



## Apomorphine Silence: Cutting-up Burroughs' Theory of Language and Control

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In the beginning was the word and the word *was* God. And what does that make us? Ventriloquist's dummies. Time to leave the Word-God behind. "He atrophied and fell off me like horrible old gills" a survivor reported. "And I feel ever so much better." (Burroughs, 1986: 105)

Often rejected by his contemporary critics on the basis of the author's homosexuality and drug use, Burroughs' writing has remained fairly marginal despite his reconstruction in the 1990s as a cultural icon appearing in everything from Nike adverts to Gus Van Sant's film, *Drug Store Cowboy*. The reading public has also neglected much of Burroughs' writing preferring the mythology and iconography surrounding the man to his actual work which is seen as overly opaque, complicated and difficult to read (Caveney, 1998). Critics have long had trouble reconciling Burroughs' novels with the conventions of literary criticism, at least partly because many of those conventions were developed as a response to the form of the novel, which Burroughs actively sought to disrupt. Nevertheless, Burroughs' oeuvre has remained a source of inspiration for many other writers, artists and musicians as well as political radicals, anarchists and cyberpunks. It has also slowly but steadily produced a body of significant critical commentary so that today Burroughs must be taken seriously both as an author and an artist. Paradoxically one of the main reasons we should take Burroughs seriously is precisely the difficulty of his writing. It is the argument of this paper that, at least in his more radical literary experiments, Burroughs pushes language beyond the limits of representation and opens his texts to a radical reconfiguration of human subjectivity. Whilst such experiments may not make easy bedtime reading, they do raise important issues for the critical study of organization.

During the 1960s William S. Burroughs developed his thesis that the word – language – is quite literally a virus. Much of Burroughs' writing was a working through of the implications of this theory for understanding human subjectivity and intervening in its (re)production. For Burroughs, what we have come to understand as *the* human is in fact a symbiotic relationship of body and word-virus. In this sense 'human' is not an identity so much as a difference: a heterogeneous relationship rather than a thing in itself. As a radical, Burroughs was particularly attentive to changes in the elements of this 'human' relationship and their connections. Evolution, mutation and change are dominant themes throughout his work so that, despite appearances, the relationship between the 'word

virus' and human is not benign and is currently undergoing a radical change through the externalisation and materialisation of voice by information and communication technologies (ICT) as diverse as the tape-recorder and the computer (Burroughs, 1989:12).

This paper reviews Burroughs' theory of language, augmenting it with elements of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) post-structural linguistics, to show how narrative forms of communication are themselves implicated in a specific mode of human subjectification. Within this mode of production docile, neurotic, human subjects are produced that serve well the interests of capital and social control but constrain and limit the potentialities of more inhuman becomings. In this sense, Burroughs work is relevant to critical studies of organization as it has implications for theories of the subject in the wake of Foucault. Whilst his critique of the subject and language is itself a contribution to studies of organization, Burroughs' writing always sought a positive engagement that would facilitate and bring about radical change both in the constitution of the social and in the constitution of its subjects. The second part of this paper follows one of Burroughs' attempts in this direction by examining his method of the 'cut-up' as a technique for breaking free of pre-formed lines of narrative subjectivization in order to allow a proliferation of inhuman mutations that escape this linear coding. In cutting-up language Burroughs sought a relationship between author and text that paid attention to the materialities of inscription and thereby raised the whole question of embodiment. The paper considers the relationship between language, technology and embodiment as productive of new modes of becoming that are not authorised by the narrative traditions of humanism and subjectivity. Effectively, Burroughs sought to silence 'the word' through linguistic experimentation and thereby enable a new (r)evolutionary development beyond the human condition.

The paper concludes with a brief summary of Burroughs' ideas and their relevance for critical conceptions of subjectivity and the narrative turn in organization studies. Burroughs' cut-up is a politically radical form of writing that highlights the power-relations inherent in language and the conservatism of conventional modes of both literary writing and the narrative form so often favoured by organizational researchers (Czarniawska, 1998; 1999). Rather than turning in ever more tightly bound reflexive circles, learning managerial lessons from the bourgeois 'realist' novel, or proliferating subjectifying narrative after narrative – all strategies that reinforce linear-linguistic processes of subjectification – the cut-up slices through these lines of control to open out spaces for thinking otherwise. As such, Burroughs' theory of language and the cut-up offers an incisive critical intervention in the body of contemporary organizational discourses on critique, language and subjectivity.

At the end of his experimental phase, Burroughs was less than sanguine about the prospect of overcoming language through the use of words (Burroughs, 1989) and toward the end of his career gave up writing fiction in favour of other modes of artistic engagement, most notably painting. In this sense the cut-up offers no clear answers and may well be a methodological and critical dead-end. Within a discipline dominated by the word and an epistemology of representation that is resolutely textual, however, the time seems ripe for organization studies itself to be cut-up. As such the third part of this paper presents a cut-up of several texts as an attempt to disrupt the conventional

narrative flow of argument and subjectivization as performed within this discipline. Whilst the results of this experiment are certainly questionable, the foregoing argument will hopefully have made the reason for it clear. If a sensible response to this section seems impossible, then it is perhaps worth bearing in mind the title of this paper: apomorphine *silence*. In a world that is heavy with radioactive word-dust and the viral production of linear-linguistic sense, the cut-up offers not so much a new form of sense, as a moment of silence within which the compulsion to *make* sense enables the possible emergence of new forms of sense and modes of subjectivization.

## **Narratives of the Linguistic Organization**

It has been fairly well established now that narrative and storytelling are among the dominant modes of representation within the social sciences and organization studies (Czarniawska, 1998; 1999; Fineman and Gabriel, 1996; Gabriel, 2000). As well as literature and literary theory becoming an increasingly popular resource for theorizing organization (ten Bos and Rhodes, 2003; Easton and Araujo, 1997; DeCock, 2000; Smith et al, 2001; Czarniawska-Joerges and Guillet de Monthoux, 1994; Knights and Willmott, 1999), recent work in the sociology and epistemology of science has suggested that even positivist modes of representation are dependent upon an underlying logic of narrative (Czarniawska, 1998; Gherardi, 1995). With this recognition that knowledge is fundamentally narrative has come a celebration of qualitative research methods that seek out and produce narratives (Czarniawska, 1998; Gabriel, 2000). More generally the question of language has become central to critical understandings of organization since at least the post-modern turn in the mid 1980s (Cooper and Burrell, 1988). The issue of how words, language, or more broadly discourse, produce certain modes of organization and organize our knowledge of organization has been well established in recent years (e.g. Westwood and Linstead, 2001; Linstead, 2003; Grint and Woolgar, 1997; Czarniawska, 1999).

