NOTES AND REFERENCES


4. Ibid., (P.52)

5. Ibid., (P.11)


8. Ibid., (P.79)


CHAPTER VI

THE WILD BOYS: A FANTASY OF FREEDOM

The Wild Boys published in 1971, is another fantastic parody typical of Burroughs. In an interview with Robert Palmer in Rolling Stone (1972), Burroughs himself states that The Wild Boys represents a significant departure from Naked Lunch and the trilogy, but here he tries to maintain that the freedom from all sorts of bondages is possible through fantasy. No doubt this second mythology has also been constructed on the autobiographical basis representing Burroughs' wild mind. In other words, Wild boys is clearly meant to be a movie of Burroughs' mind, "Billy, B. St. Louis Encephalitis," who records the "1920 St. Louis boyhood of Audrey," whom everyone humiliated because he "looked like a homosexual sheep killing dog," and who went to 'kindergartens like mental homes.'

"William Burroughs, for years the undergrounds' loudest voice against social, political and sexual repression, writes in The Wild Boys about packs of homosexual guerrillas dedicated to destroying people."
The book has a greater unity of subject matter than any other and there appears to be an inner conflict of the author himself. Burroughs gives a new direction to the novel in its themes as well as style.

Even his second mythology in *The Wild Boys* does not exempt the major themes of his earlier works like addiction, and the quest to free oneself from bondages. But, on the contrary, it adds to it — the emphasis on politics and sexual fantasy of the wild generation. In *The Wild Boys*, "the attention is given to man's positive potential for autonomy, regeneration and creation." The theme of regeneration and creation is itself associated with the basic metaphor of sexuality in the novel. Burroughs himself believes that the output of his earlier writings with a shocking acurateness is the outcome of his drug experiences. His fifteen years' drug addiction enabled him to write the exact experiences during the hallucinatory period. In the same way, his childhood memories and sexual fantasies of adolescence contributed to the second mythology of his work. Therefore, it can be maintained that such fantasies and dreams too, can lead to surreal visions resulting in artistic work by the authors. In other words, the creation of any art is formed through fantasies born in the mind of the creator.
Hence, Burroughs holds the view that this creation is possible only for a writer who has a strong media of expression—the language. But, if he remains free from the bondage of word-and-image or language, he can create many new worlds through one piece of composition. For Burroughs, a writer has the greatest artistic ability of all other artists.

In his earlier works, sex has been looked upon as an addiction as well as control system on human beings. Both the addiction and control system either result in life forms or death which has been called the Biologic trap by Burroughs. But in The Wild Boys, the sexual fantasies are a source of artistic creation for a writer. The obsessional ideas due to the bondage, death-like and repressive experiences are balanced and compensated by the sexual fantasies providing pleasure and freedom. Hence, the second mythology maintained and developed in The Wild Boys is that freedom is possible through fantasy. On the contrary, the whole concept now seems to be a fantasy because such fantasies formed and expressed by any writer also need the language the word-and-image. The exact expression of the formed fantasies is not possible at all without language which is the only media for a writer.
For the same reason, "Burroughs is able to merge his personal fantasies with mass-media fantasies, by using the narrative style as well as the characters, images and actions of the pulps." These fantasies, in fact, express basic human desires for individual autonomy, freedom and rebirth.

In The Wild Boys, the whole structure is narrative rather than the development through cut-ups. He himself states that he has chosen to use fewer cut-ups in the later work, returning to more conventional narrative prose: "I feel that in all those books (the trilogy) there was too much undifferentiated cut-up material, which I eliminated in The Wild Boys. The cut-up technique has very specific uses... In the Wild Boys I was really quite deliberately returning to older styles of writing. Quite a bit of it is really 19th Century. It's a different style of writing." The book contains eighteen brief routines consisting of narrative sequences. One of the narratives called Penny Arcade Peep Show (pp 39-49) explains the structure of the book. The five different "Penny Arcade Peep Shows" are the fragments of the cut-ups arranged in between the narratives. It's obvious that the film metaphor has been clarified by Burroughs in the novel.
For Burroughs, the reality is a film and hence "the novel is like a film theatre for an audience of one, showing several narratives simultaneously on several viewing screens surroundings the viewer. It times the viewer observes the narratives (which he can perceive only one at a time); at times he enters one of them as a character (actor). Sometimes he sees the "structuralized peep show" of arbitrary images (a pinwheel, a Christmas-tree ornament, an Easter egg, a copper coil) by punctuation symbols, by captions and images from an old book, or by titles.5 The autobiographical images of Burroughs convey the theme of his quest. He incorporates gradually the characters of the earlier work along with the new ones — all showing the changing identity of the author himself. In the mythology of The Wild Boys, the writer receives greater importance and respect who creates stories out of impression laid by reality and fantasies imparting pleasure and sense of freedom. Therefore, it is here on one ground that Burroughs cannot be agreed with; that is, to free oneself from the bondage of the reality or past or death. Whatever personal is blended into the fantastical composition, most of them are the experiences of the writer himself binding him to the past.

