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Acknowledgments

“Every creative journey begins with a problem. It starts with a feeling of frustration, the dull ache of not being able to find the answer. We have worked hard, but we’ve hit the wall. We have no idea what to do next. [...] It’s only at this point, *after* we’ve stopped searching for the answer, that the answer arrives. (The imagination has a wicked sense of irony). And when a solution does appear, it doesn’t come in dribs and drabs; the puzzle isn’t solved one piece at a time. Rather, the solution is shocking in its completeness. All of a sudden, the answer to the problem that seemed so daunting becomes incredibly obvious. We curse ourselves for not seeing it sooner.” – Jonah Lehrer

This quote from Jonah Lehrer’s book *Imagine: How Creativity Works* meticulously describes the creative process I went through while writing this thesis. Since it was quite the trip, there are several persons who fully deserve my gratitude and a personal thank you.

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Introduction

“Writing was a drug I couldn’t stop taking,” this is the title of an interview which the British newspaper *The Guardian* conducted with young and upcoming writer Samantha Shannon, who is known for her *Bone Season* series (Kellaway). The title of this interview refers to how Shannon felt while writing her novel *Aurora*”(Kellaway). Shannon refers to the act of writing as a drug, an addiction. It is interesting to see that while Shannon considered writing a “drug,” many authors that preceded her were actually high on drugs or addicted while writing their works. However, despite the influence drugs have had on many writers and their writing, extensive research on which effects these drugs had on the authors and the writing process or how you can distinguish a novel as a “drugs” novel has not been done yet. Since drugs can have numerous kind of effects, it is plausible that these effects could affect someone’s writing as well. For example, amphetamines are notorious for their capability of evoking a state of euphoria. Studying a text of an author who claimed or is argued to have been under the influence of these kind of drugs, and examining whether its influences can be traced in the text, could give an altered insight into a literary text .However, since a method to systematically examine these effects is nonexistent, the aim of this thesis is to set up parameters which assess the influence of drugs on a literary work and in this way create a framework to analyze any novel from this point of view.

In order to answer these questions, this thesis will be divided in four different chapters which will all touch upon the subject in a different manner. Since the use of stimulating substances goes back centuries, it is sheer impossible to cover every piece of literature which deals with the subject of drugs or where the author of the piece was under the influence of drugs while writing. In order keep the aim of this thesis concise, the main focus will be setting up the framework and examining a novel from both the Beat Generation and the counter culture with the use of this framework. Two periods in American history in which the literature of these certain groups stood out significantly from the rest of the American literary scene. The way in which they used and experimented with drugs and how this considerably influenced their writing was unprecedented and therefore makes them into the ideal groups to further examine.

However, as is mentioned before, literature with the presence of and references to drugs has been present since the beginning of literature. The goal of the first chapter is to give an overview of some influential pieces of literature and poetry in which drugs were of the essence. The aim is to explore how several texts from different points in time deal with drugs

and what made them stand out. Furthermore, it will also be compared why they were not as influential and different than the drugs infused novels that were published during the time of the Beat Generation and counter culture. Some of the texts that will be discussed are Chaucer's *The Knights Tale* (1475) and Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* (1816), two works which were of influential during the time they were written in and which contain references to drugs as well. Furthermore, the first chapter will shortly discuss the presence of drugs in modern literature. However, since the works of the Beat Generation and the counter culture will be used as a case studies, these two generations will be examined thoroughly in the second chapter. In order to avoid repetition, they will be discussed after the framework, which will be used to examine the novels, has been set. This is done since analyzing the generations in which both writers published their work is a significant part of one of the parameters and it therefore fits in better with the structure of this thesis.

With the purpose of establishing what made the novels from the aforementioned generations stand out, one groundbreaking novel from each is discussed in depth. The novels of choice are William S. Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* (1959) and Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971). Since not much research has been conducted on the subject of drugs and literature, chapter 2 will establish the framework which distinguishes the influence drugs had on the many facets of a literary work, ranging from a focus on the history with drugs of the author to whether the particular novel eventually changed the perception on drugs at the time. Although it would be too complex to fully explore if a new genre, the drugs novel, should be established in literature, this thesis will focus on the factors that make these novels different from other novels, specifically aiming on the aspect of drugs. This framework should therefore be seen as a first step of an academic discussion, which aims to establish whether a subgenre such as the drugs novel would add to the wide-ranging spectrum of literary genres.

Setting these parameters and explaining why they are of importance in identifying these novels, as significantly different because of the influence of drugs, are the main goals of the second chapter. Furthermore, because of the fact that extensive research on this topic has not been conducted yet, it is difficult to center this part of the research around an actual theoretical framework. For that reason, the parameters that are set are not based on an existing theory but established specifically for this thesis.

Furthermore, establishing this framework is the first step towards creating a better understanding of the influence and relevance of drugs in literature. If the framework proves to

be beneficial to the study of drugs and literature, the next step would be to combine theories and frameworks from various fields of studies. On the one hand to optimize the framework and on the other hand to expand this novel approach in literary studies. Theories stemming from studies such as film adaption and frameworks used in, for example, cultural studies could prove useful for further study. Since implementing all these approaches from different studies in this work would overly expand the research, the discussion of these perspectives for further studies is merely suggestive and will be added as an appendix.

The third and fourth chapter will use the parameters set in the previous chapter to study Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* and Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. The purpose is to examine which of the requirements that are set by the parameters are met by these novels. Conducting this research will result in an in depth analysis of both novels and what made these works, the authors, and the era they were written in, different from other novels that dealt with drugs. Since there is a great quantity of research done on both writers and these specific novels, the research will be based on the analyses of the novels as well as various secondary sources. Consequently, it can be concluded whether the parameters that are set in the second chapter are appropriate to answer and discuss the distinctiveness of these 'drugs' novels and what made them stand out from the work of other writers.

As a result, this thesis will discuss the history of drugs in literature and question the absence of in-depth research on the correlation between the two. The parameters set up in the second chapter will be used to examine *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and establish the efficiency of the framework. When proven to be beneficial in the field of literary studies, this framework can be utilized to assess an extensive selection of drug related novels. Eventually, combining this framework with other fields of study which would add to the research of drug related literature will eventually result in a better understanding and deeper insight in the relevance and influence of drugs on a work of literature.

Chapter I

1.1 A Brief Overview of Drugs Related Literature

“Whether you sniff it smoke it eat it or shove it up your ass the result is the same: addiction.” (Burroughs 200). This quote can be found in the epilogue of William Burroughs’s *Naked Lunch* (1959). In this part of the novel called “Deposition: A Testimony Concerning a Sickness” Burroughs describes the period in which he was addicted to drugs, mainly heroin. This period of heavy addiction lasted for fifteen years and Burroughs refers to it as “The Sickness” (Burroughs 199).

This period of addiction was of great influence to Burroughs’s writing. The aforementioned novel *Naked Lunch* is a fictional description of Burroughs time as an addict. What characterizes *Naked Lunch* is the fact that Burroughs made notes- and kept these as records- of what he did during the day and what he went through while being under influence of heroin throughout these drug infused years. *Naked Lunch* is the gathered result of all these notes and could be considered as a composition of this data into a piece of literature.

As such, it is not a surprise that the result had become a time-consuming work where Burroughs had much support from Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg whom both kept pressing Burroughs to write a novel based on these notes. Afterwards, *Naked Lunch* became the novel which established Burroughs as one of the most important writers of his era. Scenes in which drugs are (ab)used are described thoroughly and detailed, in a manner which gave the reader insight into the mind of a heroin addict while also providing the reader with some of Burroughs’ (homo-)erotic escapades, along with the concurring hallucinations he had to endure. Such a work was unprecedented at the time. Resultantly, it evoked a storm of criticism and was banned in several states for a period of four years for its vulgarity and obscenities.

Although *Naked Lunch* is now considered to be a literary masterpiece, in which drugs are of significant importance, William Burroughs was not the first writer who used drugs as an important theme in a novel, and neither was he the first writer who actually wrote much of his work under the influence of drugs.

This chapter aims to demonstrate that countless works of literature deal with the subject of drugs or, at least- reference to it substantially. Considering that references to drugs have been found in texts of over a thousand years old. This introductory chapter will focus on some key texts and writers in the drugs ‘genre’,- while subsequently giving a brief drugs-

related history of literature in general. In this way, the provided information from this chapter will give an idea of what makes drugs literature stand out from other literary works, explains its characteristics, and shows its relevance in a historical (literary) perspective.

The main work on which this introductory chapter will be based is Marcus Boon's¹*The Road of Excess: A History of Writers on Drugs* (2002) which is one of the few books that deals with the relation between drugs and literature on an academic level. Among the texts discussed are Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale", Samuel Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* and "Pains of Sleep". However, these are not the works that will be analyzed in this thesis and neither are they from the same period as *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, the two novels which this work will be centered on.

The reason for this discrepancy is the fact that, although Chaucer and Coleridge deal with drugs, they were not of such influence to 'drugs' literature as the works from the Beat Generation and counter culture. Thus, this first chapter will provide a brief history and discussion of important drug related literary works while subsequently discussing the difference with the works from the Beat Generation and counter culture. The actual research on *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* will be conducted in subsequent chapters.

1.2 Early Encounters

The first time in history drugs were actually described in a literary work, was Homer's poem the *Odyssey*, probably written in the 12th century BC (Baikouzis 1). Nonetheless, this is evidently not the first encounter of humanity with drugs and drug like substances. There are several debates in which researchers argue whether earlier civilizations were aware of the drug capacities of several plants and used this to alleviate their senses (Main). However, in order to prevent from deviating too much from the subject, this chapter will solely focus on references to drugs in poems and literary texts .

The particular substance mentioned by Homer is a drug derived from the nepenthe plant (Boon 19). The use of this drug- or other drugs- was already quite popular in ancient Greece. However, the Greek use of drugs differed significantly from how drugs are used today. As Dr. Carl Ruck describes in his book *The Road to Euleisis: Unveiling the Secret of*

¹Professor of English at York University

the Mysteries, the people from ancient Greece mixed it with wine and henceforth created a cocktail of wine and drugs which elevated the senses. Ruck describes how “[l]ike the wine of most primitive peoples, Greek wine did not contain alcohol as its sole intoxicant but was ordinarily a mixture of various inebriants (101).” Furthermore, Ruck and fellow writer R. Gordon Wasson claim that there is some evidence that an “LSD-like consciousness altering drug” might have also been used by Greeks at the time (143). Until an earlier reference to drugs is found, it was Homer’s *Odysseys* that first described it in a literary fashion.

From the time Homer wrote the *Odyssey*, an immeasurable number of literary works has been written and numerous works which contain references to drugs. Thus in order to keep this summary concise, the three aforementioned works which were of significance during their time, and contained drug related themes, will be discussed.

The first work which will be discussed is Geoffrey Chaucer’s “The Knights Tale”, a story from Chaucer’s renowned work *The Canterbury Tales* which was written approximately around 1386 (Abrams 216). Since *The Canterbury Tales* is a renowned early piece of English literature, which is still studied and discussed by academics and critics, and since it is one of the early works which refers to drugs, this text by Chaucer is an ideal work to start this overview. “The Knight’s Tale” tells the story of the knights Arcite and Palamon and is based on a work by the Italian author Boccaccio called *Il Teseida* (the story of Theseus) (Abrams 215). The stories in *The Canterbury Tales* are, in contrast to many literary works of that time, written in Middle English instead of French or Latin (Abrams 214). This is one of the several factors that made Chaucer’s collection of texts unlike other works admired at the time. Not only was it quite unique at the time to write in Middle English but Chaucer is also praised for “consolidating and enhancing the literary prestige of English, and all of his major works represent a masterly exploitation of the creative possibilities of the native tongue”, as is described in *Old and Middle English, c. 890 – c. 1400: An Anthology* (Treharne 584). Furthermore, *The Canterbury Tales* is mostly recognized for Chaucer’s “exceptionally vibrant description of society, and [it] is a text that still has the most immense appeal for a modern audience” (585).

The interesting aspect of the previous quote from the anthology is the fact that *The Canterbury Tales* provides its reader with vivid and clear descriptions of life at the time. It is therefore interesting to see how drugs are implemented in the text and of what significance they were in these medieval times. One of *The Canterbury Tales*’ texts in which drugs is mentioned is in the next fragment of “The Knight’s Tale”:

For he had yeve his gaylerdrynke so
Of a clareemaad of a certeynwyn
of necotikes, and opie of Thebes fyn
That al nyght though men woldehym shake,
The gayler sleep, he myghtenat awake. (Chaucer qtd in Boon 19)

The two words which indicate that Chaucer is mentioning drugs are “necotiks” and “opie”, referring to narcotics and opium. Furthermore, the last sentence mentions to a “happy sleep” from which he might not awake. This probably is a reference to the fact that the use of drugs influenced his sleep but might cause that he will not wake up anymore ie. an overdose. The question then arises what the role, or influence, of the mentioned drugs is in *The Knight's Tale*. Since the previous fragment of the text is the only occasion in which drugs are mentioned in *The Knight's Tale*, it is safe to say that its role is fairly minimal, though apparent. Even though drugs cause an important twist to the story, wherein Palamon escapes after an accomplice hands the prison guard an opium and narcotics infused wine mixture, drugs do not have a critical role (Benson). Furthermore, except for that it is revealed that wine is often used as an agent to mix drugs (like the Greeks did according to Ruck and Wasson), not much can be concluded about the further role of drugs in this text or the writing process in general. Drugs are merely a small element in one particular scene and do not have a significant role or any further consequence in the story. However, since *The Canterbury Tales* is such an influential piece of literature for its time and simultaneously a work in which drugs are referred to, it is an ideal intermediate step towards works in which the presence, influence, and importance of drugs is of greater significance.

In addition, it is remarkable to see that similar to Homer's *Odysseys*, opium is the described drug (the nepenthe from the *Odyssey* created an opium-like effect)(*Oxford English Dictionary*). However, the fact that opium, or opium-like drugs, reoccur in these old texts is not surprising. In Martin Booth's book *Opium: A History* he describes that opium is one the oldest drugs known to mankind as it was quite easy to get a hold of. It has therefore been popular since its discovery (Booth 15). However, opium was officially used for medical purposes during Chaucer's time, namely to “reduce the distress of surgical operations” and most probably was also used as a painkiller outside of the operation room (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). Nonetheless, as can be seen in *The Knights Tale*, people noticed that opium not only had remedial or distressing qualities but also brought the user in a different state of mind, a kind of ‘high’, or sleep, which brought great happiness but could also result in death.

The Encyclopedia Britannica describes what kind of effects we nowadays contribute to opium and which influence it has on someone who uses it and thus shows opium's capability as a drug. Opium is described as being able to "alleviate anxiety; induce relaxation, drowsiness, and sedation; and may impart a state of euphoria or other enhanced mood".(*Encyclopedia Britannica*) Furthermore, it is unknown whether Homer and Chaucer themselves used drugs or were under the influence when writing. It is therefore interesting to see that countless authors who succeeded them actually were addicted to stimulants while writing, and from that point forward, it can be examined whether these drugs had an effect on the writing process of these writers.

1.3 Drugs In The Romantic Period

As said before, many writers succeeded Homer and Chaucer in writing about drugs and mentioning them in their texts. Since not all of these texts were of great significance- and it would be an impossible task to discuss them all- the next era that will be discussed is the 18th century.

One of the British authors whose work differs in comparison to earlier works, making him of great interest in the field of drug related writing, is Samuel Taylor Coleridge.² Coleridge was known for being addicted to stimulants, mostly opium, and it is strongly believed that his addiction influenced his work significantly. What makes him stand out in comparison to Homer and Chaucer is that he is recognized to be addicted and is known to have been influenced by his addiction.

Two works by Coleridge, one written while under the influence of drugs and one written while being sober, will be discussed and combined with some of his personal background in order to establish in what way his writing was influenced by drug use. The works of choice are Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" and "the Pains of Sleep".

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, born in 1772, is described as a "remarkably innovative poet"(Abrams 426). However, it took some time before Coleridge gained recognition. Unfortunately for Coleridge, he was already deceased by the time he finally became

² Although the work of one of his contemporaries, Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, is equally interesting and does have drugs as a major influence as well, Coleridge's works will be discussed elaborately. This is done because of the fact that Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" and "The Pains of Sleep" show a great contrast in how opium influenced their origins and is therefore, in my opinion, of greater interest in this part of the thesis.

acknowledged as one of “the two seminal minds of England”, as he was described in an essay by philosopher John Stuart Mill (qtd. in Abrams 426). Coleridge was especially known for being “one of the important and influential literary theorists of the nineteenth century”(426). During the early stages of his addiction, Coleridge was in a state of denial, as is described in Boon’s *The Road of Excess: A History of Writers on Drugs*, Coleridge “gave medical reasons for [his] first use” and “saw [himself] as a philosopher, [who] used [his] philosophical interest to create a *literary* context for opium use”(32). Nonetheless, the fact that Coleridge visited the Mediterranean in 1804 “as at least in part in a failed attempt to break free of his opium habit” shows that the problem was quite severe (33). While Coleridge claimed that he used the drugs for “creating a literary context”, he was known for being mentally and psychologically unstable. The *Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gives an insight in Coleridge’s work and life, including his mental state. In Neil Vickers’ chapter “Coleridge’s Marriage and Family” he describes how “Coleridge’s mental state was a second source of difficulty in the marriage” and “Coleridge’s psychological frailty elicited from his friends an extraordinary protective attitude”(75).

This addiction is also reflected in his work, for example in his poem “Kubla Khan”. “Kubla Khan” was written, as Coleridge himself once noted, “in a sort of reverie brought on by two grains of Opium, taken to check a dysentery”(Griggs 357). Although he believed opium stimulated him in writing “Kubla Khan”, Coleridge was trying to recover from opium while writing “Pains of Sleep”. He was henceforth struck by terrors and fears induced by the withdrawal, leading to poetry based on these experiences. In their work “Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Opium” in the *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Earl Leslie Griggs and Seymour Teulon Porter clarify that Coleridge’s poem “The Pains of Sleep” is a great example of how such withdrawal influenced his poetry. “The Pains of Sleep” meticulously describes what Coleridge is going through during the night, at the time not yet aware of the fact that he is having “withdrawal symptoms from opium”(Abrams 469).

Since “Kubla Khan” was written while Coleridge was under the influence of opium and “The Pains of Sleep” during his withdrawal, it is interesting to see what kind of effects opium has on its users but also which symptoms it causes during withdrawal. Thus, it can be examined whether these completely different effects have a significant influence on Coleridge’s work.

