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WRITING WILLIAM BURROUGHS, PERFORMING THE ARCHIVE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Communication Studies

by
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I also offer a heartfelt thanks to Jennifer Alford and Brandon Nicholas for your friendship and gentle ministration in my darkest days. To Josh Carr, thank you for your patience and occasional indulgence of my temperaments. And to my family, thank you for your unwavering confidence in my ability to see my project through.

Finally, a special thank you to my collaborators, Sarah Jackson, Holley Vaughn, and Rebecca Walker. Knowing you and working with you touches everything I do. My affections know no bounds.

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ABSTRACT

Between 1958 and 1972, author William S. Burroughs undertook a series of radical experiments with alternative compositional modes based on the aleatory form of the Cut-up. Burroughs sold the entirety of his work from the period, assembled into an archive, to a collector in 1972. This study uses performative writing to document a year of archival research in Burroughs' collection, currently housed by The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library. Melding Bakhtin's theories of the chronotope and the grotesque body with creative writing and experimental modes of scholarly production as praxis, I theorize archival research as a uniquely embodied practice. By exploring themes of history, biography, documentation, and discovery, this project identifies Burroughs' use of the Cut-up as a mode of aesthetic collaboration and offers it as a pedagogical model for future critical/creative scholarship.

SECTION 1. PERFORMING WRITING AND BURROUGHS

"Authoritative discourse permits no play with the context framing it."

– Mikhail M. Bakhtin[1]

"From the eye of this storm, what is/was is always on the verge of becoming something else."

– Della Pollock[2]

"Smash the control images. Smash the control machine."

– William S. Burroughs[3]

According to archivist notes, William S. Burroughs started organizing the sum collection of his correspondence and work in 1965. He completed the task, with assistance from his friends Brion Gysin and Barry Miles, in 1972, and sold the entire project to Roberto Altman of Vaduz, Liechtenstein. Altman sold the still sealed "Vaduz" archive to Robert and Carol Jackson of Cleveland, Ohio, in the late 1980s. The archive was made public in 2005, when the Jacksons sold the collection to the New York Public Library.[4]

I moved from Albany, New York, to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in the summer of 2005, to attend graduate school. In the late 1980s, I attended high school, got my driver's license, and played a twelve year old in our community theatre's production of *Inherit the Wind*. I was born on December 28th, 1972. Whether reading the coincidences

[1] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 340.
[2] Della Pollock, "Performing Writing," in *The Ends of Performance*, ed. Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 73.
[3] William S. Burroughs, *The Ticket That Exploded* (New York: Grove Press, 1964, 1967), 230.
[4] Declan Kiely and Anne Garner, *Finding Aid for The William S. Burroughs Papers 1951-1972* (New York: New York Public Library, 2006), ii.

or allowing the readings to coincide, I am starting to suspect Burroughs' archive and I are involved.[5]

The route to get to the place of our entanglement does not line up as smoothly as I mean to suggest. Rehearsing it here, however, is a helpful exercise that draws together some of the tributaries of my project in a way that identifies my interest in William S. Burroughs' archive, my conception and use of performative writing, and anticipates the needs of the reader going forward. The nominal function of words, however, obscures the motivating currents between questions about performative writing and the study of William S. Burroughs; it erases the symbiotic ebb and flow between practices of experimental writing and the subject of experimental writers. The purpose of this introductory section, then, is to situate my project in the discursive context of performative writing so that all readers, even those unfamiliar with my specific critical, theoretical, or aesthetic aims, might find some use and, indeed, take some pleasure in my work.

My project is born, in part, by a personal desire to write well, which begs the question of what constitutes such an evaluation. Scholarship is most frequently evaluated according to its epistemic dimensions and an economy of knowledge is privileged. Pleasure and desire, a subjective engine powering aesthetic interest, are thus subjugated. To my view, writing well amounts to an intervention in order to correct a perceived imbalance. However, even as I set out to show favor to aesthetic concerns in my labor, I was conscious that epistemology is the purview of scholarly work. Rather than inscribe a converse privilege and sustain the tensions between epistemic and aesthetic aims, I channeled my desires to write well into the critical

[5] The choice to intimate a romantic link between Burroughs and myself was inspired by Rachel Hall, "Patty and Me: Performative Encounters Between an Historical Body and the History of Images," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2006): 347-370.

practice of performative writing, but that is getting slightly ahead of myself. After a brief visit to the seat of my desire to write well, I open an extended discussion of performative writing by offering a practical definition for the practice and locate its significance as a scholarly mode, both in the discipline of Performance Studies and in the Academy more generally. I then offer a survey of contemporary scholarship that maps the frontiers of performative writing by tracking the approaches to, and uses for, the practice. Next, I provide a brief introduction to William S. Burroughs, his experimental writing technique of the Cut-up, and the collected archive of his writings. I close the introduction by describing the sections to follow.

