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"this flux of anguish between light and dark":

Trickster Elements in Jim Carroll's

The Basketball Diaries and Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries

by

Leanne Patterson, B.A. Hons, Guelph

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of English

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

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Trickster Elements in Jim Carroll's

The Basketball Diaries and Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries

submitted by Leanne Patterson, B.A., Hons.
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of English

Carleton University

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Abstract

In this paper I examine Jim Carroll's The Basketball Diaries and Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries in the context of the Trickster figure as it is discussed by Paul Radin in The Trickster, and by C.G. Jung in his essay "On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure." Carroll's diaries portray him not only as a modern day Trickster, but they also illustrate that he is in an ongoing cycle of evolution (and devolution) which is reflected in the Trickster cycle of tales.

I begin by introducing Carroll's influences and my approach to his diaries. In the successive chapters I examine Jim's psychological evolution as a Trickster figure. I then move on to a discussion of how Jim's personal evolution as a Trickster is reflected in the evolving confessional structure of the diaries.

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Legend

BD: The Basketball Diaries

FE: Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries

Introduction

I. Jim Carroll and His Influences

Jim Carroll published his first book of poetry, Organic Trains (1967) at the age of seventeen. He then approached American poet Ted Berrigan and asked him to read and comment on the collection. Berrigan did and proclaimed that Carroll was "the first truly new American poet" (quoted in Kuennen 81). Carroll then published two more books of poetry, 4 Ups and 1 Down (1970) and Living at the Movies (1973). Between these books, however, lingered a prose piece entitled The Basketball Diaries that Carroll had written between the ages of thirteen and fifteen chronicling his troubled youth and subsequent addiction to heroin. Excerpts from The Basketball Diaries, published in The Paris Review in 1970, not only won him the Random House Young Writer's Award (1970), it also continues to be his most famous work to date. Ted Berrigan was so impressed with the diary that before it was published in its entirety in 1978, he took Carroll and excerpts of the text to Maine to visit Jack Kerouac. After reading portions of the work, Kerouac proclaimed that "at the age of 13, Jim Carroll writes better prose than 89% of the novelists working today" (quoted in Kuennen 81). Kerouac was not alone in his praise of the diary. When it finally arrived on the literary scene, the book was touted as everything from a "literary miracle", to "a street cool Huck Finn dope diary" (quoted in Kuennen 99). The recent release of the movie version of the text (1995) put it, for a time, back on best seller lists.

Carroll's career certainly does not end at The Basketball Diaries. In 1980 he started his own rock band, "The Jim Carroll Band," and produced the song "People Who Died"--a cult hit which chronicles the various people in Carroll's life who died young and tragically. Incidentally, many of the people mentioned in the song are also discussed by Carroll in The Basketball Diaries. In 1986, Carroll published a book of verse and prose poetry entitled The Book of Nods; and in 1987 he published the "sequel" to The Basketball Diaries, Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries. Although in many ways similar to the first volume, Forced Entries is a maturer and more self-reflective offering. It begins with Jim at the age of twenty and details "the scene" in New York City during the early 1970's. Many famous people are mentioned: Andy Warhol, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, and Lou Reed, to name just a few. A good portion of the second diary, however, discusses Carroll's addiction to heroin and his desire to free himself from the drug.

A recollection of Jim Carroll's work has most recently been published under the title Fear of Dreaming: The Selected Poems of Jim Carroll (1995). All of the poems in Living at the Movies are included in this text, as well as most of the work in The Book of Nods. Also included is new work never before published in book form, and the short story "Curtis's Charm", which is based on Carroll's experiences with a junkie friend. This story has recently been adapted to the screen by Canadian filmmaker John L'Ecuier, who himself is a recovering heroin addict. Currently, Carroll is working on two novels with the "working" titles The Petting Zoo and Stigma (Knowles 1).

Although I am familiar with all of the work mentioned, for this

paper I have chosen to focus upon the two diaries. Carroll's diaries follow a long tradition of drug-inspired literature. One of the first and most well known is probably Thomas De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium Eater. De Quincey's experiences with opium became "the motivating force of his life and work," and when Confessions was published in The London Magazine in 1821, "it was an immediate sensation and marked him as the first writer to study deliberately from his own experience the results and effects of taking opium. He believed its use could not only form the material for literature, but also play a part in its creation" (Haining 1:32).

Other writers who wrote about opium include Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, and Samuel Coleridge. In fact, experimentation with drugs was widespread among writers, artists and bohemians of Paris through much of the second half of the nineteenth century (Haining 1:112). Into the twentieth century, and particularly in the 1920's, experimentation with opium continued to be fashionable in European circles (Crosland 412). Jean Cocteau's drug diary, Opium, was very much influenced by De Quincey's writing on the subject. Margaret Crosland, who edited an anthology of Cocteau's work entitled Cocteau's World, says that although Opium came to many of the same conclusions that De Quincey did in his Confessions (they both agreed that the effects of alcohol were quite different from those of opium, and they both pleaded that "medicine should learn to make opium harmless rather than deal passively with its after effects"), what makes Opium so valuable is "Cocteau's description of the actual cure, the stages in being 'weaned', as he says from the milk of Paradise This aspect of the journal contributes something that cannot be found in any medical treatise" (Crosland 412-13).

William Burroughs achieved much the same thing with his "Letter from a Master Addict to Dangerous Drugs" which was published in The British Journal of Addiction in 1956. In this letter, Burroughs discusses several different drugs and explains not only how they are ingested, but also their effects on the subject and the intensity of the withdrawal symptoms that they produce. Although not as poetic as Cocteau's Opium, Burroughs's letter is valuable precisely because of its unfettered, journalistic approach. He takes a similar approach in his novel Junky. In the introduction to Junky, Allen Ginsberg describes the difficulties Burroughs had in getting the book published because

there was a time--not unknown to the present with its leftover vibrations of police state paranoia cultivated by Narcotics Bureaus--a very heavy implicit thought-form, or assumption: that if you talked aloud about 'tea' (much less Junk) on the bus or subway, you might be arrested--even if you were only discussing a change in the law. It was just about illegal to talk about dope . . . , and so, before the book could be printed, all sorts of disclaimers had to be interleaved with the text (Ginsberg in Introduction to Junky, vii-viii)

Some of these disclaimers were to prevent the publisher from being implicated criminally with Burroughs, others were written by Burroughs who was asked to "contribute a preface explaining that he was from a distinguished family background . . . [to give] some hint how some supposedly normal citizen could arrive at being a dope fiend to soften the blow for readers, censors, reviewers, police . . ." (Ginsberg in Introduction viii). The book was finally published in 1953 and was well received, according to Ginsberg, because of its "intelligent fact, the

clear perception, precise bare language, direct syntax and mind pictures . . . , enormous sociological grasp, culture-revolutionary attitude toward bureaucracy and law, and the stoic cold-humor'd eye on crime" (Ginsberg in Introduction ix).

Burroughs's drug use was also the inspiration for his most famous novel, Naked Lunch (1959). Burroughs's approach to discussing drug use in Naked Lunch is quite different from his approach in Junky. While he strove in Junky for clarity and directness in the language and in the narrative, Naked Lunch self-consciously works against these objectives. In Junky, Burroughs steps outside of the mind of the junkie in order to provide objective observations about junk and the lifestyle that it produces. The narrative of Naked Lunch, in contrast, is more subjective and seems to occur mostly from within the junkie's mind. This approach does, at times, make Naked Lunch difficult to read, but this reaction seems to be an integral part of what Burroughs was hoping to achieve with the text.

Jim Carroll's respect for Burroughs becomes obvious when, in Forced Entries, he speaks of seeing Burroughs at a party: "I can hear that voice, like a low-key carnival barker. It's like freshly split wood, clear, clean, but loaded with splinters" (FE 107). He goes on to say that he has "never been able to get into all [of Burroughs's] cut-up technique stuff . . . ; I want the story straight, like Junky and Naked Lunch, with all that obliterating passion and spiteful truth. I don't want that wisdom, unobtainable elsewhere, cut up into pieces I don't want all that intelligence realigned" (FE 107). Intimidated by Burroughs's intelligence, Carroll later describes how Burroughs had "the only eyes [at the party] he wanted to look into. And when [he] had the

chance, [he] couldn't do it" (FE 107). His reverence for Burroughs is clear.

The Beat writers greatly influenced Carroll's writing. In Forced Entries he describes Allen Ginsberg as not only a great poet but "THE poet", and one who, humourously, sits "up with the straight, Zen posture of a man who knows how to take a really proper shit" (FE 24, 67). He speaks also of Bob Dylan, whom he describes as having "a slumping, camouflaged way of moving, like an aged and wise chameleon . . ." (FE 68); and he contemplates why Jack Kerouac, in his work, wound up "so concerned with (among so many other obsessions) his own lies" (FE 147). Also, in one of the more memorable vignettes in Forced Entries, Carroll describes how he ends up at a restaurant sitting at a table with William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Ted Berrigan, Anne Waldman, and Peter Orlovsky. He accentuates his nervousness about being with his heroes when he says that they all talk but he, like a student, watches "and I listen. I listen and watch. Even while I eat, I listen. Watch" (FE 110). His respect is obvious.

From the Beats Carroll inherited a desire to push the limits in his life and in his writing. The literary and social strides made by the Beat writers (most notably Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Lucien Carr, Herbert Huncke, and John Clellon Holmes), opened the door for Carroll's work. These writers created "their own standards and [found] their own means of expression--in the main through the use of stimulants and a thirst for personal experiences of all that life had to offer, however strange or bizarre it might seem by accepted standards" (Haining 2:18). Many of the Beat writers experimented with drugs and recorded their experiences (Burroughs's Junky and Naked Lunch,

Kerouac's On the Road, Ginsberg's Howl, "Mescaline", "Lysergic Acid", "Marijuana Notation", "Wales Visitation"). Carroll illustrates the Beats' influence on him not only in his characterization of them in his diaries, but also in his similarly open and unfettered writing style. We can also discern their influence in Carroll's choice of subject matter, so often the characters and happenings in New York City's underbelly. Without the inroads made by the Beat writers, Carroll would have had a more difficult time finding his own niche in the literary world.

The Basketball Diaries and Forced Entries, like Kerouac's On the Road and even Ginsberg's Howl, record Jim Carroll's own "thirst for personal experience" (Haining 2:18). In this sense, there is a similar confessional and autobiographical element to Carroll's writing that we see throughout the writing of the Beats. Both of his diaries are based on his own life. Interestingly, Carroll begins the second diary, Forced Entries, with an "Author's Note":

Because I know from repeated experience one question which will be asked later, I will try to answer it now. This diary is not the literal truth and is not meant to be a historical recounting of the period. The entries were consciously embellished and fictionalized to some extent. My purpose was simply to convey the texture of my experiences and feelings for that period. (FE vi)

Recording the "literal truth" is an impossibility to which Carroll is sensitive because he recognizes that his memory is a narrative like any other. Kerouac, for example, avoided this problem (to a certain extent) by fictionalizing real events; but for Kerouac's On the Road, what

"really happened" was secondary to the telling of a great "story".

Carroll makes it more difficult for himself simply by calling his two major prose pieces "diaries". When the question of "truth" arises, as it inevitably does, there is the danger of that debate overshadowing more important discussions of the writing. Regardless of how much the diaries were embellished (something we can never know for certain), what is always more important is the writing: what it says, how it says it, how it makes us feel and why it makes us feel that way.

At the same time, however, it is because Carroll writes mostly of his own experiences that he has achieved such an underground iconic status. Be it in his prose or poetry, for many readers Carroll will always be known as the adolescent, junkie poet in The Basketball Diaries. Similarly, Kerouac will always be known as Sal Paradise and Neal Cassady as Dean Moriarty. It is certainly not uncommon for authors to become interchangeable with their characters. But this approach is also dangerous because it ignores the inevitable distance between the author who writes and the characters about whom he is writing. Even in a diary where the main character is the author himself, it is important to measure this distance.

Because moments in life vanish almost as soon as they appear, all of the entries in Carroll's diaries are written after-the-fact and become stories that are representations of "real" events. Inasmuch as "real" events become the basis for Carroll's story-telling, the "real" Jim Carroll also becomes the inspiration for the character "Jim". In order to emphasize and clarify the distance between the author and the character, I have chosen--in my essay--to split Jim Carroll's name in half, using "Carroll" when I speak about the author, and "Jim" when I refer to the character in the diaries.

I have provided only a brief introduction to Carroll, his work, and his influences because he is a writer who defies categorization--he invents himself as he goes: from poet to rock star with many phases in between. Writing about Carroll's work proved to be quite a challenge, but it is precisely because of these challenges that I think more should be written about it, particularly in the academic world. The Beats have been accepted by many in Academia as a cluster of writers whose works are important because they challenge "underlying [literary], social, sexual, political and religious values" (Charters xxxi). Jim Carroll's work continues in the Beat tradition of pushing limits and is just as compelling. I hope that this paper will show, among other things, that Carroll's writing is more than worthy of serious study.

* * *

II. My Approach

I would like now briefly to introduce the approach that I am taking towards Jim Carroll's diaries. There is a discernible evolution in the diaries not only in Jim's character, but also in the narrative itself. This evolution closely parallels the evolutionary cycle of the Trickster figure, whose complex and paradoxical nature is ubiquitous in both life and literature. In the next section of my paper, I will discuss in much more detail these complexities, but here I think it will be beneficial to look at one of the more famous examples of the Trickster's consciousness in literature--Dean Moriarty in Jack Kerouac's On the Road.

They all sat around looking at Dean with lowered and hating eyes, and he stood on the carpet in the middle of them and giggled--he just giggled. He made a little dance. His bandage was getting dirtier all the time; it began to flop and unroll. I suddenly realized that Dean, by virtue of his enormous series of sins, was becoming the Idiot, the Imbecile, the Saint of the lot

That's what Dean was, the HOLY GOOF. (Kerouac 194)

"HOLY GOOF" is a particularly apt characterization of the Trickster consciousness, for the Trickster is always split between light and shadow, between man and animal, between good and evil. Because the Trickster figure embodies these dualities, it is unclear which side will show itself. As Kerouac says here, it is because Dean is an Idiot and an Imbecile that he is also the Saint of the lot; he simply cannot be one without the presence of the other.

