an older boy returning from a sexual encounter: he'd "been to skew his girl in a dirty barn in the Dracut woods . . ." (DS, p. 199). Duluoz replays this episode too, making love to Terry in the barn. While they are sexually engaged a symbol of death hovers above them. A large tarantula, reminiscent of the Mayan spiders of the Castle, witnesses their act from the apex of the barn roof. Terry has told Duluoz that the spider cannot harm him, but Duluoz cannot ignore its presence. The lovemaking session in the barn concludes Duluoz's sexual relationship with Terry.

ii

MARDOU

On the Road begins with a reference to Duluoz's marriage "split up"; the novel ends with Duluoz's discovery of Laura, "the girl with the pure and innocent eyes that I had always searched for and for so long" (OR, p. 306). However, Kerouac hardly intends Laura to represent the fulfillment of Duluoz's love quest. No more than three or four lines are

devoted to Laura in On the Road, and in the following novels of the legend she is never mentioned again. In the three year time frame of On the Road, 1947-50, Duluoz has only one heterosexual love relationship, or at least only one that he feels merits description. That is the affair with Terry. Not until 1953, six years after that affair, does Buluoz again meet a woman of whom he is compelled to speak. Like Terry, The Subterraneans' Mardou is brown-skinned, of Indian descent, and a victim of the world.

In On the Road, Duluoz embarks on a mission to heal himself, to discover a "yea saying" (OR, p. 10) view of life. At the onset of The Subterraneans, he poses as a healthy man who has come to a land of sickness. An outsider, he finds himself in an hermetic enclave on the west coast,* inhabited by the subterraneans. Though at first the subterraneans appear to him to make up an enlightened society, Duluoz quickly discovers the underlying disease. They are an "incestuous group," the men anemic and guilty of premature ejaculation. Duluoz, by contrast, presents a vigorous if peacock-like image, his "tanned hairy chest" (SUB, p. 8) showing beneath a loud Hawaiian shirt. Kerouac seems to offer him as a life restoring force.

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*The real-life events on which The Subterraneans was based took place in New York, but fearing libel action, Evergreen asked Kerouac to set the novel in another city. As a result, New York becomes San Francisco and Richmond Hill (home of Kerouac's mother) becomes South City. Whether Kerouac would have wished the actual locations to be used in his imagined republication of *The Duluoz Legend* is a moot point. The San Francisco setting does lend consistency to one aspect of *The Duluoz Legend*, all of Duluoz's quests take place in the west. On the other hand, Duluoz's mother I associate with the east (though she does make a temporary move to California in Desolation Angels) and her relocation in South City I find awkward. One relevant point in this matter is that Duluoz describes himself at the beginning of The Subterraneans as having "just come off a ship in New York" (SUB, p. 2). He does not, however, mention how he subsequently arrived in San Francisco.

In reality, however, Duluoz is equally as sick as the subterraneans, the healthy exterior masking the diseased inner being. With this in mind (and due to publisher pressures) Kerouac gives Duluoz the alias, Percepied, in The Subterraneans. As Gerald Nicosia has noted,[17] Percepied in French means "pierced foot," and identifies Duluoz (Percepied) with Oedipus. Careful examination of The Subterraneans uncovers several similarities between Duluoz's subterranean affair and the Oedipus legend. Though Kerouac does not belabour the parallel (nor do I intend to), his Beat reworking of the myth seems to run as follows: Mardou can be read as both Jocasta and Sphinx. She is the queen of the subterraneans, yet she also poses the riddle that none of them can answer and that relates to their degeneration. The riddle focusses on herself: how should this woman be loved? In taking Mardou as his "wife," Duluoz plays Oedipus, trying to solve the riddle of woman (rather than of man), blind to the reality of his own sickness--his mother love, his fear of sex, his excessive pride and ambition.

Like Oedipus in Thebes, Duluoz is an interloper in the land of the subterraneans; he also has kingly aspirations. He immediately recognizes Mardou as the chief prize of the subterraneans and schemes to win her. However, after he has succeeded in his enterprise, he finds that she is a slave queen, kept merely for show, and victimized by the subterraneans. Moreover, he discovers that she is a victim of the world. Of Black and Indian parentage, Mardou is an outcast of society, and she is alone, her mother dead and her Cherokee father's whereabouts unknown. Her hipness comes only by circumstance, her falling in with the subterraneans; her true self is fellaheen. When she reveals to Duluoz the episode of her nervous breakdown during which she ran

naked into the city streets, he is convinced that she is a saint, "a holy Negro Joan of Arc" (SUB, p. 31). He describes her rescue by an old Italian woman who gives her a blanket for cover: "Out of the naked rain to a robe, to innocence shrouding in the decoration of God and religious sweetness" (SUB, p. 27).

Mardou's tale of suffering both awes Duluoz and creates in him a desire to care for her. Kerouac leaves no doubt, however, that Duluoz is still incapable of assuming responsibility for another person. One of his first impulses is to take her to Mexico, return the fellaheen to her natural habitat:

> . . . I take a few swigs of stale beer and consider a dobe hut say outside Texcoco at five dollars a month and we go to market in the early morning she in her sweet brown feet on sandals paddling wifelike Ruthlike to follow me, we come, buy oranges, load up on bread even wine, local wine, we go home and cook it up cleanly on our little cooker, we sit together over coffee writing down our dreams, analyzing them, we make love on our little bed (SUB, p. 40).

The scenario is hopelessly romantic and hardly new; the imaged hut life replays Duluoz's tent domesticity with Terry. For her part, Mardou likes the idea of a change of locale, though she attaches no romantic or philosophic notions to it. She merely wants to get away from the subterranean crowd. But as he did with the plan of taking Terry to New York, Duluoz procrastinates, bringing up financial constraints. It is not to his advantage to take Mardou to Mexico, and he knows this, at least subconsciously.

Three factors influence Duluoz's decision to stay in the domain of the subterraneans. First, he enjoys the high profile and notoriety of his affair with Mardou, which he feels puts him one up on the subterraneans:

> . . . I was cutting quite a figure with her on the Beach anyway (and in a sense too now cutting the subterraneans who were becoming progressively deeper colder in their looks towards me in Dante's and on the street from natural reasons that I had taken over their playdoll and one of their really if not the most brilliant gals in their orbit)--(SUB, p. 46).

Second, he would be king of the subterraneans, which involves their recognition of him as the literary giant among them. Exile in Mexico will not facilitate his ascendancy to the throne. He does not write in Mardou's flat on Heavenly Lane; he would not write in the Mexican dream hut. For his "writing work" and his "well being" (SUB, p. 47), Duluoz goes home to his mother in South City. His mother's hold over him is the third and most important factor in his not taking Mardou to Mexico, and for that matter, in his inability to form a lasting relationship with Mardou or any other woman. All three factors make Kerouac's hero readily identifiable with Oedipus. The first two speak of his great ambition and pride, the third of his unhealthy mother-love.

Duluoz's feeling of "well being" and his ability to write in his mother's home have their source in Duluoz's childhood Doctor Sax days. In Book Four of Doctor Sax, "The Night the Man with the Watermelon died," Kerouac describes Jacky's first direct confrontation with death. Walking across the Moody St. Bridge, Jacky and his mother are approached by a man carrying a watermelon. The man suddenly collapses from a heart attack and dies. That night Jacky sleeps in his mother's bed:

> I lay huddled against the great warm back of my mother . . . nothing could harm me now . . . this whole night could only take me if it took me with her and she wasn't afraid of any shade (DS, p. 147).

A flu epidemic in which he and his mother are semi-quarantined together allows the sleeping arrangement to continue:

> I lay . . . blissfully sleeping with one leg thrown over my mother in the nighttime--so secure did I become that death vanished into fantasies of life, . . . (DS, p. 147).

The "fantasies of life" were of Sax and Snake; now the fantasies are Duluoz's fiction, the security and tranquility of his mother's home allowing his creative juices to flow. In the presence of Mardou, on the other hand, he has periods of wild paranoia:

> . . . this being the last deepest final doubt I wanted about Mardou that she was really a thief of some sort and therefore out to steal my heart, my white man's heart, a Negress in the world sneaking the holy white men for sacrificial rituals later when they'll be roasted and roiled . . . (SUB, p. 49).

This fearful fantasy is similar to his imagining that Terry was a prostitute out to rob him, but the racial undertones have their roots, once again, in his childhood. In Doctor Sax, Duluoz recalls having been terrified by the film "Trader Horn":

> . . . they came running over the round hillside in a fiendish horde all waving their ant spears and screeching in the wild sun of Africa, horrible black fuzzie wuzzies of the bush, let alone desert, they wore black dirty bones across their breasts, their hair stuck straight out like black snake halos and they wielded spears and hung people upside down in crosses in fires-- (DS, pp. 149-50).

Duluoz concludes the reminiscence, "I was a scared kid" (DS, p. 150). Apparently he is also a scared adult. Kerouac makes an ironic comment here: Duluoz's idealization of the fellaheen masks an irrational fear of the Black race.

In On the Road Duluoz shares a shabby tent with Terry, then goes "home" to the cozy domicile of his mother and buys her a new refrigerator with the money he has made as a barracks guard. In The Subterraneans the same double standard for his mother and lover exists. Duluoz describes the attention he lavishes on his mother:

> . . . when she comes home from work at night, tired, from the store, mind you, I feel very good making her supper having the supper and a martini ready when she walks in so by 8 o'clock the dishes are all cleared away, see, and she has more time to look at her television--which I worked on the railroad six months to buy her (SUB, p. 47).

Mardou, in contrast, receives pitifully little from Duluoz. He criticizes her for being a sloppy housekeeper, and frankly admits "I haven't given Mardou a dime" (SUB, p. 41). The discrepancy in his treatment of his mother and Mardou reflects an existential decision to which he has come: he will pad his secure nest at the cost of forming an adult love relationship. He has a vision of his mother offering lifelong protection and he accepts it:

> " . . . poor little Leo [Jacky] you suffer, men suffer so, you're all alone in the world I'll take care of you, I would very much like to take care of you all your days my angel" (SUB, p. 104).

And yet Duluoz understands this offer of security to have another edge to it. In a moment of insight he speaks of his family's certain objections to his marrying Mardou, "especially my really but sweetly but nevertheless really tyrannical mother's sway over me--" (SUB, p. 47). Duluoz recognizes his enslavement but cannot revolt.

Rationalizing the situation, Duluoz decides that he can have the best of both worlds: a secure home life with his mother that allows him to relax and write; sex and the city social life with Mardou. This solution, of course, satisfies neither Mardou nor mother, nor least of all himself. Of all the novels in *The Duluoz Legend*, The Subterraneans is most packed with dramatic irony, the tragi-comic variety that Kerouac obviously relished. Caught in a hopeless and decidedly unhealthy triangle, Duluoz voices a remarkable personal belief in the teachings of Wilhelm Reich:

> . . . the clarity here [of Reich's, The Function of Orgasm] tho was scientific, Germanic, beautiful, true--something I'd always known and connected to my 1948 sudden notion that the only thing that really mattered was love . . . here magnified and at the same time microcosmed and pointed into and maled into: orgasm, the reflexes of orgasm--you can't be healthy without normal sex love and orgasm-- (SUB, pp. 46-47).

Duluoz hardly stands as the Reichian model of the sexually fulfilled person: he, whose youthful libido took the monstrous shape of the World Snake, and who even yet speaks of that "worm and snake called sex" (SUB, p. 92); whom Kerouac has given the alias, Percepied; who still finds sex ugly and horrifying. Waking up after a night of lovemaking with Mardou, Duluoz feels "revulsion" at the sight of "the little white wooly particles of the pillow stuffing in her black almost wiry hair" (SUB, p. 39). He then thinks to himself, "'I gotta go home, straighten out'"* (SUB, p. 39).

Duluoz's relationship with Mardou ends when she sleeps with another man, the young poet, Yuri. Like Oedipus, Duluoz has been forewarned of his fate, but seems powerless to alter it. He dreams of Mardou's infidelity, anguishes, describes the dream to his friends, Yuri included, yet he cannot grasp the course of action needed to supplant the nightmare future with one of his own making. He cannot answer the riddle of the sphinx: how should this woman be loved. Nor is his failure for lack of help from the sphinx herself. Mardou does her best to instruct him in male-female relationships. In the insights she offers, Kerouac anticipates the modern feminist position:

> . . . they [men] rush off and have big wars and consider women as prizes instead of human beings, well man I may be in the middle of all this shit, but I certainly don't want any part of it" (SUB, p. 16).

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*The phrase "straighten out" also plays on Mardou's "wiry hair." Kerouac intimates that Duluoz (perhaps reminded of the "fuzzie wuzzies" of the film, "Trader Horn") has had too much of the fellaheen.

Duluoz has listened to Mardou, he reiterates her demand for independence several times, but he is incapable of rethinking his male role, the role that made him gloat over relieving the subterraneans of "one of the most beautiful gals in their orbit."

Duluoz feels that Mardou has "pierced [him] with an adultery of a kind" (SUB, p. 110), leaving him "forsaken and shamed" (SUB, p. 109). The irony of this, which Duluoz never acknowledges, is that Mardou has been inconstant once, while Duluoz has been continually unfaithful. If the word "adultery" suggests that Mardou has been Duluoz's wife, then he has been a bigamist, keeping house with both Mardou and his mother. For Kerouac, however, the matter of betrayal is secondary to the reality of love lost. In *The Duluoz Legend* Kerouac identifies several spots that are heaven on earth, and Mardou's flat on "Heavenly Lane" (with its entranceway gates) is one of the more obvious. Duluoz's frequent flights from Heavenly Lane to the prosaic South City are an ongoing tragic joke in the novel. Duluoz's quest for love is in a great sense a search for heaven on earth, but when heaven is offered Duluoz, too often he runs away. Finally, with the termination of his affair with Mardou, the gates of Heavenly Land are closed to him.

iii

TRISTESSA

In The Subterraneans, Duluoz champions the salutary nature of sex: "you can't be healthy without normal sex love and orgasm." In the first half of Tristessa, the novel that describes Duluoz's final foray into love's domain, he announces, "I have sworn off lust with women, sworn off lust for lust's sake."[18] The complete contrast of these two

views speaks of the serious psychological wound that Duluoz's failed relationship with Mardou has left in him. Certain Buddhist teachings on the merits of celibacy have provided him with a rationale for his new stance, but the sexual factor in his "lacerated love" with Mardou is the real cause of his sexual abstinence: his revulsion at looking at her "the morning after"; his admission, "I thought I saw some kind of black thing I've never seen before, hanging like it SCARED me!" (SUB, p. 45); his sense that the "worm and snake called sex" led to Mardou's betrayal of him, and her extinguishing of her light in Heavenly Lane. In Tristessa, Duluoz goes on to explain that he has "sworn off sexuality and the inhibiting impulse [because] I want to enter the holy Stream and be safe on the way to the other shore" (TRIS, p. 22). The "ding dong bells" that glorified the unity of the sexual and the spiritual in Doctor Sax no longer ring for Jack Duluoz.

