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2. Ibid., (P.156)


   (P.88)


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17. William Burroughs - Naked Lunch, Paladin, 1962 (P. 31)

18. Ibid., (P. 99)


22. William Burroughs - Naked Lunch, Paladin, 1962, (P. 91)

23. Ibid., (P. 136)

24. Ibid., (P. 163)

25. Ibid., (P. 76-77)

26. Ibid., (P. 133)

27. Ibid., (Pp. 133-34)


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40. William Burroughs - Naked Lunch, Paladin, 1982, (P.177)
41. Mary Mc Carthy - The Writing on the Wall & other Essays, New York, 1970 (P.42.)
CHAPTER III

SOFT MACHINE AND MEMORIES OF ADDICTION

In the words of Burroughs, the Soft Machine is "an expansion of my South American experiences with surreal extensions." He sees the Soft Machine as being a sequel to Naked Lunch, a mathematical extension of the Algebra of Need beyond The Junk Virus." In fact, while the focus in Naked Lunch is on drug-addiction-the attention shifts in Soft Machine to a vague and pervasive evil which can still be identified by its perverted and experimental character. The world depicted here is no less infernal than hell. It accounts for the author's recollection of various kinds of addiction and fantasies of adolescent and homosexual experiences, travels and wanderings in quest of the Grail (i.e., the yagel).

Donald Palumbo states, "In Naked Lunch, Nova Express, Soft Machine and Ticket That Exploded, William Burroughs weaves an intricate and horrible allegory of human greed, corruption and debasement." Each work is a single volume with a single plot. But the quartet (i.e.,
The Naked Lunch, Nova Express, Soft Machine, & The Ticket That Exploded constitutes the different sections of one large work. The development of the author's thought is seen through the gradual progress of his bizarre novels which clarify the concept and message from the viewpoint of the world of controllers and controlled. Burroughs suggests measures to attain complete freedom from addiction. For him, any sort of habit, necessity or need is addiction which in turn dehumanizes its victim. In Soft Machine, the major theme is sexuality as a means of control. It lays different emphasis on the themes of sexuality, drugs and power in Naked Lunch; The theme of revolt is added to it. The imagery of the addict world and the metaphor of addiction are important secondary motifs. Soft Machine includes the familiar imagery of junk neighbourhoods, possession by an evil force, downward metamorphosis, and various addict hustlers. The various junk images link the theme of addiction to the Uranians of the Nova Mythology. The narrator of Soft Machine is also the persona of a hustler story-teller of the carny world despite his different roles like German, Nova Criminal or the Nova Agent. Though drug-addiction is not the major subject, the dominance of the persona's voice and vision of the carny world has the same satirical effect.
as it has in Naked Lunch.

The Soft Machine is a metaphorical term for a human body being operated (manipulated) by the control system i.e., language. In other words, word and image has a strong hold on it. The action of body or the operation of a Soft Machine depends on the physical needs of the body or the technique of its operation.

"Not only is the 'Soft Machine' some sort of communicating device, it has been implanted on our very nervous system; it is a compulsory, tape-recorder within, or inner 'writing machine' hooked up somehow to more cumbersome and conventional external communication devices." In Burroughs' apocalyptic mythology, the Soft Machine is the pure end-product of control by some malicious and all powerful conspiracy of government media and what Burroughs calls 'the Nova Police', agents of technology. These latter include not only human villains like the ubiquitous Dr. Benway, but extraterrestrial viruses capable of using a man's need to reduce him to a "paralyzed larva, slobbering and covered by a caustic green slime that seeps from the rectum." (Tex.-P.96).

The title - also refers to the human body, with all its curious, outmoded apertures and inefficiencies which Burroughs' scientific zeal finds so unsuited to the
sadomasochistic pleasures of the future. The title is both the "Founted Galaxy", "the Milky Way" seen as a quasibiological organism diseased by the virus like Nova Mob, and the human body riddled with the 'ticket' obsolete fictions, myths and dreams, written on the 'soft typewriter' of culture and civilization. Here, in the Soft Machine the first mention of nova activity, that of Iranian Willy – Willy the Rat, the Heavy Metal Kid, is made: "His plan called total exposure – Wise up all the marks everywhere show then the ringed wheel – storm the Reality studio and retake, the Universe."6

In Soft Machine, language is the main manipulator exercising its power like a virus over a human body. All the other characters associated with the sexual theme are drawn from Burroughs' own memories and personal fantasies. He considers homosexuality also, an addiction. The consuming addiction, displayed again in juxtaposition with scenes (or drug abuse and sexual perversion and through a number of shifting narrators), is the addiction to power over others.

This theme of power has been conveyed by Burroughs through narrative fantasies in the Soft Machine. The book has been given the historical emphasis and it focuses primarily on the historical control of mankind
through bodily needs. "The most interesting theories about the control system and the form it takes at present are inferred convincingly from a model of simultaneous calendars used by the Mayan priests to control the Mayan populace by remembering the past and foretelling the future." In Soft Machine, Burroughs takes us back in time to the Mayan Civilization as he once again deals with control and escape relationships and raises important questions about violence, revolution and the necessity for change in the interest of survival.

