

Tangier and Kerouac's Oriental Experience in Liminality

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Abstract: In her article "Tangier and Kerouac's Oriental Experience in Liminality" Peggy Pacini discusses Kerouac's production derived from his Tangerian experience. Since the Tangier narratives have no existence of their own in the Duluoz Legend and are included in larger volumes about traveling and passing through, Pacini examines how this production cohered within the entire Legend and the terminology and world vision Kerouac had already fashioned. Focusing on two texts, "Big Trip to Europe" and "Passing through Tangiers, France and London," Pacini considers Kerouac's and his alter ego Duluoz's visions of Tangier and their journey to Tangier as many thresholds or liminal moments that eventually culminate in another rite of passage in their Beat experience. Within the framework of the Legend and of Kerouac's cosmology and imagery, Pacini addresses what has been overlooked in Kerouac's Tangier experience and how his encounter with the city is translated in his narratives. She examines several passing through experiences as described in Kerouac's and Duluoz's journeys to Tangier as revelations concerning their art and vision of the world while measuring them against a sense of lost innocence and the imperative to get along in their spiritual, artistic, and traveling quests.

Peggy PACINI

Tangier and Kerouac's Oriental Experience in Liminality

Since the seventeenth century, Western artists, intellectuals, and writers from Delacroix to Bacon and Barthes to Led Zeppelin have been attracted by Tangier's fascinating history, liberal spirit, and mythical dimensions. The city's underground life and underworld provided an exceptional place of exile altogether physically, spiritually and intellectually. There are a number of studies about these artists' meeting and confrontation with the city and how it shaped their literary life (see, e.g., Caraës and Fernandez; Coury and Lacey; Harter; Mullins). Most of them focus on the impact Tangier had on US-American and English literature in the 1950s and give specific attention to William S. Burroughs and other Beats as well. The literature of Tangier points to the city as an "artistic catalyst" (Harter 3), "a liminal space" (Mullins 4), and "a point of contact through which identities are challenged" (Coury xiii). It also investigates "Tangier as a signifier in the literary imagination" (Coury and Lacey x) by digging into what proved fascinating and attractive about the city. What attracted Kerouac to Tangier was his friend Burroughs, an expatriate there since January 1954. Yet, as Kerouac wrote to his ex-wife Edie Parker, he did not mean to stay long in Tangier with the Beat scene (Maher 337), although Ellis Amburn reports that it was Kerouac's and Ginsberg's plan to "become expatriates and carry the Beat movement abroad" (257). His contribution to what might be referred to as Tangerian literature from American writers is scant, which seems therefore to dismiss the idea that Tangier could have been for Kerouac that artistic catalyst Harter suggests. When he left for Tangier on 14 February 1957 to join Burroughs and help him on the *Naked Lunch* manuscript, most of the Duluoz Legend had already been written. A month before, he had finalized a contract with Viking for *On the Road* (1957) while writing Book one of *Desolation Angels* (1965).

The corpus of texts and paratexts about Kerouac's Tangier experience is indeed meagre. Inserted in two narratives ("Big Trip to Europe" in *Lonesome Traveler* [1960] and the "Passing through Tangiers, France and London" section of *Desolation Angels*) and seven poems published in *Book of Sketches* (2006) and *Pomes all Sizes* (1992), the experience is also recorded in a selection of letters published in Ann Charters's *Selected Letters 1957-1969* (9-25) and Joyce Johnson's *Door Wide Open* (7-17). I have chosen to focus essentially on the narratives as they offer a dialogue on the same journey and provide thematic perspective on the Legend as a whole. Before that, I would like to recall briefly how the paratexts deal with this period. Almost left unnoticed in Charters's *Kerouac*, his two-months' stay in Tangier is wrapped up in no more than four pages in other Kerouac biographies. When reported, it largely focuses on his relationship with the Tangier (sub)cultural expatriate community, his growing fear of Burroughs (Nicosia 544-45), his feeling of loneliness and homesickness, and editing problems concerning the publication of *The Subterraneans* and *Desolation Angels* (Amburn 267; Maher 341-43; Nicosia 545). As for the letters, those in the Charters selection mostly focus on editing problems while those in the Kerouac-Johnson correspondence echo "Big Trip" and chapters 50 to 59 of *Desolation Angels*.