The work of Michel Foucault has also brought the attention of organizational scholars to the role of language in the constitution of subjects through discursive organizational technologies like the confessional or psychoanalytic session (Foucault, 1978), the CV (Metcalf, 1992) and the career (Grey, 1994). Whilst these studies map out the networks of power that incorporate the linguistic and the organizational, few of these writers consider how linguistic, and specifically narrative, modes of subjectivization can be escaped. Following Giddens' seminal work on identity most critical organizational scholars have accepted the need for a coherent narrative of self-identity in order to keep ontological insecurity and existential anxiety at bay (Giddens, 1991; Knights and Willmott, 1989; 1985; Cameron, 2000). Even where this identity is recognized as essentially precarious because of its necessary dependence upon the recognition of another for its validation and maintenance (e.g. Collinson, 1992), the goal of a unified identity is rarely explicitly problematised but rather tends to be posited as a foundation of the human condition.

By turning to the work of William S. Burroughs the question of narrative identity and language can be asked again however. Where the likes of Giddens are concerned with

defending a narrative self against erosion and dissolution (cf. Sennett, 1997) Burroughs seeks the annihilation of this humanist self so as to escape what he sees as the regime of control of language itself. As well as radically critiquing self-identity and language Burroughs also suggests a line of escape through his method of the cut-up. Of course, the notion of escape is not new to organization studies, and has been on the sociological agenda at least since the publication of Cohen and Taylor's *Escape Attempts* in 1976. Where critical organizational sociologists have taken up these ideas, they have tended to focus on escapes from the drudgery of work into meaningful identities outside the workplace, but nevertheless within the confines of socially validated identities, as for example in David Collinson's studies of masculine identities such as 'breadwinner' or prankster (Collinson, 1992; 1988). Where Burroughs breaks with these traditions is that he neither assumes nor empirically investigates the construction and social validation of identities that seek to become stable, however precarious they are in reality. He uses the medium of fiction to destabilize and disrupt the linguistic reproduction of such identities and categories altogether. As such, we could say that Burroughs' work is apocalyptic (Dellamora, 1995). It heralds the end of human identity as such. But this is an optimistic apocalypse as it opens up onto the positive potential of difference. As an escape attempt, Burroughs' strategy of difference perhaps offers more hope than those identity based strategies that have dominated critical studies of organization. Before considering his method in detail however we need to outline Burroughs' theory of language, control and subjectivity in more detail.

## **The Word is a Virus**

My general theory since 1971 has been that the Word is literally a virus, and that it has not been recognized as such because it has achieved a state of relatively stable symbiosis with its human host; that is to say, the Word Virus (the Other Half) has established itself so firmly as an accepted part of the human organism that it can now sneer at gangster viruses like smallpox and turn them in to the Pasteur Institute. But the Word clearly bears the single identifying feature of virus: it is an organism with no internal function other than to replicate itself. (Burroughs, 1986: 47)

For Burroughs language is literally a virus: the 'word virus' (Burroughs, 1986; Burroughs, 1989; Munro, 2001). Throughout the 1960s, in his fictional writing and in interviews and essays, Burroughs developed this idea both as a theory of language and as a theory of subjectivity. Burroughs' basic argument is that language is a physical, viral infection which has developed a parasitic or symbiotic relationship with the human body. In fact this infection is fundamental to what we now understand as 'human being'. The complex relationship between words, images of words, and subjectivity operates on a number of registers. At one level, Burroughs focuses on our everyday subvocalizations, the internal monologue that provides a narrative sense of personal, subjective continuity which we think of as 'our self'. These subvocalizations simultaneously come from outside, hence the notion that they are a viral infection, and constitute an inside: the subject 'I'. They are external in at least two senses. On one hand they are often constituted by fragments and snippets picked up from conversations, the daily press, books, radio and television. Alternatively they might be generated in response to an external authority, as when a child is called before the headmaster, or when travelling when one's passport or papers are out of order. In such situations one

incessantly runs excuses and explanations round and round, rehearsing the potential encounter with 'control' (Burroughs, 1989: 108). On the other hand, for Burroughs the whole idea of language is something external. In this respect subvocalization is not 'natural', but the product of a language, with all of its grammatical structures and subjects, that comes from outside the body. In Burroughs' literary writing, this idea of language as a viral infection is taken up in his widespread use of images of viral and parasitic infections, as well as crabs, centipedes and other insects or reptiles, often portrayed as necrotic flesh-eaters.

These subvocalizations are also productive of an interior. In this Burroughs roughly follows the Buddhist tradition, suggesting that this internal monologue creates the linear, narrative sense of self-identity and continuity that we usually refer to as 'I' (Hayles, 1999: 211). In many cases in Burroughs' writing however these images are combined with critiques of drug-addiction and capitalist commodity fetishism, as in the 'Black Meat' section in *Naked Lunch*, suggesting that the formation of this linguistic subject is a thoroughly politicised process that proceeds always through the functioning of power. As such, he has little time for practices such as meditation that seek to silence the word-virus and return to a pre-linguistic state. Rather he actively embraces new linguistic technologies and methods in order to explode the word/control system.

As a theory of language the word-virus functions to indicate the absolute Otherness of language. Language is something that comes from outside the human whilst simultaneously being taken as a key line of demarcation that separates human beings from other animals and from machine, as evinced for example by the Turing test (Plant, 1997; cf. Searle, 1984; Fellows, 1995). In this sense language is an Other that produces human being. More importantly, it is language that produces self-identity and the concept of the coherent self or 'I', itself a linguistic construct. Without this identity, and without language, 'one' quite simply isn't – the 'I' does not exist – a point that is reinforced by our characterisation of pre-linguistic children as 'infants,' a word deriving from the Latin *infans*: 'not speaking' (Easthope, 1999: 34). In this sense Burroughs is close to Nietzsche whose critique of Descartes was that he mistook a 'grammatical prejudice', the need to posit a subject of the statement for an ontological verity (Nietzsche, 1989: 24; 1994). For Nietzsche the 'I' of the subject was itself produced by language and the structures of grammar. For Burroughs this notion is developed in a more vividly material sense as 'the word' is seen to inhabit the human subject as a physical infestation or infection.