In Soft Machine, wars of sex and politics occur in the ancient past; a Mayan peasant is so bitterly used by a high priest that the tyranny of office reverberates with sexual cruelty. But the intercourse of stars or the degradation of a Mayan is more than a parable of love or tyranny. Events like these reflect the process by which Burroughs' characters disown what happens to them, where it happens, and what they feel. In the recesses of hallucinations, they symbolize their rage away, move out into space or back in time, but always away from their own fury. The Mayan villagers are controlled in "thought feeling and sensory impressions" by the priests who are "nothing but word and image." Puerto Joselito is a nightmare of death, erotic self-indulgence, and the destruction of all that is virile, productive and natural. The sexual perversions in which the natives engage are as
Burroughs writes in another context, "dreamy and brutal, depraved and innocent." These acts are like the hideous 'Black Meat', which is "overpoweringly delicious and nauseating, so that the eaters eat and vomit and eat again until they fall exhausted." The consequences of the Mayan's appetite for sex are associated with an "addiction" to the sexual pleasure promised by drugs. Puerto Joselito's old men are "boneless", "mutterine addicts of the orgasm drug", and are eventually eaten by cramen. Their bonelessness suggests the emasculating effects of drug pleasures and symbolically, of social tyranny.

Though there is no story in *Soft Machine*, yet the unsustained routines are cohered in such a manner by means of repetition as they reveal a situation. The obsessional themes recur through the repetition of phrases, motifs and images.

The detailed analysis of the various fantasies in *Soft Machine* shows Burroughs' keen interest in different fields of study. His historical, anthropological psychological, political and commercial explanations form a very interesting fantastic myth declaring the condition in future too. The myth that he has given rise to, is the 'Nova Mythology' in the *Soft Machine*. It is, however, not fully developed as in his later works.
Let us first distinguish between the development of the Nova Myth in *Naked Lunch* and *Soft Machine* before proceeding to analyse the fantasies in the latter novel.

Although the three subsequent novels emerge out of *Naked Lunch*, the latter stands alone as a self-contained work while *The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket That Exploded* and *Nova Express* form a close-knit continuously evolving trilogy. The cut-up technique of *Naked Lunch* separates it from the trilogy. Also the use of comprehensive mythology is seen in the trilogy while in *Naked Lunch* the myth is neither much emphasized nor developed.

In *Naked Lunch*, the myth consists of good and evil forces fighting with each other for control of the human individual and the human race. The three parties constitute the Evil Group (i.e; the Réalacti-

onists, the Divisionists and the Sensors) and the fourth one-Factualists belong to the good, that fight the evil parasites. The Factualists reveal the conspiracies of the other parties and this revelation is equated with the apomorphine treatment. Hence, the drug addicts group can be termed as the Nova Mob against whom is the Nova Police, identified and symbolized by the Factualist party. The Nova Mob controls life on earth through the addiction of human beings to language, junk
or drugs, sex and power. They are viruses invading the human body. On the contrary, the Nova Police or the actualist tries to free the various addicts either by means of destroying word and image or silence or the introduction of apomorphine cures.

So far, we have seen that the author has tried to evolve the theory imparting the knowledge of the different kinds of control systems through various means and the methods of their obstruction and destruction. The relevance can be relied upon, only by experiment for which he adopts the cut-up technique. It would be better to name it as the 'nova technique' appropriate to associate with the 'nova mythology'.

This mythology is relevantly developed in *Soft Machine*. In this book, another category is brought into the group of Nova Mob. Obviously, the action of the Nova Mob takes place through a different angle. Previously, it has been stated that (in *Naked Lunch*) the drug addicts (human beings) are under the control of needs or junk. In *Soft Machine*, the human body is itself the member of the Nova Mob because its own bodily existence is a trap transforming him into a *Soft Machine*. The bodily functions of a soft machine are manipulated through language. Again the message is
to control and fight against the bodily functions too, (especially, the sexual acts which are unaware of the time element). Burroughs suggests that individual can control sex, time or drug in order to be physically free.

All the fantasies in *Soft Machine* appear to be independent each conveying a different theme and message.

In "Cross the Wounded Galaxies", the birth of mankind gives rise to creation myth. A similar idea is represented in 'The Mayan Caper' where the birth and growth of the Mayan Civilization is described. The Mayan priests controlled the peasants through their calendar. As a whole, this stands as the historical basis for the myth. This fantasy portrays in the other section 'Pretend In Interest', the primitive men involved in sadistic and psycho-sexual activities. Burroughs attacks satirically the capitalist-consumer societies in the 'Trak Trak Trak' fantasy. This is a modern economic control system; gaining through the news-agencies, advertisements, etc. Just like the Interzone or Composite City of *Naked Lunch*; *Soft Machine* also inhabits a city called Slotless City. It is a futuristic fantasy of violence and chaos produced by complicated acts and sexual conflicts. Here also
Burroughs watches men and women at war for the reproduction and survival of the new life forms.