"Big Trip to Europe" and "Passing through Tangiers, France and London" are two travel narratives with overlapping time frames and providing two versions of the same experience, a common device in the Legend. Yet, these correspond to two different writing time frames and projects. The former was a commissioned tale written in the spring of 1958, published in February 1960 in *Holiday* magazine. The latter, on the other hand, was written in 1964, which partially accounts for these two slightly different perspectives, each offering further developments on one part of recollecting and memorializing the journey within the Legend in a particular light and from a specific angle. This article explores how these cohere within the entire Legend, how while offering intertextual echoes to other structurally and thematically founding texts of the Legend, especially *On the Road*, they force the reader into analyzing space and traveling in relation to the narrator's sense of adventure and quest, concomitant with his role as a writer, spiritual quester and the phenomenal world vision Kerouac had already fashioned.

If many cities compose the Legend's topography, Tangier does not. Kerouac's trip to Tangier and his writings on his experience there offer nonetheless some clues to re-evaluate or re-work some of The Legend's structuring motifs such as journeys, spaces, and rites of passage, spiritual and meta-physical quests. Consequently, it is Kerouac's Tangier experience as a whole—his departure from Brooklyn Busch Terminal, his journey onboard a Yugoslavian freighter, his stay in and departure from Tangier—I discuss here as a series of thresholds, of liminal spaces in this experience. "Liminal space" as I use it in this study is borrowed from Victor Turner's study of van Gennep's "liminal phase" of "rites de passages" and from Turner's concept of liminality to see how threshold spaces are conceived as pivotal, experiential and uprooting in the narrators' experience of Tangier. I explore the journey as

a liminal space forcing the narrators to reevaluate the meaning of their "experience in the world at large" (*Desolation* 330) and then consider the narrators' experience of the city itself and how it helps reconsider their sense of adventure and ambiguous attitude to experiencing the margin and the Elsewhere.

Kerouac saw Tangier as a passing through city—just as Burroughs saw it as a place where you are always in transit, an interzone. Even though Kerouac's brief experience was not as positive and fulfilling an experience for him as it was for Burroughs or Ginsberg who travelled and/or stayed there, it was nevertheless a distinctive, fertile and revealing one, as the letters, novels, and interviews demonstrate. In fact, a comparative reading of a letter to Johnson dated March 19 (*Door* 11-12) and the letters dated April to Sterling Lord and Gary Snyder (*Charters* 22-25) show how the latter appear more contemplative and serene as Kerouac has begun to dig and absorb all there is in Morocco (*Charters* 22-23). These Tangier narratives do not really have any existence of their own in the Legend. They are included in larger volumes about traveling (*Lonesome* 131-46) and passing through (*Desolation* 330-52), and collections of poems and sketches (*Book* 401-04; *Pomes* 89-91). The experience is transient. However, Kerouac's visions of Tangier offer several thresholds or liminal moments or spaces that can be read in connection to other rites of passage in Kerouac's Beat Generation and literary experience, and in Duluoz's role as prophet, quester and writer. The titles of the narratives themselves give the reader hints as to how these should be read and interpreted. The passing through motif is chosen as the eponymous title for Book two of *Desolation Angels*, and the trip to Europe is presented as a passage through three expatriate cities, each a potential threshold or transitional space into a larger journey. In her *Spontaneous Poetics*, Regina Weinreich analyzed the "passing through" image, equating it with a metaphor for both traveling and life itself (111). If we consider the original title for "Big Trip," as published in *Holiday* magazine—"Tangier to London: a Beatnik Pilgrimage"—the pilgrimage metaphor confirms Weinreich's analysis. To start with, what is it that Kerouac and his alter ego Duluoz are searching for, what moral, personal or spiritual truth is going to be revealed through this pilgrimage?