While there is no reason to assume that either Kerouac or Carroll consciously sought to exploit the archetypal elements of this psychological type, it is undeniable that both authors were profoundly moved by the Trickster's presence, however hidden. Jim Carroll's two diaries, The Basketball Diaries and Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries, indirectly portray Jim as a Trickster figure reminiscent of Kerouac's Dean Moriarty. Like Dean, Jim is a "holy goof": a Saint in search of "purity", but also a great "sinner". But Carroll always gives Jim space to move and grow. Even when Jim is in the depths of his addiction to heroin, there is always a sense that he will survive. Survival is an integral part of the Trickster psychology; in order to evolve, the Trickster tricks; but he must also be able to survive being

tricked. It is because Jim possesses the Trickster's qualities that he survives on the dangerous streets of New York City.

As Jim evolves throughout the course of the two diaries, so too does the narrative. Although both diaries are confessional, and inadvertently explore the dynamics of a confessional discourse, they approach the confession in slightly different ways. Both challenge the passive role of the speaker, but the confessional narrative of The Basketball Diaries rebels against the hierarchical relationship between the speaker and the listener. In Forced Entries this rebellion is transformed into introspection, and the power relationship between the listener and the speaker is somewhat abated. The evolution of the narrative from the first volume to the second reflects, as we will see, the evolutionary path of Jim as a Trickster figure. I will begin this paper, then, by speaking about the Trickster figure himself and move on to a discussion of how, in both diaries, Jim's character reveals the impulsive nature of the Trickster. I will then illustrate how the confessional aspects of the texts mirror Jim's evolution as a Trickster figure.

Chapter I

The Trickster and the Jungian Shadow

"And the eclipse of the moon was fantastic, I watched it in slow motion and understood it" (BD 134).

Lounging on the roof of a New York City high rise and peering up at the friendly dome of sky above him while tripping on a tab of L.S.D., young Jim witnesses an eclipse of the moon that reflects his own ecliptic path: this is what he understands, and what we will soon understand about him. Carroll's two diaries, The Basketball Diaries and Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries, chart Jim's ecliptic movement from the brief light of basketball stardom, to the dark streets of New York City (heroin addiction, prostitution, crime, poverty), and back to a life free of heroin. But this movement is slow. We move quickly enough from light to dark, but when we reach darkness, it lingers, shrouding Jim as the moon is shrouded, pulling him in and holding him until there seems no possibility of a return.

However, while light does exist for our Trickster, Jim, it cannot be entirely recovered or understood until he matures. It is this evolutionary or "ecliptic" cycle: brief light to dark to flashes of light--or star basketball player to punk streetwise kid to reflective adult--that can be discerned in the diaries. This movement reflects a modern version of the widely known mythical figure of the Trickster, and the cycle of change he typically undergoes.

* * *

we are essentially walking on toward the other
darknesses,
while the air is grasped by our phantoms.
(Jim Carroll, Organic Trains, 3)

In charting the evolutionary path of Jim as Trickster, the basketball court plays a key role; it is not only Jim's own stage where he performs for his audiences, but also a place where he feels safe, confident in his ability, and in control. But, as Jim is drawn deeper into the world of drugs, the basketball court, which functions as the middle ground between home and the streets, becomes increasingly infiltrated by the streets. As a result, he soon finds it difficult to separate his drug use from the game, and quickly stops trying. When he can no longer separate the two, the haven of the basketball court becomes lost, and the streets take its place. The further away from the basketball court Jim wanders, the more chaotic his life becomes, until he eventually strives to regain his lost innocence through the "purifying" process of art. It is important to remember, however, that the Trickster, like Jim himself, does not completely discard his more primitive or "shadowy" nature in the process of becoming more "socialized". At the end of the cycle he is just better able to keep his primitive or shadowy nature under control. But he does not reach this point easily.

In order to understand Jim's unique characteristics and evolution, it would be useful to take a closer look at the Trickster figure

himself. C.G. Jung, in his essay "On The Psychology of the Trickster Figure," discusses why the Trickster has been immortalized in the imagination, and the effect he has had on people of the modern period. Jung begins his essay by locating the Trickster figure throughout history. He mentions the rogueries of characters like "Tom Thumb" which provide examples of Trickster consciousness; Jung includes more spiritual elements of the Trickster figure when discussing the role of the shaman. He also compares the Trickster figure to the native medicine man who, like the Trickster, "often plays malicious jokes on people, only to fall victim in his turn to the vengeance of those whom he has injured" (Jung 196).

Jung also mentions how a figure like the Trickster is preserved in medieval carnivals where rules and regulations (for example, of the Church) were overturned and parodied. What is Trickster-like about these carnivals is what Mikhail Bakhtin calls, in his introduction to Rabelais and His World, the "two-worldedness" of the carnival consciousness.

[Carnivals] offered a completely different, nonofficial, extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations; they built a second world and a second life outside officialdom, a world in which all medieval people participated more or less, in which they lived during a given time of year This double aspect of the world and of human life existed even at the earliest stages of cultural development. In the folklore of primitive peoples, coupled with the cults which were serious in tone and organization were other comic cults which laughed and scoffed

at the deity . . . ; coupled with serious myths were comic and abusive ones; coupled with heroes were their parodies and doublets. (Bakhtin 6)

The "double aspects" of the carnival complement very well the "double aspects" of the Trickster. Like carnival, the Trickster contains heroic elements and parodies of those elements, the serious and comic together; which side surfaces is completely dependent upon the situation in which the Trickster finds himself. Paul Radin, in his book The Trickster, discusses this "doubleness."

Trickster is at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself. He wills nothing consciously. At all times he is constrained to behave as he does from impulses over which he has no control. He knows neither good nor evil yet he is responsible for both. He possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being. (Radin ix)

The Trickster is a dual figure: dark and light, evil and good, animal and man. Either side can and will appear at any time during the cycle of tales. But it is the potential of the more human, conscious mind prevailing over the animal, unconscious mind that pushes the Trickster to evolve. And it is because of this evolution, Jung believes, that the Trickster has a hold on our imaginations and "continues to make its influence felt on the highest level of civilization . . . ; in many cultures, his figure seems like an old river bed in which water still flows" (Jung 201).

Essentially, what we find in the evolution of the Trickster is a

own group of petty thieves, "The Diaper Bandits", from the "real strung out junkies [who] go in for rapping out [their mugging victims] if they put up a fight, but I'm scared enough without doing a regular mug job" (BD 7).

At this early stage in the diary the streets and the basketball court are present but separate. Both require Jim to perform, but the stages where his performances take place have not yet overlapped. His performance on the streets with "The Diaper Bandits" points to one half of his identity, his shadow. Jim has not yet reached the point where he is living in the shadow of his shadow (this comes later), but his adrenaline-laced reactions to his bouts with petty crime, and his experimentation with minor drugs, foreshadow the power Jim's shadow will hold over him.

Jung tells us, in his essay on the Trickster, that "although [Trickster] is not really evil he does the most atrocious things from sheer unconsciousness and unrelatedness" (203). We find similar traits in Jim. It is not that he is "evil"; rather, he is not aware (or, does not want to be aware) of the consequences of his actions. Paul Radin tells us that the Winnebago Trickster, at the beginning of the cycle, "is still living in his unconscious, mentally a child" (Radin 133). Jim, at the beginning of the Trickster cycle of the Diaries, is a child: he is only thirteen years old. This does not mean that he does not know "right" from "wrong" but, rather, that his consciousness is not fully developed, and so becomes an easy prey to the shadow lurking within. In "The Psychology of the Trickster Figure," Jung reminds us that "if the conscious should find itself in a critical or doubtful situation, then it soon becomes apparent that the shadow has not dissolved into nothing

happens is that the conscious mind is able to free itself from the fascination of evil and is no longer obliged to live it compulsively" (206). He goes on to say that

the darkness and evil have not gone up in smoke, they have merely withdrawn into the unconscious owing to loss of energy, where they remain unconscious so long as all is well with the conscious. But if the conscious should find itself in a critical or doubtful situation, then it soon becomes apparent that the shadow has not dissolved into nothing but is only waiting for a favourable opportunity to reappear.

(Jung 206)

The Trickster's evolution does not make him immune to devolution. Indeed, it is through the devolutionary process that the Trickster is able to learn from his mistakes and evolve into a higher consciousness. In this sense, the shadow is ready to appear at any moment and wreak havoc in a person's life.

There is much evidence of this cycle in Jim Carroll's diaries. The Basketball Diaries and Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries can be seen as Jim's own Trickster cycle where, like the Trickster, he wants to "get out of the earlier condition," yet "not forget it" (Jung 207). Although Jim eventually moves beyond his "earlier condition", it is simply impossible for him to forget it: like the Trickster, he must remember in order to evolve.

* * *

The Basketball Diaries: The Beginning of the Trickster Cycle

I watched a street gang heading
at me on East 106th, their hands
touched the pavement as they walked.

Tired of cheap revolvers and exploding fingers
they came to understand the beauty of the knife

And I ran. I clutched the twin scorpion in my crotch.
I was thirteen years of age I was pretty I was white.
(Jim Carroll Fear of Dreaming, 187)

When The Basketball Diaries opens it is the "Fall 1963", and Jim is thirteen years old. Our young narrator begins his first entry in reference to his greatest passion, basketball: "Today was my first Biddy League game and my first day in any organized basketball league. I'm enthused about life due to this exciting event" (BD 3). As we continue reading, however, the "two-worldness" of Jim's life becomes increasingly apparent. He quickly switches his focus from the basketball court to the streets where we find him skipping basketball practice to sniff CARBONA and smoke marijuana. Jim also gleefully tells us how to mug someone effectively: "the dumbest move is to snatch on your own streets. People know all the other people around this yack-yack neighbourhood" (BD 7). And, he goes on to differentiate his

own group of petty thieves, "The Diaper Bandits", from the "real strung out junkies [who] go in for rapping out [their mugging victims] if they put up a fight, but I'm scared enough without doing a regular mug job" (BD 7).

At this early stage in the diary the streets and the basketball court are present but separate. Both require Jim to perform, but the stages where his performances take place have not yet overlapped. His performance on the streets with "The Diaper Bandits" points to one half of his identity, his shadow. Jim has not yet reached the point where he is living in the shadow of his shadow (this comes later), but his adrenaline-laced reactions to his bouts with petty crime, and his experimentation with minor drugs, foreshadow the power Jim's shadow will hold over him.

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but is only waiting for a favourable opportunity to reappear . . . "

(206). When we consider that Jim is a teenage boy quickly coming of age on the dangerous streets of New York City, it is not difficult to see why his shadow appears, nor why it lingers.

By the second section of The Basketball Diaries, we begin to recognize a movement away from the basketball court as a pure place untouched by the streets. In a pivotal scene our young narrator tries heroin for the first time, and begins to display his Trickster-like identity. Jim tells us that before experimenting with heroin, he was under the impression that "heroin was the NON-addictive stuff and marijuana was addictive," and that he "only found out later what a dumb ass move it was" for him to have this belief (BD 30). A very similar episode occurs in the Winnebago Trickster cycle.

Paul Radin tells us how Trickster imitates "what he takes to be a man pointing at him but which turns out to be a tree stump with a protruding branch" (134). Radin points out that what is significant about this scene is Trickster's reaction to his "blunder and stupidity. 'Yes indeed,' so he says, 'it is on this account that the people call me Wadjunka, the foolish one! They are right'" (134-5). Jim's reaction to his own blunder is similar: he realizes his experimentation with heroin was "dumb assed" because it is addictive. However, as Radin says about Trickster, he "does not yet accept responsibility for his actions. In fact, he holds other people, the world outside himself, as compelling him to behave as he does" (Radin 135). We see this stance in Jim: "Funny, I can remember what vows I'd made never to touch any of that shit when I was five or six. Now with all of my friends doing it, all kinds of vows drop out from under me

everyday" (BD 30). It is much easier for Jim to succumb to his shadow when everyone around him is succumbing to his.

Later in the "Winter 1964" section, Jim calls some of his peers "lamebrains" for refusing to smoke marijuana and for being under the impression that "grass was the same as hard stuff" (BD 33). Jim does not deny that he was once under the same impression, but points out that now that he has got his "facts" straight, he will try to "convince them that [pot is] no habit drug but they wouldn't hear it and called me a 'dope fiend,' but they seemed to cool down a bit and got a little curious and asked if they could smell it" (BD 33). To argue further his point, Jim uses his prowess on the basketball court: "[I] asked them how I could be as good as I am in basketball if I was 'hooked,' and they admitted that I did have a point" (BD 33).

This episode is significant because it illustrates how much of Jim's identity is embedded in basketball, due both to his own perception and that of his peers. The basketball court, which is associated with healthy sport and appropriate social behaviour, becomes for Jim the measure of his successes and failures: if he can function on the court, he can function in life. This balance becomes increasingly precarious for Jim as he is drawn deeper into the street world which not only seeps into and taints the purity of the basketball court, but eventually succeeds in seducing him away from the basketball court altogether.