By focusing upon 'the word' Burroughs draws our attention inevitably back to the role of the word in Biblical creation myths:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God – and the word was flesh... human flesh...  
in the beginning of *writing*. (Burroughs, 1989: 11)

By connecting to the myth of genesis, Burroughs makes another link with Nietzsche, whose oft cited pronouncement that 'God is dead' heralds the death of man (Nietzsche, 1969: 41). Made in God's image, Man takes his place at the top of the chain of creation once God has been killed. From such a perspective the advent of humanism is little more than the reproduction of an Oedipal patricide. It is precisely for this reason that Deleuze and Guattari referenced Nietzsche's *Anti-Christ* in the title of their *Anti-*

*Oedipus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). To go after Christ, or even God, is not enough. Next in line is Man.

As well as opening onto, and extending, a critique of the religion of humanism, Burroughs' quote here also raises the specificities of human language: that is it written. It is not solely verbal communication that produces a human sense of self. Most animals have some form of language, cries and shouts that enable them to communicate. For Burroughs, following Korzybski, what is unique about human language is that it is written. In a move that parallels Derrida's notion of the supplement, Burroughs recognises that the advent of writing changes the nature of the spoken word upon which it is purportedly based. Effectively the durability of the written word enables people to 'bind-time'. With a clear concept of linear, spatialised time laid out by narratives and writing, humans are able to organize in ways that other animals cannot:

Korzybski has pointed out this human distinction and described man as 'the time-binding animal'. He can make information available over any length of time to other men through writing. Animals talk. They don't write. Now a wise old rat may know a lot about traps and poison but he cannot write an article on *Death Traps in Your Warehouse* for the *Reader's Digest* translated into 17 rat languages with tactics for ganging up on dogs and ferrets and taking care of wise guys who stuff steel wool up our holes. If he could rats might well take over the earth with all its food stocks human and otherwise. (Burroughs, 1979: 66)

Time is important for two reasons here. It enables complex forms of social organization, pointing to the centrality of material inscriptions to the production of social organization (Ackrich, 1992; Latour, 1992). More relevant for our discussion here, however, is the notion that time is crucial to human identity. It is relatively well established that linear time dominates modern conceptions of temporality (Burrell, 1992). 'Time's arrow' and similar metaphors, as well as the standardisation of time through material inscriptions like the train timetable, have certainly been important in the development of a specifically modern time (Thompson, 1967), but Burroughs' suggests that language itself carries a form of temporality with it. Grounded in writing, language develops linearly (cf. Burrell, 1997) but for Burroughs' this linearity carries with it a specific mode of subjectivization.

The surest sign of infection with the word-virus is the compulsive drive to sub-vocalize. The simple fact that it is all but impossible to shut off the 'voice inside' suggests that there is an alien force at work in language. Of course, it is fairly obvious that language is dependent upon its recognition by others, but Burroughs is suggesting that the word-virus operates as an external 'other' that colonizes the body, forcing it to sub-vocalize and thereby reproducing itself. It is this internal monologue, all but impossible to shut off and expressly non-human, which produces an all-too-human sense of identity and self-continuity; generating a linear, narrative time along which experience is distributed and through which identity is assured. Just as a child has its sense of identity enforced through the imposition of oedipal identification with the triangular 'mommy-daddy-me' (itself enforced by the word (and name) of the father) so the 'I' and our internal monologue provide an anchor for the production of identity: "So it's *me!*" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 20).

In many respects, Burroughs' account of language resonates with that of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) who distinguish language proper from the communication systems of

bees. Bees are able to communicate quite complex information about the location of good sources of pollen through complicated dance patterns but only on the condition that they have seen the pollen source directly. Human language however is fundamentally indirect. Like a virus, it is communicated by exposure to one already infected, rather than to a direct source of information. As they put it:

Language is not content to go from a first party to a second party, from one who has seen to one who has not, but necessarily goes from a second party to a third party, neither of whom has seen. It is in this sense that language is the transmission of the word as an order-word, not the communication of a sign as information. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 77).

This means that even the 'I' that sees, never sees outside of language with all of its association blocks, including the position ascribed to it as an 'I' through linguistic ordering:

*I* is an order-word. A schizophrenic said: "I heard voices say: *he is conscious of life.*" In this sense, there is indeed a schizophrenic cogito, but it is a cogito that makes self-consciousness the incorporeal transformation of an order-word, or a result of indirect discourse. My direct discourse is still the free indirect discourse running through me, coming from other worlds or other planets. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 84)

Rather than the direct perception of existence and thought – 'I think therefore I am' – even the cogito is a product of indirect discourse, of hearsay: 'I heard voices say: *he is conscious of life.*' Like Nietzsche and Burroughs, Deleuze and Guattari's theory of language overturns Descartes' theory of the subject. Instead of a clearly grounded, albeit rather sceptical, ego they suggest a radically decentred subject produced through the operations of an alien language. From this perspective, the schizophrenic cogito is actually a much better model than the neurotic cogito of Descartes. Importantly, this decentring also disrupts the production of identity, a point that Deleuze and Guattari were quite explicit about in an earlier collaboration. There can be no such thing as an identity as the id is always plural and heterogeneous: "What a mistake to have ever said *the id*" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 1). Ego or id, there can be no completeness and self-identity, only an opening onto difference.

## Word/Control

In short then, the word is a virus which, over the years, has entered into a symbiotic relationship with the human to produce him/her as a relatively domesticated animal. Language cannot be separated from control. Just as Deleuze and Guattari discuss the centrality of the order-word in the constitution of language, Burroughs places the question of control at the centre of his theory of language. Language, through the interior monologue of authority, produces subjects and self-consciousness. 'I' becomes an identity that Burroughs critiques through the Korzybskian notion of the 'is' of identity. When one can say that one *is* something, a process of reification has taken place that conceals certain relationships of power. Burroughs clarifies by relating the way that 'servant' is represented in Egyptian hieroglyphics:

The is of identity is rarely used in Egyptian pictorial writing. Instead of saying he is my servant they say he (is omitted) *as* my servant: a statement of relationship not identity. (Burroughs, 1979: 65)

Through the 'is' of identity the word-virus produces essential, fixed, individual, measurable and controllable id-entities. In one sense, Burroughs is suggesting that this reification serves to conceal an underlying relationality, but there is nothing strictly 'false' about this process. The linguistic operation has a very real effect: it really produces those identities.