Tristessa's unimpeachable claim to sainthood facilitates Duluoz's self-imposed celibacy. As already noted, his first two fellaheen loves have saint-like qualities as well. Children of the dispossessed, the American Indian, Terry and Mardou have born their suffering patiently and courageously without losing their compassion and capacity to love. Like Catherine Tekakwitha, Leonard Cohen's Indian saint, they are "beautiful losers." Moreover, both have participated in miracles. Terry has "brought [Duluoz's] soul back" (OR, p. 97) and Mardou has experienced a kind of personal resurrection during her Easter Sunday naked flight into the San Francisco streets. But Duluoz makes it clear that as candidates for sainthood, Mardou and Terry cannot compete with Tristessa. He calls Terry an angel; Mardou, a "holy Negro Joan of Arc"; but of Tristessa he states conclusively: "I'd run across a saint in

Modern Mexico . . . " (TRIS, p. 58). We can assume that both Terry and Mardou have Catholic roots--Terry because of her ethnicity; Mardou, because we are told she was raised by nuns in an orphanage. But neither woman makes much mention of religion. Tristessa, on the other hand, is fiercely religious. Between God and the morphine to which she is addicted, there is room for little else. Her small living quarters are occupied by a huge icon of the Virgin Mary and a little white dove in whose body Duluoz believes the spirit of the Lord resides. When life deals Tristessa an injustice, she always finds consolation in the promise of heaven. Taken advantage of by friends in a morphine deal, she explains:

> ---"Eees when, cuando, my friend does not pay me back, don I don't care. Because" pointing up with a straight expression into my eyes, finger aloft, "my lord pay me MORE M-O-R-E" (TRIS, p. 21).

Recognizing that Tristessa seeks heaven as fervently as he does, Duluoz feels that he has found someone he can love: "I love her. I fall in love with her" (TRIS, p. 22). But he no longer presumes sex to be a necessary part of love. He even suggests that Tristessa's spirituality has rendered her incorporeal: "I notice she has no body at all . . . she never eats . . . her body (I think) must be beautiful--" (TRIS, p. 91). What Duluoz overlooks is that by denying the physical half of her, regardless of its insubstantiality, he can never hold on to the love she seems to offer nor realize the heaven in which she seems to reside. Duluoz is, in fact, replaying his unconsummated and unfulfilling love affair with Maggie Cassidy.

Kerouac divides Tristessa into two parts which are chronologically separated by a year's time. The twelve month interim, described in part in The Dharma Bums and Desolation Angels, is a time of reflection

for Duluoz. In particular, his isolation as a fire lookout on a northern Washington mountain, like his hospital stay prior to his On the Road experience, has forced him to re-evaluate some of his attitudes. With the painful Mardou affair now more distant, he once again acknowledges his need for physical love. At the beginning of part two of Tristessa, we find Duluoz again in Mexico City, but now regretfully remarking, ". . . last summer . . . I had some silly or celibaceous notion that I must not touch a woman--" (TRIS, p. 65).

Sadly, Duluoz has lost his opportunity with Tristessa, if he ever had one. In his year-long absence her health has declined alarmingly due to her mixing of bartituates and morphine. She is totally incapable of receiving sexual attentions from anyone. Finding her in this condition, Duluoz chastises himself: "My touch might have saved her--/Now too late--" (TRIS, p. 65). The edge of the "now too late" phrase is that it applies more to Duluoz than to Tristessa. In her ravaged state Tristessa has strengthened the bonds of her mutual dependency with Old Bull Gaines, the sixty-year-old morphine addict. He even wants to marry her in order to gain Mexican citizenship. Duluoz has been supplanted by a man who doesn't "rise to the issue except every twenty years or so--" (TRIS, p. 96).

Despite the fact that Tristessa and Duluoz have never made love, nor come to any agreement as to the nature of their relationship, we sense that Duluoz has been cuckolded, and that the loss of Tristessa, in his eyes at least, absurdly recalls the loss of Mardou. Duluoz despairs: "Oedipus Rex, I'll tear out my eyes in the morning . . . I'm always the King sucker who was made out to be the positional son in

woman man relationships . . . " (TRIS, p. 93). This confession also speaks of his relationship with his mother, to whom he will once again return.

Duluoz's feeling that he could have "saved" Tristessa lies at the heart of his failure to find love. Consistently he has imagined his love quest as a rescue mission in the high romantic tradition. He would take Terry to New York or Mardou to Mexico or protect Tristessa from the horrors of her life. Duluoz is unable to simply love and be loved by a woman, a failing that Mardou attributes to all of his sex: "'Men are so crazy, they want the essence, the woman is the essence, there it is right in their hands, but they rush off erecting big abstract constructions'" (SUB, p. 16). Duluoz's construction is the fantasy of the damsel in distress that he repeatedly images, and which holds little interest for the leading ladies. Tristessa does not want to be saved, except by God. She merely wants a steady supply of morphine. Old Bull Gaines can help her in this respect; Duluoz can not. Logically, therefore, she views the sixty-year-old as a better marriage prospect. Similarly, Mardou, despite her mental instability, does not seek to be rescued from her life. From the beginning of her affair with Duluoz [Percepied] she asserts a desire for independence. Only Terry shows any interest in being rescued by Duluoz, and her perspective is purely practical. She thinks that a "college boy" should be able to offer her something better than her given lot in life.

Compounding the shortcomings of Duluoz's romantic outlook is his underlying fear of the women he pursues. If they are angels, as he often tells us, Duluoz seems uncertain whether they are good or evil. He fears that Terry may be a prostitute setting him up to the robbed,

Mardou, a cannibal intent on devouring him, and Tristessa, "an evil Indian Joe of Huckleberry Finn plotting [his] demise--" (TRIS, p. 18). There is something problematical in the quest of a knight who suspects the intentions of the damsel in distress.

Kerouac may well be telling his reader that Duluoz's quest for love has failed by its very definition; that is, love is not a quest at all. Love can not be sought or won; it merely happens. And when it does happen, love should be allowed to grow in an atmosphere characterized by mutual trust and by "joy and personal reverence." Though it is too little, too late, Duluoz does show some growth towards this understanding in the course of his relationships with the three fellaheen women. Kerouac has his hero confess in The Subterraneans:

> And in those days her [Mardou's] love meaning no more to me than that I had a nice convenient dog chasing after me (much like in my real secretive Mexican vision of her following me down dark dobe streets of slums of Mexico not walking with me but following . . . (SUB, p. 53).

This passage speaks of Duluoz's growing awareness that love is an equal partnership. Even greater self-realization in this regard comes in Tristessa. His one-time fantasy of the brown-skinned woman following him now becomes reality, but with the roles reversed:

> All I can do is stumble behind her [Tristessa], sometimes I lead the way but I'm not much the figure of the man, THE MAN WHO LEADS THE WAY--- (TRIS, p. 82).

Duluoz acknowledges his incapacity to rescue the woman in distress, to lead her out of her existential dilemma, and in fact, recognizes the dependent, following role he has been playing in all his love relationships. Recall that Terry picked most of the cotton that allowed them to survive from day to day. Mardou provided the flat on Heavenly Lane.

Finally, Duluoz articulates what he has perhaps subconsciously known all along, that his search for love has no real hope of fulfillment. He has searched for lasting love where lasting love could never be found. Modern Man can no more permanently step out of time than fellaheen can step into it, and their respective worlds can never unite. Duluoz says of Tristessa:

> TROUBLE IS, WHAT would I do with her once I won her? it's like winning an angel in hell and you are then entitled to go down with her where it's worse or maybe there'll be light, some, down there, maybe it's me's crazy-- (TRIS, p. 66).

Interestingly, the only one of Duluoz's three fellaheen saints to offer him a true chance of an extended love relationship is Mardou, and this is because she has one foot in each world. Paradoxically, however, it is her striving to become a modern woman that Duluoz cannot accept. He would take her to Mexico for deprogramming. The reader must ask himself whether the protagonist truly wants to find love.

The fact that Duluoz's love quest must fail stems from his unfulfilled love with Maggie and precedes his human and masculine weaknesses in undermining his three affairs. Maggie is Duluoz's Margarete, whom he has dreadfully wronged, and like Faust, Duluoz does lifelong penance for his betrayal of her love. His quest for love, despite its intensity and notwithstanding his increased self-awareness, is only a masquerade, a going through the motions. The self-imposed judgment made in Maggie Cassidy must stand: ". . . the only love can only be the first love" (MC, p. 21). Duluoz seeks out women from another world, a world equivalent to the spirit world in which Faust finds Helen of Troy. With these saints, these "angels in hell," lasting love can never be attained. With Maggie, Duluoz can dream of having a "bouncing boy," a pronouncement of ongoing life and love, but Terry's Caesarian scar and frail body

suggest that she could never have a child with him, and Duluoz acknowledges that "Tristessa has never had a child and probably never will because of her morphine sickness" (TRIS, p. 22). Duluoz describes Maggie's body in words connoting its procreative wonders: Maggie's river making muds more fragrant in the spring" (MC, p. 117). Tristessa, in contrast, is a "bundle of death and beauty"* (TRIS, p. 52). When Duluoz tells us that "holy Tristessa will not be the cause of further rebirth and will go straight to her God . . ." (TRIS, p. 23), he speaks for himself as well. Only with Maggie was he meant to engage in life's cycle and only with her could he have found fulfillment in love.

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*This description of Tristessa recalls the death of Jacky's dog, Beauty, in Dr. Sax. Duluoz despairs, "Beauty dies the night I discover sex, they wonder why I'm mad" (DS, p. 121). It follows that Duluoz would be reluctant to have sex with Tristessa. His initial vow of sexual abstinence is underpinned by his subconscious belief that sex leads to the death of beauty and to madness.

Chapter Three

THE QUEST FOR LOVE IS OVER

i

"A big sad lonely man"

Duluoz's affair with Tristessa, never consummated,* concludes his love quest. The above epigraph, Mardou's description of Duluoz upon "suddenly seeing [him] in the chair" (SUB, p. 6), previews his condition in the final third of the legend. The image of Duluoz, slumped in a chair, brooding or bitching, appears again and again. Kerouac does allow Duluoz to rise from that chair occasionally to venture out onto the field of action, but Duluoz's adventures are mere parodies of his former experiences. The most striking and pathetic replaying of old scenarios is his brief affair in Big Sur, the first novel of Duluoz's final third.

Big Sur portrays Duluoz in his post-success days. His writings have brought him notoriety if not literary acclaim, and the dubious title, "King of the Beatniks."[19] In his attempt to flee juvenile fans, a baiting public, story-hungry reporters and, most of all, his own alcoholism, he accepts a friend's offer to leave the east for a quiet retreat in a cabin at Big Sur. The trip west, with its promise of renewed life for Duluoz,

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*In actuality, Kerouac did have sex with the woman after whom Tristessa was modeled. However, to include that information would have run counter to Kerouac's intended characterization of a "saint in Modern Mexico." Moreover, Duluoz's unconsummated love with Tristessa recalls his unconsummated love with Maggie and brings Duluoz full circle.

replays his On the Road journey, and his affair with Billie recalls aspects of his past relationship with all three fellaheen saints.

Unable to long enjoy the isolation of the Big Sur cabin, Duluoz heads for San Francisco, where his old friend, Cody (Dean Moriarity of On the Road), introduces him to Billie. They are immediately attracted to one another and spend their first night together, as Duluoz spent many nights with Mardou, making love, telling their stories, and planning a trip to Mexico. The fact that Billie has a four-year-old son, for whom she is looking for a father, recalls Duluoz's unsuccessful but happy attempt at playing the paternal role for Terry's son, Johnny. But after the first night, Duluoz's relationship with Billie plunges into an ugly mockery of the three episodes in Duluoz's love quest.

Duluoz's uninterrupted drunkenness leaves him almost as incapable of lovemaking as Tristessa's morphine addiction did her, but unlike Tristessa, Duluoz still goes through the motions. He describes his nights with Billie:

> And at night Billie comes home and we pitch into love again like monsters who don't know what else to do and by now I'm too blurry to know what's going on anyway . . . (BS, p. 158).

Further unsettling Duluoz is the presence of Billie's son, Elliot, during their lovemaking. Terry's boy, Johnny, had occasionally witnessed his mother's lovemaking with Duluoz, but there is a qualitative difference of which Duluoz must be aware. The sharing of close quarters is a fact of fellaheen life, and frequency of experience renders the viewing of sexual intimacies less threatening to the child. But the actions of his mother horrify Elliot, and her response--"'what other way will he ever learn?'" (BS, p. 157)--hardly convinces Duluoz. He tries to protest when "at one point the child is drooling long slavers of spit

from his lips, watching . . ." (BS, p. 157). Duluoz may well be reminded of the mentally deficient boy of his Doctor Sax days, Zaza, who publicly masturbated and who "along the dump [had] drooled since childhood . . ." (DS, p. 69). In contrast to Zaza, however, Elliot is a very sophisticated child, quite cognizant of the power struggle in which he finds himself involved. In true four-year-old form, Elliot has taken over the Oedipus role at which Duluoz previously played.

In his affair with Billie, Duluoz slips unannounced into the role of the king whose energies are spent: ". . . during the following week I kept sitting in that same chair by the goldfish bowl, drinking bottle after bottle of port like an automaton" (BS, p. 157). To make matters worse, his action leads to death and destruction, albeit on the most mundane level imaginable. The chair collapses beneath him from his constant sitting (recall the recurring refrain in On the Road, "everything was collapsing"*) and the goldfish die from the billows of smoke he has blown in their water. Kerouac here plays with the same intentional bathos found in the Doctor Sax segment describing the death of Jacky's dog, Beauty, wherein Duluoz remarks, "Beauty dies the night I discover sex, they wonder why I'm mad" (DS, p. 121). Kerouac suggests that the least noteworthy event becomes the most sinister to the madman, and therefore Duluoz regards the death of the goldfish and the collapsing of the chair as malignly portentous events--as, in fact, they are. For Duluoz's physical and mental breakdown is imminent.

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*In Naked Angels, John Tytell comments: "Big Sur is Kourac's novel of breakdown, disintegration, the actual fulfillment of the 'everything is collapsing' refrain of On the Road."[20]

Trying to run from the inevitable, Duluoz suggests that he, Billie, and Elliot, along with another couple (Dave and Romana) go spend a week in the Big Sur cabin; and for a change, one of Duluoz's plans is put into effect. Instead of releasing tensions, however, the Big Sur setting, with its imposing trees, cliffs, and waters, drives Duluoz further into his madness, and the cloistering of Duluoz, Billie, and Elliot in the cabin brings to a head the power struggle of son and lover. That Duluoz is an unwilling and inadequate contestant in the struggle does not spare him the penalties of defeat.