On the Medline Plus website, a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine, both the effects of opium and its symptoms during withdrawal are described. People who are on

opium experience several effects, among these are “a general sense of well-being by reducing tension, anxiety, and aggression”(DEA). This sense of well-being, or euphoria, and especially the fact that anxiety levels would drop drastically made this the ideal drug for the likes of Coleridge. However, most opium users became so dependent on the drugs that they became severely addicted. This would result in their eventual suffering from withdrawal when the drugs were not available or when they went into rehabilitation. The symptoms that are related to opium withdrawal are nothing less than severe and the first indications can already be felt only twelve hours after their last hit of opium. Some of these symptoms, amongst others, are “anxiety, agitation, nausea, insomnia, muscle ache, and sweating”(Zieve).

An examination of “The Pains of Sleep” reveals that Coleridge literally describes several of the aforementioned symptoms. In the fourteenth line of the poem, Coleridge writes:

But yester-night I prayed aloud
In anguish and in agony,
Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
of shapes and thoughts that tortured me (quoted in Abrams 470)

This short excerpt from the poem exposes the terrors Coleridge is facing while he is in withdrawal. Coleridge is clearly agitated and in a state of anxiety, caused by being off the opium, judging from the fact that in the poem he refers to being “in anguish and agony”. Furthermore, the fact that he is seeing a “fiendish crowd of shapes and thoughts that tortured me” implies that this anxiety leads to remembering horrors from the past, making Coleridge extremely frightened and uncomfortable. Subsequently, Coleridge most probably also suffered from some form of insomnia but related this to these feelings of anxiety, claiming that he does not want to be asleep due to these feelings. This is most apparent in the last section of the poem:

So two nights passed: the night's dismay
Saddened and stunned the coming day.
Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me
Distemper's worst calamity.
The third night, when my own loud scream
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,

I wept as I had been a child; (quoted in Abrams 470)

The aspect which makes this poem particularly interesting is the fact that Coleridge was not aware that he was suffering from opium withdrawal, as can be concluded from a letter he wrote to Robert Southey (Abrams 469). The state of mind in which Coleridge has written this poem is therefore of significance. When thoroughly examining the content of "The Pains of Sleep", it can be concluded that Coleridge identifies extreme feelings of guilt, remorse, and woe as the reasons for his suffering (470). While Coleridge believed that opium caused the state of mind and sleep he experienced which made him write "Kubla Khan", he was not aware that opium was causing the sufferings he describes in "The Pains of Sleep". In order to see what difference it makes whether Coleridge is actually under the influence while writing and when he is in withdrawal, "Kubla Khan" will be compared to "The Pains of Sleep". By comparing both poems it can be established if Coleridge was significantly influenced by opium or that his style does not greatly change when using drugs or not.

First of all, while the subject of both poems differs, dreaming inspired Coleridge to write both poems. As is mentioned earlier, in the case of "Kubla Khan" it was the use of opium, according to Coleridge, which induced the dream that led to the poem while withdrawal from opium resulted in dreams and fears that were the inspiration for "The Pains of Sleep". In "Kubla Khan", Coleridge describes Kubla Khan and his palace near a river in the first stanza, the second stanza consists of Coleridge's vision of a "damsel with a dulcimer" and how he would rebuild the paradise if he would have the chance (qtd in Abrams 448). Coleridge dreamt about this after he had fallen asleep while he had used some opium and was reading Samuel Purchas' book *Purchas his Pilgrimage* as is described in T.C. Skeats "Kubla Khan" which was published in *The British Museum Quarterly* in 1963 (77). The opium and the inspiration from the book lead to this vivid dream of the palace of Kubla Khan, Coleridge assumed, and he planned to make it into an extensive poem, since the dream, or vision as he called it, was so clear (446). However, since Coleridge was interrupted while translating this vision into a poem, "Kubla Khan" only became 54 lines long (Skeat 77).

Nonetheless, the "remains" of the vision resulted in one of Coleridge's most renowned works, a fantasy-like poem which takes the readers back to Eastern history and describes ancient surroundings and scenery. In the article "Toward a Model of Ecstatic Poetry: Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" and Rimbaud's "Ville I" and "Barbare"", Edward J. Ahearn, Professor of Comparative Literature and French Studies at Brown University,

describes “Kubla Khan” as an ecstatic poem and states its “transcendence of normal modes of experience” is triggered by Coleridge’s “ambivalent, fearful but persistent interest in drugs, dreams, trance and delirium”(43).

This in contrast to “The Pains of Sleep”, which, as mentioned, is more of an account by Coleridge in which he describes the terrors and fears of his withdrawal process. While you could label “Kubla Khan” as fictional or fantasy, “The Pains of Sleep” is much more of a biographical poem with a more serious undertone, a tone of confession. Since Coleridge is not aware that he is in withdrawal, he relates these feelings of fear and concurring nightmares to extreme guilt which lead to the strong tone of remorse which is sensible in the poem. It is of course very hard to contribute this difference in subject matter to opium only but based on this brief analysis, the possibility that it had a significant role in the writing process is plausible. However, its effects were not exactly as Coleridge described it himself. This is because it is highly unlikely that opium induced the dream which led to “Kubla Khan”. However, opium did strongly influence Coleridge’s feelings and state of mind as described in “The Pains of Sleep”. Even though this may seem difficult to grasp at this moment, a better explanation of the effects will follow later on in this thesis

As mentioned earlier, Coleridge and many others claimed opium triggered the vision which led to “Kubla Khan”. Nonetheless, the most influential work on Coleridge’s legacy does refute this statement. The article by Elisabeth Schneider, called “Coleridge, Opium and *Kubla Khan*”, reviewed by Thomas M. Raysor in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, is a groundbreaking work on the effect of opium in Coleridge’s writing. Schneider’s approach towards the subject was vastly different from other people who had studied Coleridge.

In fact, Schneider investigated the effects of opium on a person (Raysor 484). What Schneider did was “stud[ying] medical records of drug addicts like as no one ever has before and presents overwhelming medical evidence that the influence of opium (laudanum) can produce no such effects as have always been supposed [...]”(Raysor 484). Schneider’s research revealed that it is very doubtful that opium would lead to such dreaming as described in “Kubla Khan”(Raysor 484). Furthermore, Schneider also argues that “The Pains of Sleep” does have a connection with opium since Coleridge’s demeanor and state of mind can be attributed to the effects of opium withdrawal (484). It is therefore more reasonable to contribute the significant difference in style and theme in ‘Kubla Khan’ and ‘the Pains of Sleep’ not to the effects of using opium but to the consequences of withdrawing from it.

Additionally, the dissimilarity in meter and rhyme scheme in both poems is also interesting when considering withdrawal effects during writing instead of straight opium use. An interesting fact is that the rhyme scheme of 'Kubla Khan' is arguably more fragmented than 'The Pains of Sleep'. This can be considered fairly logical when you consider that literature written under the influence of drugs can appear fragmented, trip-like, and all over the place when taking into consideration the effects it has on the mind. However, the work of Schneider has proven that opium most likely did not have any influence on Coleridge's dream since it does not affect its users as was formerly assumed. The result is that 'Kubla Khan' is an ambiguous poem when it comes to the effects it has on its author.

Coleridge was under the influence of opium and most certainly must have felt the effects of the drug. However, he wrongly attributed this dream or vision to the use of this drug, resulting in the idea that 'Kubla Khan' is the best example of how opium influenced Coleridge's writing. Conversely, 'The Pains of Sleep' was inspired by dreams evoked by the withdrawal from opium.

Nonetheless, it is likely that 'Kubla Khan' was not influenced by drugs as much as previously assumed. Coleridge's life long struggle with anxiety, fear, and physical difficulties resulted in the use of medications which would alleviate his pains. This ultimately led to an addiction to drugs which would directly and indirectly influence his poetry. Coleridge, together with his contemporary Thomas De Quincey, the author of *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, were two of the first and by the same token very influential writers who admitted their addiction to opium, amongst other things, to and wrote about it in their work. The explicit use of drugs in his work, clearly stating that drugs served as an inspiration, made Coleridge unique stand out compared to many writers and poets from his generation. The fact that he is still remembered for his work and its relation to drugs exemplifies Coleridge's importance and influence on the drugs and literature genre.

1.4 Into Modern Literature and Beyond

Although Coleridge and several of his contemporaries, were at the forefront of drug related literature during the 18th century the question is why the aforementioned writers and texts were not as influential as the two generations which will be the focus of this thesis. There are several factors that contribute to this. First, most of the time, the intention of drug used differed. Coleridge, for example, became addicted to drugs after being prescribed medication with his physical difficulties, different pains, and anxiety. Addiction was

instigated as he became reliant on these prescription drugs.

This stands in contrast to writers from both the Beat Generation and counter culture. The Beat Generation, for example, was notorious for using and experimenting with drugs for recreational purposes. Furthermore, many Beat Generation affiliates believed strongly in the creative properties of the drugs they used, claiming it influenced their writing process positively, although this is, as Schneider's work explained, hard to prove.

The Beats, but also people associated with the counter culture, no longer saw drugs as something indisputably wrong. Drugs added to the Bohemian lifestyle, and were adhered to by both the Beat Generation and counter culture. In their view drugs could be considered an expedient device to stand up against the government and societal conformities.

Drugs no longer merely had an effect on their users but these users subsequently tried to affect society. For example, the hippies and counter culture strongly believed in the stimulating properties of drugs like MDMA and LSD: properties symbolized by, among other characteristics, affection and love. These groups tried to change the opinion on drugs alter it into a more positive stance, contrary to the message the government tried to convey.

This free-spirited stance towards drugs is also reflected in many novels from both the Beat Generation and counter culture. Whereas only a small reference to drugs in an early text like Chaucer's can be found, and mainly works as an instigator in poems by the likes of Coleridge, drugs in the Beat and counter culture generation assume a very different and fairly more positive position.

Another factor which contributed to the different attitude towards drugs in literature, and the reason why it became much more widespread when compared to the works discussed earlier, are the quickly developing technologies affecting publication and mass media. This allowed the spread of ideas to come about at a much higher volume against far lower costs. Additionally, the fact that a substantial part of the American media and press condemned or scorned the works published by the Beat Generation and counter culture did result in an increase of interest in these works .

This had root in a part of society's condemnation for the newly prevailing attitudes towards youngsters, such as their drug use and related pop phenomena. In fact, the highly controversial *Naked Lunch* was even banned for obscenity. Respected writers such as Norman Mailer praised texts such as *Naked Lunch* ,and ultimately, when the book was no longer banned in the United States, it gained popularity and even became part of the curriculum at several universities such as the Radboud University in Nijmegen. Nonetheless, the fact that

works could be distributed significantly faster, be read by a much larger audience greatly, and eventually taught, contributed to the popularity of novels such as *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, allowing them to become noteworthy pieces of literature in the long run.

Chapter II

2.1 Paving the Way: Igniting the Discussion of the Significance of Drugs in Literature.

The previous chapter described the unique relationship between drugs and literature. Although so many novels were written under the influence of drugs or have references to them, it is still difficult to establish what drugs exactly contributed to the writing process, since it is a factor which cannot be measured easily. The effect of drugs on writing is usually explained by the writer himself who claims that he benefitted from using drugs in the process of writing his novel. Nevertheless, this is still a very subjective claim; did these substances actually affect the writing or does the writer have other intentions when making such a claim? Therefore, it would be interesting to create a framework which enables one to assess the influence drugs have had on the writing process of an author. Eventually, it would be interesting to see if a subgenre should be created for these novels. However, this can only be discussed when it is established that a substantial amount of authors' writing processes and lives, and subsequently their literary works, turn out to be significantly influenced by the use of drugs. While theories and frameworks concerning drugs and, for example, popular culture are fairly common in cultural studies, a framework or research approach on drugs in literary studies is absent. In the extensive work "Drugs and Popular Culture: Drugs, Media and Identity in Contemporary Society", a significant amount of approaches towards drugs in popular culture and media are examined. For example, the relevance of drugs in modern music or how drugs influence identity are assessed (Manning v, vi). However, this theory merely focuses on popular culture phenomena and is therefore not applicable for this thesis. However, when a novel is examined with the use of the parameters set in this chapter, a next step, for example, could be to analyze these novels based on theories from popular culture studies or other studies. In this way, new perspectives can be gained and they will broaden the discussion on the relevance of drugs in literature.

As has been explained before, examining whether there is a need for a new genre within American literature is not the aim of this thesis. However, it will focus on paving the way for an approach to study drugs in literary works. Therefore, a framework will be made by setting up parameters that will answer five questions which are key in discovering the effects of drugs in a novel. Factors such as the effect on the writing process, the author's history with drugs, and the reception of the novel directly after its publication will, amongst other features,

be discussed.

Additionally, as is mentioned, there are several fields of study which have, in contrast to literary studies, established a theory or methodology which allows for an extensive study in the subject of drugs in their particular field of study. For example, Brian McFarlane's novel to film adaption theory could be utilized in order to examine in which way the film versions of these drug related novels are translated to the screen. However, in order to not overly widen the scope of this research these theories and methodologies which could add to the discussion of drugs in literature are added in the appendix. In this appendix, several other studies are discussed and analyzed for possible further research.

Furthermore, two novels, each from a different generation, that have left their mark on the literary scene because of their different approaches to drugs, will be examined to assess what made them stand out and why they are of such interest when discussing the subject of drugs and literature.

2.2 Establishing a Framework: Setting the Parameters

The purpose of this chapter is to set up a framework which establishes the influence and effects of drugs on a literary work. However, since there is little to nothing written on the subject of drugs and literature, the parameters which defines this influence have to be established. Setting and explaining these parameters will be the general aim of this chapter. After these parameters are set, two novels will be used as case studies in order to study the efficacy of this newly established framework, this will be examined thoroughly in chapter 3 and 4. The novels that will be discussed stem from the previously discussed generations. William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* will be discussed as an example from the Beat Generation while Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* will represent the zeitgeist of counter culture.

In order to accurately examine the two novels of choice, a literary comparison will be conducted in order to discuss the similarities and differences of two presumably, considering their drugs theme, alike novels. Since there is no methodology or theory yet, five parameters will be created which analyze the influence of drugs on *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing*. On the basis of the results the parameters yielded, it can be discussed to which extent the established framework proved to be useful in examining this influence. The questions do not only focus on the story of the novel but also on aspects such as the writing process and the reactions of the public and critics after the publication. Since drugs are most certainly a

subject of discussion in the United States, it is interesting to not merely aim on the novel but also discuss what kind of effect the novel had on the general discussion on drugs. In this way, a comprehensive overview and examination of the novel can be provided in order to decide whether the novel does meet the standards of a drugs novel.

The five parameters which will analyze the influence of drugs on literature are 1. Does the writer have a history with drug use? 2. Did drugs influence the writing process and publishing process? 3. What is the role of drugs in the novel and how are they depicted? 4. Are the novel's style and structure affected by drug use? 5 How was the novel received and did the novel change the general perception on drugs? Each question touches upon a different feature on which drugs could have had an influence. Furthermore, every question will be explained in short with the purpose of clarifying why it is needed to establish the effects and influence of drugs on a literary work.

The first question illustrates the authors' experience with the use of drugs and, when answered negatively, does immediately rule out question number two. Since many novels, such as the two that will be discussed in the next chapter, have autobiographical content, it is interesting to see whether the writer was an avid user himself who used his own experiences in his work or whether he based his work on experiences he had seen or heard from others. Furthermore, it is possible that a writer did not have any involvement with drugs before writing the novel, which leads to a story where the experiences with drugs were simulated, which significantly conflicts with the credibility and trustworthiness of the novel.

When the first question is answered positively, it can be examined whether the writer only used drugs prior to writing the novel or whether he was under the influence of drugs during the writing process. The general purpose of this question is to find out whether several sources confirm if the writer in question was under the influence of some kind of drug while writing or that it was only part of a myth the writer tried to convey about the writing process. In the case that it can be confirmed that drugs were essential in the writing process, the additional questions can be answered from a different perspective since characteristics such as style and structure could be significantly influenced by the writer's state of mind. Additionally, since the publishing of a novel includes a high level of interaction between the writer and their publisher, and usually contains a significant amount of text editing, it is interesting to examine if drugs were still of influence in this publishing process.

Answering the third question can give an insight into what kind of role drugs have in a certain novel. In what kind of way is drugs of the essence and which message does the writer

try to convey? For example, does the novel describe how the protagonist regularly uses drugs and what kind of effect this has on his demeanor or is it more an autobiographical approach in which the life of the writer while on drugs is described? The focus will be to see if drugs and the use of it are depicted explicitly and if this is done in a positive manner or if a writer utilizes a more critical approach. This will give an idea of whether the writer tries to convey a message about drugs use, be it good or bad, or if his approach can be described as descriptive, simply depicting and describing drug use with no general message in mind

Since novels in which drugs are a reoccurring theme usually are quite different from other works of literature, for example in style, it is of the essence to find out if the fact that the writers was under the influence of drugs affected features of the novel such as its style and structure. The aim of this fourth parameter is to find stylistic features which can be contributed to the use of drugs and are therefore unique for this kind of literature. The effects and side effects of a drug which a writer presumably used when writing the novel or a certain scene will be examined. The next step is to see whether these effects are recognizable in the style or structure of the novel or in a particular scene.

The fifth and last question is an important indicator in how the public and the critics have reacted to a novel. Was the novel banned after publishing because of its explicit drugs use or did it receive positive feedback and sparked a discussion? This question is also of significance for examining the pattern of reception of these novels since it shines a light on how it was received at first by the public and gives an insight in what kind of resistance or praise it faced before gaining the status it has nowadays.

Now that there parameters are set, a framework is established which offers the possibility to research the influence of drugs on key aspects of the creation, writing process, publication, and reception of a novel. This is one of the first steps to examine the effect of and relation the between drugs and literature. However, this research approach is still fairly new and untested. The establishing of these parameters is therefore a first step towards a field of literature study which further examines the significance of drugs in a literary perspective.

2.3 The Beat Generation: Bohemia versus Conformity

The multiple references to the Beat Generation in this thesis are deliberate. The Beat Generation left its mark on the timid and strict 1940s and 1950s, which are better known as the Age of Conformity. The Beats were fed up with this Age of Conformity due to its strict control of the government. They resisted to conform themselves to the rest of society and

approached life in a very different manner. John Clellon Holmes, who distanced himself from the Beat Generation as he did not want to be affiliated with all of the Beat antics, effectively described the Beat Generation in one of his articles. He described the Beats as a “cultural revolution in progress, made by post-World War II (Charters xx).”