Of course, this last example makes the operations of power and control fairly obvious by referring to a clear relationship of authority but Burroughs' critique of language is broader than this. It is his argument that the identity produced by the word virus is itself a kind of prison, as Deleuze and Guattari would put it:

Human monsters are embryos that were retarded at a certain degree of development, the human in them is only a straitjacket for inhuman forms and substances. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 46)

Burroughs also employs this notion of retarded development at a number of points in his work. References to evolution and mutation are widespread, particularly during the mid-period constituted by his *Nova* trilogy and some of his better-known non-fiction, like *The Job* (Burroughs, 1989). In *The Ticket That Exploded*, visions of mutation feature prominently as positive potentials for evolutionary change (Hayles, 1999). At other times Burroughs is more ambivalent as when in his parody 'Roosevelt after inauguration' he has the president proclaim, "I'll make the cocksuckers glad to mutate," he would say, looking off into space as if seeking new frontiers of depravity" (Burroughs and Ginsberg, 1975: 39).

## The Naked Astronaut

I don't think of silence as being a device of terror at all. In fact, quite the contrary. Silence is only frightening to people who are compulsively verbalizing. (Burroughs, 1989: 37)

Compulsive verbalization or subvocalization suggests a certain neuroticism, the fate of the perfectly Oedipalized subject (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). Caught in the triangle of familial relations – daddy, mommy, me – the subject compulsively reworks these relations, not least on the analyst's couch but also more generally. The operation is one that Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a conjunctive synthesis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 20). Flows, breaks and connections are compulsively fixed and singularised onto the relative security, and docility, of a fixed and centred, Oedipal self. Without the compulsive verbalizing of the neurotic subject constantly 'finding themselves' in their linguistic stream of consciousness there would be no identity, no stable subjects stretched out along a spatialised time-line. In Burroughs' work we can see the explicit relation of the production of anxiety and time through the drive to verbalize. More fundamentally, the trap of linear, narrative time produced by language has arrested the development of difference by constantly fixing it back upon identity. Human identity is the straitjacket that reterritorializes inhuman forces, potentials and differences back onto Oedipally legitimated identities.



In a move that appears to invert the Bergsonian notion that we should reject space in favour of time, Burroughs wants to escape from time. But the inversion is only apparent. Bergson's object of critique is spatialised time, geometrically laid out as a line composed of discrete points (Bergson, 1910). In a sense, Burroughs extends this rejection, by expanding upon the ways in which this conception of linear time is produced through the operations of language and expanding upon the subjective effects of linear time. Where Bergson sought a non-spatial conception of time as duration, however, Burroughs rejects the idea of time entirely and turns his attention to a rethinking of space, not in terms of geometry, but as outer-space: the final frontier. If it is the word-image lines that lock us into identity and tie us to the ground, then cutting these lines can let us escape the bounds of the Earth and move into space.

It is this drive to escape a logic of identity, control and limitation that led to Burroughs' oft-quoted catch phrase "This is the space age and we are all here to go" (e.g. Burroughs, 1990). But Burroughs' conceptions of space travel are about as far from NASA as you can get and he railed against current attempts at space travel for trying to take the Earth into space. Indeed, at times when he is discussing space travel, Burroughs seems to be talking about a more abstract conception of space that is only explored metaphorically as outer-space in those of his novels that owe the most to the genre of science-fiction. As Burroughs put it himself he was primarily "a cosmonaut of inner space" (Douglas, 1998: xxviii). Setting himself quite obviously against the American space programme Burroughs makes several indications that his concept of space is wider than the literal 'outer space' of interstellar exploration and included all attempts to free oneself from past conditioning (Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 21). At the same time however, Burroughs plays with science fictional tropes in his writing from this period, leading some critics to accuse him of a crass post-humanism that itself perpetuates a Cartesian mind-body dualism in its drive to escape the 'meat' of corporeality (Dery, 1996). If we ignore this apparent similarity of imagery however it is clear that Burroughs' concerns are far from those of the post-humanists. Indeed, in his conception of inner-space he is closer to Buddhism. Unlike the Buddhists however, Burroughs is less patient and more technologically oriented, seeking a quick, technical fix to the problems of identity and language (Burroughs, 1986: 47). Nevertheless, his goal is the same: silence. As he puts it, distancing himself again from the religious patriotism of NASA:

To travel in space you must leave the old verbal garbage behind: God talk, country talk, mother talk, love talk, party talk. You must learn to exist with no religion no country no allies. You must learn to live alone in silence. Anyone who prays in space is not there. (Burroughs, 1989: 21)

In short then, Burroughs' conceptions of language and subjectivity posit identity as a linear-time bound constraint placed on the inhuman becomings that constitute life and creativity. The human form is a product of viral infection and is perpetuated by the neurotic subvocalizations that are symptoms of this infection and which produce identity. In addition to his analysis of this system of control and subjectivization however, Burroughs also sought to escape it through the development of new artistic engagements with words and images.

## Cutting-up Control

The word of course is one of the most powerful instruments of control as exercised by the newspaper and images as well, there are both words and images in newspapers... Now if you start cutting these up and rearranging them you are breaking down the control system. (Burroughs, 1989: 33)

'Free' speech may be an illusion but resistance is far from futile. Whilst living at the 'Beat Hotel' in Paris during the 1960s, Burroughs formed a lifelong friendship, and important collaborative partnership, with the artist Brion Gysin. Suggesting that writing was at least 50 years behind painting, Gysin stumbled across the literary equivalent of a painter's collage or a film-maker's montage when, whilst cutting a mount for a frame, he sliced through the board into the newspapers protecting the table below. As the two halves of the paper moved the words were brought into novel, sometimes strange, amusing, or even prescient conjunctions. What appeared to Gysin as a slightly amusing diversion was taken rather more seriously by Burroughs who immediately saw the potential of this cut-up method for severing the lines of linguistic control he had been analysing. The result was a series of books, the most famous of which are the *Nova Trilogy* – *The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket That Exploded*, and *Nova Express* – each of which uses the technique of the cut-up, or Burroughs' derivation, the fold-in.

In this technique a page of text is taken, and sliced or folded down the middle and placed with half of another page. The pieces are then moved around until they line up, and the results are typed onto a fresh page which, depending upon the results, may then be combined with further pages to produce yet more cut-ups. In a sense, the idea is to turn the work into a material thing, which can be manipulated like the celluloid film on the cutting-room table, or the paints on an artist's palette. By careful processes of selection and combination, something genuinely novel can be produced, which is not dominated by the narrative logic of language that otherwise dictates the words that come to an author when he writes. The effect is to use language, or rather words, to say something outside, or beyond, language as it is currently constituted.