Duluoz's inability to perform the common tasks that go with "roughing it" in the woods makes him increasingly aware of his physical incapacitation. He is afraid to chop wood for fear of hurting himself, unable to light the fire for the trembling of his hands, unable, in fact, to contribute in any way to the five-person commune:

> I go in and sheepishly sit at the table like the useless pioneer that doesn't do anything to help the men or please the women, the idiot in the wagon train who nevertheless has to be fed-- (BS, p. 198).

Sexually he is equally at a loss: "She [Billie] comes to offer herself to me softly and gently but I just stare at my quivering wrists--" (BS, p. 188). When Duluoz does attempt making love to Billie, Elliot is there, "saying in his pitiful voice, 'Don't do it, Billie'" (BS, p. 188). Elliot even tries to intervene: ". . . the child is up on the bed with us tugting at her shoulder just like a grown-up jealous lover trying to pull a woman off another man . . ." (BS, p. 190). In desperation, Billie, who is unstable herself, beats her child, then screams that she'll kill both herself and Elliot. Kerouac makes the Big Sur drama a grotesque inversion of Duluoz's pastoral "movie" with Terry and Johnny. Duluoz

is nearly undone: ". . . I am about to throw in the towel and gasp up my last, it's horrible" (BS, 188).

The final act in the physical and mental prostration of Duluoz is the sex act. The lover who once sang the praises of the life-giving orgasm now experiences sex and death as one force. Billie becomes in his mind a life-draining succubus:

> But there's an awful paranoiac element sometimes in orgasm that suddenly releases not sweet genteel sympathy but some token venom that splits up the body--I feel ghastly hatred of myself and everything, the empty feeling far from being the usual relief is now as tho I've been robbed of my spinal power right down the middle on purpose by a great witching force--(BS, p. 191).

By using the word, "venom," Kerouac reminds us of the World Snake, the physical manifestation of sex and death. All the terror that Jacky once felt upon confronting the World Snake now floods the senses of the older Duluoz. Everything about him becomes evil. The above passage continues:

> I feel evil forces gathering all around me, from her, the kid, the walls of the cabin, the trees even the sudden thought of Dave Wain and Romana is evil, they're all coming now-- (BS, p. 191).

Duluoz passes through a sleepless night of horrors, culminating the following day in Billie's digging of a garbage pit like a "neat tiny coffin shaped grave . . . exactly the size for putting a dead Elliot in . . ." (BS, p. 213). For Dulouz this is the final proof that sex equals death.

If Doctor Sax describes the rites of passage involved in Duluoz's entering the arena of love, Big Sur describes the rites of his exit and, as in his confrontation with the World Snake, only a miracle can save Duluoz from his personal apocalypse. A giant bird flew down from the heavens to save young Jacky; sleep comes from the heavens to wash

away the older Duluoz's madness. Following the incident of the garbage pit, Duluoz takes up a familiar position in a canvas chair on the cabin porch and falls asleep:

> . . . suddenly hopelessly and completely finished I sit there in the hot sun and close my eyes: and there's the golden swarming peace of Heaven in my eyelids-- It comes with a sure hand a soft blessing as big as it is beneficent, i.e., endless--I've fallen asleep (BS, p. 215).

The sleep lasts for only one minute, but Duluoz awakens to discover that "--Everything has washed away--I'm perfectly normal again--" (BS, p. 215).

The miraculous resolution of Duluoz's inner conflict is preceded, however, by an important understanding reached by him. The nightmarish scenes with Billie, too horrifying even for Duluoz to romanticize, have demythicized his quest for love, which actually concluded with the unsuccessful courtship of Tristessa. He admits to himself for the first time that he does not love the woman with whom he has temporarily locked destinies. He never questioned the fullness of his love for Terry, Mardou, or Tristessa, or least of all, Maggie (though the reader certainly does). But the events at Big Sur, components of a spiritual climacteric for Dulouz, drive him to terminate his self-deception: " . . . I've begun to realize in my soberness that this thing has come too far, that I don't love Billie . . ." (BS, p. 181). Given the autumnal setting in which this statement is made, Kerouc intimates that Duluoz will never love again. Duluoz goes on to describe the Big Sur wind as lifting the leaves from the trees and "hurrying them as it were to death--" (BS, p. 182). The summer of Duluoz's life, the loving season, has passed. It comes as no surprise that at the end of Big Sur, Duluoz tells us that he will return to the home of his mother.

ii

There is much evidence in Big Sur that Kerouac meant that novel to be the final segment of *The Duluoz Legend* (the next chapter of this study will discuss the evidence more fully). But consciously or not, with the publication of Vanity of Duluoz, Kerouac added an epilogue. The salad days of Duluoz described in the novel are of less interest to the reader than the perspective of the forty-five-year-old narrator. The older Duluoz's reminiscences are laced with a bitter humour that speaks volumes about his final third condition:

> . . . now that I'm forty-five years old and in a continual rage . . . I know why the salmon jump up that river of bitter time and pain . . . (VD, p. 186).

And though the narrator tells us that he is "not talking in detail about [his] women or ex-women in this book . . . " (VD, p. 198), he does inadvertently let us taste the less-than-sweet fruits of his love quest.

In Vanity of Duluoz, the narrator addresses himself to "wifey."

> All right, wifey, maybe I'm a big pain in the you-know-what but after I've given you a recitation of the troubles I've had to go through to make good in America between 1935 and more or less now, 1967 . . . (VD, p. 7).

As Allen Ginsberg has pointed out,* Kerouac borrowed this device from Melville's "Bridegroom Dick." The question is, what does Kerouac want his reader to make of this conceit? How does Duluoz really look upon wifey? In the preceding novel of the legend, Big Sur, Duluoz gives us a description of a malevolent female who holds absolute control over her

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*Ginsberg comments: "The straightforward style of wife-talk is borrowed, I believe, from Melville's dainty tome of poems, John Marr and Other Sailors, where the cranky nostalgic sea captain talks to his wife about the past in the South Seas . . . ."[21]

husband: " . . . wifey, the boss of America, wearing dark glasses and sneering . . ." (BS, p. 44). But Duluoz's spouse in Vanity of Duluoz is not sneering, merely faceless: the third such woman in the legend with whom Duluoz has made a legal bond.

The presence of wifey notwithstanding, the narrator in Vanity of Duluoz is alone. Duluoz appears to us as the "big sad lonely man" in the chair, perhaps as in Big Sur, drinking bottle after bottle of port. Wifey is no more than a sounding board for his reconstructing of the past and his present-day beefs. And though we can never imagine him calling Terry, Mardou, or Tristessa, "wifey," we can imagine their shades taking turns in the chair across from him, listening to his night-long tale, long after "wifey" has gone to bed. Most easily we can picture Maggie, playing her part in the "sweet future" that never was, nodding in agreement, occasionally taking him up on a point, while mending clothes or writing a letter to the grown and departed "bouncing boy." In Desolation Angels, the events of which take place some ten years* before the date of narration of Vanity of Duluoz, 1967, Duluoz ponders the life he might have had with Maggie:

> I wake up in the middle of the night and remember Maggie Cassidy and how I might have married her and been old Finnigan to her Irish lass Plurabelle, how I might have got a cottage, a little ramshackle Irish rose cottage among the reeds and old trees on the banks of the Concord and woulda worked as a grim bejacketed gloved and bebaseballhatted brakeman in the cold New England night . . . . A woman for old Duluoz?[22]

If, in fact, it were Maggie instead of "wifey," Duluoz might not have come to the conclusion that "Birth is the direct cause of all pain and death . . ." (VD, p. 276). That the final years of his life do confirm

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*The major portion of Desolation Angels takes place in 1956-57.

for him that conclusion is the most tragic outcome of his failed search for love.

In Ecclesiastes, from which Kerouac takes the theme of vanity, the Preacher advises, "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy vanity . . ." (Eccl. ix.9). There has been an amount of joy and certainly longevity in Bridegroom Dick's marriage; and after ending his tale, Bridegroom Dick offers some sweet words to his wife: "Dick drinks from your eyes and he finds no lack!"[23] Kerouac pointedly leaves off such loving sentiment in Duluoz's signing off. Duluoz's last words to the listener of his story are, "Forget it, wifey. Go go bed" (VD, p. 280). Whoever wifey is, she no more fulfills Duluoz's love quest than did Johnnie or Laura. Only Maggie could do that:

> How I would have laid her [Maggie] across the bed at night all mine and laborious sought her rose, her mine of a thing, that emerald dark and hero thing I want-- (DA, p. 29).

Only with Maggie could he have been a hero in love. Without her he faces the grim penalty of his failure to find enduring love: "--but it might have been better than what it may be, lonesome unkissed Duluoz lips surling in a tomb" (DA, p. 30).

PART TWO

THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

Chapter Four

DULUOZ AND FAUST

Perhaps responding to Spengler's statement that Western man is Faustian man, Kerouac draws on the Faust legend to depict Duluoz's second great quest--the one for knowledge. In Doctor Sax, Kerouac sets the foundation of the Duluoz-Faust parallel: The Faustian characterization of Duluoz; the introduction of the Mephistophelean figure, Doctor Sax; the quest for a knowledge unknown to the common citizens of Jacky's hometown. Then, in two of the following novels of *The Duluoz Legend*, On the Road and The Dharma Bums, Kerouac describes Duluoz's active adult quest for knowledge. Duluoz seeks out and follows a temptor/mentor to replace the Doctor Sax of his adolescence, a modern day Mephistopheles to lead him to a knowledge of life that is intuitive and absolute. In On the Road, Cody (Dean Moriarity) leads Duluoz (Sal Paradise) in the pursuit of IT; in The Dharma Bums, Japhy Ryder uses the discipline of mountain climbing to reveal to Duluoz (Ray Smith) that the suppression of suffering can be achieved. Finally, in Big Sur, Kerouac presents the fall of Duluoz into the hell of an alcohol-induced madness, a fall that is the final result of his quest.

By designating Doctor Sax as part three of Faust, Kerouac suggests a sequel to Goethe's Faust, Parts I & II. He confirms this in his essay, "Origins of the Beat Generation," saying, "my hero was Goethe and I believed in art and hoped someday to write the third part of Faust

which I have done in Doctor Sax."[24] Kerouac probably became enamoured of Goethe's art through Mark Van Doren or one of his colleagues at Columbia University. Van Doren wrote an introduction to Alice Raphael's 1930 translation of Faust Part I, and C.U.'s Goethe Centennial in 1949 was a big event. But though Goethe's two dramatic works may have inspired the writing of Doctor Sax, that novel and *The Duluoz Legend* are equally informed by Marlowe's Dr. Faustus. Part III should be read version III. Doctor Sax does not continue Goethe's works, but rather draws on them and on Marlowe's play to give us a reworked and updated, American Faust.

Kerouac's twist in recreating the legendary overreacher is to offer up a boy Faust. In the present time of the novel--there are numerous recollections and flashbacks--Jacky is just entering puberty. I interpret Kerouac's reasoning behind this artistic decision as follows: the damnation of Faust follows his attempt to break down the dichotemy between the material world and the spiritual world without God's mandate and guidance. As creative and ambitious adults, both Goethe's Faust and Marlowe's Dr. Faustus consciously resort to magic for self-fulfillment when they have exhausted the possibilities of strictly mortal pursuits. But in the child, division of material and spiritual world is less pronounced. The child has easier access to the spiritual realm and is thus more susceptible to the forces of good and evil that dwell there. This idea perhaps suggested to Kerouac one of the discarded titles for Doctor Sax, "A Novella of Children and Evil." In fact, the very young child accepts the material world and the spiritual world as one, the process of his aging being directly related to their gradual separation. With the onset of physical maturation the question of matter versus spirit is

restated as an either/or choice. When sexual and intellectual awakening flood the senses, leaving the youth confused and frightened, most reach out for the reassuring "reality" of the physical world, allowing the spiritual to recede. The Faustian man-child, Kerouac implies, does not. Jacky's decision to carry a unity of vision into adulthood, to move through what he finds to be the common terrain of both worlds, lies at the heart of his Faustian nature and risks the ultimate penalty of damnation. If the adult is to explore the spiritual world he must do so under the guiding and restricting hand of God. Otherwise, the forces of evil will overwhelm him. Jacky Duluoz, as we will see, lets his muse lead the way.

Though Kerouac breaks with tradition in giving us so young a Faust, essentially Jacky comes from the same mold as Marlowe's and Goethe's creations. Like his predecessors, Jacky can readily be identified as a being apart. He is "one of the gang," but is more sensitive, more imaginative, more gifted than the other boys. His youthful fantasies, which he cannot always control, are beyond his friends' imaginations. A description of Joe Fortier sums up the outlook of Jacky's pals: "Joe avoided shrouds, knew no mystery, wasn't scared, didn't care, strode along . . ." (DS, p. 60). Accordingly, when the dark and mysterious Doctor Sax sets up camp in Lowell, he seeks out Jacky alone. Or, more accurately, Jacky conjures up both Doctor Sax and the World Snake that brings Sax to Lowell.

The growth of Doctor Sax in Jacky's mind is seen through a series of masks that the magical figure wears. Sax's first mask bears the

aspect of death:*

> Doctor Sax I first saw in his earlier lineaments in the early Catholic childhood of Centreville--deaths funerals, the shroud of that, the dark figure in the corner when you look at the dead man coffin in the dolorous parlour open house with a horrible purple wreath on the door (DS, p. 4).

But as Jacky grows older he comes to see Sax as an ally against this death figure. This is after Sax has taken on the more worldly characteristics of crime fighting agent, The Shadow. At the same time, Jacky at least in part rejects the Catholicism which for him is so inextricably linked with death: "I gave up the church to ease my horrors--too much candlelight, too much wax" (DS, p. 66). This rejection of religion coupled with Jacky's burgeoning poetic soul make Doctor Sax don the mask of Mephistopheles. He seeks to capture that soul. When they finally meet face to face, Sax chastises Jacky: "'You didn't read a book today, did you, about the power of drawing a circle in the earth at night . . .'" (DS, p. 193). The purpose of the circle is made clear in Vanity of Duluoz. Duluoz remarks, "I can draw a circle in the earth and call Mephistopheles . . ." (VD, p. 36). In order to win Jacky over, Sax takes a cue from the shape-shifting temptors of Marlowe and Goethe, and covers his frightening green face with a W. C. Fields mask. The device succeeds. Jacky says, "At that moment I knew that Doctor Sax was my friend" (DS, p. 194).