* * *

The movement away from the basketball court occurs midway through the diary when Jim starts "hanging around . . . with all the other heads

in this dreary neighbourhood, at this place called 'Headquarters,'
 . . . an amazing place where there are usually anywhere between ten and
 thirty locals hanging out either laughing insanely from grass fits or
 simply on the nod from smack" (BD 80). Earlier I spoke of the
 "two-worldedness" of the carnival consciousness and how Tric' ter
 embodies this duality. With the introduction of this dingy apartment in
 the otherwise middle class "Catholic section" of New York City, Jim's
 own duality between the basketball court and the streets intensifies.
 At Headquarters the shadow comes alive, is nourished, and overturns
 entirely the conventions of this "Catholic" neighbourhood. It is a
 rather sinister version of Bakhtin's concept of carnival when described
 as:

a spectacle [not] seen by the people; they live in it, and
 everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the
 people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside
 it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws,
 that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal
 spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the
 world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is
 the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its
 participants. (Bakhtin 7)

In Bakhtin's conception of carnival "conventions" (for example, of
 the Church) are overturned for positive, celebratory reasons,
 temporarily freeing the people from oppressive ranks and regulations.
 Although one can argue that "Headquarters" challenges the regulations of
 the Catholic neighbourhood where it is situated, it does so negatively,
 and only involves a minority group. That is, while all who are at

Headquarters participate in its carnival, and Headquarters itself is subject to "the laws of its own freedom," the outcome is not a regeneration but a degeneration of the social fabric. We see this degeneration in Jim's description of the "happenings" there:

It's an amazing thing with all the freaked out bashes and singing and goings-on up at Headquarters we weren't evicted a year ago . . . it was up to 110 decibels at this party for Shlink's "going into the army" last night, so much that we realized the man might bust in and wisely ruled that all dope smoking be restricted to the back room. Every fucking dope head in upper Manhattan was there, guys we never saw before are face down in the bathtub on scag or downers; in the kitchen a giant plastic garbage can filled with incredible varieties of booze and fruit punch, laced with a heaping dose of acid. Spades, whites, P.R.'s, junkies, old men drunks never before seen at H.Q. stuffing away secret bologna sandwiches in their ratty coats and guzzling from the garbage can, constantly refilled. Dudes stumbling out of the back smoking room with dumb smiles, whacked on hash and grass On the whole, just another typical Friday night up here (BD 130-31)

This is a shadowy carnival of hallucinatory celebration. Because most of Jim's time (as the diary progresses) is spent at Headquarters, the shadow that emerges there is encouraged, nourished, and soon spreads into other areas of his life: including the basketball court. When Jim ingests drugs before a game, the dark, carnivalesque world of Headquarters, and the once untainted world of the basketball court,

converge: Jim describes how he and Marc bought "uppers" to take before the game and "downers" to take after because they "were planning to go to Headquarters [later] for a Codeine medicine party and [would] have to come down from the speed to get the most out of the Codeine . . . " (BD 86).

This situation is complicated when Jim and his peers discover they have mistakenly ingested the wrong drug: they have taken the "downers" before the game instead of after it. Needless to say, this error affects their game: "no doubt about it, we took the downest downers I may have ever downed. My legs began to get the feeling someone slit a nice little hole at the top of my thighs and poured in a few gallons of liquid lead, I had a head on that felt like the rock of Gibraltar . . . " (BD 88). To compensate for the lost game the teens take a cab to Headquarters where Jim humourously describes how "it was a combination of everyone bitching how they were right and who was wrong . . . and intervals of total hysterical laughter about the whole farce" (BD 89). However, after this incident the purity of the basketball court is never the same, and its centrality becomes lost to the streets, to Headquarters, and their use. By the time we reach "Summer 1965", Jim is prostituting himself in order to satisfy his habit. What is interesting about this particular section of the diary is its plunge into darkness. The focus is no longer on Jim's presence on the basketball court, but on life on the streets where he has become as shadowy as everyone else.

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The movement onto the streets is swift. During the "Spring 1965" section, Jim is still at home "digging SUPERMAN on TV," and making excuses to his mother for his mysteriously misplaced report card (BD 96). Compare this to the beginning of the next section, "Summer 1965", where he suddenly informs us that "the fag hustling scene gets hairier and hairier all the time," and where he introduces some of the stranger situations in which he has found himself: "Dave" who pays him to go to the Yankees game with him, the CPA who wants Jim to whip a cat, urinate on him in the bathtub, and then masturbate into his mouth (BD 104, 106). As well, Jim tells us of what appears to be an attempted suicide he and his friends stumble across at five in the morning after leaving Headquarters: "We walk out into pleasant morning air and what horrible bringdown is there to greet us: out on the sidewalk . . . a totally naked woman groaning in slow pain, blood splashed all over the pavement" (BD 107). This is followed by a vivid description of the carnivalesque atmosphere of the Grand Central Station bathroom where "anything might go . . . , all those business cats just lined up along the piss machines . . . , the usual seedy dudes, hustlers, etc. . . . [and] forty arms like pistons pumping back and forth at incredible rates" (BD 109).

Ironically, the dark aura of these episodes is what allows us to see more clearly Jim's dual Trickster consciousness. Because he moves physically and mentally closer to darkness, the flashes of light in his consciousness become more sharply defined. And it is important to remember that however slight these flashes may be, they still provide some small illumination which is evidence that Jim, the Trickster, has the potential to evolve or devolve.

The glimmers of light amongst the darkness of Jim's shadow are

crucial to our understanding of him as Trickster. One of these occurs in Jim's description of an incident on the subway:

I'm riding the uptown "A" train tonight, half on the nod and half trying to read a sports magazine. There's this chick that gets on at 175th St., a real secretary-stewardess type with big tits and the beehive hair 'n' all. She's right across the way from me, hardly any people in the car, and here she is tossing this spread toward me so wide I can see her powder blue panties. What do these faces want out of me, an athletic youth trying to enjoy a nice heroin head and harmless magazine? Finally I got up and went over to her and asked her if she could please close her legs, I'm barely fifteen years old and it's distracting and, frankly, lewd. (BD 106-7)

At this point we already know that Jim is not as innocent as he pretends. At the same time, however, there is a sincerity to this section. Jim wants to believe that he has not lost all of his "innocence" even if--as he sees it--others are out to steal it from him: as he says, "'I'm barely fifteen years old'." These sentiments are echoed by Jim later on in the diary when he has an intense sexual affair with an older woman. When he breaks it off, his final words to her are: "'What about my innocence . . . [?]' " (BD 172).

In the above subway scene Jim distinguishes himself from the rest of "these faces" by characterizing himself as "an athletic youth trying to enjoy a nice heroin head and harmless magazine . . . " (BD 106). The Trickster duality of light and dark is implicit here: the light of Jim's athletic prowess on the basketball court, and the dark aura of heroin. As mentioned earlier, the light of the basketball court is quickly being

swallowed by the shadows of street life, drug addiction and prostitution: by losing sight of the basketball court, Jim also loses his "presence" on it. On the streets he has none of the presence that he does on the court. Heroin takes him deeper and deeper into the anonymity of darkness: when he buys heroin on the streets, he is just another junkie who swims in the darkness of his unconscious while "on the nod"; when he prostitutes himself, he is just another nameless body.

At the end of the "Summer 1965" section, Jim discovers that his desire for heroin is controlling him; he not only puts a label on his habit, he also confesses his fear that it is getting out of control. Jim describes how his "Pepsi-Cola" heroin habit (a small, first habit that sneaks up while one is convincing oneself that the habit doesn't exist), is "tightening" around him (BD 121). He can feel what heroin is doing to his body: "your nose is running and your eyes are tearing and the leg and back muscles start feeling tight and heavy . . . " (BD 121). But what is even more difficult to bear is, as Jim says, "that tiny voice reaching over your neck feeding you all them anxieties . . . I can gladly take sore muscles but my mind can't handle the monkey back there" (BD 122). Just as Jim bears the Trickster duality, so too does this unbearable voice, this monkey on his back. On the one hand, the voice tells him to do one last shot of heroin, but on the other hand it makes him aware of how his heroin habit is controlling him. It is because this voice prods him to take more heroin that he is able to discern his reliance on it. In this sense, the voice provides Jim with a glimmer of consciousness, the awareness that he is, indeed, developing a serious addiction.

True to the Trickster who is tricked as much as he tricks others, Jim compounds his new-found awareness with his own mirrored reflection, and comes to the conclusion that he "better cut loose, no jiving myself any longer" (BD 122). In fact, most of the above passage depicts Jim chastising himself for the ways he has tricked himself into believing that he could do "just one last one [and] start quitting tomorrow" (BD 122). Here Jim realizes that "the laugh's on you finally, no matter how long you think you got it 'under control'" (BD 121). Jim has never controlled his habit, his habit has always controlled him and continues to do so. But while one may be under the impression that Jim has reached a turning point in his life, that he is aware, finally, of the danger involved in his addiction to heroin, this turns out to be naive. While there is no doubt that in this section there is an unprecedented flash of consciousness, in the end it only fades to a glimmer. As we venture into the next section of the diary, "Fall 1965", it is not long before Jim finds himself back in the carnival of Headquarters, and on the streets.

However, Jim has made some progress. The difference in him now is that he is aware of his habit. This provides him with the potential to evolve out of a lower consciousness (his shadow) into a higher consciousness. Jung describes this process when he recalls how the Trickster gets his head caught inside the skull of an elk and in the next episode shows how he overcomes this condition by imprisoning the head of a hawk inside his own rectum (Jung 203). Although, as Jung emphasizes, the Trickster "sinks back into the former condition immediately afterwards, by falling under the ice, and is outwitted time after time by the animals," what is significant about this episode is

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that "in the end [Trickster] succeeds in tricking the cunning coyote, and this brings him back to his saviour nature" (Jung 203). It is, therefore, through the process of devolution that the Trickster often experiences his evolution. Despite Jim's immediately "falling back into his former condition" of drug abuse, the potential for him to evolve remains. In the last half of the diary, where it becomes increasingly difficult for Jim to indulge his habit, we begin to see the potential for this movement.

The shadowy, carnivalesque atmosphere of Headquarters intensifies after a junkie overdoses. As a result, Jim finds himself rejected by the other pleasure-seekers at Headquarters because since then "it's been a rule no one shoots dope up there . . . just smoking, and we ain't got another house and it would look a bit fucked up picketing Headquarters for grass heads being unrightful to junkies" (BD 144). Jim can no longer blithely go to Headquarters to exercise his habit: as a result he is forced to be somewhat introspective. He realizes that his habit is "starting to get heavy" and that he ought to be "cut[ting] loose" (BD 144). But in the end, what concerns Jim more is that he must go elsewhere to satisfy his habit: "it's the park or nothing" (BD 144). Finding a new place to continue his habit (although a hassle) is at this point easier than tackling his addiction to heroin.

* * *

By the time we reach the last two sections of The Basketball Diaries, Jim has travelled from the light of basketball stardom, to the darkness of the streets, and many shadowy places in between. In the

last sections of the diary, "Winter 1966" and "Spring and Summer 1966", Jim takes us back to the basketball court. But it is a basketball court that has been radically transformed. As William Burroughs tells us in his novel, Junky:

as a habit takes hold, other interests lose importance to the user. Life telescopes down to junk, one fix and looking forward to the next, 'stashies' and 'scripts,' 'spikes' and 'droppers.' The addict himself often feels that he is leading a normal life and that junk is incidental. He does not realize that he is just going through the motions in his non-junk activities. It is not until his supply is cut off that he realizes what junk means to him. (Burroughs 22-3)

For Jim, basketball has become what Burroughs calls just another "non-junk activity". But it is not even that. Jim may not shoot heroin before playing, but he takes downers and smokes marijuana. However, his drug of choice is still heroin--these minor drugs are only substitutes for "the real thing". The result of all of his drug use, both on and off the court, is Jim's loss of "presence", and the increased anonymity associated with drug addiction.

We see this transformation clearly in "Winter 1966". Here Jim comments on articles written about him in Washington newspapers where he had been playing in a tournament. The reports call him a "beatnik" and emphasize not his skill as a basketball player, but his "shoulder length hair" and "strange hobbies off the court" (BD 155). Jim is noticeably perturbed by this shift in focus and suddenly feels unsure of himself as a "big time basketball star" (BD 138). In an attempt to save his presence on the court, Jim goes on the defensive: he stresses how he

"sweated [his] nuts off" for a starting position, and argues that anyone who thinks differently can "go fuck himself" (BD 155).

However, he does later admit that

it is common knowledge that Marc Clutcher, Anton Neutron and myself are fucking up our basketball team by taking every drug we can get our hands on before games. It's common knowledge to the rest of the teams in the league too, mainly because we wear our hair ten times the normal length, and drop games to lame teams by fucking around on the court and not giving a shit The funny part about this is that yesterday was one of the few times I was straight while playing and it was simply the fact that they had three fucking butchers on me all game that I couldn't get it together. (BD 163)

People are less surprised to learn that Jim is playing while under the influence of drugs than when he is not. And it seems either way, Jim can no longer "get it together" on the court. Later, he amusingly describes a game where he was so stoned, and played so badly, that at one point the referee came over to ask him if he was feeling all right. Jim answers him by laughing and shooting the basketball "about four feet short of the rim. The coach whipped me out of the game . . . ; all around it was a bad day for our dealing business and a bringdown game that fucked up my leading score average" (BD 165).

There is no place that Jim can go without his habit following him. The basketball court is not conducive to getting high, and getting high has become his main concern. As a result, the basketball court slips away from him and gradually becomes part of a distant past. But what remains constant is Jim's writing. After all, it is through his writing

that we watch the basketball court move further away. In this sense, the passion Jim once felt on the basketball court, the "presence" he had on the court, is replaced by writing a diary where he is again the main focus. It is understandable, then, that the further away from the basketball court that Jim moves, the more passionate he becomes about his writing; also, the more Jim reads, the more he knows he must write. He comes to think of poetry as "just a raw block of stone to be shaped, that way the words are never a horrible limit . . . just tools to shape"; he says that he gets his images "from the upstairs vault . . . and fling[s]'em around like bricks, sometimes clean and smooth and then sloppy ready to fall on top of you later" (BD 159).

However, writing does have its limits for Jim. Not only does it become difficult for him to capture, in words, his addiction, but the addiction itself impedes his ability to express his ideas: "It's been hard, the writing, lately. Just all comes in beautiful fragments, like nods now . . . so high . . . guess I'd rather sleep forever this sleep and forget . . . but the gnats, they keep buzzing in my ear and the heat and the dreams . . ." (BD 162). The confidence in his writing that Jim had evinced in the quotation from page 159 (that writing is all about shaping and inserting to "make sense") is shaken in the later quotation. It does not take him long to discover how difficult it is to capture the essence of a "nod" when one is actually "on the nod". As Jim says here, "nodding" is like sleep, it is a retreat into the unconscious. He has a much easier time capturing his "nods" in words after-the-fact. But even then they are dream images. He admits throughout that even though he would like to be able to explain the events of some of his "nods" in more detail and make them clear, in the

end he feels "sad, needing to explain it but I can't because it belonged to me, to anyone else it was just wet images" (BD 177). Of course, the limitations of language do not stop Jim from trying to say what, ultimately, he cannot.