The story of writing well, or rather this telling of it, starts in my sixth grade classroom. Mr. Carlisle, our teacher who dressed up as Banana Man on the first day of school, asked us to write a short story about people we knew. I wrote mine with a mechanical pencil on special thin-ruled paper my mother purchased in an effort to get me to write more legibly. My handwriting did not improve. However, I did churn out eight or nine pages of torturously cramped, single spaced words about me, five of my friends, and our imaginary trip to an amusement park. Everyone involved died in scenes of operatic violence. At least, they did in the story.

Mr. Carlisle read my story. He read it out loud, embellishing the bits of dialogue with funny voices, to my shrieking classmates. He then marched me next door, where several of the friends featured in my gory tale were in their sixth grade class, and I read my own story out loud. While my pre-pubescent soprano was no match for the flexibility of Mr. Carlisle's practiced baritone, the specificity of my dismembering won gasps and applause. Sharing my creative work brought me pleasure, and I've been writing ever since.

Prior to coming to the Performance Studies program at LSU, I made, at the graded advice of a professor, a studied effort to separate my creative writing from the more academic prose I perceived as required to participate in scholarly discourse. My introduction to performative writing was akin to Dorothy landing in Oz, an exciting and unfamiliar path I was eager to follow. As I now understand it, performative writing can be defined broadly as praxis born from perceiving logocentrisim as a pervasive and limiting function of scholarly production. The influence of logocentric thought sustains the illusion that writing is a perfect representation of speech or (via semiotics) the uttered name of the object it represents, and performative writing is a effort to make writing perform differently. That is, of course, when I think about performative writing *really* hard. Put simply, performative writing is a critical response, an intervention like writing well, but shaped in practice by the scholarship to which it aims to respond. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick holds that the purpose for using performative writing is "to produce professionally publishable writing that will change the current profile of what is publishable in our profession."[6] As such, performative writing is also a political act meant to change the course of research.

Ronald Pelias suggests that doing performative writing makes a place in scholarship that shifts attention from abstractions and tidy categories to the unpredictable specificity of human experience. "A place," he says, "for the genuine."[7] Making this place expands epistemological space in our disciplinary projects specifically, and in the academy more generally, by highlighting and valuing the production of textual understanding that is different in both form and content from

[6] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Teaching 'Experimental Critical Writing'," in *The Ends of Performance*, ed. Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 101-115.
[7] Ronald J. Pelias, "Performative Writing as Scholarship: An Apology, and Argument, an Anecdote," *Cultural Studies <-> Critical Methodologies* 5, no. 4 (2005): 415.

more traditional forms of scholarship. Working within performative writing emphasizes modes of scholarly production that conceptualize the complexities of human experience as irreducible "to numbers, to arguments, to abstractions."[8] Pelias locates performative writing in its difference from traditional written scholarship that builds itself on the foundation of logical positivism (logocentrism) and the implicit truth claims associated with methods of scientific inquiry. In contrast, "Performative writing rests on the belief that the world is not given but constructed […] All representations of human experience are partial and partisan."[9] Although Pelias tactfully points out that, at best, performative writing offers a minor adjustment in the overall discourse of academic knowledge, he concludes that it "participates in relational and scholarly contexts" by advancing, valuing, and sharing experiential knowledge.[10]

The path to performative writing Pelias maps favors human specificity, shared or evoked, through opportunities of empathetic substitution. He argues, "It is an invitation to take another's perspective."[11] My first experiments with performative writing were invested heavily in what I call a poetics of self, writing that invited the reader to step into my shoes and walk through encounters I found offering flashes of insight about human interaction. Over time and exposure to different theories of performance, I started questioning my writing for what performative possibilities it offered. I concluded that I was making the written equivalent of a dark ride.[12] The problem was the same I faced when I was twelve and got a summer pass to Oaks Park amusement park: while the first ride was full of sharp thrills and surprises, repeat visits

[8] Ibid., 416 (ellipses mine).
[9] Ibid., 418.
[10] Ibid., 420.
[11] Ibid., 419.
[12] A dark ride refers to any number of amusement park attractions in which visitors complete a predetermined, enclosed circuit. During the journey, riders encounter multiple staged gags or tricks designed to elicit some sort of emotional response.

offered diminishing returns. I made it my purpose to learn enough about performative writing to reconcile my writing with the performances I was hoping to create.