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*Young Jacky's preoccupation with death is the result of his brother's premature passing. Visions of Gerard, the first chapter of *The Duluoz Legend* opens: "Gerard Duluoz was born in 1917 a sickly little kid with a rheumatic heart and many other complications that made him ill for the most part of his life which ended in July 1926 when he was 9 . . . ."[25] The older, narrating Duluoz gives us cause to believe that Jacky (Ti Jean) may in some way feel responsible for his brother's tragic fate: "--For the first four years of my life, while he lived, I was not Ti Jean Duluoz, I was Gerard . . ." (VG, pp. 7-8). It is Gerard's passing that precipitates the growth of young Jacky's identity and further explains the terrible fear of death that Jacky must grapple with in Doctor Sax.

In calling Sax friend, Jacky is not entirely naive, but he has made a dangerous compact. The donning of the W. C. Fields mask does speak of Sax's humanness. (Kerouac carries on the humanization of Mephistopheles hinted at by Marlowe and developed more fully by Goethe.) Also, the intent of Doctor Sax's mission is not entirely clear to us. Like Melville's confidence man, a direct literary ancestor of Kerouac's creation, Doctor Sax's allegiences are hard to pin down. He appears to be a kind of double agent, working on behalf of forces both good and evil. Isn't his first purpose to battle the World Snake? Does Jacky see him as a saviour as well as a temptor? Yet we must not forget that Jacky's apostasy coincides with the genesis of Doctor Sax, that what the half-secular, half-supernatural magic Sax offers undermines Jacky's Catholic indoctrination. Can his friendship with Doctor Sax end in anything other than Jacky's damnation?

Jacky jeopardizes his soul on several counts: (1) denial of religious faith, (2) involvement in perverse sexual practices, (3) obsession with books, (4) pursuit of an illicit knowledge of things. Of the four, the last two are most damning. "Tis magic, magic that hath ravished me,"[26] cries Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. Literature, a powerful form of magic, has ravished young Jackie Duluoz. Awake or asleep, Jacky is enraptured by books:

> All the night before I've been dreaming of books--I'm standing in the children's library in the basement, rows of glazed brown books are in front of me I reach out and open one--my soul thrills to touch the soft, used meaty pages, covered with avidities of reading--at last I'm opening the magic brown book . . . (DS, p. 163).

The volumes that attract Jacky's attention are, in appearance, not unlike the ancient necromantic tomes from which Doctor Faustus must have

drawn his spells and incantations: "I see the great curlicued print, the immense candelabra first letters at the beginning of chapters" (DS, p. 183). Faustus calls such books heavenly, but Lucifer is their true publisher.

Jacky's interest in books is part of an awakening artistic sensibility suggested by his fantastic flights of imagination. Both his fantasies and his readings, which so often interweave, speak of an impatience with the provincial mentality of hometown Lowell. He senses the possibility of a worldview unknown to his companions or even their parents. It is a worldview mythopoeic in nature and decidedly heretical in the eyes of the Catholic church. Pursuing this new knowledge of things, Jacky follows Doctor Sax on a tour of Lowell. Mephistopheles and muse become one.

Passing through the shadows of Lowell alleys and back yards, Jacky has visions and comes to new understandings. He sees his mother's guardian angel walking beside her, sees the eyes of eternity floating in the night sky. He crosses paths with Bert Desjardins' brother and intuitively knows the scene from which the young man has just departed:

> Tall weepy Bert Desjardins' brother is coming up Phebe from work, his footsteps are crunching in the pebbles, he spits, the starlight shines in his spit--they think he's been to work but he's been to skew his girl in a dirty barn in the Dracut woods, they stood against the raw drippy wood of the wall, near some piles of kid shit, and kicked some rocks aside, and he lifted her dress over the goose pimples of her thighs, and they leered together in the dark pant barn--he's coming from her, where he kissed her goodbye on a windy hill, and came homewards, stopping only at church where his shoes crunched on grit of basement churchfloor and he did a couple of Notre Pères and looked at the backs of sudden devout kneelers praying in the dark shave, among sad fluttering naves, silence

> except for echo pew coughs and distant frabbles of wood benches dragging on stone, frrrrrrrowp, and God broods in the upper hum air (DS, p. 199).

By paralleling the scene in the barn with the scene in the church, Kerouac intimates that Jacky has gained the artist's awareness of life: the prosaic and the spiritual, even the carnal and the spiritual, are inseparable. Jacky's mind can now grasp his hometown in its totality: "Gliding together in the dark shadows of the night Doctor Sax and I knew this and everything about Lowell" (DS, p. 199). Jacky learns as well from Doctor Sax that what applies to Lowell also applies to America. With the mind's eye of the artist Jacky can draw all dimensions, all events, all sensations into one gemlike microcosm that can be held in the hand and wondered at: "'All your America,' says Sax, 'is like a dense Balzacian hive in a jewel point'" (DS, p. 208).

The knowledge Jacky gains is not to be had without a price, however. Call it his youth, or his innocence, or his soul, he must give up something in return. To understand the nature of his loss we must backtrack for a moment. Throughout Doctor Sax, two narrative points of view are interwoven. Both come from Jacky Duluoz, but one belongs to the young boy and the other to the retrospecting grown-to-adulthood writer. At the beginning of Doctor Sax, this older Duluoz dreams of being in Lowell and seeing himself and his boyhood pals sitting in their favourite meeting place--a Moody Street doorway opening onto a "wrinkly tar sidewalk" (DS, p. 3). On the apocalyptic night that Jacky chooses to throw in his destiny with Doctor Sax, they pass the familiar spot:

> I take my last look--there, in the corner door steps, the old wrinkly-dinkly tar corner where I'd oft been too, but was no more . . . stood G.J. . . . And Scotty . . . (DS, p. 185).

Jacky's absence is a presentiment of things to come. He has sacrificed his sense of community and belonging in order to follow Sax. Kerouac hints that Jacky's allegiance to Sax may involve a loss of heaven as well:

> --G.J. is saying, "I wonder where Jacky is tonight."
> Scotty: Dunno, Gus. He may be over to Dickie Hampshire's. Or down in the alley spottin.
> Gus: Here comes old Lousy--Whenever I see old Lousy coming, I know I'll go to heaven, he's an angel Goddam Lousy--(DS, p. 210).

Kerouac intends us to understand that all the boys are angels and that the wrinkly tar corner where they congregate is the closest thing to heaven on earth. He also suggests that by living the lives of Lowell working men, Jacky's friends will be shielded from hell on earth:

> . . . Scotty was sitting on a step, picking slowly at his Mr. Goodbar, peanut by peanut--with a wry faint smile; he's weathered the crisis of the Flood, he'll weather others, he'll rise at dawn in a thousand lifetimes and duck his head to walk to work, chastened by labour into huge humilities beneath the sun, big fisted silent godly Scotcho who was never going to eat his own hands nor chaw his soul to bits . . . (DS, p. 209).

But Jacky, in pursuit of a world beyond Lowell, will lay himself open to mutilation of body and soul.*

The world beyond Jacky's hometown is represented by the bizarre and incongruous presence of the Castle. As out of place in Lowell as Jacky's mentality, the Castle waits to be discovered by the only Lowell-ite capable of visiting its interiors. The townspeople, with their limited vision, think that the Castle is uninhabited: "The Kids who played hookey and the occasional people who walked around in the

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*As a thirty-eight-year-old man (in Big Sur) Duluoz will express an overwhelming desire to "Go back to childhood, just eat apples and read . . . Cathechism sit on curbstones . . ." (BS, p. 24).

moldy cellar ruins inside did not realize that the Castle was Totally occupied" (DS, p. 191). Jacky knows better, but he also realizes the mortal danger of entering the Castle. As with the episode on the raft when the raging waters of the flooding Merrimac threatened to carry him off, Jacky must choose between the safety of Lowell terra firma and the fearful but almost irresistible attraction of the unknown.

In fact, however, Jacky's powers of reason and self-determination have been swept away. Doctor Sax has seduced him with visions of Lowell and the promise of greater visions to come. "The Castle of the World" houses the "Snake of the World" (DS, p. 236) who "has been growing in the world ball like a worm in the apple since Adam and Eve broke down and cried" (DS, p. 228). The Snake, Satan, is now on the verge of surfacing, and Doctor Sax, with his powders and potions, prepares to do battle with him. Sax offers Jacky a ringside seat for this "Homeric" (DS, p. 211) encounter. What true poet could refuse?

In designing and populating the Castle, Kerouac draws on sources ranging from Mayan mythology through Dante to grade B horror films. The Castle's inhabitants include the Wizard, Blook the monster (a fat bald giant), Count Condu, and assorted vampires, gnomes, black Cardinals, and man-sized insects. Like the Inferno, the Castle is multi-leveled, the horrors increasing in intensity with each descending level. In the cellar of the Castle lies the pit from which the Snake will emerge. Re-enacting the descent into hell of Vergil and Dante, Doctor Sax leads Jacky to the parapet of this pit.

The hellish creatures of the Castle are the stuff of Jacky's nightmares, but even in his dreams he has never confronted the Snake. Sax beckons Jacky to the parapet of the pit to see the Snake for the

first time. In the dark depths below Jacky sees two lakes and a river cut into a huge hump of land. With the voice of Ahab or a mad evangelical preacher, Sax informs him:

> "The lakes, the lakes . . . . . THOSE BE HIS EYES!"
> "The river, the river . . . . . THAT BE HIS MOUTH!"
> "The mountain, the mountain . . That---HIS HEAD!"

In abject fear at the enormity of the thing, Jack cries out, "'Oh sir, Oh sir, no!'" (DS, p. 226). But it is his second look into the pit--after Sax has told him, "'My son, this is judgment day'" (DS, p. 236) --that brings Jacky understanding of the true horror of the Snake:

> I leaned on a stone, the Pit yawned below, I looked down to face my horror, my tormentor, my mad face demon mirror of myself (DS, p. 238).

Jacky's destiny and the Snake's destiny are one and the same:

> I found myself looking into the Dark, I found myself looking into IT, I found myself compelled to fall. THE SNAKE WAS COMING FOR ME! (DS, p. 238).

The judgment day is for Jacky alone. The good folk of Lowell know nothing of the apocalypse. As the Snake heaves to be born from the pit, Jacky casts his eyes upward to the ceiling of the Castle and sees the blissful ignorance of Lowell:

> I hearbroken saw the perfectly sure heaven softclouds sitting in their regular Sunday morning blue stands--early morning clouds, in Rosemont young Freddie Dube wasn't up yet to go spend his day selling fruit and vegetables in the country, his sisters haven't yet cleaned up the crumbs from early communion breakfast, the chicken was standing on the funnies on the porch the milk was in the bottle--Birds luted in the Rosemont trees, no idea of the horror I was dark and deep in cross warm rooftops (DS, p. 239).

What Jacky has lost grasp of is that the Snake is his own creation, as is the inner domain of the Castle, and Doctor Sax himself.

Neither has Jacky realized the faulty logic of creating Doctor Sax as both his temptor and his saviour. Magnificent in his role as

Mephistopheles, Sax is, as I noted in an earlier chapter, embarrassingly inadequate when it comes to snake-slaying. When the Snake erupts from the earth, Sax disappears from Jacky's sight "in a big heave" (DS, p. 238). Common street clothes have replaced Sax's gothic garments when Jacky next sees his would be saviour:

> And suddenly I saw Doctor Sax standing behind me. He had taken off his slouch hat, he had taken off his cape. They were on the ground, limp black vestments. He was standing with his hands in his pockets, they were just poor beat up old trousers and he had a white shirt underneath, and regular brown shoes and regular socks (DS, p. 240).

Defrocked, Sax resembles no one more than Jacky himself at the moment when Jacky was exposed as the Black Thief. Jacky too had to put away his slouch hat and give his cape, "red and black like Mephistopheles" (DS, p. 47), back to his sister.

With Doctor Sax rendered impotent in the face of such enormous evil, Jacky appears doomed to the fate of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. The World Snake, the mind snake, will "sleek [Jacky] up through his portal teeth to hell" (DS, p. 192). But as we know, Kerouac does not allow the death or the damnation of his young Faustian hero. He sends down the Great Bird to dispose of the Snake. This solution to Jacky's mortal dilemma comes from the legend of the creation of Tenochtitlan (ancient capital of the Aztec world and site of present day Mexico City) but I think that for Kerouac's thematic purposes the Great Bird is an instrument of the Christian God, a foil for the World Snake, Satan. We must read the sudden appearance of the bird as a dramatic statement of God's awesome omnipotence:

> As I looked up at that descending World of Bird I felt more fear than I have ever felt in my life, infinitely worse than the fear when I saw the Snake . . . (DS, p. 243).

We must also, however, read God's intervention as an exoneration of Jacky. God obviously wants Jacky's soul and there is no indication that he demands repentance. We can only conclude, as I think Kerouac intends us to, that Jacky's art and his religion can co-exist or even be one. Perhaps a Faustian artist can be a great instrument of God. At the conclusion of Goethe's Faust Part II, angels drop down roses on the dying Faust, ensuring us that his soul is heaven-bound. These symbolic roses appear, too, in the final scene of Doctor Sax, signifying the salvation of Jacky Duluoz:

> I went along home by the ding dong bells and daisies I put a rose in my hair. I passed the grotto again and saw the cross on top of that hump of rocks, saw some old French Canadian ladies praying step by step on their knees. I found another rose and put another rose in my hair, and went home.
>
> By God (DS, p. 245).

Later in the legend, however, Kerouac reconsiders the matter of Duluoz's salvation.

Chapter Five

IN SEARCH OF IT

i

The Coming of Cody

The sense of closure in the final passage of Doctor Sax comes from the prophetic function played by the novel in the legend. Doctor Sax previews Duluoz's adult quest for knowledge, and Jacky's confrontation with the World Snake will be restaged in another form at the legend's end. But in terms of the linear movement of Duluoz's quest for knowledge, Doctor Sax offers an introductory chapter, a preliminary to the active quest. In Doctor Sax, Kerouac introduces us to his Faustian hero and leads us to understand that through his own initiative and the guidance of Doctor Sax, Jacky has begun to anticipate the enormous potential of his mind. Moreover, with the elimination of the dark destructive side of Jacky's psyche, symbolized by the World Snake, he has been freed to pursue, in full, the knowledge of which Sax has given him momentary glimpses.

The knowledge Jacky seeks will come from books and world experience, both of which are to be found outside of Jacky's hometown, Lowell. The function, then, of the following novel in the legend, Maggie Cassidy, is to move Jacky out of Lowell. As we have seen in the earlier discussion of Duluoz's quest for love, this is accomplished by Jacky's going off to prep school in New York, abandoning his high-school sweetheart in the process. That Kerouac still had the Faust

parallel in mind is evidenced by his naming of Jacky's sweetheart, Maggie, which identifies her with the Margarete of Goethe's work, and by the narrator's recollection of himself as being "like Faust" (MC, p. 80). The betrayal of Maggie opens up Jacky's ambitious course, and despite the hopeful conclusion of Doctor Sax, puts young Jacky's soul in jeopardy.