First I focus on the different steps of the journey, highlighting how combined geographic progress and emotional expectations partake in producing specific visions in the Tangier experience. Then how while reworking several intertexts, these aim at clarifying Kerouac's and Duluoz's prophetic vision, his ability to fulfill it and the teachings he has learnt. In the process, Kerouac resorts to a transposition of several recurring themes in the Legend—the pilgrimage, the quest, the prophetic revelation, the fallen people, the Shrouded Traveler—which translate not only his personal and spiritual quest but also his will to achieve thematic if not structural unity for his Legend. By doing so, he definitely challenges his narrators' role, perhaps even more so his own role, as a prophetic voice, the bearer of a noble truth while at the same time redefining his place in the phenomenal and Beat world alike. To begin with, I focus on how the metamorphosis which takes place during the trip is reported in *Desolation Angels*: "It was on this trip that the great change took place in my life which I called a 'complete turningabout' on that earlier page, turning from a youthful brave sense of adventure to a complete nausea concerning experience in the world at large, a *revulsion* in all the six senses" (330; emphasis in the original). While, from the start, Duluoz provides the reader with the outcome of the experience, the cause of "revulsion" remains unclear. However, the intertextual reference to *On the Road*—that is, to Sal Paradise's move on the road, his quest and the conclusion he draws from it—and to its incipit might help us read not only "Passing through" but also "Big Trip."

In both Tangier travel narratives, the journey begins in an extraterritorial place, the ocean, with a storm of biblical and Blakean dimension. But while Duluoz reports it as "a Biblical Tempest" (*Desolation* 331), the narrator of "Big Trip" attenuates it, just referring to "a bit of a tempest" (131). However, both of them are presented as a manifestation of God's fury. If the two texts largely resort to emphasis on sound, rhythms and alliterations to convey a sense of fear and gloom, they do not rely on exactly the same intertextual references and do not expand on particulars in the same way. "Big Trip" is more lyrical and poetic (131) than the apocalyptic *Desolation* (330-31). While literary and Biblical intertextual references (Jonah, Jacob, Ezekiel) abound in the former, the latter is structured around mythical Greek and Roman figures (Neptune, Atlas, and Apollo, the Hesperides, Hercules, Atlantis). Although these references at first seem to offer different interpretations of the passing through experience, they eventually converge. If in both texts God's wrath or presence manifests itself through the storm, it is really "Big Trip" that enables the reader to further understand the meaning of this ordeal the narrators have to face in their journey to Tangier. In fact, the storm episode is given much more importance in "Big Trip" than in *Desolation*. The vision it offers the reader is a complete rewriting of the tempest imagery of both the Old Testament (*Jonah* 1:15, 2:10; *Hebrews* 3:4; *Genesis* 2:21, 28:13-15; and *Ezekiel* 20) and *Moby Dick* (chapters 9 and 119), especially the Jonah parable. The tale

