CHAPTER - V

CULTURAL ALIENATION
There has seldom been as great a confusion about what is valid and good as there is now more and more men and women are fundamentally alienated from what their culture\(^1\) offers them. Hopeful visions of the future, idealisms and utopias have become increasingly rare and difficult. The direction of cultural change today is obviously from commitment and enthusiasm to alienation and apathy.

After the inhuman and inconceivable savagery perpetrated during the Wars, with the atom bomb hanging like the sword of Damocles over the destiny of man, the world is definitely drifting away from the path of righteousness. Wars have brought about great transvaluations in man's moral and ethical conduct. Time-honoured customs are challenged and flouted with bravado, and a rackless spirit of defiance of everything holy and sacred has become the order of the day.

\(^1\) 'Culture' is a highly comprehensive and complex phenomenon. For want of space only one aspect of American culture is dealt with here.
There is, however, not much value in the saying that things are all wrong at present in comparison with what they were in the past. What happens is this: a generation of people comes to the stage of the world; they act their parts as best they can, and when their turn comes to leave the stage and they see the 'hungry generation' eager to step into their shoes, they become alarmed at the thought that the traditions and standards they have set up will not be respected. So ensues the eternal conflict between the Old and the New. It is observed that the majority of those who say that the world is going astray, belong to the middle-age group and above. The younger generation, as a rule, will not say that. They are full of dreams and enthusiasm to build up the world on an entirely new foundation. In doing so, they do not mind if all ancient customs, standards, thoughts and, values, however holy and sacred they might have been, are swept away.

As time marches on, situations change and circumstances differ, and man also acts differently. We cannot judge the actions of a man in the last decade of the twentieth century by the ideas and ideals which were in vogue in society in the prehistoric age.
But there is no denying that some of the old principles are healthy, useful, and beneficial. Old principles will have to be applied to new conditions, and in the process they may lose their colour but not their intrinsic value. But those whose thoughts run only a fixed rut, get alarmed and say that the world is heading towards destruction. Whether we like it or not, the world is moving; it is not stationary, nor has it not fallen into stagnation. Life is movement and stagnation indicates death. So there are bound to be changes in the living, moving world.

We find innumerable societies and associations rising in every country, which seek to set right the moral disturbances of the people. It is an inherent weakness of average human nature that philosophically it conceives of high moral principles, but in day-to-day life it has to undergo a tremendous struggle against baser instincts. As a result, the average man, more often than not, succumbs to greed, malice, selfishness, lust, and the like. With the development of civilization, life began to be more and more complex, and people found it hard to guide at least the collective life by high moral principles.

Youth culture in America, is all the more
problematic. It exemplifies a kind of socially ambivalent culture. Central to all forms of this culture is the absence of a straight and smooth transition to what are called "adult roles". Instead the American version of youth culture offers an eddy, a whirlpool, a waiting period or even a final resting-point, in which young men and women adopt a way of life that constitutes a protest against the adult world. It may take the form of being a "hood" or a bohemian, intellectually rejecting the whole trapping and tradition of American culture, or - less obviously - simply being utterly indifferent to the many voices and beckonings of the wider society.

It is important to define "youth culture" broadly enough to include not only those who protest through world or deed but also those who reject through inaction. Even opposition and antagonism constitute recognition of the object; boredom simply denies that its existence is significant. "Silent generations" and "angry young men" share a common rejection of their culture: the first rejecting through lack of response, the other through open opposition.

Alienation may also be construed in terms of disassociation from "popular cultural standards".
Some writers consider one to be alienated from culture if he does not "accept" it and rather "rejects" it, or has an attitude of indifference to or detachment from it.