One of the most important differences with the literary establishment of that time and the Beats is that the Beat Generation refused to write their prose and poems in the socially accepted style of that time. During the 1950s, literature was mostly reviewed by the standards of the so called New Criticism. The adepts of the New Criticism had a unique method of assessing a text and a very specific set of characteristics which were used to criticize unpublished work. Some of the characteristics of the New Critics were that they “treat a work of literature as if it were a self-contained, self-referential object”, “perform a close reading, concentrating on the relationship within the texts that give it its own distinctive character or form”, and their approach is often described as “objective” since it “stresses close textual analysis and viewing the text as carefully crafted, orderly object containing formal, observable patterns”(Murfin). It was common for published literature to resemble the standard framework the New Criticism movement established. Since the Beats despised “the establishment” in the 1950s, they most certainly “disdained the intellectual establishment, aiming their contempt, in equal measure, at both New Critics and New York intellectuals”(Newhouse, 2). However, this was reciprocal since the New Critics usually “ignored or lambasted” the work of the Beats (2).

The question is why the New Critics were so critical and negative about the work of the Beats and what made the work of the Beat Generation stand out from the rest of the literary works of that time. This will eventually also answer why the Beat Generation was so appropriate in creating this new type of drugs infused literature and why this resulted in successful cult movies based on novels that were banned or reviled during the time they were published.

In the Age of Conformity, the Beats were often described as bohemians. This was due to their extraordinary lifestyle and views on mainstream culture. Their lives generally revolved around listening to jazz, most preferably to more rebellious musicians such as Charlie Parker, and furthermore experimenting with many things such as drugs, a different approach towards sexual desires and preferences, and a new vision on literature.

However, although the fact that the lifestyle of the Beats resulted in literary works that are now respected, and that universities, nowadays, even have added their works to their

curriculum, in their time they were condemned by a great part of the United States' society . People did not understand the lifestyle of the Beats, as Diane Huddleston of the Western Oregon University explains in her essay "The Beat Generation: They were hipsters not beatniks". Huddleston states that "[m]any people of the older generation who had lived through the Depression could not understand young people not wanting to work, especially when there were plenty of good-paying jobs available"(2). Furthermore, high-ranking politicians and other influential Americans despised the Beats. Former head of the FBI Edgar J. Hoover described the Beats as one of "America's three greatest enemies" together with the "Communists" and "Eggheads"(Petrus, 1). This lifestyle, which was unheard of in the 1950s, resulted in a type of literature that completely stood out from the accepted mainstream prose.

One important feature of their literature and writing process and also an important characteristic of their lifestyle is the use of drugs. Many beats believed in the visionary qualities of drugs such as marihuana, benzedrine, heroin, and natural drugs such as peyote and yage. It is therefore not surprising that many of them experienced with drugs while writing their most famous work. Two renowned examples of works which were written while the author experimented with drugs are Jack Kerouac's work *The Subterraneans* and Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*. Kerouac gained much attention since he is considered the founding father of the Beat Generation but also because he invented his own style of writing called spontaneous prose. Spontaneous prose is a style of writing where, amongst other features, a writer sits down at his typewriter and starts working on his text. There is no room for overthinking, revision is not allowed, and it should be a continuous flow of thoughts and creativity directly translated onto paper. The entire process should not take too long. Kerouac's *The Subterraneans* which was written in three days while the author was constantly high on benzedrine, coffee, and alcohol and had, presumably, no sleep during the entire process. The same goes for Allen Ginsberg whose famous vision of the late poet William Blake inspired him to write his masterpiece *Howl*. While it is not completely clear if Ginsberg was under influence of drugs while he had this vision, it is assumed that he was high while writing the poem as the following statement will clarify. In Ann Charter's ³*The Portable Beat Reader* is described that Ginsberg "[wrote] fifty-eight pages in an inspired forty-hour stretch at his desk while taking, by his own account, heroin, liquid Methedrine and Dexedrine"(61).

³ Professor of English at the University of Connecticut

These are just two examples of how drugs and the process of writing intertwined in the lives of the Beats and Ginsberg and Kerouac were of course not the only members of the group that did so. William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* is another great example of how hallucinations and visions invoked by a severe heroin addiction can lead to a great piece of literature. Since this novel by Burroughs sparked so much controversy because of its theme and the presence of drugs, *Naked Lunch* will be the novel of choice from the Beat Generation that will be assessed with use of the parameters set in this chapter.

All things considered, the bohemian lifestyle of the Beats was deemed repugnant by many and their works were considered to be garbage by most, dealing with despicable themes such as (homo)-sexuality, drugs, and a bohemian lifestyle. However, the Beats created a perfect environment for writing these "drugs" novels. Many works of literature by the Beat Generation are based on events that occurred in their own life and therefore resulted in the fact that drugs were a recurrent theme. Because of these reasons, the Beat Generation, and William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* in particular, are a perfect case study in examining how such a despised drug novel could later establish itself as one of the masterpieces of the 1950s even though it was banned shortly after it was published.

Furthermore, in order to give a better insight into not only the mind and history of the specific authors or frameworks from other studies which could be used for further research, this chapter will also provide a concise background on the generations the two novels of choice stem from. In the case of *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, this means that the Beat Generation and the era of the counter culture will be discussed with the intention of creating a better understanding on the background of the novels from not a purely drug-related point of view.

2.4 The Counter Culture: The Elusive American Dream of the Hippie Generation

To understand the reasons why drug-infused novels gained acknowledgement years after publishing, another novel from a different age will be examined and compared to the work of Burroughs. This work is Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, which was written during the age of the counter culture. As with the Beat Generation, a historical background of the counter culture will be provided. First of all, the difference between these two counter culture movements is that the Beat Generation was a relatively small group of writers while the counter culture was a nationwide phenomenon which writers affiliated themselves with. Therefore, it makes it much harder to define what this culture

exactly was. However, Theodore Roszak's extensive and influential work *The Making of a Counter Culture* (1969) illuminates movement. Since different movements and cultures worldwide are defined as counter culture, the counter culture that will be discussed in this thesis is the one that originated in the United States at the beginning of the 1960s. Roszak defines the counter culture as "a protest that was grounded paradoxically not in failure, but in the success of a high industrial economy"(xii). What Roszak describes as the "technocracy"⁴ is the root from which the counter culture emerged (5).

Although the 1950s were called the Age of Conformity, it did most certainly not mean that nothing happened. The American economy witnessed a significant growth and the country entered a time of considerable financial prosperity. However, these were also the time of the onset of the Cold War and the fear of Communism, McCarthyism, and an intensifying "struggle for human rights"(Abram, 540). The sudden wealth many Americans experienced changed American civilization into an increasingly consumerist society. As is described in the brief seventh edition of *A People and A Nation*, "people sought satisfaction in their families and in the consumer pleasures newly available to so many"(534). There were jobs in abundance and the average American seemed to be content with their lives. Roszak effectively summarizes the state of mind of this period in the following quote: "the members of the parental generation, storm-tossed by depression, war, and protracted war scare, cling fast to the technocracy for the myopic sense of prosperous security it allows"(13). Furthermore, Roszak states that this older generation believed that the future generation would simply blend in into this lifestyle. However, this was a serious misconception. A significant number of people in their late teens, and early and late twenties did not want to conform themselves to these new standards. The result of this was that this new generation started to act against the generation that raised them. Roszak states that "the young stand forth so prominently because they act against a background of nearly pathological passivity on the part of the adult generation" (22). They reacted fiercely against the new capitalism, the battle against communism, and the Vietnam War.

However, the question is why several drug novels originated during this era of social and political turmoil. Probably the most important factor is that drugs were omnipresent

⁴ Roszak describes a technocracy as follows: "[the] social form in which an industrial society reaches the peak of its organizational integration. It is the ideal men usually have in mind when they speak of modernizing, updating, rationalizing, planning." (5)

during the heydays of the counter culture. Especially marihuana and psychedelic drugs such as LSD were extremely popular and were consumed en masse. Whereas the Beats used drugs to alleviate their senses and tried to get into a different state of mind in order to stimulate, amongst other things, their creative writing process, the counter culture adherents' drug use can be explained from a different perspective. Roszak states that the "psychedelic experience participates significantly in the young's most radical rejection of the parental society"(155). However, there was also a significant danger for the people using drugs since these drugs are very addictive. Roszak explains that the excessive use of these drugs can lead to serious health problems and mental difficulties but can also estrange its users from their original objective of protesting and revolutionizing (160). Roszak states that "the psychedelics are a heavy weight obsession which too many of the young cannot get over or around"(160). Furthermore, the government and media started to portray a significant part of the counter culture as drug addicts and bohemians which did not do justice to the actual cause the counter culture was opposing against. How this was done by the authorities and media is exemplified by the following quote of Roszak:

To be sure, the authorities with their single-minded determination to treat the use of psychedelics as a police problem, and the mass media with their incorrigible penchant for simplifying and sensationalizing, are both to blame for turning the often innocent curiosity of the young into ugly and furtive channels. (163)

Although, the depiction of the counter culture by the mass media and the authorities was heavily exaggerated, it was most certainly true that a significant part actually used drugs. Nonetheless, the drug use by these students, bohemians, hippies, and others that were connected to this movement did result in literary work written in this particular era and under the influence of drugs or with drugs as an important theme in the work. This is because of the fact that many of the youngsters of the counter culture had their own role models who they looked up to and whose ideologies and ideas they tried to emulate. Amongst these figures were Alan Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, and Ken Kesey. These three men were known for their literary works but also because of their quite radical ideas about how to live their lives and had a significant history with drugs.

Rozzak describes Leary as the "promoter, apologist, and high priest of pshychedelia nonpareil"(164). While Leary acquired a significant amount of followers with his religious approach towards psychedelic drugs, it was Kesey who gained attention in a very different

manner. Kesey and Leary both involved the youngster of the counter culture in “public trips” but their approach was vastly different (164). While, as is aforementioned, Leary believed in the religious capacities of psychedelic drugs, Kesey was more “fun and games” and his purpose “at best, aesthetic and entertaining”(164). Even though, the way in which youth involved themselves with drugs may differ, it is clear that slowly and surely more and more youngsters and adherents of the counter culture were drawn into a culture of drugs. Furthermore, as Roszak already described, the ideals which were once a definitive characteristic of the counter culture seemed to become less straightforward. In combination with how this group was depicted by authorities and media, this resulted in the start of the diminishment of the influence of the counter culture at the end of the sixties.

However, like in the era of the Beat Generation, several novels were published by writers associated with, or inspired by the counter culture movement. Furthermore, it also occurred that a recently published novel was admired by the counter culture and in that became associated with the movement. A remarkable fact is that several of these novels have drugs as an important theme or were written under the influence of drugs. Tom Wolfe’s *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* and Hunter S. Thompson’s *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* are prime examples of this phenomenon.

In conclusion, the aim of this relatively short chapter is to create a background on the generations that played a significance in the origination in what might be called the drug novels and, furthermore, setting the framework which will assess the influence of drugs in *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* with the use of the parameters. The provided background on the two eras gave a clear insight why these generations were considerably different from preceding movements and generations. For the Beat Generation, this mostly applied to literature and lifestyle of people who affiliated themselves with the culture which was vastly different and sparked a lot of controversy in an age that was not used to such extremities in any sense. It was therefore no surprise that both their lifestyle and style of literature were not accepted and several works got banned before or just after they were published. The counter culture had much more influence in comparison to the Beat Generation, as it was a nationwide movement that stood up against the wrongs of the United States’ government and society. The aspect which both groups had in common was that drugs was a of the essence in many of the affiliates’ their endeavors. This created an environment which was perfectly suitable for the writing of the drugs novel, since in both generations writing was a way to express themselves and their generation.

Since there was no existing framework to establish whether a novel could be defined as a drugs novel, the aim of this chapter is to establish these requirements and set up a set of parameters that would define what features a novel should contain to be categorized as a drugs novel. These parameters should give an overall view of the novel and its relation to drugs, dealing with characteristics such as the writer's history with drugs and to features like the influence drugs had on the style of the novel. The parameters are presented as five questions that after answering decide if a novel can be considered as a drugs novel or not. The goal of this is to create both a discussion on the fact if these parameters are sufficient in categorizing a novel and if there is a need in literature to create a subgenre for these particular novels or that the literary landscape is already saturated with genres. Therefore, the previously set up parameters will be used for the first time in the third chapter and will examine if William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* and Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* are the first to novels which meet the requirements and could therefore be labeled as drugs novels.

Chapter III

“He was the first person who was famous for things you were supposed to hide — he was gay, he was a junkie, he didn’t look handsome, he shot his wife, he wrote poetry about assholes and heroin. He was not easy to like.” — John Waters, the Pope of Trash, on William Seward Burroughs, the Pope of Dope”

3.1 Introducing William S. Burroughs

While the enigmatic Jack Kerouac and the spirited Allen Ginsberg can be considered as the two most prominent faces of the Beat Generation, they both consider another author associated with the Beats as their mentor and inspiration. This man was William Seward Burroughs, born in 1914 and slightly older than most of the other Beats. He graduated from Harvard University, another dissimilarity, while most other members were college dropouts. Possibly due to the age difference and the fact that Burroughs actually graduated, he “impressed [other beats] with his erudition, as well as his sardonic humor and reserved poise”(Charters 102).

Nonetheless, while Burroughs was an established and respected author, achieving mainstream success was difficult. His works got rejected by all the large publishing houses of his era (Charters 102). This led to Burroughs losing faith in getting his work published in the conventional fashion.

Burroughs’ life took a very different direction from that point forward. He resorted to criminal practices in “the hope that he would feel at home in a community of outlaws” as described in Ann Charters’ *The Portable Beat Reader* (102). In an interview with the *Paris Review*, Burroughs said he became an addict just out of boredom (Knickerbocker). Regardless the exact reason, it resulted in the beginning of an almost lifelong addiction to numerous drugs and ensuing an unsettled and turbulent life; with a literary legacy to show for.

This turbulent existence is characterized by a few key moments which shaped Burroughs life and literature significantly. One of these moments is his marriage with Joan Vollmer which was noteworthy for several reasons, especially since it indirectly was one of the causes for the origination of Burroughs’ most important novel; *Naked Lunch*. Although Burroughs’ novels are filled with mostly homo-erotic scenes, Burroughs himself was bisexual. Whereas bi- and homosexuality was accepted among the Beats, it most certainly was not common in the United States. Most Beats got married to a woman at some point in their life although their motivations varied strongly. For some of them, marriage was “as open and

spontaneous as prose and poetry,” while for others it “served as a constant reminder of conformities and conventional restrictions placed upon sexual orientation and behavior” (Lawlor 216).

Burroughs married twice, of which his marriage to Joan Vollmer is the most notorious. Interestingly, it is as much the marriage itself as well as the way it ended which makes it both particularly interesting and horrendous. Burroughs shot and killed Vollmer while presumably playing a game of Wilhelm Tell, although this has never been fully acknowledged by Burroughs himself.

This improbable event instigated Burroughs’ travels around the world to places such as Tangiers and at the same time launched his writing career. In fact, he once explained writing was one of the few ways he could escape “[the] nightmare that he would live for the rest of his days” after he shot Vollmer (Butler 5). In the introduction to his novel *Queer* he even goes as far as claiming it was because of Vollmer’s death that he became a writer:

I am forced to the appalling conclusion that I would never have become a writer but for Joan’s death, and to a realization of the extent to which this event has motivated and formulated my writing... The death of Joan brought me into contact with the invader, the Ugly Spirit, and maneuvered me into a life-long struggle, in which I had no choice except to write my way out (Butler 5).

This was the start of Burroughs’ career as a writer and resulted in many remarkable literary works. Many of these were inspired by aspects Burroughs struggled with during his life in combination with events witnessed during his stays abroad. As such, the resulting novels dealt with bi- and homosexuality, drug (ab)use, and conveyed Burroughs’ view on authorities, with *Naked Lunch* as his most significant work, the latter of which combined all of these themes in one mind-blowing novel. Although his novels, *Naked Lunch* in particular, were not well received by most critics at the time, Burroughs did receive some praise and slowly but surely reached a larger audience.

His popularity rose significantly in 1966 after the Massachusetts Supreme Court declared *Naked Lunch* as not vulgar and obscene. As a result, the novel was no longer banned from bookshops (Foster 165). Onwards, Burroughs became one of the most respected writers of the mid-1950s and 60s. He became a mentor and cult figure for younger generations. This did not only involve later Beats such as Kerouac and Ginsberg, but countless others as well

until he died of a heart attack in 1997. Examples of his influence include his many appearances in music videos, references to his work in lyrics, and cameos in several movies. This exemplifies that William Burroughs, who tried to overcome his traumas and addictions by writing about them, eventually became one of the most recognized and respected writers of the 1950s, expanding his influence on pop culture until his death.

3.2 Dissecting Naked Lunch

After a short introduction on William S. Burroughs, the aim of this chapter is to examine his novel *Naked Lunch* with the use of the parameters which have been set in the previous chapter. While it is not very common to use the word ‘dissecting’ in the case of examining a literary work, the fact that *Naked Lunch* contains numerous references to insects and bugs makes it arguably the proper term to introduce this chapter. The insights these parameters will provide will eventually lead to a better understanding of the novel; with drugs as a primary focus. Since this drug-focused approach is experimental, it could open the discussion whether examining novels with this method adds to the literary discussion and is a first step in exploring if there is a need for “drug novels” as a supplementary subgenre in literature.

3.2.1. Does the writer have a history with drug use?

The first step in this process is to use the first parameter and find out if the author had a history with drugs before writing the novel. Furthermore, the question remains as to when an author can be considered influenced by drugs. For this study, the writer is considered to be having a history with drugs, or marked to be an addict, when it is clear that drugs were of such significance in his life; he no longer could do without; and when there is a clear craving for the drug in order to stay “sane”. Since addiction was, and still is, a great taboo, most people will not admit being addicted. By examining secondary sources such as interviews and literature, the aim of this research is to establish whether the author can be considered an addict, instead of an occasional and recreational user, and thus having a history with drugs.

However, in the case of William Burroughs, assessing his purported drug use is fairly straight-forward. The short introduction on his life already revealed Burroughs’ life-long addiction, mostly to heroin. Sources such as the aforementioned Herbert Huncke confirm that statement. Moreover, Burroughs definitely did not make a secret of it himself. The interview between Conrad Knickerbocker of the *Paris Review* and Burroughs in 1965 is a great basis for examining Burroughs and his work, as Burroughs himself becomes the primary source on his

own alleged drug use.

At the beginning of the interview Burroughs is asked why he started using drugs and he replies that “I didn’t seem to have much interest in becoming a successful advertising executive or whatever, or living the life Harvard designs for you” (Knickerbocker). This does not only confirm Burroughs’ use of drugs and reveals his motivations but does, to some extent, also explain why he fit the ideology of the Beat Generation; who all had a great resentment against the life they were ought to live according to institutions such as Harvard and society at large.