describes how Jonah disobeys God's command to prophesy against the capital of Assyria, Nineveh, for its people's wickedness. So, are the narrators like Jonah, challenged in their disobedience to fulfill the mission God has sent them on? If intertextual references prepare the reader for the message to be delivered, we cannot but wonder what their mission is. Jonah is clearly evoked three times either metaphorically or metonymically, as the narrator of "Big Trip," in the midst of this tempest, is a prey to paranoid reveries, and fancies the crew conspiring against him; "That capitalist scum American on board is a Jonah, the storm has come because of him" (133). Through the metonymic use of antonomasia, the narrator belongs to the wicked, those who disobeyed God's will and command, of which the symbol is Jonah. If the narrator is a Jonah, then the reader might conceive Tangier as a Nineveh, a "symbol of treason" (Genet 83). In a letter to Johnson, Kerouac calls Tangier "the Blue Pearl of the Hesperides—the city of vice!" (*Door* 7). The direct reference to Plato's *Critias* offers a mythological parallel to Jonah's tale. According to *Critias*, when Zeus saw how corrupted the Atlanteans were, he was determined to chastise them. In both biblical and mythological references, Tangier is associated with corruption and vice. Therefore, the reader cannot but imagine that the narrator is the voice of wisdom brought to the city. But to be that embodiment, the narrator himself has to be transformed and undergo some kind of ordeal made manifest through the tempest. Only then, in that threshold place the Ocean represents, between the New and the Old World, can some truth be delivered and gained. In fact, it is at the very moment verging on consciousness of death that revelation comes, that rebirth occurs in "an endless womb bliss" ("Big Trip" 135), echoing once again Jonah's three days in the belly of the whale where Jonah is left with his guilt and conscience. In "Big Trip" the storm becomes a manifestation of God himself coming to reveal to the narrator a "luminous peaceful truth" (Johnson, *Door* 7), an epiphany that the reference to Ezekiel confirms. Like Ezekiel's encounter with God, the narrator's encounter with a divine voice is translated as a "lesson in white" ("Big Trip" 135) which he interprets through different layers of prophetic books (Ezekiel, Jonah) and scriptures (the Lankavatara Scripture, The Diamond Sutra), and which is summed up as "Everything is God nothing ever happened except God" (135). In a letter to Johnson, about a month after the so-called vision, Kerouac explains: "When I said 'God' in my vision in the sea I didn't mean a bearded man in Heaven, I meant THAT WHICH PASSES THROUGH ALL ('Should anyone looking at an image or likeness of that which passes through all claim to know that which passes through all and should offer worship and prayer thereto, you should consider such a person an idolater who does not know truly that which passes through all.' DIAMOND VOW OF WISDOM)—Then 'Do not think the opposite either that when that which passes through all passes through knowing perfectly through all, it is by no means of its ability to pass through various kinds of excellent form ... [you] should neither grasp after such verdicts of the appearance of things nor reject them'" (*Door* 15).

By fusing Christian and Buddhist teachings, this peaceful truth gives his narrator prophet-like authority. Through this vision, he has gained insight into the nature of the phenomenal world, into the presence of God and is awakened. Kerouac here embeds Christian and Buddhist texts to interpret a highly coded journey as writer and spiritual quester. Moreover, in *Desolation*, the narrator thinks he sees in semi delirium "a snow white ladder being held down ... from the sky" (331). The reference to Jacob's ladder, in both narratives, reinforces the meaning of spiritual insight, of Wisdom, and might also be interpreted as a stage of harmony, love and wisdom gained from the cathartic experience the storm generated. If this also largely complies with Emerson's notion of the oversoul, Kerouac links that "glowing white vision of God" ("Big Trip" 131) to the Book of Wisdom and the Diamond Sutra (*Door* 15), equating the passing through the ocean storm as a revelation or wisdom narrative as to the holy/prophetic mission he has and should prophesy as a writer. If one cannot here but be reminded of Sal Paradise's vision of God in the cloud (*On the Road* 165), it seems that now Kerouac's alter ego is no longer the patriarch Sal was but the prophet Duluoos has become. As might be expected, the rest of the journey to Tangier will be a succession of other passing through experiences and visions.

