

Notebook entry #2:

Consider Dave Wallace's claim in his Kenyon College commencement speech that,

there is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship — be it JC or Allah, bet it YHWH or the Wiccan Mother Goddess, or the Four Noble Truths, or some inviolable set of ethical principles -- is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough.

He argues in this talk that the true fruit of an education is not "learning how to think," but, rather, learning how to choose what we think about and how we think about it, that is, "You get to consciously decide what has meaning and what doesn't. You get to decide what to worship."

Consider these ideas in the framework of Burroughs's *Western Lands*, particularly in his apparent choice to prefer the "Magical Universe" (MU) to the "One God Universe" (OGU). What does this choice have to do with Burroughs's narrator's claim that our world is approaching apocalypse:

Consider the One God Universe: OGU. The spirit recoils in horror from such a deadly impasse. He is all-powerful and all-knowing. Because He can do everything, He can do nothing, since the act of doing demands opposition. He knows everything, so there is nothing for him to learn. He can't go anywhere, since He is already fucking everywhere, like cowshit in Calcutta.

The OGU is a pre-recorded universe of which He is the recorder. It's a flat, thermodynamic universe, since it has no friction by definition. So He invents friction and conflict, pain, fear, sickness, famine, war, old age and Death." - William S. Burroughs, *The Western Lands*, p. 113