The world beyond Lowell, for which Jacky forsakes Maggie, is the city, and the city is New York. Duluoz's New York days are recounted in Vanity of Duluoz: new friends, new experiences, new books, radically alter Jacky's worldview. Initially he stands in wonder at the seemingly limitless possibilities his life can contain and strives to meet the challenge of the city. He does, in fact, remind us of Eugene Gant in Of Time and the River's "Young Faustus" section. Like Eugene, Jacky works himself to the point of exhaustion trying to do everything and learn everything. But rather quickly he falls in with a decadent Bohemian crowd, an eventuality anticipated in Doctor Sax. For young Jacky, the world beyond Lowell is symbolized by the Castle, and Kerouac's portrayal of the Emilia St. Claire crowd, who temporarily reside in the Castle, previews and parodies the beat coterie which Duluoz will later join:

> Where Emilia St. Claire goes, there, by the grace of God, go non conformists! the intellectuals! the gay barbarians! the dadaists! the members of "the set!" (DS, p. 138).

We can readily identify the future Jack Duluoz in the figure of the artless Boston College* student, "lured by the glitter of the weekend . . . " (DS, p. 138). He has been brought along by one of the regulars who

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*Kerouac's father had wanted him to go to Boston College rather than Columbia.

"thought he was so virile, so self-sufficient" (DS, p. 138). In the later reality, described in Vanity of Duluoz, the student, himself, becomes a mainstay of "the set," and his enthusiastic quest for knowledge is sidetracked. His virility and self-sufficiency are dissipated by the decadent lifestyle. A much older Duluoz recalls:

> . . . I completely gave up trying to keep my body in condition and a photo of myself on the beach at the time shows soft and flabby body. My hair had begun to recede from the sides. I wandered in Benzedrene depression hallucinations (VD, p. 270).

Hardly out of the womb of Lowell, Jack Duluoz has joined in with "the despairists of [his] time" (VD, p. 272) "who really [don't] know how to go on living" (VD, p. 273).

In the Emilia St. Claire send-up of Duluoz's New York set, an outside force intrudes to shake the Castle habitues out of their mortal ennui. As the party-goers attempt to comply with Emilia's command to be "gay . . to be frightfully mad" (DS, p. 138), Doctor Sax sweeps into the Castle:

> Screams! Screams! Screaming the women fell, one by one! Ha Ha! They fell, they fell! The men paled, some of them fell to the floor, some stood transfixed with horrors. Emilia St. Claire swooned upon the divan! (DS, p. 141).

The only person who does not flee or faint at the sight of Sax is the Jacky Duluoz character: "only one young man stood stalwartly swaying, the young student from Boston College" (DS, p. 142). Similarly, an outside force creates a stir in Jack Duluoz's New York crowd. Like Sax, who hails from Butte, Montana, this invader, a "young jailkid" named Cody Pomeray (Dean Moriarity), comes from the west, is "shrouded in mystery" (OR, p. 4), and brings a knowledge of "something new, long prophesied, long a-coming . . ." (OR, p. 10).

> All my other current friends were "intellectuals"--Chad the Nietzschean anthropologist, Carlo Marx and his nutty surrealist low-voiced serious staring talk, Old Bull Lee and his critical anti-everything drawl--or else they were slinking criminals like Elmer Hassel, with that hip sneer; Jane Lee the same, sprawled on the Oriental cover of her couch, sniffing the New Yorker. But Dean's [Cody's] intelligence was every bit as formal and shining and complete, without the tedious intellectualness . . . . Besides, all my New York friends were in the negative, nightmarish position of putting down society and giving their tired bookish or political or psychoanalytical reasons, but Dean just raced in society, eager for bread and love; . . . I could just hear a new call and see a new horizon . . . (OR, p. 10).

Duluoz recognizes Cody (Dean Moriarity) as his liberator and reaches out to him, just as in his boyhood, he reached out to Doctor Sax.

Cody also reconnects Duluoz with his past Doctor Sax days, with Lowell and the friends of his youth whom he left behind in the "wrinkly tar corner":

> Yes, and it wasn't only because I was a writer and needed new experience that I wanted to know Dean [Cody] more, and because my life hanging around the campus had reached the completion of its cycle and was stultified, but because, somehow, in spite of our difference in character, he reminded me of some long lost brother; the sight of his suffering bony face with the long sideburns and his straining muscular sweating neck made me remember my boyhood in those dye-dumps and swim holes and riversides of Paterson [Lowell] and Passaic [Merrimac] . . . . And in his excited way of speaking I heard again the voices of old companions and brothers under the bridge, among the motorcycles, along the washlined neighbourhoods and drowsy doorsteps of afternoon where boys played guitars while their older brothers worked in the mill (OR, p. 10).

Doctor Sax once took Jacky on a visionary tour of Lowell and told him, "'All your America . . . is like a dense Balzacian hive in a jewel point'" (DS, p. 208). Now Cody has come to show Duluoz that America.

In matching Doctor Sax with William Burroughs (Will or Bull Hubbard in *The Duluoz Legend*), Kerouac's biographers have neglected the

resemblance of Doctor Sax and Cody*: their western roots, bony hawk-nosed countenances, made "hee, hee, hee" laughter. Raymond, Sax's "Butte name" (DS, p. 29), may be one of Kerouac's name plays on Pomeray, and the Butte poolhall scene is certainly reminiscent of Cody's Denver poolhall. But most important is the similarity of roles played by Sax and Cody in their relationship with Duluoz. Each is friend, mentor, and temptor alike to him.

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*No doubt, as Ann Charters states, "Kerouac imagined Burroughs as the physical model for the character of Doctor Sax."[27] Kerouac was living with Burroughs in Mexico City when he wrote the novel. But he had previously put together a taped version of the story while staying with the Cassadys, which perhaps accounts for the similarity of Sax and Cody. At the end of the novel, the de-frocked Sax, dressed in "Beat up" street clothes looks "a little like Bull Hubbard . . . or like Gary Cooper" (DS, p. 240). When Duluoz (Sal Paradise) first meets Cody (Dean Moriarity) he compares him to a cowboy, albeit a much younger one than Gary Cooper in "High Noon": "My first impression of Dean [Cody] was of a young Gene Autry" (OR, p. 5). My own feeling is that though Sax may resemble Burroughs more than Cassady, he resembles Cody more than Will (Bull) Hubbard.

ii

The Nature of IT

Duluoz's quest for knowledge in On the Road has four stages that correspond to four journeys (three across America and one into Mexico) and to four levels of development in his relationship with Cody. In the initial stage of his quest Duluoz heads west on his own, acting in naive imitation of Cody, the free spirit. He wants to live as Cody does, see America through Cody's eyes, and describe what he sees in Cody's words. Timothy Hunt remarks, "The college boy out on a summer lark, he [Duluoz] plays at being Dean [Cody] much as Tom Sawyer plays at being Huck Finn."[28] But role playing runs counter to everything Cody is and blocks understanding of his special knowledge. As Carole Gottlieb Volpat notes, "Sal's self-conscious posturing undercuts his insistence on the life of instinct and impulse,"[29] the life, I would add, that is so quintessentially Cody's. Duluoz catches glimpses of the America Cody knows--while riding on the flatbed truck with Montana Slim and Mississippi Gene, and during his affair with Terry--but even in these two episodes Duluoz is, in Volpat's words, "enjoying himself, enjoying himself, raptly appreciating the performance in what seems more like an ongoing soap opera than an actual life."[30] The result of Duluoz's playacting is that the trip west concludes with the traveler hardly the wiser.

The second stage of the quest sees Duluoz and Cody traveling together, following the United States coastline from New York to Florida to New Orleans to San Francisco. Duluoz now dispenses with the Cody imitation, content to enjoy the companionship of his new friend

in whatever adventures lie ahead. His only purpose is to take "one more magnificent trip" (OR, p. 129). Yet, just prior to departure, a night spent at the house of "the wild ecstatic Rollo Greb" (OR, p. 127) and a visit to Birdland to hear George Shearing move Cody to define for Duluoz a special kind of knowledge that some men possess. This knowledge cannot be learned in school or in the workplace or in church, though it is decidedly religious in nature. This knowledge is not a set of ideas to be considered or applied, but rather a condition to be felt and lived. Rollo Greb has this special kind of knowledge:

> His excitement blew out of his eyes in fiendish stabs of light. He rolled his neck in spastic ecstasy. He lisped, he writhed, he flopped, he moaned, he howled, he fell back in despair. He could hardly get a word out, he was so excited with life (OR, p. 127).

And, as Cody tells Duluoz, "George Shearing . . . [is] exactly like Rollo Greb" (OR, pp. 127-28).

> And Shearing began to rock; a smile broke over his ecstatic face; he began to rock in the piano seat, back and forth, slowly at first, then the beat went and he began rocking fast, his left foot jumped with every beat, his neck began to rock crookedly, he brought his face down to the keys, he pushed his hair back, his combed hair dissolved, he began to sweat (OR, p. 128).

This knowledge possessed by Rollo Greb and Shearing, Cody calls IT. Cody tells Duluoz:

> "That Rollo Greb is the greatest, most wonderful of all. That's what I was trying to tell you--that's what I want to be. I want to be like him. He's never hung up, he goes in every direction, he lets it all out, he knows time, he has nothing to do but rock back and forth. Man, he's the end! You see if you get like him all the time you'll finally get it."
> "Get What?" [Duluoz asks]
> "IT! IT! I'll tell you--now no time, we have no time now" (OR, p. 127).

Interestingly, Cody indicates that he, himself, does not have IT yet, though he knows what IT is, and, dangling the carrot in front of the horse, promises to explain IT to Duluoz at some future time. Cody also suggests that having IT is akin to achieving godhood. When Shearing concludes playing, Cody points at the empty piano seat and pronounces it, "'God's empty chair'" (OR, p. 128).

The Shearing-Rollo Greb episodes offer some insight into the matter of acquiring IT. One thing Shearing and Rollo Greb share is music. Shearing's ecstatic rocking is brought on by the music he makes on the piano, and Rollo Greb's movements pantomime a Verdi opera. Another agent that facilitates the realization if IT is marijuana. Following the Shearing session, Duluoz remarks:

> I didn't know what was happening to me, and I suddenly realized it was only the tea we were smoking; Dean had bought some in New York. It made me think that everything was about to arrive--the moment when you know all and everything is decided forever (OR, pp. 128-29).

The music and the marijuana recall Doctor Sax's powders and potions. Sax, of course, is short for saxaphone, and we should not forget (though Duluoz may do so) that Doctor Sax first led Jack Dulouz to IT. As Jacky looks into the pit of the World Snake, the narrator recalls, "I found myself looking into IT . . ." (DS, p. 238). But Sax shows Jacky only the dark side of IT, the horrifying death side, whereas Cody holds out the promise of a yea-saying, ecstatic life IT.

Duluoz's first trip with Cody, despite its wild adventures, is less important to his quest for knowledge than that which immediately follows. During the journey Cody fails to further explain IT, but when they arrive in San Francisco, Cody abandons Duluoz (along with girlfriend, Mary Lou), leaving him penniless, and in doing so teaches his companion

a great deal about IT and a great deal about what it means to be Cody. As Volpat has pointed out, at this point in On the Road, Cody has become a father figure to Duluoz. His disappearance makes him an absent, uncaring father, the kind of father that Cody had throughout his childhood. Duluoz asks, "Where is Dean [Cody] and why isn't he concerned about our welfare?" (OR, p. 171). Fortunately, Duluoz initially has the company of Mary Lou, who, like Terry, has had practice at dealing with an uncaring world. She is able to obtain a hotel room on credit. But unlike Terry, Mary Lou is no saint, and when the opportunity arises, she abandons Duluoz in the spirit of self-preservation. Duluoz calls her a whore, but in fact he is being paid back in kind for his earlier abandonment of Terry.

Left utterly alone, "out of his mind with hunger and bitterness . . . " (OR, p. 172), Duluoz experiences a vision, a sensation that Cody must have internalized in his impoverished, forsaken childhood:

> And for just a moment I had reached the point of ecstasy that I always wanted to reach, which was the complete step across chronological time into timeless shadows, and wonderment in the bleakness of the mortal realm, and the sensation of death kicking at my heels to move on, with a phantom dogging its own wheels, and myself hurrying to a plank where all the angels dove off and flew into the holy void of uncreated emptiness, the potent and inconceivable radiancies shining in Mind Essence, innumerable lotuslands falling open in the magic mothswarm of heaven. I could hear an indescribable seething roar which wasn't in my ear but everywhere and had nothing to do with sounds. . . . I thought I was going to die the very next moment (OR, p. 173).

The narrating Duluoz recalls, "I was too young to know what had happened" (OR, p. 173), a statement that equally applies to Cody. The chapter concludes with a long description of all the food smells carried through the San Francisco night air to Duluoz's hotel window. The

passage illustrates Kerouac's spontaneity or literary instinct at its finest, not because of the writing, but because of the passage's bearing on the introductory description of Cody. When Cody and Mary Lou first arrive in New York, they go immediately to Hector's cafeteria and eat "big glazed cakes and creampuffs" (OR, p. 4), and Cody articulates the human reality that a knowledge of poverty dictates one's priorities in life.* He tells Dulouz, "'so long's we can eat, son, y'ear me? I'm hungry, I'm starving, let's eat right now!'" (OR, p. 10). Duluoz's involuntary fast in San Francisco teaches him the value of food as an agent to stave off the "bleakness of the mortal realm," and furthers his understanding of Cody. That Cody deliberately puts Duluoz through the ordeal is implied by the opening lines of the following chapter. Speaking of his starved, hopeless condition, Duluoz remarks, "That was the way Dean [Cody] found me when he finally decided I was worth saving" (OR, p. 174).

iii

"This will finally take us to IT!"

The intimacy of the relationship between Duluoz and Cody increases with their second trip taken together. This time they are not encumbered with friends, male or female, and simply ignore their fellow passengers in the travel bureau cars that take them from San Francisco to New York, across the heart of America. They are much like a couple on a honeymoon, and in fact, as Carole Volpat and others have pointed out, a wedding of sorts does precede their departure. Duluoz, taking the

*A point of interest: The original Faustus of German folklore sold his soul for food.

initiative for the first time, proposes that they go to New York together. As Cody considers the offer, a Greek wedding party files out of a near by house and lines up for a photograph: "'Well,' said Dean [Cody] in a very shy and sweet voice, 'shall we go?'" (OR, p. 190).