As a pilgrimage demands, the need for retreat and contemplation is required for what the narrator and author alike are looking for: "a reproduction of that absolute peace in the world of society" (*Desolation* 247). If life is, as Duluoos sees it, "a search for peace as an artist," it is also "a way of life in itself more beautiful than any, a kind of cloistral fervor in the midst of mad ranting action-seekers of this or any other 'modern world'" (*Desolation* 247). Therefore, the reader expects that Tangier will provide Duluoos with some kind of cloistral fervor away from the modern world and Western culture. To a certain extent, it will. The long-awaited arrival and the narrators' first vision of Tangier in both narratives are slightly different, and the perception and expectations of the city also contrast slightly with how it is reported afterwards. While in "Big Trip," the narrator only mentions "the sleepy little Arab city of Tangier" waiting for the adventurer he pretends he is to be explored (136), in *Desolation* Duluoos recalls the little harbor simply as "sweet." His first vision of the Tangier Bay is reassuring as the port

unveils a comforting beacon (*Desolation* 335). Now being safe, he focuses on the city coming to life in a highly poetic almost five-lines-stanza-like vision: "The city turns on magical little lights, the hill of the Casbah hums, I wanta be out there in those narrow Medina alleys looking for hasheesh" (*Desolation* 335). But white-roofed Tangier is above all an entryway to "the Mediterranean Atlantis of old" (334), a threshold into the Old World. After God's call at sea, the city's whiteness gains even more highly symbolic meanings of purity, awareness and enlightenment. In *Desolation*, Kerouac intertwines the symbolism of Jacob's ladder with the symbolism of the color white: "Suddenly as we climbed the hill of white street steps I remembered an old sleeping dream where I climbed such steps and came to a Holy City of Love" (336). However, this state of spiritual consciousness and compassion is fleeting as the narrator is called back to reality through a series of "horrible disappointments" (337). The confrontation with "the black inky maw of a Tangiers garage" (336), for instance, puts an end to the narrator's "white dream."

However, he seems to cling to whatever reassuring element he finds in order to rid himself of both disappointment and fear. So no sooner has he arrived than Duluoz immediately compares Tangier with Mexico (*Desolation* 335), two cities of the Fellaheen world. Kerouac's translated vision of the Mexican fellaheen into a Mediterranean context also echoes the comparison Burroughs makes in his letters between Tangier and Mexico (Burroughs, *The Letters* 198, 346, 351). Tangier and the Fellaheen Arabland ("Big Trip" 142) in fact offer Kerouac another vision of Spengler's concept of the fellaheen, the detritus of dying civilization moving unaffected through time. Visions of innocence emerge at times in the Tangier landscape. During a walk with Bill (Burroughs) on the outskirts of the city, Kerouac's attention is suddenly caught by the pastoral vision of the herd of goats coming down the road followed by an Arab shepherd boy of ten who is holding a little lamb in his arms ("Big Trip" 137). If Kerouac immediately sees that as genuine and real, Bill rejects this pastoral vision of innocence, ironically calling the little shepherd boy a "prig," simply because his world has lost "the innocence of the Shepherd" (*Desolation* 336). In both narratives, the narrators realize that their vision totally clash with their host's. Moreover, while Kerouac describes himself as "a messenger from heaven" ("Big Trip" 137), Burroughs sees himself as "just a hidden agent from another planet" ("Big Trip" 137) who hasn't "got [his] orders clearly decoded yet" (*Desolation* 341). Both have a mission: Burroughs pretends he does not know why he has been sent; Kerouac on the contrary knows from his experience at sea. In the episode just mentioned, what Burroughs rejects mostly is the narrator's orientalist representation, calling him back to reality. Bill/Bull, guiding his friend around the city in fact always seems to remind him that what he considers as "real" is a construct and provides the references and codes the narrators lack to decipher Tangier and the Arab world ("Big Trip" 138; *Desolation* 338). In "Big Trip," Kerouac stresses the fact that he cannot share with other expatriates his sense of marveling at Tangerian representations of innocence and holiness. His vision of Tangier is definitely a foreigner's, an outsider's, and "no one is interested" by his holy men, Tangerian hobos on tracks, or little shepherd boys ("Big Trip" 138). Most probably, it is another vision they share, closer to Burroughs's—"like the dream, the other dimension ... always breaking through" (*The Letters* 351)—not just the projection of an idealized vision of innocence and freedom, as it is for Kerouac's narrators. This is made quite clear from Duluoz's reaction to Bull's visions when he evokes his typing *Nude Supper* (*Naked Lunch*) (*Desolation* 340-41). The horrific scenes that give Duluoz horrible nightmares are part of a cathartic process through which Bull will become "as pure as an angel" (341). Kerouac/Duluoz's experience of Tangier might have indeed this same cathartic end; yet, whereas Bull is actively involved in the process, Kerouac's narrators are more passive subjects.