Furthermore, Burroughs would remain an addict for the rest of his life, although sober for some intermittent periods. In his novel *Junky*, Burroughs argues that once you have been addicted to heroin, you will be an addict for the rest of your life, even though you can kick the habit and stay sober for a while, you will stay addicted and crave the drugs. Burroughs explains heroin addiction has such a catastrophic effect on the human body, that, regardless of effort, you will always remain a ‘junky.’ Burroughs exacts words in *Junky* are: “Junk causes permanent cellular alteration, once a junkie always a junkie, you can stop using junk but you are never off after the first habit”(97).

Nonetheless, Burroughs comes back to this statement during an interview for CBC on national television. When Burroughs replies negatively to the question if he is still a ‘junky,’ the interviewer confronts him with the quote from the novel of the same name. Burroughs admits he was wrong and that he “would question that statement now” since he had not used the apomorphine of Dr. Dent yet and does feel himself “permanently cured”(CBC). Nonetheless, this interview dated 1977 and although Burroughs was no longer a heavy user, he would remain using drugs for the rest of his life.

Although he was mainly addicted to and interested in the use of heroin and similar opiates, he did not restrict himself to only using similar kinds of drugs. In *Naked Lunch: the Restored Text*, a part called “Letters from a Master Addict to Dangerous Drugs”, Burroughs in a letter to Dr. Dent describes that “he has been thinking of writing a book on narcotic drugs [...]” (213). After this, Burroughs added a glossary in which he describes all kinds of drugs he had used, what their effects were, and if they could be considered addicting. This provides a great model for understanding which kinds of drugs Burroughs had used over the years and what kind of effects it had on him. This is particularly fascinating as it could give an insight into how these drugs did or did not influence Burroughs’ writing process .

An interesting characteristic is that Burroughs himself never considered drugs or

addiction as morally wrong. In Edward Halsey Foster's study on the Beat Generation *Understanding The Beats*, Foster describes that Burroughs saw addiction in a very different way and it gave him "a privileged view of human psychology". He continues by stating that according to Burroughs "[t]he addict, [...], did not suffer from a psychological illness. Rather, heroin provided a pleasant experience (at least initially), and anyone, [...], would naturally gravitate to what was pleasurable"(152). Burroughs gives an identical answer in the *Paris Review* interview when being confronted with the claim that he does not support the common ideas and opinions on drug use and addiction (Knickerbocker). Burroughs answers by saying "no, most of it is nonsense. I think drugs are interesting principally as chemical means of altering metabolism and thereby altering what we call reality, which I would define as more or less constant scanning pattern"(Knickerbocker).

Burroughs' drug use would eventually be one of the reasons why he started writing, which is confirmed in the *Paris Review* interview in which Burroughs states "I started to write in about 1950; I was thirty-five at the time; there didn't seem to be any strong motivation. I simply was endeavoring to put down in a more or less straightforward journalistic style something about my experiences with addiction and addicts"(Knickerbocker). Junk gave Burroughs an insight in human psychology and a reason to write about his history and knowledge of drugs. For example, Burroughs states that it "at least put [him] in contact with the carny world.[...], the underworld, the old-time thieves, pick pockets and people like that. They're a dying race; very few of those old-timers left. Well, yeah, they were show business"(Knickerbocker). This underworld and its many characters are some of the key elements in *Naked Lunch* and many of his other novels such as *Junky*, *Queer*, and *The Soft Machine*; all of which give an insider's perspective of the heroin addict's grim world.

Summarizing the previous paragraph reveals the author clearly had a history with drugs and can be considered an addict. Furthermore, Burroughs uses his experiences with drugs, and images of the drug (under)world, in his writing. Since Burroughs experienced both the short and long term effects of drugs, the descriptions of drug use and hallucinations provided in his novels can be considered trustworthy. As such, it is a clear explanation of how Burroughs himself reacted to the drug and not merely a description of the effects an author expects from the drug. This makes *Naked Lunch* an insight into the mind of an addict, revealing his habits, and the dim world he resides in.

The previously discussed parameter disclosed William Burroughs certainly can be regarded as being seriously addicted to several kinds of drugs and heroin in particular. An

interesting feature is Burroughs' habit of keeping notes while under the influence of heroin. These notes mainly date back to his Tangiers period and include his wanderings around the world as well. Compiling these notes eventually led to the writing, and publishing, of *Naked Lunch*.

3.2.2. Did drugs influence the writing process and publishing process?

The second parameter questions whether the author was under the influence of drugs when writing the novel. This is necessary to examine whether drugs had a direct effect on the writing process. However, this will be assessed later on in this chapter. The current question regards Burroughs' mental status under the possible influence of drugs when writing *Naked Lunch*.

The above question, however, poses some difficulties. First of all, in *Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness*, a testimony which Burroughs wrote after the publication of *Naked Lunch* (and later added to new prints), Burroughs elaborates on the writing process of the novel. His heroin addiction, which lasted for more than fifteen years, was one of the factors instigating the advent of the writing process. Burroughs refers to this period of addiction as "a delirium" and states "I apparently took detailed notes on sickness and delirium. I have no precise memory of writing the notes which have now been published under the title *Naked Lunch*"(199). Although Burroughs comes back to this statement in "Afterthoughts on a Deposition" in which he refers to different kinds of memory and claims it did not mean he did not remember absolutely nothing.

Nonetheless, the notes which Burroughs kept while in delirium constitute the main body of the novel. Burroughs saved these notes in maps and refrained from touching them until Kerouac and Ginsberg encouraged him to sort out these notes and turn it into a novel. Since these notes were written while Burroughs was under heavy influence from several kind of drugs, it can be argued that drugs played an important role in the writing process of *Naked Lunch*. In *Understanding the Beats*, Foster states "Interzone began as a hallucination of the modern city where the deviant can find everything he needs except privacy. Yage may not have given Burroughs telepathic powers, but it gave him a starting point for his most famous novel"(157). This confirms drugs inspired Burroughs but it is not yet clear if he was high while actually writing the novel.

In the interview with *The Paris Review*, Burroughs himself gives an insight into the writing process of the novel, which mostly consisted of reviewing the notes and ordering them into a full story. As a result, *Naked Lunch* has no linear structure and a clear

storyline is absent. The story starts with an introductory in which Bill Lee is shortly introduced. The following chapters all do have features in common such as place, characters, and at some points reoccurring events which connect certain parts of the novel. The final chapter kind of rounds up Bill's journey and when looking at the previous chapters in retrospect, it can be concluded that the novel was a kind of diary. It opens and closes with comparable chapters, running from the cops in the first chapter, instigating his travels, and dealing with the cops in the final chapter. The chapters in between are therefore more of collection, a mosaic, of events experienced by the protagonist in the time between the beginning and ending of the novel.

Furthermore, Burroughs states how "the only benefit to me as writer (aside from putting me in contact with the whole carny world) came to me after I went of it"(Knickerbocker). Burroughs gives a similar statement in the CBC interview in which argues: "so far as creative work goes: can't be indicated, I would never have been able to write *Naked Lunch* for example unless I have been off now and then"(CBC). When further interpreting these statements it can be concluded that Burroughs presumably was under the influence of drugs while he wrote the notes which eventually lead to *Naked Lunch*. However, when he actually wrote the novel on the basis of these notes he most probably was not using drugs as they did not stimulate his writing process.

Burroughs has not explicably acknowledged that drug use makes writing impossible but in *The Paris Review* interview he gives a statement hinting that it is, in the case of Burroughs, counterproductive to be under the influence of stimulants when writing. When Burroughs is asked if "the visions of drugs and the visions of art don't mix", he answers:

Never. The hallucinogens produce visionary states, sort of, but morphine and its derivatives decrease awareness of inner processes, thoughts, and feelings. They are painkillers, pure and simple. They are absolutely contraindicated for creative work, and I include in the lot alcohol, morphine, barbiturates, tranquilizers—the whole spectrum of sedative drugs. As for visions and heroin, I had a hallucinatory period at the very beginning of addiction, for instance, a sense of moving at high speed through space. But as soon as addiction was established, I had no visions—vision—at all and very few dreams. (Knickerbocker)

Burroughs argues that the painkilling qualities of opiates make them so addicting but eventually also induce a state of mind in which the addict is not capable of doing something else other than getting his fix and experiencing life in a completely numb and emotionless condition. Burroughs went through this himself: "I was living in Tangier in 1957, and I had spent a month in a tiny room in the Casbah staring at the toe of my foot. The room had filled up with empty Eukodol cartons; I suddenly realized I was not doing anything. I was dying."(Knickerbocker). When analyzing these fragments from the interviews, the assumption rises that during the actual writing process preceding the publication of *Naked Lunch* William Burroughs was not under the influence of drugs since, according to himself, he would not have been able to be productive while being addicted to opiates.

However, a lot of interaction between author and publisher occurs in between the first draft of the novel and the eventually published work. Getting a novel published is a procedure which takes time; especially in the 1950s when communications and technology were much less sophisticated than today. The absence of modern technology made book publications lengthy procedures. Publishing houses and companies had certain rules and expectations which had to be met. Corresponding these procedures consumed a significant amount of time. As these companies usually had remarks and requirements before accepting a manuscript, an author regularly had to rewrite, edit, and polish his texts before publication.

This most certainly was the case for *Naked Lunch*, which due to its theme and scenes of overt (homo)sexuality, sodomy, and drug use made publication difficult. Complications in the publication process had several reasons. In the case of *Naked Lunch*, finding a publishing house willing to publish the text proved difficult. This, as is aforementioned, has everything to do with the novel's theme.

Burroughs' former publisher A.A. Wynn, which had published his work *Junky* in the Ace Book series, was one of the companies declining to publish the novel. The A.A. Wynn publishing company had taken quite a gamble by publishing *Junky* (originally spelled as *Junkie*), a semi-autobiographical novel which describes the experiences of the heroin addict William Lee, a pseudonym of Burroughs. A novel which dealt with drugs in such an explicit manner was groundbreaking in its day but did not receive much critique on its theme. However, when A.A. Wynn was approached to publish the follow-up novel *Queer*, the company declined. A statement by the publishing house, which is included in Foster's *Understanding the Beats*, sets forth their explanation. Foster states " The people at A.A. Wynn [the publisher of Ace Books] decided that publishing *Junky* was dangerous enough without

teaming it with a book... that might land them all in jail”(154). The ubiquitous presence of a homosexual theme and homosexual scenes made Ace Books decide that they would not publish *Queer*. This simultaneously meant that publishing *Naked Lunch*, a novel which combines the themes of both *Queer* and *Junky* and with probably even more explicit scenes, was out of the question.

The publisher eventually willing to publish some scenes of *Naked Lunch* was not an established publisher but a student magazine from the University of Chicago called *the Chicago Review* which decided to add some excerpts of the *Naked Lunch* manuscript to the literary section of their magazine (Foster 160). The publication of only a small part of *Naked Lunch* immediately caused a serious upheaval because of the novel’s theme and eventually led to the university “fail[ing] to print the next issue of the magazine”(Foster 160). Although this could have been the end of *Naked Lunch* it did spark the interest of some readers who decided to establish “a privately funded journal” called *Big Table* (160).

The *Big Table* is significant because this journal got the attention of Maurice Girodias, the founder of Olympia Press in Paris and named “a crusader against censorship”(Encyclopedia Britannica). Girodias was no stranger in the publishing scene. His father Jack Kahane was the owner of Obelisk Press, famous for publishing notorious works such as Henry Miller’s *The Tropics of Cancer* and Girodias continued his father’s work after World War II under the name of Olympia Press (Encyclopedia Britannica). Girodias was known for his interest in obscene, dark, and pornographic pieces of literature and other art forms. As a publisher, he published the works of, amongst others, Nabokov, Samuel Beckett, and Nikos Kazantzakis. As such, “[d]ozens of Olympia titles were banned; thousands of copies were confiscated or destroyed; and Girodias was repeatedly arrested by French authorities and tried as a pornographer”(Encyclopedia Britannica).

It is therefore no surprise that a publisher with such a record had great interest in the novel by Burroughs. Girodias demanded Burroughs to send him a finished text “within two weeks, for publication by his English language Olympia Press in Paris” which led to Burroughs finally finishing his first version of *Naked Lunch* after it “evolved slowly and unpredictably for nine tumultuous years in the life of its author, William Seward Burroughs”, as described in the *Editors Note* of *Naked Lunch* by editors James Grauerholz and Barry Miles (qtd. in Burroughs, 233). Nonetheless, this first version was by no means the final version of the novel, even the first edition published by Grove Press in the United States differed from the version published by Girodias’ Olympia Press (233). Succeeding editions would all be re-

edited by the publishing house, editors, or by Burroughs himself, usually because a publisher demanded more chapters or the addition or removal of a certain scene.

The version used for this thesis, *Naked Lunch: the Restored Text* which is restored and edited by James Grauerholz and Barry Miles, includes all the outtakes of chapters, letters by Burroughs, and appendixes such as “Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness”. These additions to the novel, and the writing process discussed earlier, provide a clear image of the long road *Naked Lunch* had to make before it was finally published. And even after publication, it still transformed into *Naked Lunch: The Restored Text* through several modes of input which resulted in, according to the editors, the most complete version of the novel.

However, the question whether drugs was involved in the writing process is therefore ambiguous. First of all, it is clear Burroughs was under heavy influence of drugs while scribbling down the notes which became the basis for *Naked Lunch*. However, getting the novel published became such a longwinded process, it is not indisputably proven that Burroughs was still addicted while rewriting and editing his work. Furthermore, since Burroughs claimed that the apomorphine cure from Dr. Dent cured his addiction, it would mean, according to Burroughs himself, he was only addicted while he wrote down the notes and he was clean when composing the novel. However, since many doubt whether apomorphine did actually cure him, it’s debatable whether this was not just a “desire to portray himself as drug-free and thereby stay out of jail”(Birmingham).

Therefore, the question whether the writer was under the influence while writing the novel is difficult to answer with certainty. The most logical answer therefore is that it is incontestable that Burroughs was under the influence of stimulants while he wrote the groundwork for his novel, the numerous pieces of texts for his “Interzone” project which eventually would be composed into *Naked Lunch*. The question whether Burroughs was addicted or sober during the rewriting, editing, and publishing process is a different question altogether. However, since Burroughs had been addicted for almost his entire life, except for periods in which he claimed sobriety because of the apomorphine treatment, it is safe to say that it is highly likely that Burroughs was under the influence of drugs while in the publishing process of *Naked Lunch*.

3.2.3. What is the role of drugs in the novel and how are they depicted?

This leads to the next parameter which will explore whether drugs are also critical in the novel by itself or whether the writer merely used them as a stimulant for the writing

process. In this parameter, the role of drugs in the novel and the way in which Burroughs portrayed them will be examined. This will lead to an understanding of how drugs are depicted in the novel and which message Burroughs tried to convey by writing about drugs the way he did. Since it is already clear drugs play a significant role in *Naked Lunch*, the question remains whether drugs are of critical importance to the final product, or whether they are merely used as a method to improve the writing process.

Drugs are an important factor in Burroughs' writing in general. Novels like *Queer*, *Junky*, and *The Yage Letters* all heavily revolve around drugs. *Naked Lunch* is no exception and is therefore a perfect novel to further investigate its importance and presence. This parameter will specifically focus on fragments from the text and discuss the relevance and depiction of drugs, illustrate the significance of drugs and drug use in the entire novel while simultaneously using Burroughs' personal background with drugs as a reference point to his style of writing.

Naked Lunch starts with the chapter "And Start West" and this chapter directly provides a clear indication on the role of drugs in the novel. Drugs in *Naked Lunch* and in the author's life can be described as the great instigators. In the novel, the first chapter starts with a scene where the protagonist of the novel, Bill Lee (a pseudonym of William Burroughs), is on the run for the police since he is in possession of heroin. Lee soon recognizes he can no longer stay in New York because the cops are closing in on him and he decides to "stock up on H, buy a secondhand Studebaker, and start west (Burroughs 8)."

This scene strongly resembles Burroughs' personal life in which he experienced similar situations. After being caught several times for the possession or use of drugs, Burroughs and his then wife Joan Vollmer decide to relocate to Mexico because of the stringent drug policies in the United States. This move would eventually result in Burroughs' almost lifelong wanderings around the world, ending up in places such as Tangier, Mexico and several countries in South-America. This journey would eventually lead to the writing of *Naked Lunch* in which Burroughs' experiences recur in narrative form.

It is therefore not surprising that such a storyline is implemented in *Naked Lunch* where drugs are again, as stated before, the instigator for the journey of the protagonist. Furthermore, the use of drugs resulted in Burroughs writing down his experiences on notes while being in Tangier; these notes are the basis of *Naked Lunch*. The idea of a novel about Interzone was already present and these notes eventually allowed Burroughs to complete the full text. His experiences in Tangiers and his severe addiction became some of the main

features of the novel. Drugs therefore indirectly the source which gave Burroughs the inspiration, via the notes he kept, to complete his *Interzone* manuscript. As a result, *Interzone* is a key location in the novel and is as an additional factor which demonstrates that drugs did not merely initiate Burroughs' retreat from the United States but similarly gave him the creative freedom and impulse to complete his *Interzone* manuscript.

Furthermore, drugs not only are the "great instigator" of the novel but they have a linking role as well, bringing people from all walks of life together. Most of Lee's acquaintances he encountered in the drug world give a clear portrayal how drugs are intertwined in the lives of people among all ranks of society. For example, in the chapter "Lazarus Go Home" Lee meets a young junky called Miguel in his room in Tangier. Judging on how the chapter continues, this Miguel was a boy whom Lee had some kind of sexual relationship with, most probably giving the boy drugs in return. This can be assessed by investigating the chapter in which Lee recollects meeting the boy and thinks "here to show off his new body"(58). Miguel has returned to Lee in order to get a "fix", which is slang for a shot of heroin. The way in which Burroughs describes the moment in which Lee injects Miguel with heroin again reveals the sexual tensions between the two: "'You're better off like this,' said Lee, dreamily caressing a needle scar on the back of Miguel's hand, following the whorls and patterns of smooth purple flesh in a slow twisting movement..."(59).