Alienation from popular culture is always referred to as a "feeling", of distance or separation, the exact nature of which varies from writer to writer. For Middleton\(^2\), to be alienated from culture is simply to feel "uninterested" in it. Similarly, Seeman\(^3\) speaks interchangeably of "alienation" from culture and "detachment" from it. The feeling involved is simply a feeling of indifference towards it, as opposed to a feeling that importance or value attaches to its various components. According to Nettler\(^4\), on the contrary, to be alienated from it is to feel "unfriendliness" towards it, to feel "averse" to it, and to "resent" it. Says Schacht:

> It should be observed that individuals who satisfy the above criteria of alienation from popular culture frequently do not feel unhappy about their alienation. On the


\(^3\)Melvin Seeman, "On the Meaning of Alienation", p. 788.

contrary, an awareness of it often gives rise to feelings of pride and superiority....

Disassociation from the popular culture prevailing in one's society must be distinguished from disassociation from its fundamental values. Popular cultural and fundamental values may often be related, but they constitute quite different levels of the socio-cultural life of a society. When Keniston refers to the young men, who are the subjects of his study, as "alienated", he is referring to "their generalized refusal of American culture"; that is, to their rejection of these fundamental assumptions and assignations of value, rather than merely of popular American tastes and pastime.6

The crux is that one cannot reject the old well-established cultural values by forming new popular cultural standards; but if he does so, he can no more be happy. By rejecting popular cultural values one may have a feeling of pride and superiority, but if he tries to reject 'cultural standards' he has to suffer in due course.

5Schacht, p. 185.
6Ibid., p. 186.
Culture is, essentially, society and religion-bound. It has always been affected by the religion of the society. Therefore, standards and values pronounced by prophets are necessarily attached to the culture. For example, a catholic cannot marry again, nor can he commit adultery. There is a growing tendency of demolishing the cultural standards concerning marriage and adultery. Love has become lust; persons are not often satisfied with one wife, and often resort to remarriages. These two things very often make a person alienated from the culture.

Berryman is no exception to this phenomenon. His life was often darkened by so many love scandals, and escapades of lust and adultery. So strong was the sense of alienation from his culture that Berryman suffered a disastrous love affair — one of "dozens, "as the poet himself claimed7 — that drove him to severe mental disorder. He had to undergo psychoanalysis from 1947 to 1953. The affair brought him to the point of suicide and murdering his 'mistress' because she flatly refused to leave her husband and marry him.

Berryman could not restrain himself even from falling in love with his graveyard character 'Mistress Bradstreet', who had died about three centuries before. Not only did he fall in love with her but also seduced her and got a child from the lady who was 'pure' and 'loyal' towards her husband, Simon, whom Berryman accuses of being unsympathetic to her literary labours. The accusation has no basis for Anne Bradstreet's most passionate poems were written to her husband:

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were lov'd by wife, then thee,
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me ye women if you can. 8

Anne was a very well-read girl by the time she married her father's twenty-five-year-old (not "so much older" [Homage, 14.4], as Berryman puts it) assistant on the estate, the man who was to be her companion for life: "Simon Bradstreet, nine years older than herself, a graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who in the New World would become eventually Governor of Massachusetts, legislator, judge, ambassador, and royal

councillor, dying in great (honour) at ninety-four."

Berryman himself knew well that Anne Bradstreet, 'the first poetess' of America, had been a remarkable woman and married to a remarkable man, "she loved him, with a passion that can hardly be described, through their whole life together, from the age of sixteen on. I decided to tempt her. I could only do this ...." 

His turmoil makes Berryman call Anne from her grave: "I summon, see,/ from the centuries it" (Homage, 3.2-3). He asserts; "I loved her - I sort of fell in love with her ...." The poet takes comfort in saying that "we are on each other's hands / who care" (Homage, 2.7-8). Moreover, this caring later becomes a love dialogue directly between the poet and Anne, which can be taken to be a symbolic marriage.