The narrators' perception of Tangier fluctuates. Sometimes it is described as "nice, charming and cool," sometimes experienced as "unutterably dull," "sad," or "weird"—a contradiction the narrator doesn't seem to manage to reconcile. The more negative the city is viewed, the more urgent it becomes for the narrators to leave the place. The harder it becomes for the narrators to grapple with the city's complexity and freedom, the more they become homesick and miss American culture (*Desolation* 347) and family comfort. In fact, it appears that their vision of Tangier does not comply with their expectations, which are perhaps too clichéd. Focus on the city and the narrator's vision of it clearly discloses this dialectic between the real and the projected/the fancied, between the real Tangier and the exotic, perhaps naturalist vision the narrators nourish, between expatriate Tangier and fellaheen Tangier. The narrator of "Big Trip" gradually becomes aware of that misunderstanding as he wonders: "And I live up there full of imaginary conceptions?" Just after that, the haiku he composes seeing a Saturday night parade encapsulates this epiphany: "Walking along the night beach/—Military music/On the boulevard" (144). The military marching music somehow comes as an eye opener. Bagpipes, drums and trumpets bring the narrator back to real historical Tangier, neither mythical and legendary nor fellaheen, but riotous and dangerous.

The narrators' visions of Tangier comply neither with the expatriates' nor with their own. To escape the subcultural expatriates and Burroughs's friends, the narrator of "Big Trip" is desperately looking for some peaceful, natural moments with the Fellaheen Arabland, which he finds by the sea and in the mountain ("Big Trip" 143-44), and which the anaphoric use of the adjective "quiet" applied to the surrounding landscape conveys. But, here again, his description is sometimes romanticized, verging on exoticism and thus might be qualified as orientalist. Three letters sent by Kerouac to Malcolm Cowley (March 8, 1957), Lord (April 3, 1957), and Snyder (April 3, 1957) record Kerouac's solitary walks over the green hills in the back of the Casbah, along the sea and in Berber villages (Charters, *Selected* 14, 22-23) and the pleasure he takes in being reunited with the natural slow rhythm of life and ancient wisdom. This is clearly conveyed by a balanced syntax and hyperboles ("fantastic sunsets over Moroccan fields," "beautiful Berber women with enormous packs on their backs toiling up the grade"). The vision Kerouac translates in these letters is not only extremely peaceful and poetic, it also verges on the picturesque and even more so on the pastoral. However, when comparing the same descriptions in the letters and in "Big trip" (143), the reader immediately notices how the narrator tones down his enthusiasm by somehow neutralizing his experience. In both letters and narratives, though, what he really seeks is confirmation that the fellaheen world still exists.

Fellaheen Morocco thus seems to provide Kerouac some comfort, and the constant comparison between Fellaheen Tangier and Fellaheen Mexico partakes in reassuring the narrators. In this marginal space, he can witness the true glory of religion (Charters 24) and wisdom, hence finding a representation of the message he was given in his vision of God at sea. In constantly establishing a parallel with Mexican Fellaheens, Kerouac's narrators want to convince themselves that there still exists a life for man outside modern societies. It is these visions of "listless but earnest sincerity of the Arab world" ("Big Trip" 145) that the narrator is looking for to cope with his gradual estrangement from the underground circle in Tangier and from Burroughs's "interzone." These visions are somehow essential to provide the narrators with some kind of relief and peace away from the abysmal world Bill/Bull projects, away from what Burroughs's interzone represents and the confrontation it generates between dream and reality. In his letters, Burroughs explained the meaning of interzone and its space-time location, "a point where three-dimensional fact merges into a dream, and dreams erupt into the real world" (Burroughs, *The Letters* 300). If Tangier conveys for Burroughs the "prognostic pulse of the world," it is because it is "like a frontier between dream and reality," challenging both realities (302). It is precisely this frontier that Kerouac's narrators refrain from engaging with fully.