The same cut-up imagery conveys the sense in Soft Machine. The narrative fantasies are history which is only a process of repetitions. For Burroughs the history of sexuality is the history of power and hence resulted in the growth of the humanbeings. Just as the sexual acts remain the same between certain relationships, history can also be repeated in some series with the change of specific forms. For writers, the history is only fiction.

The means of attacking the control systems have already been described; such means constitute the theme of revolt. Burroughs suggests and the use of the narrative fantasy and cutup collages for the same purpose. One should resist the word and image system through the cutups of newspapers, films, tape-recorders, etc. But the most important devices are time travel and identity change to avoid and destruct the already laid impressions in mind. If one continues to remember the same identity then it cannot be denied when we call him addicted to one's image.

Taking into consideration the theme and technique, it is found that Burroughs concentrates more on the control systems either in the form of addiction
or the language not only in *Naked Lunch* but also in *Soft Machine*. In *Naked Lunch*, emphasis is on the drug addiction whereas in *Soft Machine*, the emphasis is on sexuality. The emphasis is on sexuality, both forming the control systems. Above all, language is co-existingly exercising its power over a human body. Burroughs calls this parasitical message "the other Half":

The "Other Half" is the word.
The "Other Half" is an organism.
Word is an organism. The presence of the "other Half as separate organisms attached to your nervous system can now be demonstrated experimentally ...
Modern man has lost the option of silence. Try halting your sub-vocal speech. Try to achieve even ten seconds of inner silence. You will encounter a resisting organism that FORCES YOU TO TALK.10

(Tx. P.49.)
Burroughs adds that a human being is not a complete organism. Their union through sex acts only form them into one complete organism. He wants man to be free and liberate himself from such a control (virus) too. The sense of revulsion is also found in Burroughs' other work. For him, Everything must be 'cut' :

Cut the Sex and Dream Utility Lines

Cut the Trade Service Lines

The Paws do not refresh.

Working for the Yankee Dollar. 11

(IH - P.44)

Ihab Hassan holds the view that "Change is regression, contact is torture, property is control; and all desire is addiction," 12 - the central theme of Naked Lunch which echoes again in Soft Machine. This is because the author perhaps has not forgotten the memories and fantasies formed during addiction which later envisioned him.

On the whole, Soft Machine is a historically repetitive series following the Naked Lunch with the same descriptive memories of various addiction. The
Nova Mythology which is not fully developed in Soft Machine, has to be pursued in his next work — The Ticket That Exploded. But Ihab Hassan notices a perceptible shift in the perspectives and techniques he observes:

The Soft Machine (1961), second book in the trilogy, shows certain differences from the earlier work. The collage technique of Naked Lunch yields to the more random effects of composition by a thoroughly cut-up method. All verisimilitude vanishes. Moreover the focus of drug addiction shifts to a vague and pervasive evil which can still be identified, despite the phantasmal setting, by its perversion and excremental character. The limbo depicted by Burroughs proves to be a wasteland no less infernal than his hell.

More than in his earlier novels in Soft Machine the novelist becomes more pungent in his satirical attacks on the human predicament. More than ever the satire of Burroughs is motivated by his earnest desire
to redeem the human society of its weaknesses and absurdities and to alter the human condition.

The 1961 edition of The Soft Machine had breakup into four units. (Burroughs has since added and revised the novel and in the subsequent condition the break-up has been discarded). Thus units are titled:

"Red: Transitional Period"
"Green: Thing Police Keep all Board Room Reports"
"Blue: Have You Seen Slotless City"
"White: Poison our Dead Sun in Our Dreams."

The name of the colour in each unit is associated with an episode or a sequence and is followed by a tantalizing enigmatic sub-title. This kind of division of the novel into thematic or episodic units may not give us new insights into it, but it certainly lends structural unity, Cohesion and Clarity to the work. The episodes themselves are not very different from those in the earlier novels. But as Hassan observes:

The innovation consists in sketching a portrait or situation early in each unit, and cutting and permutating its component in the sections that follow.
The method, of course, heightens the fantasmagoric quality of the work, and, in some cases it creates fresh contexts and connections which might have been missed in a sequential narrative. The novel both in its theme and technique betrays an utter lack of feeling or sentiment. The novelist is so much obsessed with the technique that he rejects all other components of a good novel as irrelevant. As Hassan observes, "the whole of life seems in the grip of a subtracting machine. What the machine prescribes is not only the ethics of outrage and the aesthetics of revulsion" (emphasis is added). Open furnication, homosexuality, lesbianism, description of Baby and Semen Market — all kinds of sexual aberrations only create sense of revulsion and not a feeling sacrament or a sense of celebration. If bondage is the central theme of the novel, the story (if we can describe it so) does not liberate but binds man to sex commerce and politics. Thus the novel defeats its avowed purpose of liberating man from addictions of all kinds. This kind of a creative uniting, as Norman Mailer says in an altogether a different context "the aesthetic act shifts from the creation of meaning to the destruction of it."
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4. Ibid, (P.99)