Miguel is just a minor character in the novel, and not much more than one of Lee's many flirts in Tangier and can be considered a low life. He sells his body for drugs and is part of one of the lower societal classes. However, several major characters who reside in the higher ranks of society also have a connection to the world of drugs and addiction in which Lee lives. Characters such as Salvador Hassan O'Leary and A.J. are important and reoccurring character throughout the novel. Both Hassan and A.J. are in some way related to Islam Inc. "the absurdly diabolical cartel that operates out of the political no man's land of *Interzone*"(Murphy). They both have a history with drugs and it is still part of their everyday life. For example, A.J., who is often described as a sort of joker, "put piranhas in Lady Sutton-Smith's swimming pool, and dosed the punch with a mixture of yage, hashish and yohimbine during a Fourth of July reception at the U.S. Embassy, precipitating an orgy"(123). The sections of *Naked Lunch* in which A.J. and Hassan are portrayed usually involve sex parties or orgies which usually are instigated and, or, fueled by drug use. These scenes reveal that drugs are part of every layer in the social structure and that you can find junkies among all ranks of society, with the likes of Miguel at the bottom, Lee somewhere in between, and characters

like A.J at the top of this drug pyramid.

Naked Lunch is often described as Burroughs' critique on the system of the 1950s and the "conspiratorial government" (Indiana) . The above makes it quite controversial when implying the highest ranking governmental bodies, such as Islam Inc. and the U.S. Embassy, are also "infected with the virus" and drugs are thriving in their midst. The role of *Naked Lunch* as a critique will be further discussed in the parameter concerning the reception of the novel.

In the previous paragraphs, drugs are visible as having a threefold role in the novel. They serve as an initiator in the first place, both in Burroughs' own life as well as William Lee's story in *Naked Lunch* since they set off his travels. Secondly, Drugs also have a connecting role, linking all ranks of societies and the characters of the novel because of their involvement in the distribution or the use of drugs. And thirdly, they also operate as a device which allowed Burroughs to criticize, amongst other things, the establishment when arguing that drugs are omnipresent even at the highest ranks of society. In this way, Burroughs proves drugs are much more than stimulants used by junkies and people of the seamy side of life but can serve as a tool in the writing process and as a defining element of a novel. Although the prominent role of drugs, and the numerous obscene passages of sex and violence caused by drug use did provoke a wave of critique and controversy, *Naked Lunch* proved to be an exceptional piece of writing. A *Newsweek* journalist described the novel as a "masterpiece" but "a totally insane and anarchic one, and it can only be diminished by attempts to give it social purpose or value or whatever (qtd. in Severo). An elusive storyline, dark humor and wittiness, arousing scenes of sex, violence and drug use, and a great range of intriguing and shady characters are features which made *Naked Lunch* into a novel which was unprecedented for its time; and drugs played an important in achieving this.

Considering the role of drugs in *Naked Lunch* has been thoroughly discussed at this point and its significance has been established, the next step is to see how drugs are specifically depicted in the novel. While establishing the role of drugs demanded a more figurative approach, the aim of this parameter is to explore how the drugs are literally described and decide what Burroughs' approach was in his depiction of the phenomenon in the novel.

When judging interviews by Burroughs in which his stance on the drug issue is questioned, his approach is fairly positive. Burroughs did not condemn drugs but rather focused on its positive aspects and qualities. It could therefore be expected that the tendency

towards drugs in the novel will be positive as well. Nonetheless, the introduction of the edited version, provided by the English writer J.G. Ballard, describes the novel as “a banquet you will never forget. [...]. A rollercoaster ride through hell, a safari to the strangest people of the strangest planet” revealing the dark atmosphere and tendencies of the novel (Ballard, introduction in Burroughs). Nonetheless, this is not conclusive for how drugs will be depicted in the entire novel. It gives a clear indication which clarifies that even though Burroughs’ might have a positive stance towards them, the depiction of drugs and the mood of the story will be dark and grim.

The aim of this parameter is to explore how Burroughs eventually choose to depict drugs and drug use and whether it corresponds with his general approach towards drugs. By thoroughly examining several scenes, it will be examined in which way drugs are depicted in *Naked Lunch*, how they affect the story, and if Burroughs’ stance towards drugs is reflected in the way he depicts them.

One of the striking characteristics of Burroughs’ writing style and his depiction of drugs already reveals itself in the first chapter. This chapter introduces Bill Lee and describes a scene in which he is being chased by the police while he is trying to get his fix of heroin. Furthermore, the scene exposes how deeply involved Bill Lee, and therefore William Burroughs, is in the narcotics scene. Burroughs’ knowledge of drugs and the drug world is exemplified by his clear understanding of the drugs vernacular. As an outsider, words such as “grass”, “hot shot”, “yen pox” and “People” do not evoke connotations related to drugs. However (or luckily), Burroughs did include the meaning of these words in layman’s terms so readers who are not familiar to this kind of slang do have a general idea of what he is referring to. A fine example of this is the following sentence: “I can tell you in confidence he is due for a hot shot”(Burroughs, 4). Whereas the Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes a hot shot as a “a talented and successful person; someone who is successful or skillful in a showy or flashy way”, it is clear that this description would not fit in the aforementioned sentence by Burroughs. Therefore, Burroughs included his own description which reads “Note: This is a cap of poison junk sold to addict for liquidation purposes. Usually the hot shot is strychnine since it tastes and looks like junk”(4).

Not only does this note by Burroughs clarify the meaning of the word and in this way gives meaning to the sentence, it also provides a deeper understanding of world of narcotics and Burroughs’ understanding of its slang, habits, and heterogeneities.

Nonetheless, this has not yet further illuminated how drugs are actually depicted and

whether Burroughs used the representation of drugs to express his own position on the issue. However, “the rube”, which is the third chapter of the novel, provides another yet different insight in Burroughs’ knowledge of the drugs environment. In this chapter, and in several other sections, he accurately and vividly describes how to use certain drugs and occasionally adds what kind of effect it has on its user. This is illustrated when Lee describes how to shoot PG:

Shooting PG is a terrible hassle, you have to burn out the alcohol first, then freeze out the camphor and draw this brown liquid off with a dropper-have to shoot it in the vein or you get an abscess, and usually end up with an abscess no matter where you shoot it. Best deal is to drink it with goof balls...(13).

The descriptions get more personal and precise in a following chapter, “hospital”, in which Lee describes his experiences in a piece of writing which is named “*Habit Notes*”(55). He meticulously describes the urge for drugs, how to use the proper drug in a certain situation, and how he keeps craving for them. This craving is a clear sign of addiction and evidently brings the physique and mental state of the protagonist in a deteriorating state, even to the point where there is not much left at all. Burroughs acknowledges his addiction and the doubtful state he is in in the following fragment of the notes:

Look down at my filthy trousers, haven’t been changed in months...the days glide by strung on a syringe with a long thread of blood... I am forgetting sex and all sharp pleasures of the body- a grey, junk-bound ghost. The Spanish boys call me *El Hombre Invisible*-the Invisible Man...(56).

While these previous descriptions are clearly not very positive, emphasizing on the hassle of drugs use, the effects on your mental and physical state, and the addiction in which drugs use results, Burroughs has not yet clearly distanced himself from drug use or disapproved the use of it explicitly. Even though “*hospital*” is the seventh chapter of the novel, you could assume Burroughs’ stance or point of view would alter throughout the story. However, this does not occur and Burroughs’ stance towards drugs remains rather ambiguous. He cannot be accused of stimulating drug use as these are merely his experiences involving drugs and his personal opinion on the use of it. Furthermore, there is no clear indication that Burroughs condemns them either and he does not clearly discourage his readers to use drugs in *Naked Lunch*.

A remarkable feature however is that the part in which Burroughs' stance towards drugs and his description of them is explained best is not an official chapter of the novel. It is the aforementioned appendix he wrote after *Naked Lunch* was first published. In *Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness* Burroughs, as mentioned before, reacts on *Naked Lunch* and his heroin addiction and tries to convey which message he wanted to carry out with *Naked Lunch*. The way in which drugs are depicted in the testimony provides a clear idea of what Burroughs' stance was, and why he chose for the grim atmosphere present, and proves to be useful in answering this particular parameter.

Analyzing this deposition and his reaction to the deposition, *Afterthoughts on a Deposition*, clarifies the ambiguous message which Burroughs conveys in *Naked Lunch*. Burroughs mainly describes how the "junk pyramid" works, why you stay addicted, what junk does to a person, and how he eventually kicked the habit (200). In this part of the book, drugs, and especially junk, are depicted rather negatively. Burroughs became heavily addicted, his health declined significantly, and due to this addiction, his life came at a complete standstill resulting in having no energy or any interest in doing something other than use junk and sit in his room. Apomorphine eventually was the cure which got Burroughs out of this downward spiral.

Nonetheless, while it would be completely understandable if Burroughs would condemn drugs, in these appendixes as well as in *Naked Lunch*, he never completely does this, disapproving other factors which in his opinion lead to this virus or sickness. Burroughs states "*the junk virus is public health problem number one of the world today*"(205). He opts for a worldwide apomorphine treatment which should be the cure to the junk virus. However, Burroughs states: "junk is big business, there are always cranks and operators. They must not be allowed to interfere with the essential work of inoculation treatment and quarantine"(202). What he implies here, is while junk is such a hazard for public health, certain factors, which he refers to as cranks and operators, are keeping the junk industry alive most probably because of the great amount of money which can be earned from it. This can be considered as a direct critique on American capitalism, which in Burroughs' opinion makes people care more about making money than about public health.

This type of capitalism, and how power is distributed and by whom, is one of the main factors why William Burroughs wrote *Naked Lunch*. *Naked Lunch* is aimed at the government which legislated anti-drug laws, the medias which created mass anti-drug hysteria, and the forms of capitalism which let the "sickness" thrive instead of providing a safety net or a cure.

Burroughs therefore felt that he as a writer had the power to address this problem and make his readers aware of it. The fact that many people found his writing shocking and obscene, did not surprise Burroughs as he stated in his testimony: “since *Naked Lunch* treats this health problem, it is necessarily brutal, obscene, and disgusting. Sickness is often repulsive details not weak stomachs”(205).

This last statement for a great part answers the question why Burroughs chose to depict drugs in *Naked Lunch* in the way he did. Burroughs decided no to shock just to repulse his readers since he believed that such an important and overlooked problem as the drugs sickness could not have been portrayed in a different way. The obscenities and detailed and graphic descriptions of several scenes in the novel depict the problem in his rawest form and Burroughs does not at all try to veil these particular scenes.

Furthermore, since Burroughs was an addict himself the story is based upon his own experiences. The descriptions of drugs, the effects of using them, and his portrayal of the underground junk scene he resided in are highly realistic. Although obscene and sometimes even gross, Burroughs’ aim was to portray the virus, sickness, and almost everything affiliated with it as health problem number one in a realistic, though shocking and dark, way in order to gain maximum effect.

3.2.4. Are the novel’s style and structure affected by drug use?

The penultimate parameter distinguishes whether drugs had an effect on the style and structure of the novel. This parameter will help to clarify whether the use of drugs did affect other aspects than the novel’s theme, subject and imagery and focuses on the linguistic features. Since style and structure are significantly defining for a novel, analyzing to what extent drugs affects these characteristics in a novel is essential.

William Burroughs’ style is often described as one of the most essential features of his writing. Hallucinatory, satirical, and hardboiled; these are reoccurring terms when his style is debated (McLemee). *Naked Lunch* mainly features the hallucinatory and satirical style. On the other hand, in scenes such as the opening chapter in which Lee is chased by cops or the last scene in which he almost gets arrested by Hauser and O’Brien, elements of classic hardboiled literature is present. Nonetheless, the focus of this parameter will be aimed on the correlation between Burroughs’ hallucinatory, satirical style and his drug use prior to and during the writing process since the hallucinatory style is most probably influenced the most by Burroughs’ use of drugs.

Furthermore, the hallucinatory style grants Burroughs the opportunity to pursue his goal to eradicate the sickness, while simultaneously sternly criticizing the authorities. The way in which this hallucinatory style offers Burroughs this chance is thus twofold. Since Burroughs clings to the hallucinatory style throughout the novel, it provided him with the opportunity to thoroughly and explicitly describe these hallucinations and the effects drugs have on a person. His descriptions of the events he went through while being hallucinating or suffering from drugs, show the severe effects of addiction while simultaneously addressing the problem and questioning why nothing is done about it.

In order not to make this parameter too abstract, an example of Burroughs' writing will give a better idea of what this hallucinatory style implies. The following part is from the chapter "Islam Incorporated and the Parties of Interzone", a chapter which explains and criticizes how and by which factions Interzone is governed. This chapter can be interpreted as Burroughs' view on the approach of the American government on the drugs problem and their stance in general. The following part clearly conveys this hallucinatory style while explaining how the world is infected with the "Human Virus", referring to the many, according to Burroughs, misunderstanding in this world:

The Sender is not a human individual... It is The Human Virus. (All viruses are deteriorated cells leading a parasitic existence... They have specific affinity for the Mother Cell; thus deteriorating liver cells seek the home place of hepatitis, etc So every species has a Master Virus: Deteriorated Image of that species.

The broken image of Man moves in minute by minute and cell by cell... Poverty, hatred, war, police-criminals, bureaucracy, insanity, all symptoms of the Human Virus.

The Human Virus can now be isolated and treated. (141)

Some of the features which exemplify the hallucinatory style of Burroughs are included in this fragment. Although it is very difficult to convey a style in only a few fragments, this short scene provides a good idea of the overall style in *Naked Lunch*. First of all, the use of the suspension points, (...), does not only imply the reader to think about the preceding sentence. It almost gives the reader an insight into Burroughs' mind who presumably is under the influence of drugs and severely hallucinating. Nonetheless, he has this idea of this Human Virus and tries to convey what it means. The suspension points

indicate Burroughs was choosing his words carefully, trying to reflect the hallucination.

Furthermore, this part simultaneously portrays Burroughs' kind of rambling writing style, using the suspension points, abbreviations, very short paragraphs, and writing the last sentence in italics. This creates a sense, as is mentioned before, of how Burroughs experienced these elusive hallucinatory moments and how he wants to grasp the meaning of these hallucinations and translate them onto paper. In this short excerpt from the text, Burroughs shows how he can meticulously describe what addicts experience while hallucinating. While on the same hand criticizing the governing body of Interzone, which sustains the "Human Virus", using this hallucinatory writing style. Moreover, this parameter also explores whether the structure of the novel is influenced by drug use. The fragment previously discussed partly clarifies this since Burroughs' hallucinatory style also significantly affected the structure of *Naked Lunch*. Many chapters are written in the formerly discussed hallucinatory style and causes to make it seem as if *Naked Lunch* does not have a clear structure. Furthermore, the novel is a collection of Burroughs' drugs induced experiences which he wrote down later. Therefore, *Naked Lunch* does not have a linear structure and the storyline is almost absent.

For example, the first chapter introduces the reader to Lee and describes his run from the cops. This implies that the reader will follow Lee on his trip around the world, escaping from the United States, and how he eventually ends up in the USA again.

Nonetheless, after the first chapter the novel transforms into a sort of diary which includes many of the notes Burroughs kept while wandering around in Mexico and Tangiers, now described as Interzone. A clear storyline and structure remain absent, the chapters are loosely connected to each other with the use of reoccurring events, locations, or characters. This use of structure indicates that *Naked Lunch* was written under the influence of drugs, resulting in its hallucinatory style and structure, and could only be composed because of the notes which Burroughs kept.

This sort of technique Burroughs used to structure *Naked Lunch* is called the cut-up technique. Burroughs discovered this technique while cutting up different newspaper articles and combining them leading to articles with a completely altered meaning. Burroughs was intrigued by the technique and started to use it for his novels. Since *Naked Lunch* was one of the novels in which Burroughs applied this technique, the reason behind its deviating structure and lacking storyline is explained. Moreover, the notes which Burroughs kept during his addiction were an ideal source to use this cut up technique.

Furthermore, the cut-up technique was not just a feature to justify Burroughs' odd way of structuring his novel. As with many features in *Naked Lunch*, the use of the technique has a deeper significance. This is explained in Robin Lydenberg's article "Cut-Up: Negative Poetics in William Burroughs and Roland Barthes" published in *Comparative Literature Studies*. Lydenberg explains that the use of this technique allowed Burroughs to tackle literary conventions. She states that "its poetics is essentially negative, aggressively distrustful of language and form, its effects constructive and deconstructive"(414). Furthermore, Lydenberg describes:

By disrupting the conventions of narrative and logical sequence through cut-up prose, the fiction writer and critic are merely practicing in an extreme form the challenge to tradition which accompanies any innovative venture. The radicalism of these new works, however, is distinguished by their resistance to the traditional procedure of hierarchical displacement which characterizes the progress of literary history (414).

This description of what one of the intentions of the cut-up technique is fit with Burroughs' aim to break with literary traditions, criticizing the establishment, and addressing the issues which the United States government should deal with in his opinion. The use of the disruptive cut-up structure was one of these methods to do this. Not only did it break with traditional literary conventions as Lydenberg argued but it also fitted with Burroughs' purpose to write a novel which was so blatantly different and obscene that it would open a discussion.

With both the style and structure of the novel discussed, it can be concluded that Burroughs' drug use prior and during the writing process did have an influence on both these characteristics. The hallucinatory style of the novel can, to a great extent, be attributed to Burroughs' addiction in the years before he started writing the novel. The same goes for the structure of the novel which is rather extraordinary in comparison to conventional novels. A technique which granted Burroughs the opportunity to create a novel with the use of notes kept during his addiction. Furthermore, both the hallucinatory style and the use of the cut-up structure aided Burroughs' goal of breaking with literary conventions and concurrently reinforced Burroughs' critique on the United States government. As is the case with the previous parameters, drugs did not only affect Burroughs or the novel itself but on the same hand serve a greater purpose which in the case of Burroughs is, amongst other things, raising awareness for the virus and condemning the approach towards the virus and towards those suffering from it.

3.2.5 How was the novel received and did the novel change the general perception on drugs?

The previous parameters all dealt with Burroughs' life before and during the writing process of *Naked Lunch*. Nonetheless, one of the reasons why the book has gained so much recognition nowadays is because of the aftermath of its publication in the United States. Since this time is of such significance for a novel, and *Naked Lunch* in particular, this final parameter will deal with how the novel was received and if, at some point, it did alter the general perception on drugs.

As mentioned before, *Naked Lunch* already caused a stir even before it was officially published. Eventually, Olympia Press from Paris published the novel in 1959 and it took several years before Lawrence Ferlinghetti's Grove Press decided to finally publish the novel in the United States in 1962. Especially in the United States, the responses were consentient. The book was considered filth, obscene, disturbing, and dealt with themes which should not be written about. The introduction to Frederick Whiting's "Monstrosity on Trial: The case of *Naked Lunch*" provides a description which perfectly describes these reactions:

Interests and authorities as diverse as US Customs, the trustees of the University of Chicago, the US Postal Service, the City of Los Angeles, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and a host of journalists and literary critics were all in agreement that what Burroughs had to say should not be said (145).