There are, however, a few incidents in the diary when he does stop writing. One of these occurs in the "Winter 1966" section when Jim is sent to Riker's Island for possession of heroin. This section ends with Jim proclaiming that he is "not interested in keeping this diary going while I'm here. Maybe later. Right now I'm not interested in anything" (BD 178). Jim does not continue writing steadily in the diary again until he is released from Riker's in the "Spring and Summer 1966" section. In that section Jim again struggles with keeping up the diary while he goes through withdrawal from heroin. He describes how it has been a week since he was able to write any entries in the diary, and how the last entry "must have been a bit off key since I had been cold turk three days when I scribbled it down on that fucking cold toilet seat in H.Q. To tell the truth my 'withdrawal' only lasted one more day" (BD 199).

If Jim finds it difficult to write when he is going through the pains of withdrawal, he finds it equally difficult to write when he is using heroin and always "on the nod". The diary takes us to both extremes, but there is also a lingering in between these two states which reminds us of the Trickster who oscillates between being half animal and half man, half light and half shadow. Jim often writes in a state which is somewhere between withdrawal and "nodding". Because he often writes from this position, it is not predictable whether or not he will evolve. He is, in some instances, very conscious of the dangers of his habit:

Then there's us street kids that start fucking around very young, thirteen or so, and think we can control ourselves and not get strung out. It rarely works. I'm proof. So after two or three years of control, I wind up in the last scene: strung out and nothing to do but spend all day chasing dope Like you just know you're in the real junkie thing when you wake up in the morning and say to yourself and know it and go through with it, "Today I either get my fix or get my ass busted into the Tombs, fuck it all." (BD 190-1)

But at the same time, when he is confronted with his habit, when others tell him he has the "junk halo" (greenish tint to his skin), in order to escape the realities of his addiction he succumbs to it: "What the fuck, he turned me on to a nice day of nods at least" (BD 206).

This fluctuation is typical of The Basketball Diaries, which begins with Jim as a young, talented basketball player and ends in the darkness of Headquarters with Jim "nodding" on a mattress where he has spent the past four days. But it does not really end. Amidst the darkness of Headquarters, Jim finds himself still chanting for purity. The last sentence of The Basketball Diaries reads: "I just want to be pure" (BD 210). Looking in the mirror, Jim is not sure what he sees, but "purity" is not it: "A wasted peek in the mirror, I'm thin as a wafer of concentrated rye I can feel the window light hurting my eyes: it's like shooting pickle juice. What does it mean?" (BD 210). Jim no longer knows who he is, and by the end of The Basketball Diaries he begins to lose confidence in his ability to control his "habit", for it is now an addiction that controls him.

If our Trickster is to survive we should not view him as merely a victim of his addiction to heroin and the junkie lifestyle. In the dangerous world that Jim inhabits, Carroll challenges Jim's role as victim by empowering him through the confessional structure of the narrative. This is ironic considering that in the confessional discourse the speaker is involved in a hierarchical relationship with the listener. According to Foucault, "one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it" (62). This hierarchy exists between the speaker and the listener because the listener is in a position that controls the consequences of the confession; as Foucault explains, the listener "intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, reconcile" (61). The narrative of The Basketball Diaries not only illustrates how Jim participates in the ritual of confession, but how, in that participation, Carroll manages to problematize the hierarchical dimensions of the confessional discourse by challenging the role of the speaker as passive.

We see this dynamic operating at the beginning of the diary when Jim describes how, at Catholic School, he is forced by a Brother into confession. In this scene, he is more than a little skeptical about entering what he calls the "phone booths to God" (BD 25). He tries to avoid getting in line to confess, but is forced to anyway: "and at that moment let me tell you I hated that fucking school and the whole religion worse than anything before They should gun off the whole bunch [of Priests], they're fucking up minds they do not own" (BD 25).

Although angered by the power held by the Priests, Jim is at the same time intrigued by it, for later he admits that he "was curious to dig what went on through these finely carved doors in and out of which each cat was going. I really wanted to find out the story" (BD 25). In order to do so, Jim enters the confessional booth where he participates in the very ritual he had tried so hard to avoid. He confesses to us, and then to the Priest, that he has never been to confession: "'Priest, I ain't never done this before because like I'm not really Catholic and the Brother out there made me come in but I told him I . . . well, shit' (I really said shit too and then said excuse me and all), 'I don't know what to say'" (BD 26). By using profanity, apologizing to the Priest, and then bragging about it to us, Jim, in his defiance, unknowingly complies with the regulations of the confession. Regardless of whether or not his apology to the Priest is sincere, the fact that he apologizes at all indicates his recognition of a confessional discourse.

However, Jim is still able to retain some resistance towards the institution of confession. Curious to know the Priest's "story", and willing to participate in the hierarchical dynamics of the confession to acquire it, Jim manages to challenge that hierarchy by not giving the Priest his "story", thus averting any judgement the Priest might pass on him. Jim avoids judgement because his confession forces another to be judged--the Brother who forced him into the confessional booth. When the Priest calls the Brother a disgrace to his fellow robe wearers, Jim successfully places the Brother in a position that is as powerless as the one in which the Brother had previously placed Jim.

In the confession, Carroll insists that Jim avoid the passivity of "the victim" by challenging the dynamics of the situations which make

him powerless. Near the end of the diary, when Jim is caught with heroin and confesses his guilt to a judge, he is sentenced to three months in Riker's Island Juvenile Facility. Although Jim is powerless to control the consequence of his confession and goes to jail, Carroll does not focus on his powerlessness. Instead, he allows Jim to regain control of the situation by denying the reader Jim's confessions during his stay: "I'm not interested in keeping this diary going while I'm here. Maybe later. Right now I'm not interested in anything" (BD 178). From the moment he enters Riker's in the "Winter 1966" there are no entries until his release in the "Spring and Summer 1966" section which begins with a lengthy confession detailing his experiences in the jail.

Suffice to say I am finished with the asshole bandits of shower room rape; suffice to say that those swine for guards won't draw blood from my ankles again; suffice to say nobody will hang himself one night on the other side of the wall six inches thick from where I sleep; suffice to say I won't have to watch anymore fourteen year old Puerto Ricans carving their initials in forearms with filthy dull forks they stashed, taken off to the infirmary a week later for blossoming gangrene; suffice to say no black cell-block kings will stab fat little Jews here . . . suffice to say that I found a broom closet at the end of my cell-block where I could hide from ugly screws and filthy cock and sad-eyed forms and learn to love silence and suffice to say that, though I spent four hours a day in that closet, I didn't become pure on Riker's Island. (BD 183-4)

Not only does Jim try to hide from the cruel conditions ("the broom closet," "silence") he also conceals these hardships from us right up until the sentence before his revelations: "So I'm putting this past month behind me for now and for later, and we won't have any more about it" (BD 183). But as we see in the above passage, Jim confesses the travails of the jail anyway. Here, the confession gives him back the power that he lacked in the situations themselves. For he only confesses to the reader when he is ready and has a grasp on the horrors he has experienced.

* * *

For most of The Basketball Diaries the reader is the sole listener of Jim's confessions. As listeners, we begin to expect and to depend upon Jim to confess the more shadowy aspects of his life. We only, perhaps, become aware of our expectations when Jim draws attention to them. Throughout The Basketball Diaries he shows an acute sensitivity toward the reader of his confessions. He will often try to justify what he perceives as the more uninteresting entries with disclaimers: "I realize all this was a wee trite . . . ", or, "from here this diary becomes very anti-climactic and, in fact, quite a fucking bringdown for all concerned," or again, "Fuck it anyway, I just couldn't think of anything else to write about anyway, no dope, no nooky, no queers following me today, I guess you start writing lame diaries like this" (BD 100, 193, 90). These disclaimers illustrate that despite the fact Carroll places us in the position of "listener" (a position which, in the confessional discourse, is often thought to be more powerful than

that of the speaker) this power is undermined when Jim uncovers how we depend on him to fulfill our expectations of the narrative. Jim's confessing, then, is never a passive gesture. He does not depend on the reader to grant him the "purity" for which he longs; rather, he confesses because he felt powerful in the situation about which he is confessing, or the act of confessing gives him the power he lacked in the situation itself.

Jim's drug use and subsequent addiction to heroin are the occasions for most of his confessions to us. His first use of heroin, earlier discussed as an aspect of the Trickster, becomes particularly important here when we notice his delay in confessing to it: "I never did write about the time I took my first shot of heroin. It was about two months back" (BD 30). When we consider this is a diary, a daily record of the events in Jim's life, it is curious that he would wait two months to record so definitive an event. However, the two-month time span gives Jim enough distance to evaluate the situation before confessing it to us. As a result, the naiveté that he experienced in the situation, his belief that "heroin was the NON-addictive stuff and marijuana was addictive," is replaced with self-chastisement: "I only found out later what a dumb ass move that was" (FD 30). There is a doubleness to Jim's confessing his first use of heroin. On the one hand, it allows us to witness the Trickster tricked as a result of his naiveté. On the other hand, it allows Jim to display his "street-smarts" which not only provide him with the craftiness to trick, but which also provide him with the ability to recognize when he is being tricked.

In order to "trick", the Trickster experiences a loss of some of the naiveté and the innocence that allows him to be "tricked". Jim

recognizes this loss when he confesses that he had made many "vows" as a youngster to never touch heroin; after entering the cellar these vows "drop out from under [him] everyday" (BD 30). We discern this not only in the action of the passage, but also in the progression of the language Carroll uses to describe Jim's first use of heroin. The first "vow" is dropped when Jim decides to experiment with heroin after promising himself he would resist the drug. The next vow is broken when he decides not just to "sniff a bag" (as he had convinced himself he would), but to "skin pop" the heroin. This last vow gets dropped as well when, instead of "skin-popping" the heroin, he "mainlines" it (BD 30).

As the "vows" drop, the language Carroll uses also changes. He begins the passage using words like "vows" and "promises", and also describes Jim's naive misunderstanding (that heroin was non-addictive). But as the passage continues, these words and phrases are replaced with descriptions of the dark cellar and its "shooting gallery", and how, after losing his "virgin veins", "the first rush" is "like ten orgasms" (BD 30). There is a movement here from a childlike innocence to a loss of that innocence through experience. Carroll compares his first use of heroin to a loss of virginity. But there is a darkness to this comparison: for while sexuality is not necessarily "dark", when the term is used in relation to heroin, a shadow is inevitably cast. Everything associated with heroin does, after all, connote the shadow: the darkness of the cellar where the experimentation takes place (the cellar being replaced later with "Headquarters"), the darkness of the unconscious where the heroin "nod" takes the user, and finally the dark places the heroin user must go in order to sustain his habit--not only on the streets but also within himself.

But Jim has not yet experienced the extent of this darkness, and what pushes him even further into it is his tricking himself into believing that what he is getting himself into is not all dark. For Jim also describes how his first use of heroin was like "one long heat wave all through my body, any ache I had flushed out" (BD 30). There is, in that first rush, a pure sense of painlessness. But as Jim's fascination with heroin grows, finding a kind of purity in the painlessness that heroin provided is quickly replaced with nothing but aches, of trying to recapture that feeling, of addiction itself, and of the withdrawal that comes with trying to "kick" the addiction. And as Jim's habit becomes an addiction that controls him, he turns more and more to writing the diary in an effort to retain some control over his life. We see this quite clearly when Jim intimates his sexual experiences. Once again, there is a doubleness to Jim's confessions: there is sex that he enjoys and finds beautiful, and sex where he is subject to others' sexual perversions which he considers ugly. But there are also situations in which these aspects collide, as they inevitably do.

In an early passage on masturbation, Jim's candor regarding pleasure is straightforward and uninhibited.

I did it again tonight after the rest of them had fallen far asleep [I] went out and up. "Up" is my roof, and what I do is simply take off all my clothes, stand around awhile, a totally naked young boy, stare into the star machine and jerk myself off. Is it strange? Maybe, but it's certainly the most beautiful and exciting way of masturbating I've experienced since I first began my steady practice of the art when I was just turning twelve (BD 42)

In confessing that masturbating in this way is "beautiful" and "exciting", Jim also implicitly confesses his realization that it is regarded as a "sin". This becomes clearer later when Jim writes that "the real turn-on" is that "someone else might pop through the roof door and snag you any second" in a situation where "there is no possibility of explaining yourself" (BD 42). Jim's realization that he may have to explain himself points to his broader awareness of the taboos associated with masturbation. This awareness, coupled with the giddiness it brings him, leads us to wonder whether he would consider masturbation as beautiful if so many did not believe otherwise. But this is not just adolescent rebellion. Many things that are regarded as "sinful" are in some ways pleasurable, and what makes them sinful are the pleasures they bring.

Another important aspect of this scene is the control Jim has over the situation. Although there is always the possibility that he will be caught masturbating and will be unable to explain himself, it is still he who is in control because he is comfortable with the situation and is prepared (indeed, almost desires) to be caught. As well, confessing to the act connotes a sense of phallic power, the importance of which becomes clearer later in the diary when Jim confides to us his experiences with Winkie and Blinkie, "exact lookalikes . . . with all that pink gloss lipstick and teased up hair and enormous tits that hung out of the blouses about six inches from my stoned face" (BD 58). He goes on to describe how he "let [Blinkie] do a little mouth work on [his penis], bigger than I ever saw it in all of my fifteen years, let me tell you, I was proud of its showing" (BD 60). In this episode, Jim exults in his prowess with women by placing emphasis on the size of his

penis. As we have seen thus far, having "power" arouses Jim; here, it gives him the confidence to bring the confessional right into the bedroom (where it frequently seems to be anyway).