In many ways, Burroughs is inconsistent in his use of the cut-up. At times he seems to suggest that, as with Cubism, the cut-up is simply a way of more accurately reflecting the essentially cut-up nature of lived experience (Mottram, 1977, Lodge, 1964/1991; McLuhan, 1964/1991). When walking down the street, the internal monologue, and experience itself, is realised as a series of interruptions and random juxtapositions. From this perspective, the cut-up provides a more realistic representation of an essentially cut-up phenomenological world. If we accept this line, then Burroughs clearly remains wedded to a distinctly modernist logic of representation, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest in *A Thousand Plateaus* when they draw parallels between Burroughs and Joyce (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 6). In a sense this interpretation has some truth. As I have been arguing, Burroughs' basic notion is that language produces a 'false' appearance of subjective coherence and narrative continuity. In a way then the cut-up is an attempt to break down this apparent coherence. But it is not an attempt to represent subjective experience more accurately. Rather the theory of the word-virus points to an essential otherness at the very heart of the formation of the subject itself. The cut-up needs to be understood in response to this otherness: not to represent the subjective but to destroy the subject as a subject of linguistic control.

This reading is supported by Burroughs' suggestion that the random element of chance brought into the process of writing by the cut-up can serve to break the lines of narrative conditioning that subjectify and subjugate us, enabling a breaking-away from, and breaking-up of, the order of identity thereby produced (Hassan, 1963; Caveney, 1998). This idea has much in common with Burroughs' interest in Scientology's use of repetition as a means of breaking down linguistic association blocks, thereby freeing the individual from unconscious controls (Russell, 2001). This use of the cut-up for purposes of deconditioning the subject by severing linguistic control lines is one that informs the use of the technique in this paper but it is important to note that the precise role and functioning of the cut-up varies within and across Burroughs' writing and was eventually rejected entirely in his later fiction (Murphy, 1997).

On occasion Burroughs seems to suggest that there is nothing random whatsoever about the cut-up. Instead the method simply enables us to access knowledge of which we were unconscious. An example of this latter is when he discusses the magnetic-tape based cut-ups he experimented with in collaboration with Ian Sommerville. In these experiments, the new technology of the tape recorder was used to record a particular message, which would then be rewound and forwarded to an arbitrary point when something else, a snippet of speech, white noise from the radio, music or street sounds, would be layered over the original recording. This layering and cutting-in might be repeated a number of times, over a period of several days, or even weeks, as in the example of the 'Palm Sunday Tape' (Burroughs, 1984). In some of these examples, Burroughs was insistent that the 'author' of these experiments was aware, on some level, of the contents of the tape, and so could be said to be producing the tape in a way that precluded the truly random event. Even in this case, however, we are far from the conscious ego of the Cartesian subject as produced by the word-virus.

At yet other times, Burroughs built on this last notion to suggest that the cut-up was a quite deliberate and intentional operation, with no chance or unconscious content whatsoever, but rather a careful and quite deliberate attentiveness to the materiality of the texts with which he was working:

I follow the channels opened by the rearrangement of the text. This is the most important function of the cut-up. I may take a page, cut it up, and get a whole new idea for straight narrative, and not use any of the cut-up material at all, or I may use a sentence or two out of the actual cut-up. ... It's not unconscious at all, it's a very objective operation... (Burroughs, 1989: 29)

It is worth noting here however, that Burroughs does not oppose 'unconscious' with 'conscious', but rather with 'objective'. This is perhaps where Burroughs' use of the cut-up is closest to the materiality of the painter's relationship to their materials – paints, canvass and brushes – or perhaps the woodworker or sculptor who works with the grain of her materials rather than hylomorphically imposing an external form onto a formless matter (cf. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Massumi, 1992; Thanem, 2001). Of course, this could also be an attempt to defend his work against accusations that it simply isn't art, a suggestion that is supported by his claim that the cut-up has its origins in the radical surrealism of Tristan Tzara:

At the surrealist rally in the 1920s, Tristan Tzara the man from nowhere proposed to create a poem on the spot by pulling words out of a hat. A riot ensued wrecked the theatre. André Breton

expelled Tristan Tzara from the movement and grounded the cut up on the Freudian couch.  
(Burroughs, cited in Mottram, 1977: 37)

As well as laying claim to culturally important precursors to his and Gysin's development of the cut-up, and supporting a 'random element' reading of the cut-up though now validated by reference to Dada, this also raises the important point, taken up in the next section, of the technique's essential antagonism to psychoanalysis. This antagonism has similarities to the idea of working with materiality. Rather than stamping a hylomorphic triangle of daddy-mommy-me onto every experience so that the subject can be normalised into a fixed mould from which every deviation is deviance, the cut-up breaks the imposed lines of control and meaning (from a stable signifier that can anchor meaning) to follow the textures of a writer's raw material.

Whatever the final result of Burroughs' cut-up experiments – they are often difficult to listen to/read, repetitive and dull – the underlying ideas are most important here. If the word is a virus, and the human is a ventriloquist's puppet, spoken through more than speaking, then the only way to resist and escape control is to silence the tyrannical logic of narrative and put an end to compulsive subvocalisation. Just as the narratives of the realist novel and criticism are a bourgeois, humanist conception, reflecting innumerable assumptions about subjectivity, identity, morality, reality and the socio-political order, so Burroughs' anti-narratives perform an anti-humanist subversion of those orders (Lydenberg, 1987). In this sense Burroughs' work provides an important counterbalance to those organizational applications of literature that have focussed upon the realist novel (Czarniawska-Jorges and Guillet de Monthoux, 1994) as well as those methodologies that have sought the authentic representation of research subjects through the production of narratives. Burroughs takes his critical practice in a somewhat different direction, problematising rather than celebrating narrative identities and directly intervening in the production of his readers' subjectivities. In this sense his work has direct relevance for critique in organization studies as Burroughs is grappling with the difficulty of writing with an anti-essentialist emancipatory intent. He is not seeking to represent the authentic, non-alienated subject but to recognise that the subject is alien in its very constitution and to release some of these alien – or inhuman – forces from the constraints of narrative subjectivity without simultaneously capturing them in other, perhaps equally repressive, representations.