If the narrator of "Big Trip" gradually realizes that innocence is lost, there still remains a vision that acts as a teaching device for the whole experience: the Shrouded Arab by the sea. In his letters to both Lord and Snyder (Charters 22-23, 25) and in "Big Trip" (143), he is described as "the old robed Bodhisattva, old robed bearded realizer of the greatness of wisdom walking by with a staff and a shapeless skin bag and a cotton pack and a basket on his back, with white cloth around his hoary brown brow, the shrouded Arab by the sea." Besides being a manifestation of the narrator's own confusion, he definitely stands as a prophetic messenger, reintroducing the spiritual quest paradigm in the narrative. Kerouac also reworks here a recurrent trope of his since *On the Road*, the Shrouded traveler (94, 277). As Nancy Grace recalls, he stands as "the shadowy presence of an alienated kinsman" to Kerouac's narrators (Grace, *The Literary* 88). As the narrator in Big Trip reminds the reader, there was no need for them to nod to each other; they had known each other too long. Like The Ghost of the Susquehanna in *On the Road*, the Shrouded Arab also represents the narrator's growing sense of confusion about what drives his traveling and search. In fact, Duluoz actually voices his tiredness of searching the world at large by the end of his Tangier stay. The Shrouded Arab is a sign signifying to him that it is time to move on, and "figure the losses and figure and gain" (*On the Road* 97) of his stay in Tangier. He clearly challenges the narrator's quest and journey ("Big Trip").

Once again, the two narratives project different Tangier experiences. While in "Big Trip" the subcultural expatriate scene is left at the margins of the text, *Desolation Angels* offers a wider, more developed view of the Beats transplanted in Tangier and Burroughs's world there. It is in fact Burroughs's vision of Tangier that he is introduced to. Strangely enough in the post-colonial Moroccan era, Kerouac often describes his friend and his "weird expatriate" companions as adopting an almost colonial attitude toward the locals and those Kerouac considers fellaheens. Two visions of Tangier, Burroughs's and Kerouac's, seem to confront each other and force Kerouac/Duluoz into reconsidering his place and role within a community (Turner 96-97) which has lost belief in the innocence of humanity.

Tangier, to which Kerouac refers in a letter as "this sinister international hive of queens" (Johnson 11), generates ambiguities and allows reshuffling of codes and hierarchies. Several places are spotted as loci of transgression, such as the Zoco Chico ("Big Trip" 138) and its Café Central—described by Burroughs in "In the Café Central" and "International Zone" (Burroughs, *Interzone* 39-42, 47-54)—or