But even when Jim is at his most vulnerable, when he is prostituting himself in order to support his drug addiction, he is still able to retain some control. Midway through the diary he describes how

the fag hustling scene gets hairier and hairier all the time
 You just don't know what the next trick you pick up
 is gonna whip out of his attaché case these days
 . . . Handcuffs, masks, snakes (yeah, that's right, real
 ones), chains, whips, last week a guy had a pet parrot that he
 had eat grapes out of my pubic hair. (He had a leather 'muff'
 for my cock to insure me against any danger of the dumb bird
 getting smart and snatching off my main asset). It's all out
 of hand as far as I'm concerned, I'm taking a vacation for a
 few weeks before I go zoo . . . I'd rather go back to ripping
 off old ladies or something sensible. (BD 104)

Just as Jim's penis gave him a sense of power in the earlier scene, it does the same for him here but in a different way. Instead of the power Jim experiences through the "showing" of his penis and his own pleasure, here the power comes from commodifying his penis by making it, literally, his "main asset". If prostituting himself to support his heroin addiction also makes him vulnerable to danger, Jim manages to elude the role of victim by uncovering the perversities of his "Johns"; that is, in the act of confessing he gains power that he lacked in the situations themselves. His power comes not only from revealing what others want to conceal (he shatters his Johns' anonymity by naming them

("Dave", the "CPA") and by detailing what they wanted him to do), but also by subverting the onslaught of his own "heavy guilt feelings" by "run[ning] down a few cases on paper" (BD 104). In this sense, Jim confesses not because he feels extreme guilt, but because through confessing he avoids guilt. This is ironic considering it is often the guilt one has already experienced that compels one to confess.

There are also occasions in The Basketball Diaries when Jim confesses his actions as a prostitute because in the situations themselves he was the one in control. He describes how he "had an experience hustling fags that for once, turned me on. Quite a bit in fact" (BD 187). Here is the scene. Jim is in the bathroom of an "alternative" movie theatre where a man gives him oral sex while all of the men in the bathroom watch. After describing the scene, our young narrator emphasizes that what had aroused him was the power he had in the situation: "But, bullshit aside, some weird sensation did shoot a blood rocket up my zone as an incredible rush of power shook me with all these faces staring at my body fucking a mouth on its knees" (BD 188). The feeling of power that Jim gets from this situation is ironic considering he is in such a dangerous position: he is selling his body to a "John". Compare this scene to the earlier passage on male prostitution where Jim admits being afraid because he is unsure of what might happen or if he can control the situation (BD 104). Now, however, he confesses that he feels powerful because this "John" (who is literally on his knees) is gratifying Jim in order to gratify himself.

As well, in this instance Jim feels he is in control of the whole room. He describes how he scans the room of voyeurs and transforms each face into someone familiar--some who have victimized him and some who have not--but all have played some imagined part in his life.

I begin to fantasize on each as I start getting hotter and hotter: I see all the teachers I've ever had, fat principals, basketball coaches, an old superintendent from 6th street age seven, famous poets from all times down . . . a giggling drag queen unshaven in the corner, he's all the girls I've ever fucked; I see cops who busted me, judges, oh yes, all the judges, drooling . . . I shoot hard into the mouth beneath and hurry to zipper up, watching the faces change back to black and white cartoon old men, obscure members of the cosmopolitan night. (BD 189)

In his fantasy, it is Jim who has control and power over others, and that is what arouses him. Just as in the earlier passage on prostitution, we saw that the act of confessing gives Jim the power he lacked in the situation itself, here the dynamics are similar. Jim confesses to us not merely because he must be "faithful to the muse of truth," but also because he enjoys sharing the power he experienced in the situation (BD 188). This is important because the Trickster cannot always be seen as a victim if he is to survive and evolve. Therefore, Jim must manipulate the above situation enough so that he is not a mere victim of it; this is how and why he survives the danger.

* * *

One may argue that Jim is so concerned with confessing the more shadowy aspects of his life that his self-reflection is rather limited. However, we must not ignore Jim's age. At the end of The Basketball Diaries he is purportedly only fifteen years old: not an age usually

conducive to self-reflection. Although he does have moments of introspection, in this diary he is more concerned with finding something interesting to confess. Of course, as he grows older, his interests evolve, and this is reflected in the sequel to The Basketball Diaries, Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries. In the second diary, we will see how Jim's evolution as a Trickster is reflected in his impulsive nature as well as in the evolving confessional structure of the narrative.

Chapter II

Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries: The Trickster Cycle Continues

Zonked, but I've been slugging away at orange juice all along, anyway, for vitamin C and dry mouth. I just crawl out of the bed at first; don't even attempt my human posture. Think about my conversation with Brian: 'Ever notice how a junkie nodding begins to look like a foetus after a while?' 'That's what it's all about, man, back to the womb.' (BD 210)

While Jim ends The Basketball Diaries with a return to the symbolic womb through the heroin "nod", he begins his next diary with his own birth: "This is the day I was born, twenty years ago in Bellevue hospital, New York City, at three minutes past midnight. It's the birthday of Herman Melville, the Emperor Claudius, and Mr. Jerry Garcia of The Grateful Dead" (FE 1). These references to his birth also herald a new awakening in the maturing narrator who has now reached twenty years of age. The narrative of Forced Entries expresses Jim's growing awareness of his past, present and future. No longer a teenager, Jim admits that he "hadn't planned to make it to this age" (FE 2). But now that he has "made it", he begins to think of his past "as if it were some exquisite antique knife . . . you can use it to defend yourself or slit your throat, but you can't keep it mounted on some wall" (FE 2). While Jim is determined to confront his past and deal with the ramifications it has had on his life (then and now), he also realizes

that he "can no longer allow the past . . . to interpret [his] future" (FE 2).

In Forced Entries, becoming an adult allows Jim to reach a higher level of consciousness and to "detach the earlier state from himself and objectify it, that is say anything about it" (Jung 202). At the beginning of Forced Entries, Jim emphasizes his "detachment" from his "selves". He describes how he "inhabit[s] a different body," how "another self wakes up and heats the coffee," and how he needs this new diary "to record the flux of each self" (FE 2). Jim is concerned not only with his past as a teenager but also with his evolving self as an adult. Becoming conscious of this transformation is what separates him in Forced Entries from the "Jim" in The Basketball Diaries. In the earlier diary Jim's identity was buried under the shadow of addiction and street life which made it difficult to develop autonomy, or achieve sufficient distance to evaluate his actions.

Because the first diary ends with Jim fifteen years old, and the next begins with him twenty years old, Jim has the distance to look at himself critically. It is his own critical eye, particularly his awareness of what he has lost to heroin and the junkie lifestyle, that provides his movement from a lower, shadowy consciousness of The Basketball Diaries, to a higher level of awareness. In the vignette entitled "The Price You Pay" (FE 14), for example, Jim laments the loss of what, as a teenager, he became increasingly indifferent towards: basketball. He describes how he believes he "fucked up" because, while watching the NBA All-Star Game on TV, he sees men he "used to seriously abuse on the court scoring in double figures now against the best in the game. Ergo, I fucked it up. I should have stayed an athlete, body well-tuned . . ." (FE 14-15).

The basketball court, with Jim's presence on it, is so removed from him that the closest he can get to it is through the television screen. Now a spectator, rather than a player, he is the one doing the looking, not the one being looked at. This change in position has profound implications for the Trickster. Recall in The Basketball Diaries the emphasis that Jim placed on presence, especially on the basketball court.

If you never do anything to make yourself seen . . . like really seen, the type that makes people point, then you don't deserve to be seen at all. That's my theory, not only on a basketball court, to look good while you're doing it is just as important as doing it good, and combine both and you've got it made. Presence is where it's at, but not the going out of your way to be noticed presence, but sneaky, shy presence (though it's all a part, you're still always aware). Presence like a cheetah rather than a chimp. They've both got it, but chimp gotta jump his nuts around all day to get it, shy cheetah just sits in total nonchalance or moves a sec or two in his sexy strut. (BD 89-90)

In The Basketball Diaries our narrator got people to look at him by adopting the suave, cool strategies of the cheetah. But as The Basketball Diaries continued, we saw how Jim's presence on the court was challenged and subsequently replaced with a different type of constructed presence: the long-haired beatnik with strange off-court hobbies. Both of these identities did, however, give him the presence that he lacked in the drug world; on the court, the cheetah made him a star, and the beatnik made him an oddity. However, when the basketball

court was replaced with the drug world, a world where Jim was as shadowy as everyone else, all that was left of Jim's "presence" was its absence.

In Forced Entries, then, it is not how to have "presence" that Jim contemplates, it is how he lost the presence he once had and how he can begin to construct a newer, wiser, more mature presence. The distance between Jim and the basketball court is necessary here because it gives him the room to objectify that part of his life and to be critical of it. Certainly, there is a split here between past and present selves: in the past Jim was looked at, in the present he looks, especially at himself.

The loss of the basketball court is profound for Jim. As he moves into adulthood in Forced Entries, he begins to realize that "true" presence is not easily attained. Writing becomes one way that he can recapture the presence he lost to heroin. But this recapturing is certainly not without its aches. The confidence in language that Jim expressed throughout most of The Basketball Diaries, the simple notion that language is the "tool" used to capture the images in one's head, and in no way "a horrible limit", is seriously doubted in Forced Entries (BD 159).

For Jim, the limitations of language (in poetry) are that there are no limitations, the variations of shape and meaning are endless: "Poetry can unleash a terrible fear. I suppose it is the fear of possibilities, too many possibilities, each with its own endless set of variations" (FE 14). When there are so many ways to say something, Jim seems to ask, how can one hope to say anything? Jim's uneasiness with the limitless possibilities in poetry contrasts strongly with his earlier confidence on the basketball court. In basketball there is, as

Jim says, only one direction to go "to the cylinder on the fiberglass rectangle. And you don't aim. If you do, you're off" (FE 15). In poetry, "direction" is more abstract: generally, the poem will go where it wants and it will take the poet with it.

In many ways the poet is subject to the poem, and for the writer this lack of control can be frightening. Jim admits as much when he warns that a poet should not "look too closely into [his] poems, or listen too closely to them as they arrive in whispers" because if he does "the features inside . . . call it heart, call it mind, call it soul -accelerate out of control. They distort and they erupt and it is one strange pain So you take what the muse gives, and try not to force it" (FE 14). But "forcing it" is exactly what Jim finds himself doing; the title of the diary reflects this: Forced Entries. Later in the diary, when Jim is going through his most painful periods of withdrawal from heroin and subsequently methadone, he admits that the entries in the diary do become forced. He describes how he can no longer sleep and is up before the "the sun rises to its first, somehow irritating, force" (FE 143). A part of him realizes that this, perhaps, would be

the perfect time to create long poems out of my lustrous
aching but until this rather forced entry, I just didn't have
the ability to recall that such things are what I am supposed
to do. That is, not only did I not give a shit, but I had no
inkling that I was supposed to. Even now, I'm forcing it, and
I suppose it's evident (which is alright as long as you
understand that I'm impaired). (FE 143-4)

In this passage, Carroll writes a forced entry about writing

"forced entries". But although this is a very self-conscious "forced entry", in the end it is really no different than any of the other entries in the diary. Carroll is always very conscious of the vignettes he chooses to share with us. In this sense, all of the entries are "forced" in that they are well planned and well thought out. What is perhaps different about the "withdrawal" entries is that Jim must also physically force himself to write.

* * *

Jim seeks to strike a balance between unleashing his horrors in his poetry as a kind of release, and discovering in that unleashing more horrors that he had not anticipated and may not be able to control. One can understand his anxiety here. He has already lost his youthful, heroic self-image, earlier represented by his prowess on the basketball court, to his heroin addiction; to lose a much diminished self-image through failure as a writer is frightening, especially since he hopes to construct, not diminish, his presence through his writing. Taking drugs is one way to "calm things down" (FE 14). But in the end, as Jim says, drugs are only an escape from the inevitable: that "whatever poetry gives out, you must pay back eventually, with an incredible interest added on. Take my word for it, the muse in one form or another, will be around to collect" (FE 14).

Jim not only fears the infinite variations in poetry, he also fears what he owes "the muse" for his creative gifts. The various forms this payback will take are also endless: all Jim knows is that the muse will collect. Earlier he contrasted his uncertainty in poetry with his past

certainty on the basketball court. Here he makes a similar comparison when he contrasts his payback to the muse with his payback to his heroin addiction: "the price you pay for drugs is a small pink simian who enjoys interlocking his twenty digits around your spine in a slowly tightening grip. But at least you are dealing with a pain fierce enough for you to understand, to endure. The subtle art of poetry carries a more subtle pain" (FE 14).

While Jim was aware of his "small pink simian" ("the monkey") in The Basketball Diaries, he was also caught in the middle of its duality. Even while being seduced by the monkey's voice telling him to inject more heroin, he was becoming increasingly aware that the voice was telling him to prolong his addiction. The monkey would not have been such a problem for Jim had he not believed he could enjoy the high without the negative effects. By temporarily convincing himself that this was possible, he also convinced himself that his addiction did not exist. However, as the monkey tightened his grip, Jim began to recognize his own trickery. As he says in The Basketball Diaries: "I can gladly take sore muscles but my mind can't handle the monkey back there. And I used to laugh at the corny monkey phrase too, I had it under 'control' . . . " (BD 122). In The Basketball Diaries, Jim's awareness of his addiction remained skewed; although he recognized the control the monkey had over him, he still believed that he might have been able to control it by "offing" the little voice back there.

In Forced Entries Jim recognizes that "the monkey" will never simply disappear. The narrative of Forced Entries illustrates his increasing awareness of not only how the monkey tricks him, but also how he tricks himself in order to comply with the monkey's demands. That is

"the price" he has had to pay: that voice will always exist and has existed for so long that he has come to understand the "fierceness" of its pain (FE 14). What Jim understands less well is the "subtle pain" of poetry's demands.