## **The Cut-up as Methodology and Radical Praxis**

The challenge that Burroughs holds out to all writers, including those of us who are primarily concerned with writing about organization and organizations, is to develop a way of writing that is simultaneously attentive to the materiality of language as the raw material for an aesthetic creation, and which recognises the constitutive role of language in the (re)production of social organization and subjectivity. For Burroughs language is neither a neutral means of representing an objective, external reality, nor a tool for expressing an authentic, subjective interior. Language and writing are material elements within the reproduction of the social. They actively produce social subjects through their connection with, and inscription of, bodies and other material objects. For this reason language is never neutral or innocent. Within language there are always forms

and structures that facilitate and presuppose certain lines of subjectivization: an organization of language and an organization of the subject presupposed and produced by that language. But these organizations of language are themselves reproduced and policed by social and political institutions like grammar and formal education designed to ensure the 'correct' use of language and prevent its mutation.

The use of language – writing – is inherently political. By focusing on the politics and organization of language in this way, Burroughs foregrounds power in a way that develops the insights of critical studies of subjectivity and language at work. Where he goes further than such studies have thus far is in developing a radical practice of writing that seeks to actively break down these lines of linguistic subjectivization. One such practice is the cut-up, a means of materialising 'the word' and subjecting it to various manipulations that cause it to take flight. As this paper has argued, Burroughs' goal here is to escape language, an objective that, in conjunction with his adoption of science-fictional motifs during the same period, has led some commentators to read Burroughs as an adherent of the 'theology of the ejector seat' (Dery, 1996). In many respect this seems true and Burroughs' later admission of failure in his project to overcome language through writing would support this reading.

As the cut-up that concludes this paper perhaps indicates, the cut-up is in many respects a fairly blunt critical tool that in the wrong hands can knock language utterly senseless rather than opening up new modes of sensibility within language. Nevertheless, there is a possibility, gleaned in some of Burroughs more effective cut-ups, as for example in *The Soft Machine*, that the cut-up holds out the possibility for producing of lines of flight within, rather than from, language. In this sense the cut-up would function as a linguistic production immanent within language which disrupts and stalls the smooth operation of language giving space for change and reorganization through forms immanent within the material composition of language. The cut-up here enables an escape within language; the disruption of its smooth and seemingly seamless operation, thereby freeing other forces at work within language. It opens a space for undecidability, a momentary stutter, where interpretation of meaning is unclear and new logics of sense can emerge from the text.

Even if senselessness is the only outcome of a cut-up, however, this senselessness still serves to highlight the fragility and contingency of the forms of sense we so often take for granted and which are themselves shaped by the smooth operation of language. This applies particularly to narrative forms of sense-making which have been recommended by several commentators as a critical tool for destabilising authorial objectivity and the power relations of scientific discourses within the social sciences (Czarniawska, 1998; 1999; Gabriel, 2000). What Burroughs' theory of language adds to these moves is a broader appreciation of the logic and subjectifying moments of the narrative form of representation itself. The cut-up offers a mode of 'writing' which breaks with this logic of representation altogether to perform a material, critical intervention in the linguistic reproduction of subjectivities that actively subverts and renders ineffective narrative forms of argument and sense making. It thereby destabilises the meaning and power of narrative language in a positive negation: a negation as all 'sense' is negated, but positive in its direct intervention in the production of subjectivity through the text, even

if this intervention is nothing more than a momentary unsettling of sense as senselessness takes over and the narrative disintegrates.

The cut-up serves to break up the internal monologue of the subject by disrupting the smooth linguistic production of subjectivity. It literally cuts into the lines of subjectivization being (re)produced by the text. It is in this sense that the cut-up is a radical form of practice. For writers on organization it offers a challenge to the way in which our subject produces subjects and holds the potential to move writing beyond a binary-bind of objective/subjective modes of representation to make present the organization of writing within writing. Whilst the cut-up might not contribute to the study of organization as we conventionally understand it, it has the potential to disrupt, intervene and reorganize the reproduction of that subject, enabling alternative lines of subjectivization that are not pre-inscribed within the conventional organization of language.

In this way the cut-up decisively moves beyond the dominant treatment of subjectivity within critical organization studies. It is notable that those theorists most directly concerned with the production of a critical organizational discourse on subjectivity, literature and narrative have tended to turn to the most bourgeois form of writing in doing so: the realist novel (Knights and Willmott, 1999; Czarniawska-Jorges and Guillet de Monthoux, 1994). Whilst the utilization of such resources for teaching and understanding organization clearly have pedagogic value, their perpetuation of conventional narrative structure and sense, and the reproduction of subjectivities oriented to such activities, sets limits upon their possible political radicalism. Czarniawska-Jorges and Guillet de Monthoux (1994: 7) for example are quite explicit that their approach is designed to improve managerial understandings of organization and make it more 'comprehensive'. Their interest is therefore to augment traditionally technocratic and one-dimensional understandings of organization with a more complete, humanistic sensibility derived from the study of great literature. This uncritically reproduces a concept of the human-subject taken from a particular version of the humanities, despite a number of literary critical studies on the political conservatism of the form of the realist novel (e.g. Eagleton 1998; Jameson 1981).

The same is true even of more deliberately critical interventions, such as those of Knights and Willmott (1999). Whilst their readings of novels like *Bonfire of the Vanities* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* offer easily accessible illustrations of key issues in critical organization studies, particularly for students with little direct experience as employees of work organizations, the structure of the literary works they use in their exegeses tend to reinforce narrative subjectivities. The same might be said of the structure of their own arguments and critique. In seeking to expose and critique power relations and moments of subjectivization within organizations, Knights and Willmott work with already established conventions of writing that do not directly challenge the forms of subjectivity reproduced through their own texts, only their content. What the cut-up offers is a disruption of the form of the subject through formal textual experimentation. Whilst this experimentation is likely to be unsatisfactory and even senseless, the goal is to push at the limits of writing organization as a critical practice and to seek consistency across critical arguments concerning representation and subjectivity, and the forms in which these arguments are presented. As De Cock (2000;

2001) has noted, it is often the case in organization studies that the most radical critiques of conventional rationalities are presented in the most conventionally reasoned forms. Apparently radical critiques aimed at subverting organization studies actually reproduce the subject by conforming to rigidly prescribed structures of argument, reason and representation, changing only the line of argument, not its organization of sense. Whilst textual experiment is therefore a dangerous activity, a paper on the radical practice of William Burroughs and language would be incomplete without an attempt at experimentation being made.