Also preceding their departure, Cody and Duluoz visit various jazz clubs and hear an alto saxophone player who, Cody tells Duluoz the following day in the Eastbound car, had IT. Duluoz wants to know what IT means and for the first time Cody tries to explain:

> "Here's a guy and everybody's there, right? Up to him to put down what's on everybody's mind. He starts the first chorus, then lines up his ideas, people, yeah yeah, but get it, but then he rises to his fate and has to blow equal to it. All of a sudden somewhere in the middle of the chorus he gets it--everybody looks up and knows; they listen; he picks it up and carries. Time stops. He's filling empty space with the substance of our lives, confessions of his bellybottom strain, remembrance of ideas, rehashes of old blowing. He has to blow across bridges and come back and do it with such infinite feeling soul-explanatory for the tune of the moment that everybody knows its not the tune that counts but IT--" (OR, p. 206).

From Cody's explanation Duluoz seems to catch IT himself, as he tries to "fill up space with the substance of [his] life":

> Then I began talking; I never talked so much in my life. I told Dean [Cody] that when I was a kid and rode in cars . . . (OR, p. 206).

Then Cody talks and they become like two horn players taking turns soloing.

In the midst of this exchange Cody suddenly says, "'O man, I have to tell you, NOW, I have IT--" (OR, p. 207). He proceeds to tell of an episode during his youth in which he accompanied his father and another "pisspoor bum" on a trip to Nebraska to sell homemade fly-swatters. It is the memory of the lost father that brings Cody a sense of IT, and as Arnold Krupat states, "The search for Dean's [Cody's]

father, a persistent theme of the book, seems a metaphor for the search for God."[31] Duluoz, also fatherless, follows Cody's reminiscence with his own recollection of a time before his father absented himself: "'As a child lying back in my father's car in the backseat I also had a vision of myself on a white horse . . . '" (OR, p. 208). Duluoz and Cody have found their common ground of IT. Like the alto sax man, they temporarily stop time, or more accurately, drift into a timeless moment in which past, present and future are all one:

> . . . the car was swaying as Dean [Cody] and I both swayed to the rhythm and the IT of our final excited joy in talking and living to the blank tranced end of all innumerable riotous angels particulars that had been lurking in our souls all our lives (OR, p. 208).

This passage echoes the one in which the abandoned Duluoz had his vision of stepping "across chronological time."* But the "bleakness of the mortal realm" that Duluoz felt in San Francisco has been replaced by "the final excited joy of talking and living." Duluoz's "marriage" to Cody has given him something more than he ever found with his wives or even his fellaheen saints. The "session" in the car concludes with Cody's statement that ". . . we all know what IT is and we know TIME and we know that everything is really FINE" (OR, p. 208). All that remains is for Cody and Duluoz to achieve that godhood which they anticipate to be the final reward of knowing IT.

After the trip east, with no loss of friendship, the two men allow their figurative marriage to give way to Cody's third real marriage. Yet, some months later, when Duluoz travels to Denver, with plans of

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*This vision too begins with Duluoz's thinking of the lost father, in this case Big Pop, the horse Duluoz said reminded him of his father, and that he advised old Bull Lee to bet on (OR, p. 173).

subsequently going to Mexico, Cody follows. Hearing of Cody's imminent arrival in Denver, Duluoz has a vision of him: ". . . a burning shuddering frightful Angel, palpitating toward me across the road . . . (OR, p. 259). Already in Duluoz's mind a virtual semi-dios, Cody has come to drive Duluoz to Mexico, to navigate the final leg of their odyssey and quest for knowledge, God , and IT. Cody gives his personal guarantee that their journey will not be in vain: "'Man, this will finally take us to IT'" (OR, p. 266).

Mexico offers Duluoz and Cody all the agents that facilitate the IT experience: marijuana, music, an altered sense of time. No sooner are they across the border than Cody pronounces, "'We've finally got to heaven'" (OR, p. 278). In Gregoria, a young Mexican named Victor becomes their guide to that part of heaven, presenting them with a "tremendous Corona cigar of tea" (OR, p. 283) and taking them to a brothel where, to the sound of deafening Mambo music, they perform a Bacchanalian rite. The marijuana puts them into a trancelike state that permits Duluoz to witness Cody's apotheosis: "In myriad pricklings of heavenly radiation I had to struggle to see Dean's [Cody's] figure, and he looked like God" (OR, p. 285). But it is later that night that the travelers actually reach IT. Having descended into a tropical region of Mexico, they stop outside a small town for the night. Still feeling the effects of the marijuana and the mambo music, they sleep out in the open air:

> . . . I realized the jungle takes you over and you become it. Lying on the top of the car with my face to the black sky was like lying in a closed trunk on a summer night. For the first time in my life the weather was not something that touched me, that caressed me, froze me or sweated me, but became me. The atmosphere and I became the same. Soft infinitesimal showers of

> microscopic bugs fanned down on my face as I slept and they were extremely pleasant and soothing. The sky was starless, utterly unseen and heavy. I could lie there all night with my face exposed to the heavens and it would do me no more harm than a velvet drape drawn over me (OR, p. 294).

The jungle atmosphere physically manifests Duluoz's San Francisco vision: the "showers of microscopic bugs" are the "magic mothswarm of heaven"; the "screaming of the insects" (OR, p. 294), "the seething roar that wasn't in my ears but everywhere." The references to the "closed trunk" and the "velvet drape drawn over me" make it clear that IT is the experience of death. Now, however, death offers peace and serenity rather than Saxian horror. In the jungle Duluoz actually experiences what the San Francisco delirium had taught him about death:

> I realized that I had died and been reborn numberless times but just didn't remember expecially because the transitions from life to death and back to life are so ghostly easy, a magical action for nought, like falling asleep and waking up again a million times, the utter casualness and deep ignorance of it (OR, p. 173).

iv

"the father we never found"

Duluoz's "death" in the jungle is the climax of the quest for knowledge in On the Road. Kerouac anticipates this climax as early as part two of the novel.* Just prior to his first trip with Cody, Duluoz says that something has recently been haunting him:

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*Kerouac also sets up Duluoz's western odyssey and its ultimate significance in the first novel of *The Duluoz Legend*, Visions of Gerard. Four-year-old Jacky, at the funeral of Gerard, relates a vision that he had as a baby to what he imagines to be the final destination of his brother:

> One of the first if not the very first, memories of my life, I'm in a shoe repair store . . . and it's a gray rainy day . . .--I'm presumably with Ma and probably one year old in my baby carriage . . . and as we leave the shop, or, as is left the shop, by self or phantom, suddenly is seen a little old man, or ordinary man, in a strangely slanted grey hat, in coat, presumably, walking off in the dreary and endless boulevard of the drizzle dump . . .--And it seems to me that this little man is going towards some inexpressibly beautiful opening in the rain where it will be all open sky and radiant, but I will never go there as I'm being wheeled away in my present vehicle-- He, on foot, heads for the pure land-- So that it seemed to me as the organ music played and the priest intoned in Latin at the altar far up the pews in the end of time, that Gerard, now motionless in the central presented bier at the foot of the main aisle and by the altar rail, with his long face composed, honourably mounted and all beflowered and annointed, was delivered to that Pure Land where I could never go or at least not for a long time--

In the rain on Bear Mountain, Duluoz begins his journey west to the "Pure Land," "where it will be all open sky and radiant." "Gone west," is an old-fashioned euphemism for "has died." His search for IT is, in fact, a search for the experience of death which he finally finds in the coffin-like night of Mexico.

> It had to do somewhat with the Shrouded Traveler. Carlo Marx and I once sat down together . . . and I told him a dream I had about a strange Arabian figure that was pursuing me across the desert; that I tried to avoid; that finally overtook me just before I reached the Protective City . . . . Naturally, now that I look back on it, this is only death: death will overtake us before heaven. The only thing that we yearn for in our living days . . . is the remembrance of some lost bliss that was probably experienced in the womb and can only be reproduced (though we hate to admit it) in death (OR, p. 124).

The Shrouded Traveler is, as Duluoz says, death. But just prior to the Mexico trip, Cody becomes, in Duluoz's mind, the Shrouded Traveler incarnate: " . . . I had a vision of Dean Cody pursuing me like the Shrouded Traveler on the plain . . ." (OR, p. 259). The Protective City is certainly Mexico City. As the travelers approach the Mexican capital, Duluoz yells to the sleeping Cody, "'wake up and see the shepherds, wake up and see the golden world that Jesus came from, with your own eyes you can tell'" (OR, p. 300). Duluoz exults because they have reached "these vast and Biblical areas of the world . . . the end of the road" (OR, p. 300). But, as prophesied in the dream, the Shrouded Traveler, death, has overtaken Duluoz (the previous night, in the jungle) before he could reach the Protective City.

Kerouac also prepares his reader for the final event of the Mexican odyssey, Cody's abandonment of Duluoz. In the opening chapter of On the Road he has Duluoz foretell that Cody will eventually "put [him] down . . . on starving sidewalk and sickbeds--" (OR, p. 11). The "starving sidewalks" refer to the San Francisco episode; the "sickbeds" describe Duluoz's condition when on arrival in Mexico City he contracts a fever. But a more far-reaching prefiguring of On the Road's conclusion comes in Doctor Sax. I have already said that Doctor Sax is the prophetic text for *The Duluoz Legend*, and that when reading

On the Road, we should bear in mind the similarity of Sax and Cody. If we look at the relationship of Duluoz to his two heroes, we find that they develop in the same manner: imitation, friendship, intimacy, apotheosis and, finally, demystification. Calling himself The Black Thief, Jacky initially imitates Doctor Sax: "At night I came in my cape and slouch hat . . . (DS, p. 47). Then, through their first actual meeting, they become friends (Sax puts on his W. C. Fields mask to make this easier for Jacky). When they make their tour of Lowell together, a greater intimacy grows between them, built upon a shared knowledge the equal of the mutual realization of IT had by Cody and Duluoz in the travel bureau car: "Gliding together in the dark shadows of the night Doctor Sax and I knew this and everything about Lowell" (DS, p. 199). The next stage is the temporary apotheosis of Sax that takes place in the Castle. Traditionally dressed in black, Sax has an unexpected costume change: "Ahead of me in show white raiment, Doctor Sax suddenly looked like an angel saint" (DS, p. 223). Sax's apotheosis corresponds to Cody's brief attainment of godhood in Gregoria.

The final stage in the relationship of Jacky and Doctor Sax is the boy's demystification of his hero. Sax cannot defeat the World Snake of Jacky's mind and is consequently reduced to mortal stature. In Jacky's fantasy, Sax disappears as the snake erupts from its pit, and when seen again, the great Sax is dressed in shabby street clothes. Similarly, Duluoz demystifies Cody. Also in a dream-like state, induced by his fever, Duluoz sees his hero disappear. Recovering from the fever, he realizes "what a rat [Cody] was" (OR, p. 303) and the next time he sees Cody, the powers of the semi-dios are greatly diminished.

"Ragged in a motheaten overcoat" (OR, p. 309), he seems inadequate to command the allegiance of anyone.

Ann Charters has pointed out the resemblance of Doctor Sax's conclusion with that of The Wizard of Oz--[30] the defrocking of Sax paralleling the exposure of the puny wizard. On the Road, too, ends in Wizard of Oz fashion. That is, Duluoz's fever shakes him out of a dream and, like Dorothy, who sees at her bedside the real-life, very ordinary people who have been her imagined lion, scarecrow, and tin man, Duluoz sees Cody once again as a mere mortal. How this reawakening bears on Duluoz's quest for knowledge seems to me very significant. Is Kerouac, in fact, telling us that Duluoz's experience of IT and Cody's apotheosis are no more than a dream, or even that Cody is a sham, Duoloz a dupe, and their quest simply an extended joyride? The whorehouse in heaven, to name one thing, might make us suspect so, and Duluoz himself recognizes that their Mexican odyssey in the eyes of the natives is that of "self-important moneybag Americans on a lark in their land" (OR, p. 281). Kerouac, like his narrator, seems ambivalent about the reality and meaningfulness of Duluoz's experience. As Granville Jones has said about Kerouac's heroes (and it applies mainly to Duluoz): "For ever moment of insight and belief, there is a corresponding even more intense, period of doubt. If one day they think they have found the answer, the next day they are equally certain they have not."[33]

On the Road ends with a sense of wonder mixed with emptiness. Duluoz's closing statement on his quest for knowledge is, "nobody, nobody knows what's going to happen to anybody except the forlorn rags of growing old" (OR, p. 310). And if in On the Road the quest for

Cody's (Dean's) father is metaphor for the quest for God, then Duluoz acknowledges that his quest has failed: "I think of Old Dean Moriarity [Old Cody Pomeray], the father we never found . . . " (OR, p. 310).

Chapter Six

YOU CAN'T FALL OFF A MOUNTAIN

Duluoz's quest for knowledge does not end with the end of On the Road. Granville Jones accurately points out that "it is the search for IT that Kerouac describes in each novel."[34] In The Dharma Bums, going under the alias, Ray Smith, Duluoz once again seeks to enlighten himself with a greater knowledge.

In the final chapter of On the Road, Duluoz has a strange encounter during his return home from Mexico:

> . . . I heard the sound of footsteps in the darkness beyond, an lo, a tall old man with flowing white hair came clombing by with a pack on his back, and when he saw me as he passed, he said, "Go moan for man," and clomped back to his dark. Did this mean that I should at last go on my pilgrimage on foot on the dark roads around America? (OR, p. 306).

Though Duluoz initially chooses not to answer the old man's call but returns to New York to meet Laura, the girl of his dreams, the encounter with the old man anticipates the continuation of Duluoz's quest in The Dharma Bums. Following the example of Japhy Ryder, the young Zen Buddhist from northern Oregon, Duluoz learns the physical and spiritual self-sufficiency that will allow him to go clomping through America in the dark with a pack on his back.

As compared to the odyssey with Cody, Duluoz's Buddhist-inspired search with Japhy is a quiet one. Now thirty-three, (The Dharma Bums takes place in 1955-56), Duluoz continues to quest, but he seeks out a

mentor who speaks to his maturity. We can find similarities between Japhy and Cody--both have western roots, attach much importance to food, and are "American heroes"--but Japhy displays self-control and self-containment, qualities hardly associated with Cody. Japhy is a saner Cody. He comes from a solid family background that has given him a more balanced identity than that possessed by the fatherless Cody.

The Dharma Bums might well be sub-titled, "Zen and the Art of Mountain Climbing." Duluoz places himself in the role of student, seeking enlightenment from the Zen master, Japhy, who, using mountain climbing as the specific discipline, imparts a knowledge that can be generally applied, or more precisely, lived. On first meeting Japhy, Duluoz (Ray Smith) tells him that he (Duluoz) is "just interested in the first of Sakyamuni's four noble truths, All life is suffering." He then admits that he is "to an extent interested in the third [truth], The suppression of suffering can be achieved."[35] Duluoz has already accepted the first truth as given; subtly he asks for guidance in realizing the third. The retrospecting narrator tells the reader:

> (I hadn't yet digested the Lankavatara Scripture which eventually shows you that there's nothing in the world but the mind itself, and therefore all's possible including the suppression of suffering) (DB, p. 12).