In The Basketball Diaries, Jim's struggle with writing was just beginning. He described how difficult it was to capture a nod while in the process of nodding, but this neither stopped him from trying, nor did it make him whole-heartedly confront his growing addiction. About being a writer he exuded confidence that came largely from immaturity and willed ignorance about the gravity of his situation. Mid-way through The Basketball Diaries, Jim questioned whether he would "have time to finish the poems breaking loose in my head? Time to find out if I'm the writer I know I can be?" (BD 151). Jim did not doubt that he was a writer, but whether or not, with the Vietnam War looming, he would have time to reach his full potential. However, the war he was waging within himself was, and still is, far more dangerous for him than the Vietnam War; in Forced Entries this personal war becomes a grim reality.

As he says: "I feel like some officer or more likely, some foot soldier who is fighting a war on four fronts and always waiting for the transmission that he has been invaded from yet another side" (FE 120).

As a soldier in his own war, Jim has perfected the art of camouflage: he can and does transform himself according to the situation. This brings us back to the beginning of this section where we spoke of Jim's unstable identity in relation to the Trickster cycle. Paul Radin tells us in his exposition on the Trickster that the cycle illustrates not just a series of adventures, but how these adventures show "the evolution of a Trickster from an undefined being to one with

the physiognomy of man, from a being physically undeveloped and a prey to his instincts, to an individual who is at least conscious of what he does and who attempts to become socialized" (136). This analogy of the process of self-definition is particularly useful for Carroll's work.

Jim realizes, in the second half of Forced Entries, that in order to re-define himself as a poet he must un-define himself as a junkie. This need to define himself outside of junk is the force which pushes Jim to evolve from his shadowy life in The Basketball Diaries, into a life where he is able to be critical of those shadows. In Forced Entries, Jim understands what in The Basketball Diaries he did not: that anyone can be a junkie, have the anonymity of the junkie, but not everyone can be an artist, a poet. He illustrates his new-found awareness when he explains that what is different about the second diary is that he has "tried . . . to put a lid on the seamier side of the double life I've continued to lead--I am speaking, of course, of the street life as opposed to the art scene" (FE 113). He goes on to say that it was his need for heroin that prevented him from severing his ties with the streets: "Besides, after all of these years, there is a certain comfort in the familiarity of the streets . . . a fascination, even some perverse safety in its dangers and lies" (FE 113).

Although Jim feels comfortable enough with his street-smarts to be able to rely on them, what fascinates him (and to a larger degree, us) is that he can still never predict what is going to happen on the streets, in the drug world. Jim craves the indulgences that the streets offer him without having to consider the ramifications of these indulgences. He cannot, however, have it both ways, and this becomes increasingly apparent to him.

The illusionary comfort that Jim derives from his street-life coincides with the manner in which the shadows of the streets absorb his shadow and make it non-distinct to others and to himself. But here we have the paradox in Jim: he enjoys being looked at. We noted this in The Basketball Diaries on the basketball court, and we see it again in Forced Entries in his desire to be an established, respected writer. Double life indeed. One side requires hiding from the gaze, associated with heroin or street life, the other to be noticed, associated with athletics and poetry. Inevitably, the gulf between these two worlds begins to affect Jim's work: heroin, in Jim's mind, is not an inspiration for poetry.

One can argue, of course, that if it were not for Carroll's addiction to heroin, these diaries would not exist. I am not certain that this is entirely accurate. The Basketball Diaries does not begin with Jim's addiction to heroin, that comes later. In this sense, and because Carroll would like us to view this book as a diary (a day to day account), the heroin addiction is not an inspiration for the diary but something that happens as it unfolds. Forced Entries focuses more on the addiction, and is a more in-depth exploration of it, but as it unfolds Jim comes to believe that although heroin and the junkie lifestyle provide him with interesting (and often hilarious) stories to tell, the telling itself becomes more of a strain because of the heroin. In other words, Jim recognizes how his obsession with heroin frustrates his ability to move forward in his writing. For he does not want to be known only as a writer who writes of junk or as a junkie who writes, but as "a writer", period.

Jim describes how he is "sick of writing about dope . . . sick of

recording the ups of indulgence, and sick of releasing dispatches of misery via abstinence" (FE 120). He goes on to say that he can no longer convince himself that through his writing he can come to understand his "obsessions". Instead Jim's "obsessions" (heroin) have made him a hostage not only to himself but also to the language he thought would free him (FE 120-21). To free the language, Jim believes he must first free himself from his obsession with heroin. For, as he says, on the "shifting platforms of artifice and quick change," and all the "false facades" he has had to invent trying to fuse his street life and the art scene together, he simply cannot "keep a steady style in [his] writing" (FE 120). Jim's description of the oscillation between the two worlds illustrates that he is at least "steady" enough to be aware of the false identities that he has come to represent. In this sense, he is able to tear them down and be critical of them. But Jim as narrator is also subject to this process by the reader. In writing about what he is not, we inevitably see, even if Jim (or Carroll) did not intend it, what he may be(come).

It is difficult for Jim to come to terms with what he is not, and inevitably the mirror, both metaphorically and literally, plays a major role. In The Basketball Diaries, Jim did not clearly see what heroin had done to his body. William Burroughs, in Junky, describes how difficult it is for the junkie to actually see--while looking in the mirror--the changes in his own body. Burroughs contends that the actual changes do not show up in the mirror, "that is, the addict himself has a special blind spot as far as the progress of his habit is concerned . . . I have talked to many addicts and they all say they were surprised when they discovered they actually had the first habit. Many

of them attributed symptoms to some other cause" (Burroughs 22). In The Basketball Diaries, Jim survived in that "blind spot" where, although he could not judge entirely for himself the effects of his heroin abuse, those around him served as an undistorted mirror.

An excellent example of this is found in The Basketball Diaries when Jim ran into another junkie with whom he used to run welfare scams. Jim posed as his son in order to receive emergency checks, which they then used for drugs.

I went over to Ju-Ju's and asked him if he thought I could still pass as his son, the welfare con nostalgia seemed so great last night. 'No chance,' he lays it down, 'that long hair of yours, your features filling in, naw, like you got the junk halo now all over. No more innocence man. And frankly you look totally seedy.' What the fuck, he turned me on again to a nice day of nods at least. (BD 206)

The fact that Jim could believe that he still looked "innocent" enough to pass as Ju-Ju's son points directly to his own blind spot. We must keep in mind that in The Basketball Diaries he was still very young and immature: but his blindness here cannot be blamed entirely on his age. Even after being told how "seedy" he looked, Jim disregarded the evidence.

The "junkie halo" that appeared in The Basketball Diaries, continues to show itself in Forced Entries. D.M.Z., Jim's artist friend, tells him his face is taking on a greenish tint: "'like one of those radium-laced bulbs that hang on a string from the light fixture in the bathroom . . .'" (FE 50). "Seriously, something has to be done about this situation," Jim says, but still puts it off until "tomorrow"

(FE 50). Even though when looking in the mirror he may not be able to see the junkie halo, the Jim in this diary still knows it exists because those outside him provide the objectivity that he lacks.

There is one incident in Forced Entries where Jim is able to see how others view him. Carroll uses the character of "Gloria" (an artist friend of Jim's) and her camera as the means of showing Jim his own reflection. Jim describes how Gloria's Polaroid "seemed to take longer than usual . . . to reach a finished clarity, as if the subject's pulse had barely existed" (FE 57). The "subject" is Jim himself, and when the photograph is fully developed he discerns "ribs stuck out like the inner shell of a toy boat . . . , cheeks sunken in deep enough to hide pins within the crevices . . . , [and] eyes that had the look of a pathologist's wet dream" (FE 57). Jim is so disturbed by the photograph that he proclaims: "I was not going to allow that person to continue as me any longer. I got up out of bed and dressed in a single motion" (FE 57).

Gloria's photograph is an indelible reflection of Jim. He may want to disown it, but that person will always exist. As the photograph is developing, Jim emphasizes its sobriety: he describes how his emotions become "unclogged", how the sun beating against the blinds seems "clean and sympathetic". He detects an honesty in the photograph even before his likeness appears. Inevitably, this honesty extends to the rest of the photograph as well. This is why, when the image of Jim's naked body begins to appear, he protects himself from its honesty by distancing himself from it. Instead of claiming the figure in the photo as his own by referring to it as "my naked body", Jim refers to it as "the naked body"; instead of referring to it as "my pulse" he refers to it as "the

subject's pulse". This distancing allows him to objectify the self "developing" in the photograph. By describing the photograph, he becomes both subject and object, the one doing the gazing and the one at whom the gaze is directed. What Jim sees is not only evidence of where his shadow has taken him, it can also be considered the physical, material incarnation of his shadow: the protruding ribs, sunken cheeks, hollow eyes--all connote a kind of darkness, and all take Jim back to that dark place within himself.

The photograph so shocks Jim that he rushes to put his clothes on to cover up the self he says he no longer wants to be. But when he dresses, the self underneath does not cease to exist, rather his clothes act only to camouflage himself from his own gaze and that of the outside world. As Jung tells us, the shadow never disappears but is only waiting for a favourable opportunity to reappear. Jim may be able to cover up the physical reminder of the shadow, but now he is also very aware that it is only a layer of clothes away.

* * *

In Forced Entries Jim wants to get straight. It is this desire that allows him to objectify his past and see his trickery for what it was. But even getting straight seems impossible, for in order to quit heroin, he must replace it with other drugs. Jim is more than a little aware of the irony involved in tricking one's body with a new drug while attempting to "kick" the old. This is, perhaps, the greatest trick of all. But despite the fact that he needs other drugs to replace heroin, the distance he gets from heroin allows him to be critical of his addiction.

When he first tries to kick heroin in Forced Entries, Jim devises his own brand of "replacement therapy". In the section entitled "The Cycle" (FE 35), he describes how he takes methedrine injections "followed hours later by palm loads of seconal barbiturate ["reds"]" to ease the pain of quitting heroin "cold turkey" (FE 35). However, the result of Jim's own kind of replacement therapy is not an easing of his "fears" but the creation of new ones. He awakens on the floor to what he thinks is "a passing caravan of gypsy roaches," and although his instinct is to kill them, he refuses, fearing that they do not exist "outside the drug-ravaged confines of my brain, which has been rapidly turned into a side dish searching in vain for the main course" (FE 35). Jim does not want to discover that the "side course" (methedrine, "reds") that he has been substituting for "the main course" (heroin), is making him hallucinate, and that there may be real damage to his brain as a result of his addiction(s).

So, if these bugs were nothing more than the proverbial figments of some cooked circuit above my neck, I was not quite ready to prove it to myself at that specific time. It might mean I'd have to reconsider injecting the drug, which I had just drawn up from the ampoule, into my vein, and considering the hangover from the barbiturates, that would be too harsh a discomfort on a weekday noon. (FE 36)

Jim does not want to confront the "tricks" of his own mind: he tricks himself into believing the cockroaches exist whether they do or not. The ultimate trick is, however, that Jim cannot dispense with heroin except by substituting other drugs. But our Trickster is more aware of this trick than anyone else.

Later in this section, Jim criticizes his own trickery. That is, in the midst of his "cycle" he is still able to criticize the cycle and its flaws. There is a cycle of addiction, and then there is another cycle that is created when the addict tries to "kick" the former addiction.

You see, what we have established here . . . is your classic vicious cycle. One continues to inject speed throughout the day for energy, dubious insight, and social interaction . . . So after ten or maybe, as the old tolerance adjusts itself, twenty more repetitions of the ritual, one starts to feel a bit, well, nettled by evening . . . so it's time for a few Valiums. The night comes, the shots continue, as do more Valiums, . . . The red ones are just what you want for your problem . . . wait, no . . . we don't like that word . . . Let's make that your "situation." And it is truly amazing, the way, after all that meth you have inflicted on yourself throughout three entire days, it takes only two of these pills to send you right off to sleep. And it goes on like this for a week, but now, instead of two of these red pills, it's suddenly become seven or eight. Conversely, you need more speed in that first wake-up shot, a more condensed solution, so to speak. And, of course, I use the word "solution" in a strictly pharmacological sense.

And here I am--filled with my solution But break the cycle, just when I'm seeing insects that may not be there? (FE 36-7)

Carroll's ironic word plays, particularly his emphasis on terms like

"problem", "situation", and "solution" all point to the trickery involved in drug addiction. It is not a "problem" but a "situation", and the "solution" he refers to here is, paradoxically, everything and anything but that. Jim is aware of all of this even though he continues the cycle. But breaking the cycle just seems to be more hassle than it is worth. He must believe that those cockroaches exist because he is not in a stable enough state of mind or body to believe otherwise.

When this "cycle" has run its course, he substitutes it with another cycle provided by "Dr. Feelgood" and his magic "solution". Similar to the previous cycle, Jim explains in great detail what is in the good doctor's "solution": "basic to each . . . formula are calcium, cow's blood, potassium and the main ingredient, the reason the foyer is full of anxious fur and gray flannel at 5:45 a.m., a whopping dose of pure amphetamine" (FE 75-6). "Dr. Feelgood" is a doctor whose practice is built on the backs of heroin junkies who depend on him to "save" them from the pains of withdrawal. And "save" them he does, with a religious intensity felt by both the doctor and the patient.

Jim describes how getting "hit up" by the doctor himself is a "privilege along the lines of a Papal benediction," and calls the nurses "angels of mercy" (FE 78). For the junkie trying to kick heroin, the office of any "Dr. Feelgood" would be a sanctuary. But Jim is still critical. As a Trickster he allows himself to be tricked by Dr. Feelgood's "solution" (as a substitute for heroin), but at the same time is acutely aware of the trick. Jim questions what he and the other addicts are being treated for and comes to the conclusion that they are "being made well daily for the mistake of coming here in the first place" (FE 79).