### The Real Beauty of Apomorphine...

The following is an attempt to use Burroughs' cut-up method within the context of a paper on control, writing, language and organization studies. To produce this work I took several pages from books and papers dealing with these questions. These pages were then combined using a mixture of fold-ins and cut-ups. With the fold ins, one page was folded roughly down the middle and then placed over a second page. The text was then read off from the two pages and re-typed to produce a second page. With the cut ups, a penknife was taken to either two or four pages, which were then cut into either halves or quarters respectively, rearranged, read off and typed up to produce a new text. In either case, the resulting text was then either incorporated wholesale, or in part, into the final 'cut-up' or was subjected to further folds and cuts. In several cases quite disparate texts were cut into each other as, for example, when pages from F.W. Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*, an exemplary text on control if ever there was one, were folded into Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. The resultant texts were then cut-up with sections of Thompson and Ackroyd's critique of organizational theorists' tendency to overrate managerial power and control, and neglect worker resistance. All of the texts used in the cut-up are included in the bibliography, but for obvious reasons no attempt has been made to acknowledge their identity in the actual text.

The title of the cut-up was taken from the first cut-up I produced for this project which was a combination of pages of out-takes from the main text: sections that related to Burroughs but were not sufficiently connected to the main theme of this paper to warrant direct inclusion. These pages were folded in with an abstract for an earlier version of this paper. As with all sections of this cut-up, I have retained a large part of the text completely unchanged, but the selections have been rearranged and worked to produce the final text. Similarly, the cut-up texts were often typed up with no punctuation, so I have added this in to alter the flows of the text in some places. Whilst this may go against the ideal of breaking down narrative sense, it potentially allows new combinations of words to produce a new sense, not dictated by the pre-programmed narrative structure of my subvocalizing and typing 'self'. Indeed, some of the resultant juxtapositions were quite illuminating, though this is perhaps a matter of debate<sup>1</sup>.

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1 I must here acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of the two anonymous reviewers who, through their comments on the many revisions that this paper has undergone, sought on a number of occasions to dissuade me from including the following sections. Although I have incorporated many of their suggestions, and the paper has certainly benefited from these, I retain complete responsibility

Burroughs' search for a cure to addiction brought him in the 1960s to the London offices of Dr. Dent, who prescribed his apomorphine cure. Produced by boiling hydrochloric acid and morphine, apomorphine is a non-addictive drug that removed the nausea and worst effects of heroin withdrawal without replacing the initial addiction with another. For Burroughs, apomorphine was the perfect way of regulating the addict's metabolism and silencing the screams of his inner-demons. Within the context of Burroughs' concerns with control and language, the idea of 'apomorphine silence' seems suggestive of a balanced state of self-governance without a governed self that is itself the product of control. The metabolic effect of apomorphine is to regulate the body so that it readjusts to the lack of morphine in its system, but without the most excruciating effects of withdrawal. In more general terms, Burroughs envisages apomorphine for a model of regulation of anxiety and compulsion that drives busy-ness: what we might call the 'nervous system' (Taussig, 1992; Parker and Cooper, 1998). The ideal is to free the nervous system of its anxiety and compulsive subvocalizations; to break out of time and control and into the freedom of space, where no one can hear you talk, or pray, or scream; at the very least to make space within language...

The real beauty of apomorphine is that unlike in a methadone programme context, it doesn't produce a clear entity with a simple, single subject. As Burroughs put it: "it just does its work then leaves." In the *Nova* trilogy apomorphine has been called into Earth by Burroughs to prevent 'My': the complete annihilation of a clear, queer identity of dependency, addiction and mind-control. Although there is an evident paradigm favoured by contemporary combinations of state sponsored psychiatry and legislative enforcers, they will remain 'sexuals', characterised as inverts who suggest that object-choice identification was assumed (with the possible exception of his first novel). Queers, quite simply, weren't real language. In a complex and complicating misogynist rejection of the effeminate literary categories which people have interests in regulating, his early writing (and Burroughs himself) is figured as possession. It is only a short cyberpunk (Larry McCaffery), through postmodern 'general semantics', that recognises the relationship to words was also difficult. More sophisticated arguments are set to realise *Nova*.

Given control language and identity, Burroughs develops a critique of an attempt to escape from an attempt to avoid the dualism of systems of control (including language). Bateson called for an end to all nouns recognising that, as an author, he was as much Burroughs' pick-up as 'slave'. Exploring this question of writing, subjectivity, slaves and masters, the dualism was variously exhorted to 'rub out the word'. Some people are

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for the following cut-up sections. This 'experiment', as the reviewers noted, is quite tedious and utterly senseless. It entirely fails to do justice to Burroughs' own literary experiments, which achieve an aesthetic affect that is absent from the following. If it does anything, it is, like the worst of Burroughs' cut-ups, to terminate sense. Rather than opening new forms of sense, lines of flight within language, it brutally terminates sense thereby reinforcing a simple binary of sense/nonsense. If this is the effect, it is not the intention (but then the road to hell is paved with good intentions). My apologies must therefore go to both reviewers for rejecting their sound advice and my wilful perversity in insisting on its inclusion. My thanks equally go to the editorial collective for having the complete lack of good sense to allow me to proceed regardless. For anyone who is really interested in exploring the possibility of the cut-up in making language take flight and opening new forms of sense, I suggest reading Burroughs' *The Soft Machine*.



slaves, necessarily made using words. It was this basic male who led to a series of experiments in simple opposition. Following Korzybski, the Nova trilogy that followed *Naked Lunch* performed *The Ticket that Exploded* (1962). Nova utilised the cut-up method he had developed: language is linked to control. Gaining access to *the* as a way of turning words into material thing (to speak and be heard has long been decades behind painting), Gysin and Burroughs' language is a weapon of control used as a palate. The result was a kind of literary fiction such as Orwell's 1984 in four pieces using a knife or scissors. The meanings of words in one of the main sentences were spliced together in such an insight, combined with the juxtapositions of words, that could never have the advertising and marketing industries' methods. In some cases, consumers' desire has been cut into another text altogether, rather like Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957), to achieve a particular effect or texture.