The sensuality which had enabled Anne to triumph in the birth scene ("I did it with my body!" [21.1]) now comes into conflict with her commitment to her family. Lonely and despairing, she explores the

---

9 Hutchinson, p. 2.
possibilities of adultery with the poet in "a sort of extended witch-seductress and demon-lover bit." 12 Both the poet and Anne are attracted and repelled by the desire they nourish for each other across the centuries. "You must not love me", says Anne, "but I do not bid you cease" (26.8). She feels both delight and fear in the relationship, and her attitude changes from time to time. Like Berryman, the adulterer, she finds herself in violation of moral law:

Falls on me what I like a witch,
for lawless holds, annihilations of law
which Time and he and man abhor, foresaw ...

(28.4-6)

However, he fears of if not Hell, a hellish dream life: "I trundle the bodies, on the iron bars, over that fire backward & forth; they burn" (34.1-2). Nevertheless, their passionate selves overcome their fears, and they touch and kiss. When Anne says to the poet, "Talk to me", he responds with a marvel of sensuality, described in "an only half-subdued aria-stanza":

- It is Spring's New England. Pussy willows wedge
up in the wet, Milky crestings, fringed
yellow, in heaven, eyed

12Arpin, p. 56.
by the melting hand-in-hand or more
desires single, heavy-footed, rapt,
make surge poor human hearts, Venus is trapt -
the hefty pike shifts, sheer -
in Orion blazing.

(31)

But such innocent-sounding passion has violent undertones. At the end of the stanza Venus is trapped in Orion. By stanza 37 the ambiguity of Orion's pike is resolved - it has become "a male great pestle" which "smashes/ smell women swarming towards the mortar's rim in vain" (37.7-8). Thus, the moment of the poet's most intimate contact with Anne is by no means a tender interlude.

There are some very interesting and striking dialogues in the verbal intercourse of the "lovers":

Berryman: ... O my love, my heart is breaking, please neglect my cries and I will spare you.  
(26.1-2)

Anne: You must not love me, but I do not bid your cease.  
(26.8)

Berryman: I have earned the right to be alone with you.  
(27.6)

Anne: What right that can be?  
Convulsing, if you love, enough, like a sweet lie ... This created skin.
like the crabs & shells my Palissyewer, touch!
... It lessens. Kiss me.
... Talk to me. (27.7-8; 28.1-2; 30.1-8)

Berryman: Milky crestings, fringed
yellow, in heaven, eyed
by the melting hand-in-hand ... (31.2-4)

Anne: ... I want to take you for my lover. (32.5)

Berryman: - Do. (32.5)

Berryman and Anne touched and flattered,
souls mate and bodies do mate, belong in bed together;
she savours to the full of the glamour of this sexy
evil. She invites him to touch her smallpox scars,
exclaims with pleasure when he does it. She is both
abandoned ("kiss me") and prim ("that once"). He
responds to her "talk to me" by calling to her
attention the New England Spring, all damply burgeoning
with fertility symbols, she admits, yet forbidden. She
is increasingly carried away by a temptation
increasingly sexual and therefore increasingly "a black
joy". She is almost helpless before the tyranny of sex :
"a male great pestle smashes / small women swarming
towards the mortar's rim in vain " (37.7-8).
Unlike the protagonist, Anne realizes that the penalty for her violation of the moral law is damnation: "I fear Hell's hammer - wind" (37.1); she is ready for the holy punishment and her struggle ends with a return to her family:

Evil dissolves, & love like foam;
that love. Prattle of children powers me home,
my heart claps like the swan's
under a frenzy of who love me & who shine.

(39.5-8)

Anne need no longer say "I am Ruth / away " (9.7-8); she can now say "I am at home".

The poet also desires to obey the ethical law (refrain / my western lust" [stanza 33]), but is again unable to control his passion. He is driven to the same despair, guilt, and self-denigration that Anne experienced.

The ultimate aim of the poet is to present "A love forbidden by Time and Space and the laws of God and man, and death ...." The poet wooes Anne not only out of history but away from Simon and her family. The relationship that would never achieve public sanction.