This depiction by Whiting, associate professor on the University of Alabama, perfectly covers the general tendency towards the novel. It is therefore not very surprising many bookstores refused to sell the novel and, with all the accusations against the book, it was eventually banned in certain parts of the United States such as the city of Boston.

However, this ban was not the end of *Naked Lunch* but the start of a process which would eventually lead to a significantly greater literary freedom in the United States, which is acknowledged by Whiting who states that "[t]he controversy surrounding the novel's publication was the last instance of complete literary censorship in the US- the end of the unspeakable per se"(145). The reason for this literary earthquake is the fact that, although the novel was officially banned by the United States authorities, some stout-hearted bookstore owners decided to sell the novel nevertheless. One of these sellers was Theodore Mavrikos "a bookseller with various previous arrests on obscenity charges"(Lawlor 53). Mavrikos would

eventually get caught selling *Naked Lunch* which instigated the trials at the Boston Superior Court.

Although several “literary experts” criticized the ban and pointed out the literary relevance of the novel, “Judge Eugene A. Hudson accepted the prosecutor’s arguments that *Naked Lunch* lacked redeeming social value, appealed to prurient interests, and was patently offensive. The judge ruled that *Naked Lunch* was obscene”(Lawlor 53). However, there was a request for an appeal and this was granted. Resultantly, the case appeared before the Massachusetts Supreme Court (53). This was pivotal, as the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled *Naked Lunch* as not obscene (54). This decision dissolved the ban on the novel. And not only did this result in the fact that *Naked Lunch* was now widely available again, but it also further eliminated the literary censorship which was still present in the United States.

After the ban was eliminated, the respect and admiration for the novel gradually increased. This did of course not mean that the novel was no longer obscene and overly sexual but an increasing number of people became aware of the fact that Burroughs’ novel intended to do much more than just shock. *Naked Lunch* was a social and political critique, broke with literary conventions, and used themes which were usually not discussed or at least not as explicitly as in Burroughs’ novel. Since the novel is now considered as one of the United States’ most ground-breaking works and one of the masterpieces of its time, it demonstrates its unique position in American literature, which is particularly exceptional considering the complications the novel faced prior and just after its publication.

However, it remains difficult to decide whether the perception towards drugs altered after the publication. Summing up the previous paragraphs provides similar results. Using the framework for analysis indicated that effect of drugs on Burroughs’s work is substantial. Nonetheless, since in-depth research into the exact influence of drugs on writing is scarce, or probably even inexistent, much relies on the analysis of subjective sources and materials i.e. letters from and interviews with the author. It is therefore difficult to establish the exact effects of the drugs on the novel since the authors tend to alter their story at times.

Furthermore, drugs are rarely discussed as one of the factors which made *Naked Lunch* stand out, notwithstanding its significance. Since *Naked Lunch* mostly changed the perception on themes as homosexuality and breaking with conventional literary practices; the question of whether drugs played some kind of role in the writing process is scarcely mentioned. This demonstrates that while drugs are of such influence in the field of literature, they are often overlooked accidentally or explicitly not discussed at all. This justifies the necessity for a

discussion whether a framework which analyzes the effects of drugs in literature is required. Additionally, combining this framework with different fields of study is required to get a better understanding between the correlation of drugs and literature. In this way, the framework could become less reliant on subjective sources and a more conclusive analysis could be conducted.

Chapter IV

“I hate to advocate drugs, alcohol, violence or insanity to anyone . . . but they've always worked for me.” - Hunter S. Thompson

4.1 Introduction To Hunter S. Thompson

Hunter S. Thompson, who was born on 18 July 1937, graduated while he served a prison sentence, and he enlisted himself in the Air Force shortly after his release (Elborough 2). Nonetheless, Thompson pursued a career as a journalist while he kept dreaming of a career as a respected writer (2). Thompson is often seen as a rebel. According to the biography that accompanies *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, this rebellious demeanor can be traced back to his youth and to the writers he considered his “idols” (2). His mother describes him as “difficult from the moment of his birth”, and Thompson’s biographer Paul Theroux states that “the writer-heroes of Thompson’s youth were famous recluses and disreputable heroes...borderline outlaws” (Theroux qtd. in Elborough, 2). As a result, it can be said that “such figures left an indelible mark on the young Hunter, for whom any authority was suspect” (3).

One of the most interesting features of his biography is probably that Thompson “sided with outsiders and iconoclasts” his entire life, which explains his interest in the counter culture (3). Similar to William Burroughs, Thompson enjoyed using and experimenting with drugs and they often reoccur in his work. While Burroughs uses many of his own drug escapades as a theme in his novels, Thompson not only employs his experience as a journalist for his storylines, but he also creates a writing style, which is called Gonzo journalism. Furthermore, drug use is a significant part of Thompson’s most renowned work *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, which is described as a “subjective narcotic-fueled first-person account of a wild weekend in Vegas, its mix of fiction, fact and fantasy, defined what became known as his ‘Gonzo’ style of guerilla journalism [...]”(4). Thompson gained much respect and credibility as a writer. Although he kept publishing work, his early ‘Gonzo’ works such as *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and *Hell’s Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga* best define what made Thompson’s writing stand out from the rest.

4.2 Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: The Novel of Choice

Thompson's magnum opus *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* is analyzed with the use of the parameters. As described previously, Thompson has been rebellious since birth, and this can also be said about his writing style, now recognized as Gonzo journalism. An important feature of this Gonzo style is the journalistic style, which is far from objective. In Bruce Navoa's article "Fear and Loathing on the Buffalo Trail", Navoa defines Gonzo journalism. He states that Gonzo journalism can be best labelled as "a camera-eye technique of reporting in which the writer's notes are published supposedly without editing", which resembles Jack Kerouac's spontaneous prose and Navoa points out that it is often compared to the stream-of-consciousness (41). Furthermore, Gonzo journalism is not based on objectivity: "the writer is expected to select details and interpret events, including in his notes whatever comes to mind, as if thoughts were also part of the observed happening" (41). In addition, Navoa states that Thompson himself described that "the writer must participate in the scene, while he is writing it...the closest analogy to the ideal would be a film director/producer who writes his own scripts, does his own camerawork and somehow manages to film himself in action as the protagonist or at least the main character" (41). When comparing this description of Gonzo Journalism to the writing style in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, it is clear that this novel is a prime example of what Gonzo journalism entails.

However, a feature that is absent in Navoa's description, and therefore not labeled as a characteristic of the Gonzo writing style, is the ubiquitous presence of drugs in Thompson's work. However, since its presence is undeniable in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, the parameters set earlier will examine the influence of drugs in this particular novel.

4.3 Utilizing the Parameters:

4.3.1. Does the writer have a history with drug use?

The first parameter is whether the writer has experience or a background with drugs and drug use. As previously explained, if the writer himself has had experiences with drug use, the scenes in which drug use or, for example, a trip or hallucinatory experience are described gain credibility and make the novel more trustworthy as a drug novel. In the case of Thompson, this question can, without hesitation, be answered positive. Before thoroughly examining Thompson's background by the means of autobiographies, interviews, essays, and other pieces of work that could shed a light on his personal life and relation to drugs, the following quotation by Thompson himself clearly explains his stance and immediately

answers the first parameter. This quotation, from an article on Thompson in *Life Magazine* and mentioned in an article in *The Washington Post*, goes as follows: “I hate to advocate drugs, alcohol, violence, or insanity to anyone, but they’ve always worked for me” (Lengel and Weil, 4).

When taking *Fear and Loathing* into account, the notion that drugs have worked for Thompson seems to be an understatement. Although the novel is categorized as fiction, it has many autobiographical features since Thompson actually traveled to Las Vegas to cover a sports and police event together with a friend, the Chicano activist and artist, Oscar Zeta Acosta. This novel is this trip’s fictional description. In this narrative, Thompson is named Raoul Duke and Acosta is called the attorney or Dr. Gonzo. The reason why drugs have worked for Thompson is that he was under the influence of several illegal substances while enjoying this outing and still managed to produce a successful work of literature. As a result, this novel, which was unprecedented at the time, is an electric blend of scenes of hallucination, wild action, moments of transcendence and simultaneously a perfect description of the social perception on drugs and a critique on the American Dream.

An explanation for why the two protagonists were under the influence of drugs for almost the entire journey is offered in the second chapter where Thompson describes that “[t]he only way to prepare for a trip like this, I felt, was to dress up like human peacocks and get crazy, screech off across the desert and *cover the story*” (12). Moreover, Thompson explains that the problem at the time was that there was no clear indication of what exactly he had to cover. Once more, Thompson believed that getting extremely high on drugs would solve this problem and create a story of its own. Thompson explains that this is what Gonzo journalism is all about: “But what was the story? Nobody had bothered to say. So we would have to drum it up on our own. Free Enterprise. The American Dream. Horatio Alger gone mad on drugs in Las Vegas. Do it *now*: pure Gonzo journalism” (12). This answers the first parameter to a large extent since it is evident that the writer in this case does have a background with drug use and was no stranger to the effects of these substances. Additionally, the fact that Thompson believed that getting completely wasted on drugs would aid him to write about a story testifies how Thompson trusts drugs to be a useful tool to spark his creativity.

4.3.2. Did drugs influence the writing process and publishing process?

Therefore, it is noteworthy to find out if Thompson was actually under influence while writing *Fear and Loathing*, which would immediately answer the second parameter. Many writers are rather vague about their drug use and its influence on their writing. For example, Allen Ginsberg used to claim to be under the influence of drugs while writing his works, yet one of his personal assistants later on claimed only having seen Ginsberg high on a few occasions. In contrast to writers such as Ginsberg, Thompson is open and talkative about his drug use, his experiences with drugs, and answers the question if he does his writing while being high. A great source is an interview Thompson gave in the *Paris Review* in 2000. When asked if he was under the influence of drugs while writing, Thompson answers positively and explains that drugs is an important instrument for his writing since “[m]y theory for years has been to write fast and get through it. I usually write five pages a night and leave them out for my assistant to type in the morning” (Brinkley and McDonnel). Nonetheless, the interviewers do not seem to be completely satisfied by this answer and dig a bit deeper by asking if this writing happens “[...] after a night of drinking and so forth?” (Brinkley and McDonnel). Thompson’s response does not only answer if he was under the influence of drugs while writing his works, but also unveils why he argues that drugs have always worked for him, as was explained in the previously mentioned quote. Thompson’s answer on the question goes as follows:

Oh yes, always, yes. I've found that there's only one thing that I can't work on and that's marijuana. Even acid I could work with. The only difference between the sane and the insane is that the sane have the power to lock up the insane. Either you function or you don't. Functionally insane? If you get paid for being crazy, if you can get paid for running amok and writing about it . . . I call that sane. (Brinkley and McDonnel).

Here, Thompson effectively explains that he is both capable of writing under the influence of drugs and can make a living out of this insane lifestyle, questioning who really is sane or insane. Furthermore, Thompson even takes a step further by arguing that almost every writer lies when he or she proclaims that they never used drugs or that drugs are no part of the writing process. Thompson’s reaction is sparked by a statement the interviewers provide, based on the interviews they did with other writers, who generally claimed that they most

certainly did not use drugs during the actual writing process (Brinkley and McDonnel). When asked what Thompson's stance was on this issue, Thompson's fury is almost imaginable while giving his answer:

They lie. Or maybe you've been interviewing a very narrow spectrum of writers. It's like saying, "Almost without exception women we've interviewed over the years swear that they never indulge in sodomy"—without saying that you did all your interviews in a nunnery. Did you interview Coleridge? Did you interview Poe? Or Scott Fitzgerald? Or Mark Twain? Or Fred Exley? Did Faulkner tell you that what he was drinking all the time was really iced tea, not whiskey? Please. Who the fuck do you think wrote the Book of Revelation? A bunch of stone-sober clerics? (Brinkley and McDonnel).

Although this is quite a bold statement, it is also a precise description of Thompson's view on literature and its writers as he indirectly argues that the most influential, contemporary writers wrote their most prominent works while being under the influence of drugs. Evidently, it is impossible to find out if this truly was the case, yet it does reveal to some extent the qualities that Thompson assigns to drugs while being in the process of writing a novel.

Furthermore, as was the case with *Naked Lunch*, the publishing process is also of great interest and the question remains whether drugs only influenced the initial writing process or also played a role in the novel's publishing process. When comparing this publishing process to *Naked Lunch*, the greatest difference most probably is that in Burroughs' situation it was difficult to obtain a publisher for his novel, whereas Thompson already had a publisher before he had a story. This is due to the fact that Thompson was hired by *Sport Illustrated* to cover the Mint 400 race (Elborough 10). At the time, Thompson was walking around with the idea to write a piece about the American Dream in his Gonzo style, however he did not yet have an idea of how to accomplish this (8). Since Thompson was also preparing an article for *Scanlan's Monthly* involving Oscar Zeta Acosta, he took him with him for the trip to Las Vegas for the *Sports Illustrated* article (9). However, *Scanlan* went bankrupt, which resulted in the fact that *Rolling Stone Magazine* decided to publish the story involving Acosta (10). The journey to Las Vegas with Acosta opened Thompson's eyes on how to write his Gonzo novel and he, subsequently, handed *Sport Illustrated* a 15,000 words piece where he "was supposed to deliver in the region of 1,500 words" (10). Yet, *Sports Illustrated* refused to publish the work, but *Rolling Stone* editor Jann Wenner decided that the piece had potential.

Thus, the article was published in the magazine on 11 and 25 November 1971 and was eventually published as a novel in 1972 (12).

In addition, the most interesting part about this novel's publishing procedure is that Thompson contradicts himself in letters to Tom Wolfe in how the novel was established. Travis Elborough discusses this in the "PS" section of the Harper Perennial Modern Classics version of *Fear and Loathing*. According to the letters, Thompson wrote to Wolfe that the script for the novel was "knocked off in an all-night drink/drug frenzy, and then typed verbatim in a motel in Pasadena some time afterwards" (11). This corresponds with Thompson's remark in the *Paris Review* in which he claims that all of his work is written under the influence of drugs. Nonetheless, in a later letter addressed to editor Jim Silberman, Thompson denies that he was drugged out while writing the novel; according to him, "it was, in fact, a very conscious attempt to *simulate* drug freak out...I didn't [...] really *make up* anything—but I did, at time, bring situations & feelings I remember from other scenes for reality at hand (11). Although Thompson clearly rejects that he was on drugs while writing the novel, this is the only source that claims that he was sober in the process of writing *Fear and Loathing*. The reason for his denial in this letter to Silberman is unknown; however, the fact that he also "asked Silberman to keep quiet about his drug intake that weekend" gives the idea that Thompson could be worried that his novel would not be published when the publishers would know that he was high while writing the piece (11).

Overall, the first parameter, which questions whether the writer had a background or history with drugs, can be answered positively. Thompson was an avid user and as he said himself, it usually worked for him in several ways. Furthermore, Thompson was able to use drugs while doing his job as a journalist and, consequently, transform these drug-infused experiences into highly respected works of journalism and literature. In addition, while further investigating Thompson's relation with drugs, an interview in the *Paris Review* made clear that Thompson presumably was high when turning his manuscripts into actual articles or novels. On the other hand, as he also denied the drug use in a letter to his editor, the actual influence of drugs on his novel remains questionable. Was this denial Thompson's attempt to ease the publishing process and ensure that the novel would be printed, was he actually sober while writing, or was this part of the myth created around the writing and publishing of the novel? This results in the conclusion that the second parameter cannot be answered entirely, yet it can be assumed that drugs most certainly played a role in the experiences leading to the idea for the novel.

4.3.3. What is the role of drugs in the novel and how are they depicted?

As the first two parameters are answered positively, it is vital to examine in which manner these drugs are also of the essence in the novel itself. The aim is to find out whether drugs were just used during the writing process, are a feature that occurs occasionally, or are a significant theme in the novel. Furthermore, the manner in which Thompson depicts drugs in the novel is discussed in order to not only have an idea of the figurative role of drugs in the novel, but also obtain an indication of how they are actually portrayed. Getting an answer to these questions will result in defining the role of drugs, how they are depicted in *Fear and Loathing*, and, subsequently, answer the third parameter.

The question whether drugs were merely used as a method to spark creativity can be ruled out immediately, even though Thompson did mention that drugs helped him while covering assignments and that he used them during writing. Yet, drugs and the use of these substances is featured in such abundance in *Fear and Loathing* that they cannot be considered as just a creative device. In order to create an image of the aforementioned presence of drugs in the novel, the number of times a drug is mentioned in this novel has been counted as meticulously as possible. This results in the fact that in only 204 pages, disregarding the many white pages or images by Ralph Steadman, a drug has been referred to 299 times. This ranges from simply mentioning “drugs”, “acid”, or “mescaline” to nicknames such as “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” (LSD), “grass”, or “smack”. The mere presence of so many references to drugs is a distinct indication that drugs are not merely features that occur occasionally, but play a significant part throughout the story.

This means that the first two options are already ruled out. Thompson did not solely use drugs in order to get inspiration for his stories and neither is drugs only a feature in the novel that comes up every now and then. The question remains what the actual role of drugs entails in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. Firstly, the drugs can be described as a kind of ‘engine’ for both the protagonists. It is what keeps them going and most importantly, it provides Duke provide with a story. Additionally, the notion that drugs is the substance that allows them to carry on is emphasized by Duke’s attorney Dr. Gonzo who advises them to “arm themselves”, which refers to bringing as much drugs as possible (Thompson 9). This highlights the fact that Thompson counters the general consensus on drugs. During the era in which this novel was written, the general opinion on drugs was changing dramatically. The age of the hippies was over and drugs were increasingly seen as highly dangerous commodities that should be excluded from American culture. However, the role of drugs in

the novel is to highlight that, according to Thompson, drugs can have a beneficial effect and are not necessarily immoral.

Moreover, Thompson even takes it a step further in the chapter called “Getting Down to Business...Opening Day at the Drug Convention” in which Duke and Dr. Gonzo enroll themselves for a police convention that deals with the drugs problems in the United States. They sign up for this convention in order to acquire another story for Duke and because they believe that “if the pigs were gathering in Vegas for a top-level Drug Conference, we felt the drug culture should be represented” (110). Afterwards, Thompson, through the characters Duke and Dr. Gonzo, completely ridicules the conference’s police officers and lectures. They are portrayed as true conservatives, with outdated ideas on drugs, and as being incapable of grasping what this ‘drug culture’ actually entails. A prime example of this ridicule occurs when an authority in the field of drug abuse, Dr. E. R. Bloomquist, MD, starts his talk. While he seems to procure a great deal of respect from the police crowd, Duke and Dr. Gonzo are unimpressed. Duke describes that it felt as if “we’d stumbled into a prehistoric gathering” (138). Furthermore, when Bloomquist discusses the resemblance between a joint and a cockroach and remarks that the “reefer butt is called a ‘roach’ because it resembles a cockroach”, Dr. Gonzo retorts “what the fuck are these people talking about? [...] You’d have to be crazy on acid to think a joint looked like a goddamn cockroach!” (136). Finally, Duke summarizes their opinion by stating that Bloomquist’s much-acclaimed book on drugs is “a compendium of state bullshit” (136).