Dr. Feelgood's office is a shadowy sanctuary where Jim goes for treatment, but where he gets addicted to the treatment itself. In a sense, the atmosphere in Dr. Feelgood's office is not much different from the carnivalesque atmosphere back at Headquarters. The good doctor's office is just a cleaner, safer version that offers a different drug. Here "diamond decked necks and lapdogs" replace the "Spades, whites, P.R.'s, junkies, old men drunks" of Headquarters; "Dr. Feelgood's solution" recalls the "booze, acid, scag, downers, dope and H."; the "sober footsteps, the sterile surroundings, the gleaming cabinets", parallel the "wet floors from spilt beers . . . cans, cigarette butts . . . , not to mention dirty socks and underwear, ripped up and come-upon playmates of the month and all the other junk shit items . . ." (FE 78; BD 131, 127) of Headquarters. Jim blends in at both places for the same reasons: the anonymity of the shadow of addiction.

Jim soon tires of Dr. Feelgood's "solution" and enrolls in another cycle, a methadone program at a clinic his peers sarcastically call "The Academy of the Future" (FE 113). His reasons for doing so point right back to his writing. He describes how he craves the consistency in his moods and subsequently in his writing that kicking the heroin habit would provide. This realization comes after much inconsistency; for once again, our Trickster finds himself in the chasm between two extremes. In this case it is between "the hollow flux of desperation and incipient terror," and the "humour" Jim uses in his writing "to act as a catalyst to purify the tragic" (FE 114). But the Trickster is well aware of his own tricks: although Jim attempts to use humour in his writing to disguise the horror his life has become, he can no longer

trick himself into believing that this strategy is working: "it can't go on. My body is broke. I'm shitting where I eat" (FE 114). To get himself out of "the hollow flux" that he has created, he enrolls in "The Academy of the Future." But even in the sanctuary of the clinic, with injections of methadone to ease the pain of withdrawal, the shadows of New York City loom just outside in those who are all too willing to satisfy these demands. There is a sense, however, that in The Basketball Diaries Jim revelled in his shadowy tales of the streets. After all, it was New York that so often gave him inspiration: "Now I got these diaries that have the greatest hero a writer needs, this crazy fucking New York" (BD 159).

Although in Forced Entries Jim also writes of "this crazy fucking New York," he is much more critical of it, making a conscious decision not to revel in its seamier side. In fact, he tells us how New York City "has become like a used car held together by K-Y and coat hangers," and later how he has "burned down this city in my flesh, heart and spirit. I've become so weary of New York's speed, the ever-accelerating and forced perversity and vacillation" (FE 116, 120-1). New York City is no longer the hero of Jim's diary, but one of the most dangerous adversaries of all, stalking him. This is one of the main reasons, if not the reason, that Jim, near the end of Forced Entries, moves to California. For while he would like to believe, as he says at the beginning of Forced Entries, that he can use New York's "character . . . without threats or intimidation," he comes to realize that New York's underbelly has not stopped using him (FE 2). He must, therefore, create some distance between himself and the temptations of New York City if he is to continue to evolve.

* * *

Jack Kerouac, in On the Road, describes how "there is something brown and holy about the East [New York City]; and California is white like washlines and emptyheaded . . ." (Kerouac 79). Jim's own impressions of the contrast between New York City and California are very reminiscent of Kerouac's:

the clothes, the towels, the sheets hanging on lines in each backyard [in California], had a kind of transcendent cleanliness. Surely, it was a brilliance unimaginable to one who every Monday as a child retrieved the family laundry drying on the tar rooftops of New York. It seemed to absorb sunlight. It was mutant cleanliness, and it was a bit frightening. What was more horrifying were the shadows these mutated white sheets cast down across the hillside, where the grass was trim as a putting green. These shadows were counterpoint to the brilliant clean in their effect, darker by the same degree. I have never seen such pure, black, ominous shadows. (FE 126)

In New York City, the "Californian" contrast between light and dark did not exist, the darkness spread indistinctly. This contrast seems fitting, however, for in California, with the help of methadone, Jim finally kicks his addiction to heroin. But California is not all "light". Indeed, it would be naive to believe that for Jim kicking heroin, even with the help of methadone, is easy. Jim weans himself from methadone, but striking a balance between being a junkie and a reformed junkie is shaken by the anxiety of withdrawal. At first, the

pain is physical. But as the physical symptoms wear off, his withdrawal becomes more mental, more psychological. This is intensified for him because it affects his writing.

Jim describes how his "brain feels detached . . . shriveling and drying without protection of the vital, viscous fluid which provides a sort of nurturing balance" (FE 143). Searching for some "balance", some stabilizing factor in his life, Jim turns increasingly to writing, but finds that this too suffers. His "snake-like vacillations" are no longer between the streets and the art scene, or between humour and desperation, terror, but between heroin and methadone: Jim is off heroin but now finds it difficult to wean himself from methadone (FE 143). In fact, the more he weans himself from methadone, the worse his withdrawal symptoms get and the more Jim and his writing are consumed by them.

But unlike the loss of the basketball court in The Basketball Diaries, in Forced Entries Jim is very aware that he is in danger of losing not only his passion for writing but perhaps also his ability to write. He compares the challenge of getting back into shape as a writer to that of an athlete: both objectives must be pursued "at a slow, steady pace" (FE 144). However, Jim's problem is that as he lowers his dosage of methadone, his writing and the words that come to him seem stranger: "It's as if there is a great distance between the tip of this writing instrument and the white field of the page . . . " (FE 144). This distance makes the words "parachut[e] down subject to the whims of the strange currents of air, so that, by the time they touch down and roll a bit, they are not in the place I expected them, nor do they land with the same meaning" (FE 144). Jim has enough stability to want to write, but when he sits down to do so, the words arrange themselves in

ways that seem foreign, and their meanings become lost. In this sense language does not free Jim; on the contrary, the instability of language, the endless possibilities and variations that the meanings of words can and do take, seem to trap and trick him.

Our Trickster craves both the mental and physical stability to be able to write, and he is "getting it all back" slowly (FE 144). But the problem is that even if Jim kicks heroin and methadone entirely, and finds himself more stable than before, he still must negotiate with the instability of language and his inability to control it completely. Inasmuch as Jim (and Carroll) control language, language also controls them. Perhaps being a poet is like being a junkie. Just as the junkie mistakenly tricks himself into believing he has the monkey under control when all the while the monkey controls him, the poet may trick himself into believing he is master of his language when in actuality he is just as much mastered by that language.

But it is not only language itself that is problematic for Jim, he is also frustrated by his inability to structure language. To clarify this point, he compares words, phrases, syntax to "small glass beads from a necklace which was wrenched from some neck and spilled on the floor . . . " (FE 144). In order to put the "necklace" back together, Jim contends that he must "find all the glass pieces . . . and restring it and tie it tighter than before Then I'll appreciate the value of each bead . . . never wasting another" (FE 144-5). Jim laments, here, that he has taken his talent as a writer for granted. What once seemingly came "natural" to him--his ability to structure language as he chooses--becomes an effort to re-claim and sustain, requiring discipline and perseverance.

However, through the aches, frustration, and instability of the payback to the muse, Jim gains an appreciation of his talent as a writer and fosters it as he had failed to foster his basketball career. In the process, he also manages to become healthier himself. As we have discussed, heroin had become a hindrance to Jim's creativity, not an inspiration for it. Therefore, he must choose one or the other. By choosing writing he adopts a healthier life for both mind and body.

* * *

Jim's move to California proves successful: he is able to kick heroin, then methadone. But now that our Trickster is "clean" he has an overwhelming desire to return to where it all began, New York City. To Jim, his cleanliness is not "real" until he can test it against the biggest shadow of all, "this crazy fucking New York" (BD 159). In the vignette aptly titled "Shadowboxing" (FE 150), Jim tells us that he must "test the understanding and, well, wisdom that I've accumulated. I'm like a boxer making a comeback out in the sticks, where I was sent by too many knockouts in the big city" (FE 150). As Jung tells us, the shadow never disappears but is only waiting for a favourable opportunity to re-appear when all is not right with the conscious: Jim's California acquaintances warn him that by moving back to New York City, he is only tempting his shadow with the larger shadow of the City. Jim convinces himself (perhaps tricks himself) that "it's all just shadowboxing anyway and it makes no difference where the wall is, nor the light you adjust behind you" (FE 150). And so, the evolutionary (and potentially the devolutionary) process continues. Jim moves back to New York City to

test his new found wisdom and box the shadows, just, as he says, to "compete", not for "the title" (FE 150).

In the last section of the diary, "Back to New York" (FE 157), Jim not only remains clean amongst many temptations, but also experiences another rebirth. This volume is full of new beginnings. At the outset of Forced Entries, Jim had his twentieth birthday and entered the adulthood he feared he would never reach. It was this birth, and the contemplation that attended it, that prompted Jim to travel to California and overcome his addictions. Testing his wisdom, Jim then returns to New York City where he experiences another rebirth, symbolized by the breaking open of an abscess on his arm.

The abscess on Jim's arm, "a memorial tattoo" of his addiction, explodes at the conclusion of Forced Entries: "Out it flows, not just from that small opening, but from the center, in one stream, like a laser's beam. It exits in various shades of yellow and green followed by blood" (FE 183). The significance of this explosion, after months of Jim's prodding at it, is to release all of his "petty demons" and give him a chance at "purification"; it also signifies a rebirth into a new life free of junk which triggers a rejuvenation of Jim's mind, body and soul.

Near the end of the diary, despite Jim's confession that he no longer has "the same energy and cunning" for self deception, the Trickster is not lost. For on the last pages of Forced Entries Jim admits that

the idol was in ruins I know you think it's sick,
some fucked-up fetish But I understand the nature of
it, and now that sickness is healing. So am I. I might very

well blow it again. I don't really know where I go from here, but at least I've raised my quality of living above cockroach level. New York is not the same, that's for certain. (FE 183)

Here Jim describes how New York City, like he himself, is no longer "the same". However, what is more significant is Jim's realization that he may very well "blow it again". He will, in this sense, always be a Trickster. But we are left feeling that he does "understand the nature" of his sickness. This kind of understanding was absent at the close of The Basketball Diaries where the reader seemed more in touch with the gravity of Jim's situation than the narrator. In the previous diary we provided for ourselves the distance that Jim lacked: we knew that the pains of his addiction were destroying him while he wondered, right up until the last pages of The Basketball Diaries, what those pains meant to him and to his life (BD 210).

At the conclusion of Forced Entries, however, Jim understands his sickness even though he suspects we may not. His new-found awareness clearly indicates how much the Trickster has evolved from the first diary to the second, and this evolution is further reflected in the evolving confessional structure of the diary. Carroll uses the diary form to record the ways he has come to terms with Jim's addiction, and the ramifications they have had upon his life. Although Forced Entries is just as confessional as The Basketball Diaries, here the confession has become conversational, not hierarchical. That is, what Jim confesses is part of a continual conversation that he is having with himself.

Despite the maturity reflected in this diary, Jim's Trickster

qualities, as I have stressed throughout, have left neither him nor the narrative. Like the Trickster himself, he frequently falls back in order to move forward. However, Jim has become much more conscious and critical of his failings: in the narrative of Forced Entries, his own Trickster qualities are frankly discussed and quite obviously assessed by Carroll before they ever reach the page. There are some shadowy tales in the second diary, but Carroll does not use them to impress or shock the reader (as he had in The Basketball Diaries), but rather to work out Jim's identity and to develop a conversation between the two worlds he inhabits: "the streets" and "the art world" (FE 113).

In his book Confession: Sexuality, Sin, The Subject, Jeremy Tambling discusses how it may be possible to dispell the hierarchical power dynamics of the confession by viewing it as unidirectional, "revealing not a single consciousness, but the need for interaction" (164-5). Michel Foucault asserts that what is unique about the confessional discourse is that it comes from a subject who is also the subject of his own statements (62). Jeremy Tambling expands on this point when he discusses the possibilities of viewing the confession as "a moment when the self is allowed to see itself, in its language, as dialogue, many-voiced, not as the single self committed to an absolute truth, and certainly not . . . as the solitary self speaking in silence" (165). Since the self is allowed to see itself, this hints at the dialogic possibilities of the confession. For as the "subject" of his own statements, there is an inevitable division between the self that is confessing, and the self that is the subject of the confession. This division provides a dialogue, then, not just between the speaker of the confession and the listener, but also between the speaker and the "selves" within him about whom he is speaking.

This dynamic works very well in relation to the Trickster whose evolution is dependent upon his evaluation of events that led to his devolution. In this sense, the Trickster never displays a single consciousness, but always a dual consciousness. But although this duality is always present, the dialogue only takes place between them (past/present, evil/good) when the Trickster has enough distance to regard a lower state of consciousness from a higher. Although this duality existed in The Basketball Diaries, the conversation between "selves" rarely occurred because of Jim's young age and his preoccupation with shocking the listener. The confessional dynamic of Forced Entries, however, uncovers the dialogue Jim now has with himself, between the past and the present. In the second diary, he is perpetually "seeing himself"--who he was, who he is, who he may become--in his own confessional discourse.

Jim's confessions offer him a means of discussing his duality (between the streets and the art world, the past and the present), first by confessing that it exists, and second by working it out in front of the reader. Terrence Doody, in Confession and Community in the Novel, argues that "in the best confessions . . . the speaker does not ask [the listener] to be his image, but his real equal" (11-12). He goes on to say that this equality arises when there is a sense of freedom between them which occurs when "the [listener's] responsibility to the speaker is no greater than the speaker's responsibility to him" (Doody 11-12). What is lacking in the narrative of The Basketball Diaries is just this kind of equality between the speaker and the listener. Although Carroll challenges this inequality by drawing attention not only to the listener's dependence on the speaker, but also to the ways Jim uses the

confession to elude passivity and victim-hood, the confessional hierarchy, although subverted, still exists. In Forced Entries, confessing is not about gaining power; on the contrary, it is about communication between the "worlds" (art/streets) Jim inhabits, between his past and his present, between Jim and Carroll, and between us and Jim.