Japhy, in his role as Zen master, will convince Duluoz of the primacy of mind without relying on words. Countering Duluoz's complaint that "'It's mean . . . all those Zen masters throwing young kids in the mud because they can't answer their silly questions'" (DB, p. 13), Japhy says, "'That's because they want them to realize that mud is better than words'" (DB, p. 13). Japhy intends to show that, in the same

way, a mountain teaches better than do words.

There are two stages to Duluoz's mountain climbing "course." The first deals with physical self-sufficiency and simply involves the acquisition of equipment and supplies needed to live in the wilderness. Japhy instructs Duluoz in the importance of having a good sleeping bag, hiking boots, and backpack; explains to him the practicality of dried food; cautions him against alcohol. The second stage is the actual climbing of the mountain. As they approach Mount Matterhorn, Japhy does give Duluoz some verbal advice:

> "The secret of this kind of climbing . . . is like Zen. Don't think. Just dance along. It's the easiest thing in the world, actually easier than walking on flat ground which is monotonous. The cute little problems present themselves at each step and yet you never hesitate and you find yourself on some other boulder you picked out for no special reason, just like Zen"* (DB, pp. 64-65).

The key words in Japhy's instructions are "Don't think." Mastery of mountain climbing is no more obtained from conscious thought than is the experience of IT. Eager novice that he is, Duluoz picks up on the idea of climbing as a dance. He states confidently: "Jumping from boulder to boulder and never falling with a heavy pack is easier than it sounds; you just can't fall when you get into the rhythm of the dance" (DB, p. 65). By the end of the second day in the wilds, feeling that his lessons have gone very well, and after eating "the most delicious supper of all time . . ." (DB, p. 73), Duluoz has been converted:

> . . . I promised myself that I would begin a new life. "All over the west, and the mountains in the East, and the desert, I'll tramp with a rucksack and make it the pure way" (DB p. 77).

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*This passage quite accurately describes Kerouac's spontaneous writing as well.

Duluoz appears ready to begin the "pilgrimage on foot" that he considered at the end of On the Road.

Duluoz has not, however, been tested yet. As he and Japhy reach the upper altitudes of their climb, Duluoz becomes increasingly uneasy. He also has a sense of deja-vu:

> . . . that whole afternoon, even more than the other, was filled with old premonitions or memories, as though I'd been there before, scrambling on those rocks, for other purposes more ancient, more serious, more simple (DB, p. 80).

Kerouac may or may not have intended an allusion here to Duluoz's Doctor Sax experience, but Duluoz's sense of deja-vu is readily understandable if we realize that he is re-enacting his adolescent fantasy-nightmare. Like the snake, the mountain is a metaphor for mind, and like Doctor Sax, Japhy leads Duluoz to a confrontation with self. The panorama seen by Duluoz from the vast heights of Matterhorn recalls Jacky's telescopic view from the parapet of the pit:

> . . . I gulped when I turned around to look back and see all of the state of California it would seem stretching out in three directions under huge blue skies with frightening planetary space clouds and immense vistas of distant valleys and even plateaus and for all I knew whole Nevadas out there. It was terrifying to look down and see Morley, a dreaming spot by the little lake waiting for us (DB, p. 82).

The lakes young Jacky sees in the pit are the eyes of the World Snake; the lake seen by the older Duluoz is no more than what it appears to be, a small body of water, but it chills him nonetheless, because it defines the great height to which he has climbed: "I now began to be afraid to go any higher from sheer fear of being too high" (DB, p. 82). Lured on by Japhy, Duluoz does go higher, but the distance between him and his mentor widens, leaving him increasingly isolated. He makes the mistake of looking down again: "I looked back and like Lot's wife,

that did it. 'This is too high!'" (DB, p. 83). Duluoz's sudden realization, the words pointedly italicized by Kerouac, directs the reader to Jacky's horrific self-discovery as he witnesses the rise of the World Snake. Kerouac italicizes those words as well: "The Snake was coming for me!" Panic-stricken, Duluoz finds a flat ledge on which to plant his body. His joyous dance has been supplanted by a trembling immobility. Sakyumuni's first noble truth, all life is suffering, reaffirms itself.

> I nudged myself closer into the ledge and closed my eyes and thought "Oh what a life this is, why do we have to be born in the first place, and only so we can have our poor gentle flesh laid out to such impossible horrors as huge mountains and rock and empty space . . ." (DB, p. 83).

Huddled on the ledge, eyes closed, Duluoz relives yet another episode from his past, the one in which with "Mad Ahab," Cody, at the wheel of the travel bureau Cadillac, he huddles on the back seat floor:

> All that old road of the past unreeling dizzily as if the cup of life had been overturned and everything gone mad. My eyes ached in nightmare day.
> "Ah hell, Dean Cody, I'm going in the back seat, I can't stand anymore, I can't look."
> . . . Great horrors that we were going to crash that very morning took hold of me and I got down on the floor and closed my eyes and tried to go to sleep (OR, p. 234).

But like Cody, Japhy is not trying to teach Duluoz the accuracy of Sakyumuni's first truth, but rather to prove his third, the suppression of suffering can be achieved. By leaving Duluoz to his fate, Zen master, Japhy, has thrown his pupil into the mud.

Duluoz's fear is merely the prelude to another IT experience:

> Then suddenly everything was like jazz; it happened in one insane second or so: I looked up and saw Japhy running down the mountain in huge twenty foot leaps . . . (DB, p. 85).

In his descent of Matterhorn, Japhy gives Duluoz the satori for which he has been waiting: " . . . in that flash I realized it's impossible to fall off mountains you fool . . ." (DB, p. 85). Duluoz grasps the meaning of Japhy's action in the same way that he caught IT from Cody, and having been enlightened, he acts spontaneously: " . . . I suddenly got up and began running down the mountain after him doing exactly the same huge leaps, the same fantastic runs and jumps . . . (DB, p. 85).

Duluoz tells his teacher, "'Ah Japhy you taught me the final lesson of them all, you can't fall off a mountain'" (DB, p. 86). The lesson is not new. Sax has told him the same thing: "'The universe disposes of its own evil!'" (DS, p. 245). And Cody: "' . . . we know what IT is and we know TIME and we know that everything is FINE'" (OR, p. 208). The greater lesson that Duluoz learns from each of his mentors is that all is mind--mud, mountain, universe, IT. In a later episode of The Dharma Bums, Duluoz, taking on the role of mentor, tries to explain to his brother-in-law that the orange he holds exists only in his mind. And because everything exists only in the mind, suppression of suffering can be achieved, even happiness can be achieved.

The climax of The Dharma Bums, the climbing of Matterhorn, occurs in the first half of the novel. The second half portrays Duluoz living the knowledge he has gained from Japhy, and to a significant degree he does suppress his suffering. The novel ends upbeat with Duluoz taking a job the following summer as a fire lookout on a northern Washington mountain, Desolation Peak. The self-reliance that he has learned from Japhy, the knowledge that all he sees is of his mind's making--allow him to find happiness in solitude. Significantly, Japhy does not lose stature at the end of the novel as Sax and Cody do in their earlier

chapters of *The Duluoz Legend*. Atop Desolation Peak, Duluoz has a vision of a Chinese bum standing in the fog and knows that it is Japhy (who is at that moment in Japan). The Chinese bum cries out, "'Go away, thieves of the mind!'" (DB, p. 243). In other words, don't let happiness be stolen from you.

A biographical note is worth interjecting here. The Dharma Bums was written following the publication of On the Road, and Kerouac was uncharacteristically high for the short time it took him to discover that success was not all sweet. His personal elation at the time of writing no doubt lies behind the positive outlook of Duluoz in the novel. A passage from Desolation Angels, written prior to On the Road's publication, gives us another take on Duluoz's mountaintop solitude:

> Yes, for I'd thought, in June, hitchhiking up there to the Skagit Valley in northwest Washington for my fire look-out job When I get to the top of Desolation Peak and everybody leaves on mules and I'm alone I will come face to face with God or Tathagata and find out once and for all what is the meaning of all this existence and suffering and going to and fro in vain but instead come face to face with myself, no liquor, no drugs, no chance of faking it but face to face with ole hateful Duluoz Me and many's the time I thought I'd die, suspire of boredom, or jump off the mountain, but the days, nay the hours dragged and I had no guts for such a leap . . . (DA, p. 4).

Structurally, however, the upbeat ending of The Dharma Bums works well, for it lifts Duluoz to a greater height from which to fall in the final major chapter of *The Duluoz Legend*, Big Sur.

Chapter Seven

THE FALL

i

"the devil's come after me tonight!"

In Big Sur, Kerouac draws together the threads of the Faust parallel that he has strung through On the Road and The Dharma Bums. Using Marlowe's conclusion rather than Goethe's, Kerouac presents the damnation of Duluoz, the final outcome of his quest for knowledge. It is a lovely chronological coincidence that the events of Big Sur take place almost twenty-four years after Jacky Duluoz makes his unspoken pact with Doctor Sax. Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, too, is given twenty-four years before Lucifer comes to claim his soul.

Chapter one of Big Sur finds Duluoz waking up after a lengthy drunk to the "lachrymose cries of Salvation Army meeting":

> "Satan is the cause of your alcoholism, Satan is the cause of your immorality, Satan is working to destroy you unless you repent now . . ." (BS, p. 6).

The Salvation Army speaks as the good angel trying even yet to save Duluoz's soul. Throughout *The Dulouz Legend* this good angel role has been played by Duluoz's mother. She warns him against both of his temptors, Cody and Japhy. In On the Road, Duluoz admits, " . . . my aunt [mother] warned me that he [Cody] would get me into trouble . . ." (OR, p. 10) and in The Dharma Bums, Duluoz's mother pleads with him: "'You and your Buddha, why don't you stick with the

religion you were born with?'" (DB, p. 117). She even sends him a cross-country letter during his Big Sur sojourn, reminding him to "'Pray the real God'" (BS, p. 51).

Duluoz's two temptors both give clues to their alliance with Satan, that they are, in fact, his agents. A darker reading can be made of Duluoz's marriage commitment with Cody: "There were triumph and insolence in his eyes, a devilish look . . ." (OR, p. 189). Japhy openly expresses his distaste for Christianity: "'I don't like all that Jesus stuff . . .'" (DB, p. 90), and draws magical circles (Mandalas) in the sand, reminding us of Mephistopheles. Together, Japhy and Cody lead Duluoz to continue all the sinful practices of his Doctor Sax days: denial of religious faith, perverse sexual activities, obsession with books, pursuit of illicit knowledge.

To pay for his sins, his selling of his soul to Sax, Cody and Japhy, Kerouac's hero must be damned. Tragically, like Doctor Faustus at the end of his life, Duluoz of Big Sur has lost the ideals,* good or evil, for which he sacrificed his soul. Approaching forty, his quest for knowledge over, he describes himself as "bored and jaded" (BS, p. 5). Faustus used magical tricks and practical jokes to distract himself in his final years. Duluoz turns to alcohol, and though it is not the alcohol that causes his damnation, it accelerates his descent into hell. Duluoz discovers the folly of his thinking that suffering can be suppressed, and having searched so long for a heaven on earth, he finds hell on earth instead. Early in Big Sur, Duluoz describes the condition of hell on earth:

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*Kerouac writes to one of his Italian publishers: ". . . you will be saddened by this book because it is the complete breakdown of all the ideals of Road and Dharma."[36]

> --That feeling when you wake up with the delirium tremens with the fear of eerie death dripping from your ears like those special heavy cobwebs spiders weave in the hot countries, the feeling of being a bentback mudman monster groaning underground in hot steaming mud pulling a long hot burden nowhere . . . (BS, p. 7).

The fall from the heavenly altitudes of Matterhorn to the Dante-esque underground of the mudman is a mighty one.

A few sober days begin Duluoz's stay at Big Sur, but when he returns to the cabin (after a fling in San Francisco) accompanied by Billie, Elliot, Dave and Romana, he drinks steadily and succumbs to an alcohol-induced madness. He thinks that Billie is a succubus, Elliot a warlock, and Dave and Romana communists intent on poisoning him. He hears disembodied voices, one of which reminds him of one of his past temptors:

> There are forces whispering in my ear in rapid long speeches advising and warning, sudden other voices are shouting, the trouble is all the voices are long winded and talking very fast like Cody at his fastest . . . (BS, p. 203).

The Big Sur landscape terrifies him as well: "the wind explodes huge groans" (BS, p. 204); the creek babbles madly, driving the babbling sound into Duluoz's head. Like young Jacky, who looks up from the Castle madness to see a serene unknowing Sunday Lowell, Duluoz yearns to be home: "Oh what I wouldn't do to be home on Sunday afternoon yawning because I'm bored . . . (BS, p. 204). He also acknowledges the truth of the good angel's prophecy" "Ma was right, it was all bound to drive me mad, now it's done . . . (BS, p. 204).

Dulouz's descent into madness is, in fact, a restaging of his descent into the Castle. He must once again face the dark sinister creations of his mind. But Doctor Sax begins, "The other night I had a dream . . . (DS, p. 3) and Jacky's confrontation with the Snake, his Judgment Day,

is very dreamlike. By contrast, Duluoz's Big Sur experience is starkly real, the reality, it would seem, prophesied by the Doctor Sax dream. In Doctor Sax Jacky makes the horrifying discovery, "The Snake was coming for me!!" At the height of his Big Sur madness he cries out, "'the devil!--the devil's come after me tonight!'" (BS, p. 204).

On the night that the devils come for Doctor Faustus, he sees Christ's blood flowing in the firmament and knows that one drop will save his soul. Similarly, Duluoz sees the cross and reaches out to it: "'I'm with you Jesus, for always, thank you . . .'" (BS, p. 205). Trying to save himself, Duluoz seems to recant his Buddhist beliefs, or at least recognize the folly of them:

> I lie there in a cold sweat wondering what's come over me for years my Buddhist studies and pipesmoking assured meditations on emptiness and all of a sudden the cross is manifested to me---My eyes fill with tears ---" We'll all be saved--- (BS, p. 206).

More importantly, he promises, if saved, to abandon his quest for knowledge. In a humorous parody of Doctor Faustus' final words, "I'll burn my books!" (XIX . 190) Duluoz says:

> Books, schmooks, this sickness has got me wishing if I can ever get out of this I'll gladly become a mill-worker and shut my big mouth (BS, p. 211).

No doubt the mill will be in Lowell.