Thus, Thompson describes in this chapter, also applicable for the entire novel, his attitude towards drugs in comparison with the, in his opinion, obsolete view of the United States government; in short, the ‘drugs people’ versus the ‘non-drugs’ people. In this novel, the role of drugs is not only used to get the two protagonists in their own stage of drugs transcendence and create a story for them, but it also provides Thompson with the opportunity to criticize American society and the American Dream. Finding the American Dream is the protagonists’ ultimate goal as is described in the beginning of the novel. After picking up the hitchhiker, Duke tells him: “[...] I want you to know that we are on our way to Vegas to find the American Dream” (6). However, Duke and Dr. Gonzo cannot grasp what this American Dream is for them and seem to lose themselves in their quest towards this goal. During the convention, they are confronted with the American Dream in a way, which causes them to panic. Their ideal ‘dream’, a drug infused and free place presumably found in Las Vegas, seems to be nothing more than a utopia. Contrastingly, the police officers present at the

convention seem to have found their American Dream. They have everything they wish for: a job supporting the government, a wife, a policeman's moustache, and they go to Las Vegas once a year to attend the convention; their vision of the American Dream. The protagonists taste a sense of joy and bliss, which they cannot find for themselves, as this is not their dream and this propels them into a state of dread and confusion. This is best exemplified by one of Duke's internal monologues, which goes as follows:

No, it was too much. The line between madness and masochism was already hazy; the time had come to pull back...to retire, hunker down, back off and "cop out," as it were. Why not? In every gig like this, there comes a time to either cut your losses or consolidate you winnings-whichever fits. I drove slowly, looking for a proper place to sit down with an early morning beer and get my head together... to plot this unnatural retreat. (81)

Evidently, in Thompson's opinion the ideal of the American Dream is lost for a significant part of the American society. As is mentioned previously, Thompson was intrigued by and an advocate of the Counter Culture. Although he did not approve of all their actions, he believed in their cause and a freer America - free according to their standards. Nonetheless, Thompson concludes that this ideal is gone, the Counter Culture is effectively labeled as junkies and their influence has diminished considerably. Moreover, the system fighting them, such as the government and the police, seem to have 'won', as their American Dream is still there while people such as Thompson cannot do more than retreat.

The next step of this parameter is to explore how Thompson depicted these drugs in his novel. As formerly discussed, Thompson's opinion on drug use and the American Dream contrasts significantly with the attitude of a substantial part of American society. The role that Thompson gave to drugs is figurative and is one of the features used to convey his message concerning the American Dream. However, not every mention or reference to drugs in the novel has a deeper message. As is mentioned before, references to drugs occur at least 299 times in the novel and similar to Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, Thompson is fairly positive about drugs in many of these references. Nonetheless, while Thompson strongly conveys the idea that his *Fear and Loathing* alter ego is strongly drug depended in order to function properly, the novel is clearly not a drug-promoting work. As the quotation in the beginning of this chapter describes, it is not Thompson's aim to encourage his readers to start using drugs; he rather shares his own experiences, as somebody who can cope with this lifestyle, to give them

an idea of what it implies. Furthermore, the drug use is an imperative aspect of Thompson's type of journalism, the Gonzo style, which became his trademark. Therefore, it is better to assess *Fear and Loathing* as a work of fiction that promotes Gonzo instead of a novel that encourages its readers to use drugs.

Moreover, drugs in *Fear and Loathing* are usually portrayed as fascinating and fun enhancing commodities. For example, in the following quotation, Thompson illustrates how good mescaline works:

Good mescaline comes on slow. The first hour is all waiting, then about halfway through the second hour you start cursing the creep who burned you, because nothing is happening... and then ZANG! Fiendish intensity, strange glow and vibrations... a very heavy gig in a place like the Circus-Circus. (47)

Although Duke and his attorney heavily rely on an innumerable amount of different drugs to make their journey count, Thompson also frequently highlights the unpleasant sides most of these drugs can induce. While they have stacked their car with all kind of stimulants for their Las Vegas trip, Duke is concerned that some of the drugs might be too much. For instance, he is mainly anxious about the ether as he states "there is nothing in the world more helpless and depraved than a man in the depths of an ether binge" (4). The entire story keeps fluctuating in this manner, switching between positive and negative portrayals of drug use. Throughout the narrative, scenes of drug use or hallucinations are described in great detail and Duke's and the attorney's experiences are depicted in a somewhat grotesque manner. Furthermore, on numerous occasions, Thompson emphasizes that this kind of substance abuse is unbearable for many people, and he points out the various hazards. However, it should not be forgotten that *Fear and Loathing* is fictional; though it is based on a journey, which Thompson actually took, it should not be assumed that it is autobiographical and completely true. Thus, the depictions of drugs and drug use could be exaggerated or fictive purely for the story's sake.

Therefore, as pointed out earlier, Thompson's *Fear and Loathing* is in several ways similar to Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*. For example, they do not advocate drugs, yet they clearly are not against it either; they employ drugs as an important tool in both novels to convey the meaning of the work. Consequently, the manner in which drugs are depicted in *Fear and Loathing* conforms to this description since Thompson uses them as a tool which intensifies many scenes and simultaneously conveys the divide between the dissimilar "American

Dreams” existing in the United States. Although Thompson does not recommend to use drugs, they most certainly aided him in his life and work.

4.3.4. Are the novel's style and structure affected by drug use?

The fourth parameter that has to be answered does not focus on meaning of drugs or their depiction in the novel, but deals with the novel's stylistic features and if they were affected by drug use. In order to accomplish this, it is essential to compare the style of *Fear and Loathing* to some of his other works. Since Thompson wrote numerous novels, it is unfeasible to compare *Fear and Loathing* to all of them. Therefore, his work *Hells Angels: A Strange and Terrible Sage* will be used briefly to assess Thompson style of writing in order to determine if it differs significantly from *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

When comparing *Hells Angels* to *Fear and Loathing*, it is evident that in the former Thompson's style is much more observant and realistic. Although being fictional, the book is considerably better structured, clean, and an objective piece of work. Although Thompson labels *Fear and Loathing* as a work of Gonzo journalism, it is clearly more absurdist and a work of fiction than *Hells Angels*. For example, the lengthy descriptions of the drug-induced psychosis he and his attorney experience during their Las Vegas adventure are completely dissimilar from the style he adheres to in *Hells Angels*.

Furthermore, a different factor makes it challenging to ascertain to what extent drugs influenced Thompson's writing style. As discussed earlier, Thompson claimed during the *Paris Review* interview that he wrote every work under the influence of drugs. Although this might be a bold claim and maybe somewhat exaggerated, there is no way to uncover if this is truly so since there are no sources which renounce this claim. This means that the only option is to believe Thompson's own words and assume that all his work was written while he was on drugs. Consequently, this makes it problematic to answer this parameter since the only Thompson writing style known is his Gonzo, drug-infused style, which has already been explained in an earlier chapter.

However, it still is possible to point out several stylistic features from *Fear and Loathing* to provide an overview of Thompson's typical, drug-infused, Gonzo writing style is represented in the novel. In order to do so, the Gonzo features, which have been pointed out earlier, will be used. The first of these features is “a camera-eye technique of reporting in which the writer's notes are published supposedly without editing” (Navoa). This camera-eye technique can be described as “the ultimate in authorial exclusion. Here the aim is to transmit, without apparent selection or arrangement, a ‘slice of life’ as it passes before the recording

medium” (Friedman qtd. in Allan).

In the novel, this technique is employed in several occasions. Especially the scenes in which Thompson meticulously portrays a trip Duke or the attorney are suffering from, or enjoying, the perspective of the narrator changes. The reader now seems to be floating above the situation, like a camera, and has a perfect view on the situation unravelling before Duke’s eyes. Since this technique’s aim is not to edit too much, similar to Kerouac’s spontaneous prose, Thompson’s style in *Fear and Loathing* is somewhat fragmented in several scenes. These paragraphs usually contain short sentences, a stream of fast changing impressions experienced by the protagonist; moreover, the punctuation in the fragments is different from the rest of the novel, as it contains many exclamation and question marks.

In order to obtain a better understanding of how Thompson applies this in *Fear and Loathing*, a small fragment will serve as a case in point. In the following scene, Duke has taken a shot of Adrenochrome, which is an adrenaline-like substance extracted from a human body. Subsequently, Duke starts to trip heavily and during this psychedelic experience, the way in which this scene is described corresponds with the camera-eye technique. Thompson shifts between first and third person and the scene seems to reveal before his, and therefore the readers’, eyes. The particular scene goes as follows:

Fantastic, I said. But I could barely hear him. I was so wired that my hands were clawing uncontrollably at the bedspread, jerking it right out from under me while he talked. My heels were dug into the mattress, with both knees locked... I could feel my eyeballs swelling, about to pop out of the sockets. “Finish the fucking story!”, I snarled. “What *happened*? What about the *glands*? (133)

This part, almost an out of body experience by the protagonist, portrays a scene in which several characteristics, labeled as part of the camera-eye technique, are described. Furthermore, as Navoa disclosed, another Gonzo feature is that scenes are not based on objectivity. In the case of *Fear and Loathing*, this means that many scenes are probably exaggerated and some information is elaborately described while other details are consciously left out. This offers the author the freedom to steer a text in the direction he or she desires it to go, focusing on the parts, which are valuable for the story. On the other hand, since *Fear and Loathing* is a piece of fiction, Thompson is not obliged to be objective or required to tell the specific truth. As a result, Gonzo allows Thompson to bring his story in his own way and to

convey the truth as he saw it, or in Elborough's words "What is Gonzo?", "Gonzo, then, was getting at the truth, even if it meant, technically, lying" (17).

These two features, which are core features of Gonzo journalism, are of great significance for the story's style. Nonetheless, it is challenging to determine to which extent drugs influenced this unique writing style. Since Thompson was a journalist and he adopted this style before writing *Fear and Loathing*, makes it difficult to decide whether drugs affected his style. One of the few pieces of evidence that suggests that drug use affected the Gonzo style is Thompson's claim that he wrote almost all of his work under the influence of some kind of drugs. Furthermore, in several biographies is described that he "fueled by alcohol and drugs, [...] was always on the lookout for a story and was especially interested in anything that would skewer what he saw as America's hypocrisy" (Elborough). When considering this information, it can be concluded that drugs did contribute to Gonzo journalism and the style of *Fear and Loathing*.

Furthermore, Burroughs was mainly under the influence of heroin during the writing of the *Naked Lunch* manuscript. The effect heroin had on Burroughs is expressed by the novel's hallucinatory style and narrative. Contrastingly, Thompson was under the influence of a whole array of different kind of drugs and it is interesting to see whether the drugs he presumably used, based on the descriptions in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, could have a genuine effect on his writing style. As Thompson was under the influence of so many different drugs, only a few scenes will be discussed in order to not overelaborate this section. The approach of this part is that a certain drug used by the protagonist in a particular scene is examined for its physical and psychological effects. The next step is to evaluate whether these effects are noticeable in Thompson's writing style.

The first scene that is assessed derives from "A Night on the Town...Confrontation at the Desert Inn...Drugs Frenzy at the Circus-Circus", in which Duke and Dr. Gonzo visit the infamous Circus-Circus Casino. A remarkable feature of this chapter is that Thompson, personified by Duke, explains how the drug ether, the chosen drug for that night, will affect them. These explanations are a reoccurring feature in *Fear and Loathing* usually followed by a scene in which exactly occurs what Thompson described beforehand. Thompson describes ether effect as follows:

This is the main advantage of ether: it makes you behave like the village drunkard in some early Irish novel...total loss of all basic motor skills: blurred vision, no balance,

numb tongue—severance of all connection between the body and the brain. Which is interesting because the brain continues to function more or less normally...you can actually *watch* yourself behaving in this terrible way, but you can't control it. (45)

An institution with in-depth knowledge of drugs and its side effects is the Dutch Jellinek Clinic, a rehabilitation center and an authority in the field of drugs, addiction, and rehab. Their description of the effects of ether is to great extent similar to Thompson's depiction of the drug, albeit that the Jellinek Clinic adds a feeling of instant euphoria to the list of ether effects (Jellinek). Evidently, Thompson, by years of experiencing with these drugs, became an expert on their effects; therefore, the descriptions in *Fear and Loathing* seem to be trustworthy.

Nonetheless, the aim is to discover whether the properties ascribed to ether can be retraced in the writing of Thompson. When further examining the scene in which the ether takes effect, it can be concluded that several consequences attributed to ether are apparent in this scene. The scene starts out with a descriptive text in which Duke reveals how they approach the Circus-Circus; they attempt to act normal and try to pass the security and the turnstiles. This all goes horribly wrong because their brains still function properly, but their bodies are barely controllable. Duke describes the succeeding events in a second-person narrative and this writing style is comparable to the effects of ether. The protagonists' actions can be thoroughly described as the brain still works properly, yet the actions themselves are out of control. Furthermore, the end of the scene shifts to a first-person narrative:

Then you hear yourself mumbling: "Dogs fucked the Pope, no fault of mine. Watch out!...Why money? My name is Brinks; I was born...born? Get sheep over side... women and children to armored car...orders from Captain Zeep. (45)

This part strongly resembles the speech of a drunk, as it is gibberish only he seems to understand and what he is saying is illogical. In addition, the other effects which Thompson and the Jellinek Clinic describe are factors, which are more difficult to trace in the text. Furthermore, since Duke and Dr. Gonzo are usually consuming several drugs at once, effects might be merged. Nonetheless, several characteristics of ether usage can be found in Thompson's writing style in this particular scene.

Moreover, in order to prove that this scene is not on the only instance in which this

theory is applicable, an additional scene will be analyzed to establish that several kinds of drugs affected Thompson's writing and narrative. In the next scene, the chosen drug is speed, an amphetamine which is used constantly by the two main characters. According to the Jellinek Clinic, amphetamine effects can be divided into two different sections, which are mental and physical effects. Some of these effects are "(1) an increased heart rate and blood pressure, (2) an unsettled, irritated and sometimes anxious and aggressive feeling, (3) fast and rattling talk, and (4) an increasing body temperature" (van Wilgenburg qtd. in Jellinek). In "Aaawww, Mama, Can This Really Be The End...Down and Out in Vegas, with Amphetamine Psychosis Again?", Duke is, as the title already revealed, suffering from the effects of amphetamine. A short excerpt is provided in order to analyze if the previously described features are present in the chapter as well as if they are noticeable in Thompson's style of writing.

"Aaw...Mama

Can this really be the end?

No!

Who played that song? Did I actually *hear* that fucking thing on the jukebox just now? At 9:19 on this filthy grey morning in Wild Bill's Tavern?

No. That was only in my brain, some long-lost echo of a painful dawn in Toronto...a long time ago, half-mad in another world...but not different

HELP!

How many more nights and weird mornings can this terrible shit go on? How long can the body and the brain *tolerate* this doom-struck craziness? This grinding of teeth, this pouring of sweat, this pounding of sweat in the temples...small blue veins go amok in the front of the ears, sixty and seventy hours with no sleep...

And now that *is* the jukebox! Yes, no doubt about it...and why not? A very popular song: "Like a bridge over troubled water...I will lay me down..."

BOOM! Flashing paranoia. What kind of rat-bastard psychotic would play *that* song—

right now, at this moment?”. (85)⁵

Many factors which can be attributed to the use of amphetamine, are present in this scene. The entire fragment conveys the sense that it is written in a relentlessly high pace in which Thompson was clearly agitated and probably in a state of paranoia, or on the brink of it. The many short sentences, exclamations marks, and the several italicized words transmit the intensity of this situation and create the sense that the effects of amphetamine significantly influenced the novel’s narrative and writing style. Particularly, the italicized words convey a sense of agitation in Thompson’s demeanor hence influencing his writing because of their emphasizing effect. When focusing on the italicized words in the selected fragment, they appear to emphasize the factors, which agonize and irritate Duke and stress the state of paranoia initiated by the amphetamine. Furthermore, Thompson is suffering from several physical effects which amphetamine can cause. His increased heartbeat, severe sweating, and his lack of sleep are direct results of the large amounts of amphetamine that he is taking.

Therefore, it is interesting to see that the story’s writing and narrative seem to be affected by the drugs he was taking at that time. The intricate and meticulously described effects of the drugs and the actual trip, which perfectly complement Thompson’s expectation, demonstrate his expertise concerning the effects of the drugs. Furthermore, the two aforementioned scenes establish that the drugs equally affect his writing and the novel’s narrative. Yet, similar to the prior parameters, it is difficult to establish the exact effect and influence the drugs had. Not only because the only evidence that Thompson was constantly intoxicated is based on a subjective claim by the author himself. Therefore, it could be claimed that he is so acquainted with the drugs’ effects that he could have written the novel completely sober while implementing these scenes and using this narrative based on his experiences.

Moreover, another factor which makes it difficult to assess the exact effect is that he was under the influence of such a variety of different drugs, that it becomes challenging to define which drug had, or did not, have an effect on Thompson’s writing. Therefore, the scenes in which is explicitly stated what drug was used, and preferably one drug only, provide

⁵ Although this quote does not adhere to the rules of how to implement a block quote, I decided to keep it exactly the same as in the novel. In this way, the vibe and atmosphere of this scene is conveyed most convincingly and this adds to the analysis of this particular parameter.

the most trustworthy fragments in which the effects of drugs on the writer can be examined in *Fear and Loathing*.

As the influence of drugs on the novel's style is discussed, the effect of drugs on the novel's structure is established. While *Naked Lunch*'s cut-up style structure was highly unconventional for a novel at that time, the structure of *Fear and Loathing* is considerably more linear. This means that there is an evident narrator, a protagonist and his sidekick, and a logic storyline, sometimes interrupted with a flashback. The story follows Duke and Dr. Gonzo from the start of their journey to Las Vegas until the end of Duke's assignment to, amongst other affairs, report on the Mint 400 race. Although there are several flashbacks and moments in which Duke reflects on certain events in the story or from his personal life, the storyline never digresses. The structure that Thompson adheres to in *Fear and Loathing* is typical for a picaresque novel. In "The Picaresque Novel: A Protean Form", Professor Howard Mancing of the Purdue University lists the five characteristics which define the picaresque novel. These five features are "(1) First-person narration, (2) strict realism, (3) social satire, (4) a protagonist of low station (e.g. a beggar, a delinquent, a servant to many masters, or an orphan), and (5) a struggle for existence in a hostile and chaotic world" (182). In addition, Mancing states that a picaresque novel "may consist of (1) a mere chronological sequence united (if at all) by the presence of the main character" (182), *Fear and Loathing* can be described as a prime example of a picaresque. The narration in *Fear and Loathing* is predominantly first person, the story heavily relies on Thompson's social satire, and the protagonist is a drug addict and rogue journalist who tries to survive in a world which is becoming increasingly alienated from him. Except for the fact that strict realism is not quite applicable to *Fear and Loathing*, the rest of the parameters that define the picaresque novel all perfectly fit the structure of Thompson's book.