13 Haffenden, Life, p. 27.
Some of the intensities of his ("respectable"?) seduction of the spirit of Anne Bradstreet derive from the experience, which Berryman is unable to reveal explicitly, of his adulterous affair with "Lise" in his Sonnets.

The sonnet sequence (Berryman's Sonnets) more or less tells the story of the protagonist's affair with Lise, the wife of a good friend. It is, in fact, story of a love affair, illicit, between "the poet" and a Danish-American blonde, Lise. The sonnets — apparently written over a period of several months in 1946 — are a sequence of emotions hinged on the ecstasy and the pain of a particular love. The poet, in Sonnet 105, confesses that he himself is "The adulterer and bizzare of thirty-two."

The poet coins an appropriate epigraph for the affair as "knock-down-and-drag-out-love" (97). The intensity of their love is so strong that he does not have any existence "without you I/ Am not myself" (94); "You are me" (27). He announces that love's goal is "To become ourselves" (45).

Though somewhat repetitions in theme, the sonnets are appealing in their sheer erotic exultation,
their reveling in sex - breasts, blonde hair, soul kisses, biting and kissing, even an orgasm compared to a rumbling subway train. "My glass I lift at six o'clock, my darling, / As you plotted ... Chinese couples shift in bed" (13), seems to be referring to the Oriental lovemaking. He loves to kid his lady about her drinking, and to kid himself - "we four / Locked, crooked together" (33). What the sonnets best accomplish finally is to sing assuredly of joy: "what I love you/ Inter alia tingles like a whole good day" (86).

When the time of departure comes, the Henry is feeling alone without his fair love and suffers a loss not 'painful' but 'charming':

I feel the summer draining me,
I lean back breathless in an agony
Of charming loss I suffer without moan,
Without my love, or with my love alone.

(59)

Henry takes pleasure in violating the moral law by lusting for his friend's wife.

Moreover, Sonnet 71 functions to set the time of the adulterers' action as simultaneous to a communion service, with an obvious ironic contrast
between the sacred and the profane, presenting the familiar paradox that profane love may be sacred:

Our Sunday morning when dawn-priests were applying Wafer and wine to the human wound, we laid Ourselves to cure ourselves down: I'm afraid Our vestments wanted, but Francis' friends were crying In the nave of pines, sun-satisfied, and flying Subtle as angels about the barricade Boughs made over us, deep in a bed half made Needle-soft, half the sea of our simultaneous dying.

In the final phrase "simultaneous dying", dying is used in the Elizabethan sense of orgasm.

In Henry's expression of love he has progressed beyond the Berryman of the Sonnets and Homage, who had difficulty in distinguishing between the emotion of love and lust. There are several declarations of love for his third wife, Kate, and for his children:

Go, ill-sped book, and whisper to her ... that she is beautiful ....

Say her small figure is heavenly & full .... Say she is soft in speech, stately in walking, modest at gatherings, and in every thing declare her excellence.
Forget not, when the rest is wholly done
and all her splendours opened one by one
to add that she likes Henry,
for reasons unknown, and fate has bound them fast
one to another in linkages that last
and that are fair to see.

(Song, 171)

In this love song love and joy are implicit rather than
insistently proclaimed. The joy of love for both wife
and daughter, "Twissy" (Biscuit), is included in a
later Song that indicates that Henry has found a large
degree of contentment in his domestic life (186).
"Twissy", Henry's almost perfect child" (298), is
praised along with Paul, Henry's son, by his second
wife, in Song 303, a poem that concludes with Henry's
assertion that having a vocation, children and friends
is the real purpose in life.

Despite Henry's domestic happiness, he is
"incorrigible in lusting after beautiful women". He
recalls Lise:

Melted my honey, summers ago. I told
her true & summer things. She leaned an ear
in my direction, here

(108 : 16-18);

and the two girls he had known in London during
the 1930's:
He has an interview to give in London
but the ladies have never married frolicksomes
as long ago they were
must he impute to him their spinsterhood
& further groan, as far the ones he stood
up & married fair?