As a result, it can be said that Burroughs' suggestion of being free from the bondage of past or
reality is a mere prescription without any positive result. The simplicity of this myth reveals the limited power of Burroughs, who suggests to free oneself from the past by controlling the dreams. An other interesting view that he holds is that the above mentioned freedom is possible only by the wild boys - the coming generation - the replicas of those people who do not know their past because they never existed before. Actually, they are just the creations of the author who expects their arrival in future. At the same time, it makes obvious that Burroughs totally fails to recognise the present - the real; or perhaps he pretends so in order to forget the past. For the same reason, he continues with his fantasies depicting the events to happen in future - the future which is indefinite serving the purpose of being free from the reality bondage.

Burroughs' heroes are "wild boys", a whole generation . . . that felt neither pain or pleasure," wild boys live in an emotional nowhere with no "emotions oxygen." They have no memory because they have no past - some of them are born through a process of replication; they spring full grown from another man, vibrate into life, and immediately begin having intercourse with their creator without desire or loathing. In these surreal scenes Burroughs tries to purge all
the old self images from memory, all the hates that fester in his characters' mind. In Burroughs' filmland, memory and emotion can be exploded away. When one man begins to remember "the pawn shops, the cheap rooming houses, the chili parlors" he detonates a "film grenade" and "explodes the set." The 'boys' end the novel by wishing the world dead (the ultimate insocial protest) and watch the "screen explode in moon craters and boiling silver spots." They see "dim jerky stars blowing away across the empty sky." Having turned as all to ashes, "wild boys smile."

All the old creations of the earlier work as well as the new characters, images and settings are introduced in The Wild Boys. It consists of the Moroccan wild boys, characters from Intergone, Mexican and Mayan stuff, whose roles keep interchanging. The wild boys represent an intentional psychological and social regression; they evade the social controls that underlie our civilization: concepts of God, country, family, and sexuality.

In fact, the novel portrays the degraded America of Burroughs' youth and hence he imagines a group of boys who would breakdown the current social order in near future. Behind the novel, is the voice
of Burroughs' himself, whose characters protest against the repressive civilization. Thus, the author succeeds in attacking the society vicariously and satirically.

The outrageous desire of freedom manifest in the words of wild boys:

We intend to march on the police machine everywhere. We intend to destroy the police machine and all its records. We intend to destroy all dogmatic verbal systems. The family unit and its cancerous expansion into tribes, countries, nations we will eradicate at its vegetable roots. We don't want to hear any more family talk, mother talk, father talk, cop talk, priest talk, country talk or party talk. To put it country simple we have heard enough bullshit."

This excerpt from the narrative suffices to show that the time of the wild boys' action is associated only with the future. The book is a futuristic fantasy stating that one can liberate oneself at least by forgetting and going out of mind. The construction of the plot is based on an eternal battle between good and evil forces clearly distinguished from each other.
Each and every story that makes up the novel is a fragmentary one with the continuously developing and unending myth. On the one hand, freedom and peace is being threatened by evil forces of control and on the other— the outrageous generation, in its attempt to curb such forces is adopting the destructive measures. Why? Because, they themselves are being caught by various control viruses whose survival depends on the host and for whom the ultimate is death, but they are not conscious of it.