Bull's room (*Desolation* 348). Yet, perhaps because Tangier is "a sanctuary of noninterference" (Burroughs, *Interzone* 59), it also offers a high potential of creativity as values are subverted and barriers abolished. Despite the general atmosphere of freedom, what he witnesses among expatriates, "decayed aristocrats of America and Europe and a few eager enlightened healthy Arabs or near-Arabs or diplomats" ("Big Trip" 138), apparently seems to herald vice. Kerouac equates such manifest transgression and/or sexual freedom as merely commercial transaction and depravity ("Big Trip" 138). What he observes in these marginalized experiences does not seem to provide him the truth he was seeking but rather to reveal some other truths with which he cannot or does not want to identify. In fact, while his alter ego rejects commercial sex with boys, he nonetheless asks Bill where he can get a woman in this town ("Big Trip" 138), and Bill's friend Jim provides a veiled woman for him. If the reader is at first drawn to thinking he is in a *One Thousand and One Nights* tale, he soon realizes that Kerouac's alter ego is himself taking part in the commercial sex with the Fellaheens he criticized. By a slip of the tongue, the narrator calls the veiled prostitute "a perfect little Mexican ... beauty perfect and brown as ye old October grapes" before correcting himself "(or that is to say Arab)" ("Big Trip" 139). The reader can't but think here of a double intertextual reference: Sal's love affair with Terry and their plans to pick grapes in California and his buying a girl for Neal in Mexico (*On the Road* 81, 256-66). According to Robert Holton, Sal's uncritical analysis of the situation and his complicit attitude places "the narrative episode within the now-familiar racial and gender category of Orientalist discourse" ("Among the Fellahin" 84). The same applies to Kerouac's intercourse in Tangier. Holton's interpretation of the fellaheen in Kerouac applies to the Arab fellaheens as well: they do not provide insight into the marginalized other, they are a means for Kerouac's narrators to achieve what Jean Baudrillard refers to as "mourning for the real" ("Among the Fellahin" 86).

The experience of community in Tangier is not a fully positive one for either Kerouac or Duluo as it plunges them into further isolation, especially from the Beat community in its microscopic Tangier transposition. In fact, if in Turner's rite of passages pattern three stages lead the subject from separation to aggregation, in Kerouac's and his alter ego's case, the pattern is reversed and the aggregation never achieved. Separation from the group and experience prevails. Duluo acknowledges already being sick of the Beat Generation and its stereotyped image, also sick of the posture he accuses some of the Beat followers and perhaps also some of the Beats themselves of adopting (*Desolation* 351). Although Tangier does finally bring Kerouac the inspiration he was hoping to find as a writer, the result is only a few short poems: "Tangiers 1957," "Zocco Chico—Tangiers—" (*Sketches* 401-04) and "Three Tangier Poems," "Tangier Poem" and "Poem Written in the Zoco Chico" (*Pomes* 89-91). Yet it is not so much himself he blames, but the fact that the Arabs are sending him "no vibrations at all" (Johnson 11; "Big Trip" 141). Therefore, he can neither write nor get any inspiration from the scene, he can only muse and be nostalgic, be absent and not interested, lonely. Longing for home and for similes ("Big Trip" 139, 141; *Desolation* 335, 347) that might help him either complete his cosmology and legend or bring him some comfort and familiarity, he will eventually have a fellaheen vision of a peaceful mountain Berber village and farm settlement that will foster inspiration for his next novel, *The Dharma Bums*, as he writes Snyder (*Charters, Selected* 24). Described in *Desolation Angels* as a "complete turning about" (330) in Duluo's life, the Tangier experience for Kerouac and Duluo can be seen as the beginning of a growing sense of fear and lonesomeness that will gradually shift to the sense of downfall, despair and disillusionment—the imprint of Kerouac's later works. Tangier can thus be read as eventually some kind of catalyzer confronting Kerouac with a series of visions that turn out to isolate him from the rest of the group and negate perhaps the mythic world vision of traveling and innocence he had tried to build and convey in his Legend. "Why travel if not like a child?" he wonders (*Desolation* 334).

Kerouac's and Duluo's journeys to Tangier brought them many revelations concerning their expectations, art and vision of the world. They are definitely journeys passing through experience to wisdom, sometimes encountering moments of innocence lost with the Fellaheen of the Arabland, sometimes producing a revelation about their spiritual and traveling quest and the imperative of moving on to another stage of his Legend, as a Lonesome traveler does, always looking forward to coming back home after lessons learnt on the road, still walking, with barefooted prophets, the railroad track (*Desolation* 350), and trying to build a legend.

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