Connection with Henry seemed to be an acre in Hell,
he crossed himself with horror. Doubtless a bell
ought to've been hung on Henry
to warm a-many lovely ladies off
before they had too much, which was enough,
and set their calves to flee.

(371:7-18)

But poor Henry could enjoy 'only' two in London!

He hasn't a friend for a thousand miles to the west
and only two in London, he counted & guessed:
Ladies he might see again.

(371:4-6),

Henry also came across a nude lady bending over a
telephone, her "white rear bare in the air":

My beauty is off duty:-

Henry relives a lady, how down vain,
spruce in her succinct parts, spruce everywhere.
They fed like muscles and lunched
after, between, before. He tracks her, husband
(propped on red table elbows) at her telephone,
white rear bare in air.

(93:12-18)
Henry is so preoccupied with the subject that even in dreams he encounters innumerable girls in the world, longing to seduce them all:

All the girls, with their vivacious littles, visited him in dream: he was interested in their tops & bottoms and even in their middles.

(350: 1-3).

He manages to meet many of them, including a "Miss Birnbaum": "Profoundly troubled over Miss Birnbaum -/ a photograph! from Heaven! by Heaven, please! -" (227: 1-2), an "Yvette Choinais" whom he considered more beautiful than his own wife and far more delightful than his expectations:

It is after all her! & in the late afternoon of the last day! & she is even more delightful than longling Henry expected:

...on this last day she is more beautiful high coloured even than Henry's wife who is pale, pale & beautiful: Yvette's ankles are slim as the thought of various poets I could mention & she tilts her head proudly.

... such an excellent lady
I will have more to say at a later time with my whole cracked heart, in prose or rhyme of this lady of the northern sea.

(289);
an unnamed hostess who is already married but it makes
no difference to 'Losty' Henry:

... in a rump session with the vivid hostess
whose guests had finally gone,
was stronger, though so limited, though failed
all normal impulse before her interdiction, yes,
and Henry gave in.

I'd like to have your body, but, she moaned,
I'm married. Henry muttered to himself
so am I and was glad
to keep chaste

(142: 2-10);

a "Mrs. Boogry" whom he admits he does not love but
still slavers over:

Love her he doesn't ...
God help Henry, who deserves it all
every least part of that infernal & unconscious
woman, and the pain.

I feel as if, unique, she ... Biddable?
... Vouchsafe me, Sleepless One,
a personal experience of the body of Mrs. Boogry
before I pass from lust!

(69);

the daughter of a famous woman, unspecified, whom he
seduced beside a swimming pool in Utah and considers
his jobs, awards and books on prose and poetry
worthless when compared to beautiful girls like her:

... the pool-apron in Utah whereon he lay
the famous daughter? of the famous mother? O
there were more than enough whereof
to what an entry, rather than this silliness
of jobs, awards, books.

(343 : 9-13)

Fortunately, the tone of most of these recollections
differs from the unadulterated passion of the Sonnets.
Characteristic is Henry's response when he sees a
stranger in a restaurant:

Filling her compact & delicious body
with chicken paprika, she glanced at me ....
and only the fact of her husband & four other people
kept me from springing on her

Or falling at her little feet and crying
'You are the hottest one for years of night
Henry's dazed eyes
have enjoyed, Brilliance.' ...

-Black hair, complexion Latin, jewelled eyes
downcast ... The slob beside her feasts ... What wonders is
she sitting on, over three?

(4)

The tone is both humorous and lascivious, but the lust
predominates. Henry is more of a dirty old (or
middle-aged) man than an adulterer. He notes that his increasing age has made it somewhat easier to avoid lust; by a conscious effort, he makes "passes" at ladies only in his correspondence with them and not in the flesh:

The progress of age helped him, to be not good but better:
he restricted his passes to passes made by letters
he drank less.
Mlle Choinais noted a definite though small improvement in
Henry:
... a degree of gentleness.