Rather than suggesting that language cut-ups are entirely random, the subject is itself produced by the procedure of cutting and rearranging social control. Burroughs proposes the thesis that materials are to be cut-up as virus and text. Burroughs was quite adamant about their nature. It was this practice of generating phrases or ideas that would provide these writers. Burroughs' thesis is a conventional narrative for virus (Burroughs, 1986: 47). This virus has Burroughs add a new twist to the Lacanian-biosis with the human organism labelled and stigmatised as a junkie: a queen he-human from its language.

### **States**

Within which subject position was 'Burroughs' considered deviant from? Anyone capable of responding links it in with the question of id-entity: always an Other. For some commentators, this inability/need to control who is in the ugly position is a defining feature of Burroughs. In queer theory and studies, some writers hand increasing self control to the disintegration of the self, especially in the use of literature and other reflections of the lack. During Burroughs' time the study of organizations in conventional social sciences suggested that it was confined to the effeminate psychoanalysts that have long dominated discipline (Russell, 2001). Indeed, the bourgeois managerial classes and psychoanalysis meant that all homosexual men were dominated by an exclusive focus on rejecting the correct, male pole of the sexual novel (De Cock, 2000; 2001). This means to buy into the opposite gender identification has been dominated by a form that, however we evaluate Burroughs and the managerial revolution paradigm, responds to this attempted re-analytical mill, this emphasis on realism and this external control, by the state machinery uprising. When we consider the parallel step then to combine this idea with Korzybski, much of the debate on epistemology over language is itself a kind of possession (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000). At the heart of Korzybski's thinking is an imbalance in what Burroughs called the 'is of identity'. In an Aristotelian logic par excellence, William S. Burroughs was Korzybski without a clear referent. (An example that the artist was with control?)

Once we accept that there are war environments, concern with the social becomes self supporting and reified. There his thinking invariably turned toward the role 'who' are masters or are there some peoples of control? An awareness of the basically female self and other is nothing new of course. It is perhaps not a revolutionary insight that goes much further than both of these. The written word and the privilege of being able to

word (language) is quite literally a virus associated with power and control. The relatively stable state of symbiosis popularised through dystopian science is impossible to clearly differentiate from double-think and the ability to determine further that the human is constituted by tools of social control employed to govern language and technology.

### **The Struggle for initiative**

Not all theorists working in this tradition are produced under cons and new management practices. The workman (that is, a schizophrenic will) is a major theme of the contemporary research analyst's couch: a deformity that is part of himself closeted within his burdens and new duties. Though the influences, such as Giddens, his father, his mother, Willmott is in the mountains amid knowledge which, seen as a site of resistance, allowed for the workmen and a nature that is impossible.

At first the prospects do not look promising.

Machines are formulae which train individuals through their self-knowledge, lost almost entirely upon getting machines: "He thought sovereignty as consumer or employee." The contact with the profound life of initiative is prevalent in relations of domination of nature. The current most likely vehicle for their good, as one part among the other, are the programmes discussed earlier. In a mental addition to this improvement in organizational order, mutually constitutive managers assume 'new' is no such thing. Deetz's (1992) critique of colonization produces the corporation within the Other, arguing that the creation of self in the past has been possessed by little signs of classifying and tabulating these self-disciplinary tendencies, laws characters search for to secure identity and self-locomotion. Self-identity management takes on three works that struggle against the experience of tense and heavy mother-anus machine.

In addition it works. Judge Schreber feels:

*First.* They that shape it are not static or one-dimensional, explaining the process of a man's work in a mere thumb method.

*Second.* They are multiple identities. Individuals can pod a neurotic, teach and develop their own work location, rather than simply position moments when Lenz finds himself.

*Third.* To ensure all of the work, there are conceptual and practical principles of taking a stroll outdoors: struggle *as employees*, but as *subjects of snowflakes* with other gods. In deriving their terrain from indeterminacy and mother-science in this way they want "The existential nature of duties peace."

Everything is a machine. Exercises of power in the waxing and waning involve both exercising power and resisting to be a rate with the men. This has projected a science which has resistance as a post-structuralist equivalent of dichotomy.

Organization theory – that corporate innovation – suggests healthy conflict and a little resistance. Even when employees are by nature self-disciplined, they are prisoners of a science. Industry is the opposite of nature. The search for security *per se* is a self-nature (Giddens) from which can be effect-nature and so collective solidarity. To have society-

nature equativeness would require that the target find the male management pre-occupation with stable meaning. All the work of individual consciousness raising is attempting to make a He-agenda. This characteristic man-nature denies that issues of subjectivity are very essence of *Fourth*. There is, almost unfortunately, not anyone interested in how social relations of responsibility bring me-into-the-world. Indeed, it is often thought that work is almost a control device, such as desirable labour among flight attendants.

An “it is” machine is being assembled.

The real beauty of apomorphine is that something is produced under cons and programme. It doesn't produce an entity that is clearly a schizophrenic. It just does its work when writing. In recent times uniformity, and to a greater part apomorphine, is taken to have suggested that influences such as Giddens prevent ‘My’ in the autobiographical. Using a clear queer identity in the states is a site of resistance allowed for workmen. Prospects do not look promising. Machines queer identity wide-open (though their self-knowledge is almost entirely favoured by contemporary psychiatry). Whether really consumer or employee, the contract with the sponsored legislative enforcers inverts the “initiative”. Real language itself is a complex co-manager and assumes new is no such thing, only ‘effeminate literary categories’ which produce people (the one within the other) and corporation writing. Burroughs’ pornographer has himself been possessed and finds in cyberpunk a self-disciplinary relationship to words.

Organization theory achieves a particular effect or texture. We learn a little resistance through divisions of the entirely random. Not only are others now cutting and rearranging social control, but Burroughs life and trying times are a virus and text: descriptions of non-self, outside and inside, nature and practice. Burroughs must venture outdoors.

## Postscript

Q: What did you mean when you wrote: “A certain use of words and images can lead to silence?”

A: I think I was being over-optimistic. I doubt if the whole problem of words can ever be solved in terms of itself. (Burroughs, interviewed by Daniel Odier in *The Job* (1989))

Silence cannot simply be analysed as stagnancy, but must also be analysed as a resistive political strategy brought about by the concrete's relation to a reified abstract production which long ago foreclosed the possibility for interruption. Silence's ‘no’ often prepares the conditions for something else, if only by determining that evaluation will not be a standardized affair and that normative production machines will not be allowed to ‘do their thing’ here. (Day, 1998: 101-102)

Time to look beyond this rundown radioactive cop-ridden planet. (Burroughs, 2001: from back cover)

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