Kerouac does not tell us for certain that Duluoz is damned. Big Sur's conclusion is ambiguous, but there are notably no roses of salvation for the older Duluoz as there were for young Jacky. Kerouac also lays open the possibility that Duluoz dies at the end of Big Sur, or simply ceases to exist. The "horrible climax" (BS, p. 213) of Duluoz's descent into hell comes when Billie digs the garbage pit. Another pit, that of the World Snake, figures largely in the climax of Doctor Sax.

But most distressing to Duluoz is that the pit is "exactly the right size for putting a little dead Elliot in." Nonetheless, Duluoz completes the job begun by Billie:

> I simply get mad and dump earth on the garbage and tromp it all down and say "The hell with all this madness!" (BS, p. 215).

The symbolic burial can be widely interpreted. It recalls the burial of Gerard. Perhaps it is actually Duluoz that is being buried (interestingly Duluoz was four, the same age as Elliot, when Gerard died). His statement, "The hell with all this madness!", offers his final words in *The Dulouz Legend*,* and following this statement he sits down to the one minute sleep that washes away his living nightmare. The miraculousness of the cure recalls both the elimination of the World Snake by the Great Bird and Duluoz's articulation (in On the Road) of the ease with which we move from life to death: "the transitions from life to death . . . are so ghostly easy, a magical action for nought, like falling asleep . . ." (OR, p. 173). Kerouac himself stated that "Big Sur is about Death,"[37] and Big Sur completes the cycle begun in Doctor Sax and fulfills that novel's prophecies. It is also worth noting that Kerouac chose to preface Big Sur with the reminder that all his novels are part of one great tale, *The Dulouz Legend*. Perhaps Kerouac felt that with the novel, Big Sur, he would put the Duluoz character to rest. The last line of Big Sur reads, "There's no need to say another word" (BS, p. 216).

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*In terms of *The Duluoz Legend* chronology, these are Duluoz's last quoted words.

ii

"All is vanity"

Dead or alive, damned or saved, Duluoz has failed in his quest for knowledge. Vanity of Dulouz offers an afterword on the fall of Kerouac's hero, and the conclusion come to by the narrator is that his quest was futile from the beginning and could only lead to suffering. The theme of vanity that Kerouac uses in the novel comes from Ecclesiastes, in which the Preacher has a good deal to say about the seeking of knowledge:

> And I gave my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is a vexation of the spirit.
> For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow (Eccl. i, 17-18).

That the conclusion reached by Duluoz corresponds to that of the Preacher is not unexpected. Kerouac has drawn on Ecclesiastes from the beginning of the legend* to prophesy Duluoz's tragic destiny. In Doctor Sax, speaking of a boyhood friend, the narrator states: " . . . he'll walk to work chastized by labour into huge humilities beneath the sum, big fisted silent godly Scotcho was never going to eat his hands nor chaw his soul to bits--" (DS, p. 209). Duluoz by inference will devour himself, to which Ecclesiastes says, "The fool foldeth his hands together and eateth his own flesh" (Eccl. iv.5). If we think that the word "fool" does not apply to Duluoz, the preacher corrects us: "A fool is full of words . . . " (Eccl. x.14).

Historically, the words of The Preacher have stood as the Christian response to the Faust parable. In the 1928 German film version of

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*It is interesting to note that while still in his early twenties, and long before he had published, Kerouac worked on a book entitled "Vanity of Duluoz."

Faust, which Kerouac may well have seen,* the plague-ridden townspeople tell Faust that his knowledge is useless, and they quote Ecclesiastes: "All is vanity." Similarly, the conclusion of Duluoz's Faustian quest for IT is the disillusioned narrator's statement that "nobody knows what's going to happen to anybody," a paraphrasing of the Preacher's pronouncement that "a man cannot tell what shall be . . ." (Eccl. x.14). To deny this is only more vanity. Like Marlowe, Kerouac cannot disguise an admiration for his overreaching protagonist, but to have other than a tragic ending would have been unthinkable for him. In Vanity of Duluoz the narrator must suffer the anguish of knowing that his pursuits have been fruitless; worse, that they could never have been otherwise. If Duluoz is not cast into hellfire for his quest and concommitant vanity, he is condemned to live in the world, of which Mephistopheles says, "Why this is hell, nor am I out of it" (iii.79).

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*This film has a very dramatic scene of Faust's drawing of a circle in the earth to call Mephistopheles.

Chapter Eight

REDEEMING LIFE FROM DARKNESS

i

In *The Duluoz Legend*, light is a persistent metaphor for life. Kerouac defines man in Doctor Sax: "Ah weary flesh, burdened with a light . . ." (DS, p. 97). Moreover, Kerouac extends the metaphor to include the view that the greater the illumination of our lives, the nearer we are to godhood, or heaven on earth, or everlasting life. When Cody undergoes his apotheosis, for example, Duluoz sees him through "myriad pricklings of heavenly radiation" (OR, p. 285).

Kerouac's hero, Jack Duluoz, tries to illuminate his life more brightly through the light of love and the light of knowledge. He wants his life to be the brilliant light of a "fabulous Roman candle," the light emitted when "the blue centrelight pop[s] and everybody goes "'Awwwww'" (OR, p. 8). He also wants the moment when "the blue centrelight pops" to last forever. Therefore, Duluoz pursues the love of Terry, Mardou, and Tristessa, and follows Cody in the search for IT in the hope that fellaheen woman or beat man can carry him into the perfectly illuminated moment that has no end.

The failure of Duluoz's quests results from his failure to see the true path toward light. With Maggie he could have given greater illumination to his life. She even suggests that Duluoz could have been a

bringer of light:*

> I saw, had visions and idees of you handsome my husband walking across the top of America with your lantern-- (MC, p. 149).

The lantern that Maggie speaks of is a brakeman's lantern. In the final chapter of Duluoz's quest for love, Tristessa, we do find Duluoz carrying a brakeman's lantern. But instead of walking across the top of America, he is below the bottom of America, in Mexico: "In my hand I stumble awkwardly hold big railroad brakeman lantern to her [Tristessa's] feet as we descend the perilous needless to say steps . . ." (TRIS, p. 59). The descent with Tristessa symbolizes Duluoz's understanding that his love for her will not bring much light. On the contrary, winning Tristessa's love is like "winning an angel in hell and you are then entitled to go down with her to where it's worse or maybe there'll be light, some, down there . . ." (TRIS, p. 66). Because Duluoz loses the love of Maggie, because--perhaps given a second chance--he drives Mardou to extinguish her light in Heavenly Lane, Duluoz must confront the diminishing of his light.

The narrator of Vanity of Duluoz seems to tell his tale as darkness moves in around him. Gone are his ideals, his belief in the life-giving powers of love and knowledge, his hopefulness for the future--all those things that give light to life. He quotes Ecclesiastes, "All is vanity." He fulfills the prophecy made by Uncle Mike in Doctor Sax:

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*It is my hunch that "Duluoz" is a macaronic spelling taken from French and Spanish. If we eliminate the "o" (which Kerouac may have included to play with the idea of Oz), we have "du," French for "of" or "from" and "luz," Spanish for "light."

> "Oh my poor Ti Jean if you know all the trouble and all the tears and all the sendings of the head to the breast, for sadness, big sadness. Impossible where we find ourselves doomed for death--just to suffer, like your father Emil . . . you are destined to be a man of big sadness . . . " (DS, p. 119).

The narrator of Vanity of Duluoz calls his condition one of "anguish":

> . . . my anguish as I call it arises from the fact that people have changed so much, not only in the past five years, for God's sake, or past ten years as McLuhan says, but in the past thirty years to an extent that I don't recognize myself as a real member of something called the human race (VD, p. 7).

Duluoz's words reveal the particular foresightedness of Uncle Mike's comparison of Jacky and his father. Emil Duluoz's self-description in Maggie Cassidy perfectly captures the forty-six-year old Jack Duluoz:

> "--Old Gloomy Puss--well I'll have my upsets, but pay no attention to me. I'll be ranting about the government, about the way America has changed since I was a boy, don't pay it any attention, kiddo--but maybe when you grow older you'll understand my feelings" (MC, pp. 68-69).

Jack Duluoz certainly does understand. He has quested after godhood and everlasting life, but he has arrived at middle age decidedly mortal, and very much in the image of his father. But unlike father Emil, Jack Duluoz does not have children to keep the Duluoz light burning after him.

ii

Jack Kerouac, too, sought godhood and eternal light, and no doubt he sought them in the same places as those explored by his fictional hero Jack Duluoz. However, his personal solution to the unalterable fact of man's death and disappearance into darkness was a literary one. In Doctor Faustus, Marlowe's hero reminds himself:

> Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man
> Couldst thou make men live eternally
> Or being dead raise them to life again,
> Then this profession were to be esteemed
>
> (Doctor Faustus, sc. i, 1.23-26).

Like the performance of magic, the writing of literature is a profession that offers the inspired practitioner the power to "make men live eternally" and "raise the dead." Proust discusses this power in Les Temps Retrouve, the final book of A La Recherche du Temps Purdu. Proust writes (Andreas Mayor translation):

> . . . I seemed to see that this life we live in half darkness can be illumined, this life that at every moment we distort can be restored to its true pristine shape, that a book, in short, can be realized within the confines of a book.[38]

Encouraged by Proust, Kerouac took a vow to be a "great rememberer, redeeming life from darkness,"[39] and he wrote *The Duluoz Legend*.

Ann Charters has stated: "Across the whole range of the Legend, the strongest books centered around characters who were his friends and people other than Kerouac himself."[40] I would submit that all of Kerouac's novels (excluding The Town and the City) are centered around Jack Duluoz. Kerouac gave life to many characters, but none did he illuminate so clearly as his self-modeled hero. So comprehensively and skillfully, in fact, did Kerouac unfold Jack Duluoz's life, that Charters could paraphrase the novels of *The Duluoz Legend* and produce a highly praised biography of their author. Next to Thomas Wolfe's Eugene Gant, Jack Duluoz has had more words devoted to him by his creator than any other character in American fiction.

Charters further states:

> At bottom Kerouac resisted completing his Legend. He hadn't the emotional distance in his last years to visualize

> his life as the tragedy it had become, and his prose had changed, losing its energy and muscle, so that it didn't seem possible he could weld the separate books of his Duluoz chronology into a coherent whole, even if he tried.[41]

It is not my wish to single out Dr. Charters--her love for Kerouac's work is no doubt genuine and her intentions well meaning--but this kind of misguided criticism has egregiously focussed attention away from the interrelatedness of the novels. First, given the paucity of critical work on Kerouac, it seems to me premature to content that in his last years Kerouac had lost his creative gift. This charge was laid against Melville as well until careful examination of his work after Moby Dick debunked it. Second, Kerouac did visualize the tragedy of his life, or at least of Duluoz's life. Kerouac's biographers love to place side-by-side photographs of the young Jack Kerouac of bright promise with the forty-six-year-old, fat, moribund Jack Kerouac. They know the emotional wallop this juxtaposition of images gives. But Kerouac has already done this in *The Duluoz Legend*. We have only to compare the young Jacky Duluoz of Doctor Sax or Maggie Cassidy, or even the questing hero of On the Road with the desperate and doomed protagonist of Big Sur or the embittered narrator of Vanity of Duluoz to realize Kerouac's dramatic achievement. Finally, I would argue, and I hope that this thesis lends support to my argument, that Kerouac did complete *The Duluoz Legend*. As this becomes more widely understood and as further critical studies (on *The Duluoz Legend*) become available, I think public opinion will change regarding Kerouac's work and that in due time he will be granted his rightful place among the very best of American writers. I think it will be found that Kerouac has made good on his vow to "redeem life from darkness," and that the exploration of that redeemed life is a rich and rewarding experience for the reader.

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10. Revelation xx.1-3

    And I saw an angel come down from heaven,
    having the key of the bottomless pit and a
    great chain in his hand.
    [2]And he laid hold on the dragon, that old
    serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and
    bound him a thousand years,
    [3]And cast him into the bottom less pit . . .

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19. Jack Kerouac, Big Sur (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1962), p. 4. All subsequent references to this text will appear in the body of the thesis noted by the abbreviation BS.

20. John Tytell, Naked Angels: The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1976) pp. 206-207.

21. Joy Walsh ed., Moody Street Irregulars, Number 9, (Winter/Spring 1981), p. 5.

22. Jack Kerouac, Desolation Angels, Introd. Seymour Krim (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1965), p. 29. All subsequent references to this text will appear in the body of the thesis noted by the abbreviation DA.

23. Herman Melville, "Bridegroom Dick," Collected Poems of Herman Melville, ed. Howard P. Vincent (Chicago: Packard and Company, 1947), p. 182. The line quoted is the final line of the poem.

24. Jack Kerouac, "Origins of the Beat Generation," Playboy, (June, 1959), pp. 31-32, 42-79; rpt. in Jack Kerouac, On the Road: Text and Criticism, ed. Scott Donaldson (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1979), p. 364.

25. Jack Kerouac, Visions of Gerard (New York: Farrar, Straus & Co., 1963), p. 7. All subsequent references to this text will appear in the body of the thesis noted by the abbreviation VG.

26. Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus, ed. John D. Jump (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1962), i. 105. Subsequent references to this text are noted by scene and line number in the body of the thesis.

27. Charters, p. 157.

28. Hunt, p. 468.

29. Carole Gottlieb Volpat, "Jack Kerouac's On the Road: A Re-evaluation," Midwest Quarterly, (Summer 1973), pp. 385-407; rpt. in Jack Kerouac, On the Road: Text and Criticism, ed. Scott Donaldson (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1979), p. 432.

30. Volpat, p. 432.

31. Arnold Krupat, "Dean Moriarity as Saintly Hero," On the Road, by Jack Kerouac: Text and Criticism, ed. Scott Donaldson (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1979), p. 402.

32. Charters, pp. 158-59.

33. Granville Jones, "Jack Kerouac and the American Conscience," On the Road by Jack Kerouac: Text and Criticism, ed. Scott Donaldson (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1979), p. 498.

34. Jones, p. 495.

35. Jack Kerouac, The Dharma Bums (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 12. All subsequent references to this text will appear in the body of the thesis noted by the abbreviation DB.

36. Letter from Jack Kerouac to Fernanda Pivano Sottsass dated April 18, 1963. Reprinted in The Beat Book, Ed. Arthur and Kit Knight (The Beat Book comprises Vol. 4, 1974, of the Unspeakable Visions of the Individual, P.O. Box 539, California, Pennsylvania) p. 56.

37. Ibid., p. 56.

38. Marcel Proust, Time Regained, trans. Andreas Mayer (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), p. 451.

39. Jack Kerouac, Visions of Cody (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1972), p. 103.

40. Charters, p. 359.

41. Charters, p. 358.

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