(350 : 13-18)

But Henry is "the incorrigible old beast" who predicts that there will have to be a law passed to keep him from "climbing trees, / & other people's wives ..."
(350 : 6-7). He does not consider the present moral laws sufficient for him - a new law has to be made - and who knows, will it be obeyed by the lusty Henry?
In Dream Song 1, the poet recalls climbing to the top of a "sycamore" where he sang out his joy:

What he has now to say is a long
wonder the world can bear & be
Once in a sycamore I was glad
all at the top, and I sang.
Hard on the land wears the strong sea
and empty grows every bed.

(1; 13-18)
In another Song he is an opossum in a tree and sexual activity of some kind is going on; he and the female are united, and the two of them together are said to be a "possum treed"

Cling to me & I promise you'll drown too,
this voyage is terminal. I'll take your beauty down
and ruined in sea weed
then it will seem forever. I am you
you are your moan, you are your sexy moan,
we are a 'possum treed.

Difficult at midnight grew our love
as if we could not have enough, enough,
reluctant lady.
Nobody in the world knows where I am.

(355:1-10)

In Song 57, again, Henry is a different animal, and this time he is caught; he recalls a recoon treed, dogs barking, and "flashlights":

I don't think there's that place
save sullen here, wherefrom she flies tonight retrieving her whole body, which I need.
I recall a 'coon treed,
flashlights, & barks, and I was in that tree,
and something can (has) been said for sobriety but very little.
The guns, Ah, darling, it was late for me, 
midnight, at sever. How in famished youth 
could I foresee Henry's sweet seed
unspent across so flying barren ground, 
where would my loves dislimn whose dogs abound? 
I fell out of the tree.

(57 : 6-18)

In "A Stimulant for an Old Beast" (3), Henry is clearly the beast. The beauty is "screwed-up lovely 23". Death is clearly the mother of Desire, and Henry's sexual obsession, already strong, is increased by his heightened awareness of his own physical decline. Like Rilke he is especially attracted to young women:

I'm not so young but not so very old, 
said screwed-up lovely 23.
A final sense of being right out in the cold, 
unkissed.
... Thick chests quit. Double agent, Joe. 
She holds her breath like a seal 
and is whiter & smoother.

Rilke was a jerk. 
I admit his griefs & music 
& tilted spelled alldisappointed ladies. 
A threshold worse than the circles 
where the vile settle & lurk, 
Rilke's. As I said, -
In the delightful fourth song, "Filling her compact & delicious body" Henry virtually fainting with desire, comes close to "springing on her" (like an old beast), but has to be content with his spumoni. There ought to be a law against Henry", Henry means, and his friend assures him" - Mr. Bones : there is". His lust causes Henry to fall back into "the original crime : art rime". It is not wine but women, not love but lust, that accounts for the chaos in Henry's life; "He was always in love with the wrong woman" (213:10).

Berryman follows Freudian theory in insisting on the importance of dreams as embodiments of the unconscious drives and on the primacy of the sex drive. Several consciously dream-symbols occur in the Dream Songs. Henry, for example, says in Song 11 that as an adolescent he sometimes dreamed of flying, - flying being "regularly a symbol of sexual activity in male dreams". When Henry's father, in song 241, had once taken him on military maneuvers, he had said, "My field-glasses surpass ... yours", restating the sexual competition between father and son. Henry mentions several times the extraction of his teeth, which as

Freud says symbolises "castration as a punishment for onanism." 15

Berryman consciously echoes Freud while expressing emotions towards his mother. He once confided that he enjoyed a "close" relationship with her. 16 She praises her in song 100 for her "courage". But in Song 212, he regards her as "armed" and dangerous. In one surrealistic poem she is seen as attacking Henry and his brother, hurling balloons and sacks filled with water down on them from a cafe terrace. The reason for her assault is that Henry has failed to order for her a dessert with "a catholic name" (317). Henry hallucinates in Song 270, as he accepts Freud's notion that all men desire to return to the womb. He then explicitly tries to kill his mother:

Womb was the word, where Henry never developed.
Prudent of him though gloomy. I assume
that which you neglect.
The face he put on matters, slightly wrecked,
passed muster O at noon & while he supped
& enroute back to the womb.