A similar view was expressed by Burroughs in the Palmer interview:

"The control machine is simply the machinery— police, education, etc. — used by a group in power and extend its power. For example, in a hunting society, which can only number about 30, there's nothing that could be called a control machine in operation. They must function effectively as a hunting effectively as a hunting party in order to survive, so leadership is casual and you have no control machine. Now as soon as you get agricultural society, particularly
in rich land, you will end to inequality. That is, the advantage of slave
slave labour then becomes apparent and you may have, as with the Mayans and
Egyptians, workers and priests—in other words, stratification, repression, and you have a control machine.\textsuperscript{8}

It appears that the author also admits that not only America or the Western Countries have been trapped by the evils but the whole world. The problem is a deep-rooted one and the solution seems to be difficult and apparent because—

"You may say that what happens in a foreign land is no concern of ours. But the vile tentacles of that evil are reaching into decent American homes." \textsuperscript{9}

(PP. 122-23)

The morally fallen and degraded people are being attracted to the false promises and physical pleasures supporting the theme of sexual addiction. All the mindless creatures are running to join the underworld where 'Death awaits—
Dear Mom and Dad:

I am going to join the wild boys. When you read this I will be far away.

Johnny

"All over America kids like Johnny are deserting the country and their great American heritage suborned by the false promises of Moscow into a life of drugs and vice. I say to you all that wherever anarchy, vice and foul corruption rears the swollen hood of a cobra to strike at everything we hold sacred, the very heart of America is threatened. Can we stand idly by while our youth, the very lifeblood of this great nation, drains away into foreign sewers? Can we stand idly by while the stench of corruption draws ever closer to our own borders?" . . . .

"This plague is spreading in its workings as anything in the world."
Hence, Burroughs desperately declares by "subscribing ten million dollars for an expedition to crush the chérene thing once and for all:"10(b) as —

"The wild boy thing is a
cult based on drugs,
depravity and violence more
dangerous than the hydrogen
bomb."11

(P.151)

"The imagery and actions that describe the wild boys define them as embodiments of demonic energy. Physically they are young, naked males continually engaged in sex, violence, and practical jokes. Like traditional devils, they combine depravity and malicious glee. The wild boys are the demonic evil of repressed desire in our culture."12

The wild boys have never seen the faces of women or heard their voices before and as they are free of birth or death; can be called immortal. They exist through the practices of cult who represent the release of demonic energy in conscious fantasy. For Burroughs, this is a means for individual liberation and hence a way for the evolution of a new society. However, "The
wild boys, does not describe this new world; it ends on a note of conflict and disintegration as an unidentified narrator attempts to break conventional time barriers and joins the wild boys in the fictional future . . . . Thus the barrier between the present and Burroughs' futuristic fantasy is not only the predicted collapse of our civilization but the biological and temporal barrier between life and death. 13

On the whole, the second mythology also has been constructed with the same purpose. It shows the writer's quest for complete liberation from all sorts of bondage, which has not been achieved. He continues to suggest the ways and means through the trilogy and the wild boys, which, no doubt, add credence to his imaginative power. He proposes to escape but fails to materialize it. On the contrary, the same desire has given rise to energy - the demonic energy of the wild boys - who are the characters of his fantasy.

After all it can not be denied that the existing evil forces, conflict and disintegrations are a part of the reality film of the world. The same becomes the subject-matter for the writers who wander in an imaginary world of peace; and pour their emotion into the fantastical composition. Burroughs has also attempted to create a fantasy of freedom by developing a new mythology representing the different
autotative groups of society.

The fact is the reality and fantasy are two opposite poles; hence, the author is once again trapped by the consciousness-bondage of fantasy and imagination and has become momentarily unconscious of the reality - the present.

To conclude, The Wild Boys is a successful expressionistic work of Burroughs whose imaginative power has no end. His obsessive and orijastic experiences during drug addiction and withdrawal period had widened his visionary outlook. So far, he has been able to develop new mythologies and the technique which is found in the wild boys too. But, apart from the orderly arrangement of the sequences as well as the fewer cutups, not much significant change or addiction is made to it. The Wild Boys only remains a futuristic fantasy for the reader and the need is for the visual achievement, which is yet again a fantasy. The book only appears to be a guide of pre-planned activities of the control resisters and the result is being awaited through action.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


   3. Ibid., (P. 77)

4. Quoted from Jennie Skerl's William S. Burroughs, (P. 76)


6. Ibid., (P. 82)


8. Quoted from J. Skerl's William S. Burroughs, (Pp. 78-79)


10. a. Ibid. (P. 123)
    b. Ibid., (P. 123)

11. Ibid., (P. 151).


13. Ibid., (Pp. 33-34)