It is much more difficult for the reader to judge Jim's actions in this diary. That is, unlike The Basketball Diaries, he is already acutely aware of his "sins" and he does not need the reader to confirm this. Now he needs the reader to allow, and to become a part of, the conversation that he has with himself. Doody describes how "in defining himself, the speaker also defines his audience" (Doody 12). While self-critical, Jim does not condemn himself for his past or present actions. He says at the beginning of Forced Entries that he thinks of his "past as if it were some exquisite antique knife . . . you can use it to defend yourself or slit your own throat, but you just can't keep it mounted on some wall. I can no longer allow the past, however, to interpret my future" (FE 2). The past is part of Jim, but it does not determine who he is now, nor who he will become. In this sense, Jim undefines himself in order to define himself anew. The reader is there to witness this undefining.

When Jim enters into a confessional dialogue with the reader, he enters into one with himself, this is not just a mental but a physical engagement. Indeed, the dynamics here are interesting because it is the mental confessional dialogue that provides us with the description of the physical interaction. It is the physical conversation in which Jim engages with his own body that becomes the catalyst for kicking heroin.

In the section entitled "A Vicious Nod" (FE 20), Jim describes a drug "nod" (a dream-like state) that actually forces a physical confession. Although he cannot quite remember all of what happened, he does remember "something about a furious priest in one of those sack-like miniskirts chasing after me with a wooden stake and a sledgehammer. I don't recall how it ended, but it's a good bet he caught me. Something very violent certainly went down" (FE 20-21). We note, ironically, that it is a priest that Jim runs from, and it is a priest that eventually catches him and forces him into a dialogue with his own body. He describes how he awakens in

. . . pools of sweat Then the blood. It was running down my chest, running rapidly . . . through the damp crevices of cotton, breaking off across my thighs in all directions. It was almost pink at first, mingling with sweat, but the flow was so insistent it soon reached its own unmistakable depths of red If I cannot locate it through pain, I suppose I must check the mirror. The thought of actually making it visual . . . of granting its realness a final test, brings on a sense of horror so enormous it slices like hot screams through my thick narcotic stupor. I just want to sit . . . find another priest to race . . . but the blood won't quit.
(FE 20)

As we saw in the first section of this paper, to the junkie the mirror is something to avoid. In this case, it reflects what our Trickster would like to trick himself into believing is not happening: the deterioration of his body. To actually face this deterioration is too sobering for Jim, but curiosity gets the better of him. Looking in

the mirror, he discovers that "a sharp protruding tooth along the upper line has somehow pierced viciously through the lower lip . . . " (FE 22). Jim is actually relieved that it is only his lip, for he had had visions of looking in the mirror and finding "fountains of blood arcing out of both ears . . . as if I were some gargoyle on the facade of a German Cathedral" (FE 22). A scarred lip he can handle. However, he does realize, almost instinctively, that the scarred lip is only the beginning of his physical deterioration. Jim's body is clearly telling him what his "nods" do not: that although drugs take him mentally to places he has never been, they also take him physically to places he does not want to go.

In a particularly poignant passage, Jim describes how he is no longer an athlete, but is now only a "contractor for decay": he stresses his realization that his "teeth were only the first to go . . . ; soon the rest of my body parts would begin making their own assumptions . . . calling their own shots" (FE 23). And, while looking in the mirror, Jim imagines what his body parts might say to him if they could:

'You have chosen to live so completely in your mind . . . in your dreams . . . in your nods, induced by such vile and toxic substance . . . well, look closely . . . your teeth . . . your torn lip which will soon, by the way, begin to swell to huge, ugly proportions . . . so you best remove that ludicrous object you have inserted there to entertain yourself. Look well, and see what the results of such inane disregard can lead to . . . and it will get worse, you know . . . oh, much, much worse'. (FE 23)

Here Jim's body parts seem so disjointed from his own body that they begin to take on existences and voices of their own. However, there is no real need for language in the confessional discourse that takes place between Jim and his body: actually, language here is used for our benefit only, to include us in the conversation. His body physically speaks to him through the damage that he himself has inflicted on it. In his "mind", his "dreams", and his "nods", he may be able to convince himself otherwise, but his body does not lie. Indeed, Jim's body almost demands his confession, demands that he seek the reality of his situation: it is only going to get "worse . . . much, much worse." And it does.

Perhaps the ultimate dialogue that Jim has with his body occurs when he discovers the abscess on his arm: physical proof of what he has been doing to his body for the years he has been injecting heroin. But the abscess symbolizes still more. Mid-way through Forced Entries Jim is told by a girlfriend that he "'caresses'" the abscess while he sleeps: "'you raise both your arms and you take the left hand and, while you hold the right one straight up, you run your fingers over the hole'" (FE 133). What is more disturbing for Jim is that the caressing is not just "'sensual'" or "'sexual'" but "'almost ritualistic . . . , religious. Yeah, that's exactly it . . . it's like some religious ritual. And it's quite beautiful, the way your arms move. It's like a slow dance'" (FE 133).

Here the mental and physical dialogues meet and become entangled: they "dance" together with the intensity of a religious ritual. Later in this passage Jim admits to being obsessed with the abscess, and is not surprised that this obsession seeps into the "landscape" of the

"mental" part of this equation: his sleep. However, what really disturbs Jim is his fear that in physically caressing the abscess with such intensity, he is in fact "sanctifying this oozing pit, this cavern created by the abusive entrance of syringe point and the narco-garbage within them" (FE 133). Physically the abscess may have, as Jim says, "about a quarter-inch diameter," but the mental anguish that comes out of that "oozing pit" is so intensified that Jim feels as though it is "sometimes large enough to insert my own head, my whole body. I could climb in and see my past transgressions among the slime . . . " (FE 133).

As a physical reminder of the consequences of feeding his head with heroin nods, the abscess swallows him. Language is not needed: Jim's body confesses for him, and through his body he has a dialogue with his past transgressions. This is important in terms of the Trickster cycle because, as I have been arguing throughout, evidence of the Trickster evolving into a higher consciousness occurs when the Trickster has enough distance to look back and evaluate his own actions. Although on Jim's arm now, the abscess is still representative of his past. The then and now of this situation creates a dialogue between the young Trickster in The Basketball Diaries who did not think of tomorrow, let alone his future ("that's a long ways off from where we're at now") (BD 209), and his newer, older self in Forced Entries who is worried enough about his future to "reconsider" it (FE 113). But in order to reconsider the future, he must also reconsider his past transgressions, and the abscess is an important reminder of this process.

Ironically, the "slimy", "oozing pit" of the abscess also comes to stand for a potentially purifying agent. Later Jim wonders whether he

could "put [his] lips to it and drink from it like a chalice," but questions whether this act will "purify . . . or just further the decay? I've tried to open the thing, but the skin is too stubborn, hardened by the abuse into scar tissue. It just leaks." (FE 134). The abscess does eventually burst at the end of Forced Entries, but it takes the entire second half of the diary for this to happen. It is a process for Jim. The abscess forces him into a dialogue with himself that pushes him to confront his heroin addiction, not just to feed and prolong it. Had the abscess burst at his first proddings, his own fixation on it would not have been so intense. We see this intensity near the end of Forced Entries when Jim relates what the doctors have been telling him, that the abscess is not worth "lancing, that it will heal itself" (FE 182). Jim has great difficulty following this advice, for the doctors, as he says, "don't have to deal with its spite, its enticements to self mutilation, the exhaustion of its resistance: body, mind and soul. It's taken on demonic proportions. Shit, I've sanctified the motherfucker: I caress it in my sleep./ I'm just going to accept it. I'm tired" (FE 182).

What better way to "sanctify" the demonic proportions the abscess has acquired than to confess to his obsession with it or have his body confess for him? In this sense, in the last pages of the diary, Jim's prodding and pushing at the abscess is his own kind of confession to it. His fingers are the words relieving the pressure of all of the past "sins" imprisoned in his arm. By prodding at his abscess, he has a dialogue with it: between his older self and the younger self inhabiting his arm, and between what he wants out of life now as opposed to then. However, Jim is also well aware that even when the abscess bursts, it

will forever be "an emblem" of his addiction, "a memorial tattoo that I myself inscribed, as if for an old lover, in homage to that sickness I took years to perfect" (FE 182). But this realization does not stop the prodding.

At the end of Forced Entries, when the abscess finally bursts, it is the ultimate orgasm for Jim. He describes how, when that "stubborn skin finally gave way," he thought he "heard an audible expression, like a groan, or a tired, breathless howl of someone who lost a long, long duel" (FE 183). Jean Cocteau, in his work Opium, describes how when the drug addict puts his ear to his arm, "catastrophe, riots, factories blowing up, armies in flight, flood--the ear can detect a whole apocalypse in the starry night of the human body" (Cocteau 416). Similarly, when Jim puts his head to his arm, he hears the "apocalypse" of his own body in the "howl", the "audible expression", of his abscess. But only at the end of Jim's battle does it become audible to him. He presumed to speak for his body parts before, but this new voice is something separate from him. Jim cannot put this "groan" or "breathless howl" into language. He hears the sounds, but cannot put those sounds into words, make them coherent, for to do so would cause them to lose their autonomy and become his voice--no autonomy, no dialogue. If he cannot continue the dialogue our Trickster's evolutionary process will be stunted because the past will not be heard, and will continue to be buried and silenced in his arm.

Jim's own response to the bursting abscess is revealed in an intense passage at the end of Forced Entries. He describes how "all disgust was overwhelmed by joy," and how the fluids flowing from the abscess now represent "the return of all the bad-cut street-drug

garbage" he had "inserted with such precision, all these years" (FE 183). Jim describes this fluid as "the toxic residue of all my past sins I didn't see pus; I saw the petty demons marching out. I saw purification, with new fresh air being sucked into that cavity . . . ; the idol was in ruins" (FE 183). The "purity" that Jim naively searched for in The Basketball Diaries he achieves, to some extent, in Forced Entries. Out of the abscess march some of his demons, and into the abscess blows "fresh air", a second chance, "purification". He does not expect us to understand the nature of the events that go on here, but I think we can take solace in knowing that Jim himself understands, even though he cannot entirely explain it to us.

This brings us back to the question--what kind of confessional discourse does Carroll use in Forced Entries? In this diary, and we see it clearly enough here, Jim does not ask the reader for absolution or purity; in fact, he does not even expect the reader to "understand": "Do you understand what I'm telling you? I know you think it's sick, some fucked-up fetish But I understand the nature of it, and now that sickness is healing. So am I" (FE 183). Jim understands the importance of the dialogue that he is having with himself: he confesses things to himself that he was unable to face before, or did not want to face.

Of course, there are always more things to confess, the process continues until death. But in Forced Entries Jim works out his addiction and the mental anguish that comes with it; he realizes that this is the only way he can attempt to approach a sense of "purity". No institution can tell Jim what he already knows, that he has to "reregister a room for [his] heart. It's been waiting a long time,

without so much as a whisper of protest. That abandonment wasn't just an abuse, it was a sin" (FE 148). By the conclusion of Forced Entries Jim confesses that he indeed feels "closer to [his] heart" (FE 183).

This movement points to a larger evolution in Jim: away from heroin and towards a life free of junk. But to think that this is the end of the cycle for Trickster would be naive on our part. Jim admits that despite being "clean" he may succumb to his addiction in the future (FE 183). This realization reminds us that Trickster is in an ongoing cycle: evolving and devolving, through life. Because of this movement, Jim can sustain a meaningful dialogue with, and evaluation of, himself: and this is, essentially, the life cycle that we all travel. As Jean Cocteau says in Opium: "The dead drug leaves a ghost behind. At certain hours it haunts the house" (Cocteau 428). Despite being "clean" at the end of Forced Entries, Jim Carroll's house will always be haunted by heroin.

Conclusion

Coda

I have been becoming as I
 Have been answering for fortune
 Extended even as I have been
 Losing lately, forming in perfunctory

Ways to go on giving, yet totalling
 Up what I am
 Owing, knowing how
 Much is due

Doing what is
 Needed for what
 I am becoming
 (Jim Carroll, Fear of Dreaming, 273)

Jim Carroll ends his most recent collection of prose and poetry, Fear of Dreaming (1993), with this poem. In it Carroll discusses how looking back--answering for fortune, figuring out how much is owing--is the way to look forward. It seems fitting that this poem ends a collection that spans two decades, because through the work we have the

opportunity to see who Carroll was, who he is, and who he may become. In this sense, "Coda" provides not an "end" but a new beginning.

I have begun my conclusion with "Coda" because it embodies the cyclic nature that exists in Carroll's diaries. As we have seen throughout, the Trickster is never satisfied with, nor does he accept, stasis; as he stands in the present, he is always evaluating the past and moving towards the future. The Trickster figure epitomizes movement and growth, and in Jim we see both. Throughout the cycle of the diaries, Jim is always acting or reacting, evolving or devolving. Together the diaries illustrate that we are all in a cycle and that profound movement is only possible when we reckon with our most destructive phases.

As a character in his own diaries Jim is always on the move. As Jim matures, and we see this particularly in Forced Entries, we notice how he is always thinking, evaluating and discovering where to go next and what to become. Despite the darkness exuded in the diaries, and the tales Carroll weaves are often dark, Jim Carroll's writing is still optimistic, very humorous, and at times very wise. The character in the diaries is always open to new experiences and to the possibility of finding a new self lurking in the most unexpected places. Like Trickster, he embraces the cyclic nature of life and allows himself to find meaning in it.

Neither of Carroll's diaries truly ends. In the conclusion to each of them, Carroll leaves us wondering and gives Jim the room to move and evolve. In this sense, Carroll's diaries are much more than mere testaments to Jim's heroin addiction. At the end of The Basketball Diaries, despite Jim's junk sickness, the last sentence reads "I just

want to be pure . . ." (BD 210). Forced Entries ends similarly: "It's so quiet I can hear the clicking of the traffic lights changing . . . red to green . . . stop to go. Walk. Wait" (FE 184). In both instances there is the potential for movement towards something; the lights are always changing. This is one of the fascinating things about Carroll's work: it, like Jim himself, creates itself simply by being in a perpetual state of becoming

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¹ Included in this volume: the entire text of Living at the Movies (1973) and most of The Book of Nods (1986).

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