(270 : 7-12)


Some Dream Songs also present persecution of Henry, which is, as he himself realizes, a concomitant of the guilt he often feels. In Song 20, he judges and finds himself wanting - he has left letters unanswered, has daystreamt while others were talking to him, has lied, and has "hurt" several people with his curtness; and now he doubts whether he has ever done good to others. Henry agrees with a court that finds him to be "The Man Who Did Not Deliver", guilty not only of the stated charges but also of numerous "un-charges" (43). He sometimes imagines being punished by having his "hands" (81) or his "cratch" (8) taken away, or by having a phallic leg cut off by a surgeon (319). He realizes that the tormentors are only doing what he himself feels to be fair, consequent upon his admission of guilt (236).\textsuperscript{17}

Henry's anxiety and guilt make his life almost unbearable. He asks heaven to convert him into a Prufrockian mullusk, to make him blind to the beauty of women and unresponsive to sexual impulse:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{17}The image of a man with a wooden leg occurs in "The Captain's Song" (Short Poems, 72).
\end{flushright}
Hand me back my crawl,
condign Heaven. Tighten into a ball
elongate & valved Henry. Tuck him peace.
Render him sightless,
or ruin at high rate his crampon focus,
wipe out his need. Reduce him to the rest of us.

(25 : 6-11)

Thus "The lust-quest seems in this case to be over"
(163:7) !!! ?

Perhaps Berryman was afraid of becoming a self-parodist if he continued to write Dream Songs, but the masochistic or self-congratulatory revelations in Love & Fame, spoken in the first person, often lack the aesthetic distance that poet maintained behind the mask of Henry. For example, Henry mentions that he has three children (Dream Song 303). It may be noted that in Love & Fame Berryman himself admits to have, by 1970, three children, one of them being illegitimate ("Her & It", p.3).

In "The Damned", the poet also recalls an adulterous relationship. The woman speaks the first stanza of the poem, explaining that she is pregnant and suffers from considerable anxiety. The poet then describes the scene :
As soon as I tucked it in she burst into tears. She had a small mustache but was otherwise gifted, riding, & crying her heart out.

(She had been married two years) I was amazed. (Her first adultery) I was scared & guilty. I said What are you crying for, darling? Don't. She stuttered something & wept on. She came again & again, twice ejecting me over her heaving. I turned my head aside to avoid her goddamned tears, getting in my beard.

(Love & Fame, 68)

Another blatant recollection occurs in "To B-E-" (52), where the poet describes a meeting with his lover from Cambridge, a meeting that took place in New York City some time after their first affair. The girl had undressed, "opened" herself, and said "Kiss me":

O UNIMPROVEABLE ....
My Antony & Cleopatra thirsting & burning lust!
My mortal love....
Too often, as too often you plained to me, we did it.
'What do you think you are? a sexual athlete?' You are sighed to me, after a pause: 'O yes!'

Ah, after those years; & later, stark you lay back on my thick couch in Manhattan
& opened yourself & said 'Kiss me'  
I sucked your hairs.  

(Love & Fame, 52)

Yet another example is Berryman's totalling up his sexual conquests - the total was seventy nine (!) - and ranking the ladies according to their ability: "Once, when low, I made out a list - it came to 79 - / she stood third" ("Thank You Christine", 48).