Nonetheless, although it is clear that *Fear and Loathing* can be defined as a picaresque novel, the same question arises concerning the effect of drugs on the structure. There are no sources which verify that Thompson deliberately choose to make *Fear and Loathing* into a picaresque novel nor is there an indication that drugs influenced his decision when he opted for this structure. The most reasonable explanation is that a picaresque style and structure is perfectly suited for someone such as Thompson. As he is a misfit by nature whose life could be described by the parameters provided by Mancing, while being heavily intoxicated by a wide array of illegal substances. Thus, when a person like Thompson decides to convert one of his journeys into a novel, it is perfectly reasonable that the end result contains many

similarities with a classic picaresque novel.

In sum, the novel's style and structure are clearly based on existing literary frameworks. While the story's is a prime example of Gonzo journalism, the structure is significantly influenced by the picaresque novel. Still, the aim of this parameter was to examine whether drugs played a significant role in the process of choosing for a certain style and structure. Although it could be argued that Thompson's claim that he has written all his work under the influence of drugs provides sufficient evidence that the style and structure are therefore also affected; however, the ultimate proof has yet to be found.

4.3.5. How was the novel received and did the novel change the general perception on drugs?

Finally, the parameter, which is discussed to round up the discussion on Thompson's novel, examines how the novel was received directly after its publication and whether it changed the general perception on drugs. In the case of *Fear and Loathing*, it could be argued that the previously discussed *Naked Lunch* probably paved the way for its smooth reception. Novels containing similar subjects as *Naked Lunch* were more accepted and the public seemed to be less provoked by the matters discussed in these novels. This is also true for *Fear and Loathing*. While the story is filled with ungodly scenes and obscenities, it is mostly praised for its relentless pace and Thompson's unique style and critique on American society. Although the novel did receive some critique, as critics debated whether Gonzo journalism could be considered as a form of journalism, the focus was not solely on the novel's subjects which previously could be considered obscene (Schmitt).

Furthermore, The fact that *Fear and Loathing* was received considerably better than *Naked Lunch* at the time is further acknowledged by some reviews in newspapers and magazines. Crawford Woods of the *New York Times* state that *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* is

a desperate and important book, a wired nightmare, the funniest piece of American prose since *The Naked Lunch*... These are the tracks of a man who might be dismissed as just another savage-sixties kook, were it not for the fact that he has already himself into the history of American literature, in what I suspect will be a permanent way.
(qtd in Elborough, 14)

Although this review was written almost directly after the novel was published, he immediately grasps its importance and acknowledges that *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* is a groundbreaking novel, conveying the message of a lost generation, which will remain one of the masterpieces of American literature. It is, therefore, not surprising that the novel was elected “Best Book of the Dope Decade” in 1973 (Elborough 15). Furthermore, the fact that *Naked Lunch* is mentioned in Woods statement strengthens the claim that Burroughs’ novel had a significant effect on the opinion of transgressive fiction, which were no longer immediately condemned but accepted for the message they try to convey.

Nonetheless, as was the case with *Naked Lunch*, it is challenging to decide to which extent *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* changed the general perception on the drugs in the United States. The previously discussed statement by Wood offers an idea on how drugs were perceived in the decade that the novel was published. In addition, Wood seems to anticipate that people might dismiss *Fear and Loathing* merely as another piece of drug-promoting literature written by a Counter Culture adherent whose idealism does not conform to the rest of society. Nevertheless, Wood points out the sincerity and earnestness, but also the humor of the book, making the novel much more than just a piece of hippie literature.

Conversely, as was stated in the chapter on the counter culture, the United States government used the media effectively to create an image that drugs were practically only used by a small group of people, the counter culture for example. This image created by mass media never vanished, as acknowledged by Woods, meaning that many still dismissed *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. However, in the case of this novel, its popularity, the interest, and respect for the novel significantly increased after the release of the film version as is discussed in the final chapter. Furthermore, Thompson’s description of the American Dream in *Fear and Loathing*, taking Thompson’s ideal versus the police as example, portrays that this dream for people such as Thompson is still nothing more than a distant ideal. Therefore, it can be concluded that the novel did not achieve much to improve the perception on drugs at the time. The general opinion on drugs and drug users remained virtually unchanged, as only a small group of people seemed to understand and respect the message and approach towards the American Dream that Thompson tried to convey.

In conclusion, *Fear and Loathing* is an entirely different novel than *Naked Lunch* but with a very influential common feature; the presence of drugs in the novel and life of the author. As well as in *Naked Lunch*, the parameters proved to be useful components in assessing the influence and presence of drugs in a literary work. Summarizing the results of

the analyses provides a clear insight in the relevance of drugs in *Fear and Loathing*.

The parameters made clear that Thompson was familiar with drugs and the use of it a significant time before he started to write the novel. He used drugs in a recreational fashion but also to enhance his exceptional style of journalism. Since Thompson himself took a trip to Las Vegas as a journalist, *Fear and Loathing* can be considered a fictional version of this journey. Whether he was actually under the influence while writing the novel is dubious since Thompson remained rather vague on this subject while secondary sources fail to give a unanimous conclusion as well. As with *Naked Lunch*, this question is fairly difficult to answer with this framework. Since much relies on analyzing sources which usually are very subjective, it is difficult to answer this question. Further research, for example in combination with other fields of study, should be conducted in order to form a conclusive result.

Furthermore, as in *Naked Lunch*, the depiction of drugs in *Fear and Loathing* is twofold. On the one hand, Thompson does not promote the use of drugs, highlighting the severe side effects and dangerous consequences throughout the story. On the other hand, Thompson does not condemn drugs either and rather leaves his opinion on drug use aside. Nonetheless, the role Thompson attributed to drugs in the novel is considerably apparent. Analyzing this indicated that Thompson used drugs as an intensifying tool for his literature. While concurrently pointing out the great dissimilarity in how different American generations imagine their American Dream. He specifically focuses on how this dream is particularly distant for the people with a comparable state of mind and beliefs as Thompson. The chapter in which Duke and Dr. Gonzo meet with the visitors of the Police convention perfectly exemplifies this discrepancy; portraying the great dissimilarity in how the 'drug' and counter culture adherents perceive this American Dream in contrast to the dream of the conservative police men.

Utilizing the fourth parameter provided a great insight in the actual effects of drugs on the style and structure of the novel. The use of this parameter showed the efficiency of the framework. In the case of Thompson, his work is usually referred to as Gonzo. However, examining the effect of drugs on his writing style and the structure of the novel revealed that his writing seems to be influenced significantly by drug use. While several of these factors are attributed to his Gonzo style, there is evidence that several features defining Thompson's style could be evoked by drug use. Although the evidence found with the parameter regarded the use of amphetamine, it opens up the possibility to look into the effect of various different drugs. In this way it is possible to further examine if it's possible that they effect the writing

style, and if so, what this did with the style and structure of the particular novel.

Finally, assessing the fifth parameter did not only reveal that *Fear and Loathing* was mildly received and particularly gained popularity after the release of the film version. It highlighted that the *Naked Lunch* trial in fact did have had an significant effect. While *Naked Lunch* was certainly more explicit than *Fear and Loathing*, it is still very likely that Thompson's novel would have faced more severe resistance when *Naked Lunch* trials would have overcome the obscenity accusation.

These things considered, although the framework designed in this thesis is experimental, it did show its value and promise in the analysis of *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing*. Tackling the subjectivity obstacle, studying an extensive number of diverse novels, and analyzing whether combining this framework with different fields of studies adds to the research will show the framework's exact potential and if it will add to the field of literary studies.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to study drugs in literature and, all things considered, the presence and influence of drugs in literature is, at minimum, prevalent. Early literary works such as the *Odyssey* contained references towards drugs while a variety of modern novels concern drug use; or were at least written under the influence.

Nonetheless, a suitable framework which analyzes the particular effects and influence of drugs on literature and the writing process has thus far been inexistent. The general aim of this thesis has been to establish such a framework by setting up parameters which approach this issue from a variety of perspectives. Furthermore, using this framework for the analysis of two novels has established the validity of this framework and shown it to be a suitable addition to the field of literary studies.

In order to give a better insight into the correlation between drugs and literature, an overview of the history of drugs and their respectable novels is provided. Various literary texts, from different periods, were analyzed in order to establish the influence and presence of drugs in presented works throughout this thesis. Judging from this analysis it can be concluded that drugs have been present since the first notable works of literature were created. However, while in these early works drugs were referred to occasionally, influence and presence of drugs in written work gradually increased over the years. Eventually, novels in which drugs were of essence, as in both the novel and the writing process, thrived from the beginning of the 1950s, with a surge following the acquittal of William Burroughs in the *Naked Lunch* case.

Other factors, such as social discontent, technological developments, and generations of writers who refused to adhere to the literary and social standards of their time, resulted in a new and experimental kind of literature. Since drugs were omnipresent in the lifestyles of these generations, such as the Beats and the counter culture, these narcotic influences simultaneously were important facets of the writing process and subsequent works. However, the exact influence drugs had on these particular works could previously not be determined since a theoretical framework for analysis had not yet been established.

The second chapter therefore set out to determine what such a framework should or could consist of. A framework which analyzes these influences from a literary perspective was eventually designed to study drugs and literature from various methodological vantage points. The aim from this point onwards was to determine whether the five parameters set in this framework proved to be effective, focusing on features such as the writer's history with

drugs, the effect of drugs on the novel's style, and if the novel affected the general perception on drugs.

The novels *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* served as case studies to analyze the validity of this newly designed framework. This drug-oriented approach revealed that the lives of the authors, the origins of the novels, and the style of writing are significantly influenced by drug use of both authors. These case studies would later show that the chosen parameters were effective qualitative measures of both drug-orientation and narcotic influence on behalf of their respective authors.

It can therefore be concluded, based on the analysis of chapters three and four, that drugs played a significant role in the lives, writing process, and the discussed novels of Burroughs and Thompson. Since the framework has proven its value in examining the effect and influence of drugs on a literary work, other novels can now be analyzed in order to determine to what extent they are affected by the use of narcotic substances.

Nonetheless, since the framework was specifically designed to analyze the subject from a literary perspective, this did pose some limitations. One of the main limits of this approach is the restriction of having to use subjective sources on multiple occasions throughout the research. For example, the question whether an author was under the influence of drugs while writing can generally only be answered by the author in question. As this thesis has shown, analyzing interviews with and letters by the authors did to a certain degree answer this question but in extent revealed its limitations as well since, as in the case of Thompson, authors tend to alter their answers. It was therefore not possible to provide a conclusive answer, it could only be presumed that the writers most likely were under the influence but for different reasons could not always admit this. In the case of Burroughs and Thompson this was most likely caused by restrictions from their publishers

In order to tackle this problem of subjectivity, expanding the research on the influence of drugs in literature to other fields of study could be a solution. Combining these specialisms, such as reception and cultural studies, would strengthen the research since these approaches towards the respected novels could provide new insights with which a more definitive conclusion could be provided. However, as is mentioned in this thesis, this approach would overly extend this study and the recommendations for further research are added in the appendix.

All things considered, the aim has been to establish a framework which would study literary works from a new perspective. Examining two novels would clarify the efficiency of

that framework. Analyzing *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* proved the validity of the framework but also highlighted that this study approach is still in its infancy. Further research and extensively using the framework to analyze a great number of novels will presumably improve this new approach in literary studies. The ultimate goal would henceforth be to open the debate on how drugs have a considerable influence on a significant number of novels, eventually leading to the discussion on whether a sub-category for such novels should be established.

Appendix

Perspective: Methodologies and Theories for Further Research

While this research focuses on examining *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, the subject of drugs and literature is perfectly fit for further investigation. Since including several other frameworks from different fields of study will overly extend the scope and length of this research, these frameworks will only be discussed concisely. Thus, this appendix will have a suggestive character and will put forward some theories from different specialties which eventually could enhance and expand the study of drugs in literature.

One of these specialties is the popular culture approach discussed earlier. The work of Manning offers an extensive insight in the study of popular culture and the effects of drugs on several of its characteristics. In the case of *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, both writers were involved in notable groups which shaped the face of that generation. Since Burroughs and Thompson belonged to these cultural phenomena they simultaneously became a part of popular culture at the time, which is also reflected in their novels. For example, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* contains numerous reference to pop music from the 60s and 70s while *Naked Lunch* addresses identity and sexual orientation which were up for discussion at the time. “Drugs and Popular Culture: Drugs, Media and Identity in Contemporary Society” targets these same features while at the same time analyzing the effects or relevance of drugs in these matters.

Moreover, since *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing* are still relevant nowadays, the popular culture approach could also be assessed with the focus on present times and the position of these novels in modern popular culture. However, as is mentioned before, both novels were remade into films in the 90s, reigniting the interest in and popularity of the novels. These two films, which bear the same name as the novels, provide for a different approach which could add to the research in the field of drugs and literature.

This theory is the study of adaption and novel to film adaption in particular. An influential work in this field of study is Brian McFarlane’s *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaption*, which gives an insight in the field of adaption. As McFarlane explains in the preface, his aim is “to offer and test a methodology for studying the process of transposition from novel to film, with a view not to evaluating one in relation to the other but to establishing the *kind* of relation a film might bear to the novel it is based on” (McFarlane). MacFarlane than establishes a “firm theoretical basis for a study of adaption” (McFarlane,

backflap).

McFarlane's framework consist of an array parameters which he uses to extensively analyze the process of novel to film adaption. Amongst other things, some of the features of adaption which McFarlane analyzes are the "Narrative and Transfer", aiming on the "structural patterns" of the novel and film (71). Furthermore, he discusses "Enunciation and Adaption", focusing on the "narrational mode" of both the novel and film, and assessing features such as "shifts in narrating voice and the discursive element"(80)

Another interesting characteristic of McFarlane's work is that he specifically focusses on the relation between the novel and film. This relation is of great interest when examining the film versions of *Naked Lunch* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. Drugs are a defining feature in the novels and both authors were known for their drug use. Therefore, it would be interesting to examine whether the framework set by McFarlane could be used to assess how Terry Gilliam and David Cronenberg, the directors, adapted the novels to a screen version, particularly focusing on how drugs are incorporated in the film. The cinematographic codes discussed earlier would help in analyzing how the directors portrayed the presence of drugs in the novel, onto the screen.

When the adaption theory by McFarlane proves to be effective in establishing how the director succeeded in transferring a drugs novel to the screen and how he managed to portray all the different and intricate effects these substances had in the particular novel, it would be a valid next step after the literary study to examine the film versions.

Furthermore, in order to create a broader perspective and understanding on drugs in different forms of media, the study into the movie versions can be expanded with the use of two other framework which will add to the discussion. The first study is the remediation theory by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin discussed in their work *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. They describe remediation as the "refashioned and improved version of other media"(15). The theory focuses on how new and old media influence each other and get remediated. Bolter and Grusin argue that in this time of digital media, remediation is happening at a great pace but that it is interesting to see that as a reaction to this progress old medias still find their place in these newly remediated versions (Bolter, 5). Remediation offers the opportunity to both understand these new media but also "offers us a means of interpreting the work of earlier medias as well"(Bolter, 55). Remediation is therefore a perfect addition or succeeding step for the previously discussed adaption theory, further examining how the novel is successfully translated onto the screen.

A different study which would add to this specific angle, focusing on the film versions of these novels, is the study of reception. However, there are several kinds of reception theories. The original form “refers throughout to a general shift in concern from the author and the work to the text and the reader” and was established by mostly German academics such as Wolfgang Iser and Hans-Robert Jauss (Holub, xxi). The original form of the reception mainly focuses on how a reader perceives a literary text. This could be applied to novels in which drugs are of significant influence. However, since the focus of part was aimed on the novel and its film adaptations, applying a study in which the reception theory which focuses on the media of film and television would therefore be better to apply. Such an approach can be found in Denise Bielby and Lee Harrington’s *Global TV: Exporting Television and Culture in the World Market*, in which the reception theory is described as follows: “reception theory concentrates on the responses of audiences and public. On the one hand, reception theory looks to people’s responses to specific cultural products. On the other hand, it theorizes the long-term effects of cultural products on national and cultural identity”(Crane qtd. in Bielby, 156). Their theory is mainly focused on the film and television media and would therefore be a valid next step in examining the film versions of the novels and in which way they changed or shaped the perception of the public on these novels.

Combining the study of literature and the studies of adaptation, remediation, and reception will provide a comprehensive study in drugs and its appearance in literature and film. When merging these different fields of study, a better insight on the overall influence and effect of drugs on literature and film will be gained while consequently further assessing the reception and perception of these drug by the public reading and viewing the novels and films.

While the previously considered theories and methodologies for further research mostly focus on cultural and media facets such as film and novel, they do not examine the exact effect drugs cause on the human mind. However, in which way the brain is affected by drugs and how these substances for example influence the creativity of an author would be beneficiary for the effects of drugs on literature. This neuroscientific approach could prove useful in relation with the parameters set in this thesis. The effects of drugs on the writing process or the style and structure of the novel could be examined in depth when the exact effect of a certain drug could be established via neuroscience. For example, when an author claims that drugs X caused a series of hallucinations which sparked his creativity, neuroscience could analyze whether a side effect as such could be triggered by this particular

drug. Establishing these effects per drug, would make analyzing the influence of drugs in literature more efficient. Nonetheless, since the field of neuroscience diverges significantly from literary studies, this approach is purely a suggestion with the argumentation that it would significantly improve the literary approach conducted in this thesis. However, the assumption that these effects could be examined and established, the feasibility of this approach, should be proven or debunked by academics of this field of study.

All things considered, the study of the relevance and influence of drugs in literature is still in its infancy. Therefore, forming the framework is just a first step in establishing this relevance and whether it would add to the field of literary studies. However, merely using this framework would be a fairly concise approach in a field which is still relatively undiscovered. The studies discussed in this paragraph could prove to be a significant expansion to the study of drugs and literature. Combining this array of different points of views and theories from various fields of studies would therefore be the next step when the framework established in this chapter has been utilized and proven to be useful on a greater scale.

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