The dominant emotion of Parts One and Two of Love & Famous is not love but lust. The young Berryman fondly recalls moments when he and a wed sat in a guest parlour of a Barnard dormitory and engaged in sexual foreplay in plain sight of anyone who passed the doorless room ("Cadenza on Garnette", 4). He recites another instance of his lust in "My Special Fate" (12), when he and a girl named "Clare Reese" left a Barnard dance and took the subway to some park, probably near the upper tip of Manhattan, where they undressed and enjoyed each other - at least until they were sighted by some teenagers who laughed racously as the two hastily fumbled back into their clothes. In "Freshman Blues" (9), Berryman brags about his conquest of a "townie", not a wed, whom he crawled into bed with while the girl's mother, cowed by the young man's
status, listened downstairs. (Apparently the girl's brother was less impressed with the visitor's social position; the poet says that he so feared the brother that he eventually turned the girl over to another undergraduate.)

At least once his lust was frustrated when a girl named "Elspeth" proudly told him that she had allowed someone to take photographs of her in the nude and then she teasingly refused to let the poet see the pictures ("Images of Elspeth", 10-11). But more often than not his lust finds an outlet. After he had arrived at Cambridge the young man met a girl named "Christine" in a tearoom, who immediately accompanied him to his rooms where she said:

'I'm menstruating, honey: what's the hurry?'

The hurry was a prepatent erection brought overseas needing to be buried in you
C B, my delicious amateur mistress of a young interne in London

who comes up to see you once a week.
So there on my floor she did her bloody best.
It was extreme.

(Love & Fame, 48)
Through these scenes the young man is shown to have been able to experience lust without necessarily feeling love, but he was never able to express love without confusing it with lust, he lusted after most girls and loved only a few. The confusion occurs in the first two lines of *Love & Fame* - "I fell in love with a girl/ O and a gash" ("Her & It", 3). And the same confusion is present at the end of Part Two of *Love & Fame*. The last four poems of this section express the culminating love of the young poet for a girl known to us only by her initials, "B.E.", perhaps an indication that the poet feels that this love affair was more nearly sacred for him than any of the other relationships with girls who are explicitly named. B.E. was a beautiful student at Newnham College, a former ballerina. The last of the poems to her, "To B - E -"(52), forms an ecstatic conclusion to the first half of *Love & Fame*, but even here the poet now admits that his love for the girl was confused with a "thirsting " burning lust". There is no affair in Parts One and Two of *Love & Fame*, that fail to reveal that for the young man love was always, finally, lust - his lusting is incorrigible, unimprovable.

There are rare examples of the poet's lust in
Parts Three and Four of *Love & Fame*. The poem "Dante's Tomb" (71) disjointly concludes with a recalled scene of lust:

... A domed affair,  
forbidding & tight shut....

She said to me, half-strangled, 'Do that again.  
And then do the other thing'.

Sunlight flooded the old room  
& I was both sleepy & hungry.  

(*Love & Fame*, 71)

Love cannot remain love for Berryman; for this sexual athlete' even "... marriage is outdated & superfluous".  

Though, towards his 'twilight', Berryman prays to master his lust:

'SOLE watchman of the flying stars, guard me  
against my flicker of impulse lust: teach me  
to see them as sisters & daughters.

(*Love & Fame*, 88)

He requests God to protect him from his compulsive venery and make him learn to consider adultery to be as disgusting as insect. But "... Berryman and his
Henry find that act of reconciliation (is) impossible.\textsuperscript{18}

Libidinal love in Berryman's work is a part of the problem of living in the world, a problem that became in his work increasingly insistent and intense.

A "typical" Berryman poem presents a character radically at odds with his environment, or what else, who through a process of suffering and self-examination, comes to a realization of the importance of either love or work or both. In both cases it is the character's responsibility to the culture which is rescued from the threats of irresponsibility. We would suggest that the catalogue of sexual performances, without passion or personal commitment to other values than satisfying the itch, is indicative of the poet's total lack of commitment to higher cultural values.