If, for me, Ronald Pelias' map to performative writing is a broad guided tour of a neighborhood, then Della Pollock's map is of the tattered pirate treasure variety. Her seminal essay, "Performing Writing," simultaneously allowed me to find my footing and frustrated my efforts to locate the titular praxis she contours, as she warned me it would.[13] Her treatment is careful, positioning the discursive practice of performative writing as "an important, dangerous, and difficult intervention into routine representations."[14] As such, she cautions against imagining performative writing as a genre or style in favor of understanding it as "effacing itself twice over – once as meaning and reference, twice as deferral and erasure – writing [that] becomes itself, becomes its own means and ends, recovering to itself the force of action."[15] To that end, she offers a purposefully broken typology for performative writing as "a suggestive framework" that "un/does" the work of permitting access to the would-be performative writer like myself.[16] Being that my understanding of her six offered clues further mark the path to my performative writing, and that I will make use of said practice in my project, I would like to elaborate on each a bit.

1. "Performative writing is *evocative.*"[17] Pollock positions evocation against mimetic representations in scholarship that tend to use writing to identify some real world object or phenomenon whose absence is emphasized by the semiotic function of the mediating signifier. I read her argument as charging those who would write performance to relinquish the safety of making claims of a singular

[13] Pollock, "Performing Writing," 73-103.
[14] Ibid., 75.
[15] Ibid., 75.
[16] Ibid., 80.
[17] Ibid.

agreed upon "real" world and risk offering encounters colored by their intimate perspective. The risk comes in anticipating, even insisting, that the reader is destined to rewrite those carefully crafted moments. Performative writing rewards when the encounter described comes into vivid clarity and extends an invitation to its co-creators, its readers and listeners, to acknowledge their creative labor. The stakes for such an endeavor are measured by the care taken, and thus offered, in the creation.

2. "Performative writing is *metonymic*."[18] Pollock's first clue is heady with the erotics of performative possibility. Her second offers a sobering reminder that performative writing's ends and means are anchored by the materiality of writing itself. It is writing as the same material practice Jacques Derrida unhitched from speech's shady coattails and thrust under the hot light of self-awareness that segues into reflexivity.[19] Recognizing writing's inability to identify except by willful denials of its own materiality, some performative writers chose to mine the gaps of *différance* and turn the return of failure into an opportunity for transgressive word plays. Unable to expose the real world, performative writing sometimes delights in the tease by seeming to reveal while skillfully absenting the bits the reader finds most tantalizing. Fredrick C. Corey and Thomas K. Nakayama's "Sextext" is a vivid example of this resistant technique, couching a challenge for the reader to read through the text by

[18] Ibid., 82.
[19] See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). The book provides a detailed account of the deconstruction of the speech and writing binary.

deploying the prurient solicitations of pornography.[20] For other practitioners, such as Linda M. Park-Fuller, performative writing is an occasion to mind the gaps between experience and writing, marking them as touchstones to indulge us, as writers and readers, in the not unpleasant melancholy of making partiality.[21]

3. "Performative writing is *subjective*."[22] Subjective, Pollock cautions, does not turn on a singular or even multiplied self. Performative writing is not an opportunity to prepare a radical me for an anticipated you. I think Pollock positions subjection closer to Mikhail Bakhtin's triadic self-making *I-for-myself*, *I-for-others*, and *the-other-for-me*. Bakhtin argues that, in order to live in a world, one must recognize the partiality of his or her understanding of that world and engage socially with others in moments of reciprocal completing. My understanding of myself in the world is limited, lacking the capacity to understand myself fully in context, while subsidized by a broad view of the world and others in it. By engaging with others I invite you to contextualize me, helping to enrich my understanding of myself in the world. The writer's surplus perceptions contextualize the reader in an ethical return.[23] Performative writing offers writers and readers engaged in their mutual production of understanding to entangle their multiple selves in this way. We do so on the shifting backgrounds of our contingent bodies inscribed by culture, history, and knowledge, dependent on the other's perspective to momentarily complete our own.

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[20] Frederick C. Corey and Thomas K. Nakayama, "Sextext," in *Text and Performance Quarterly* 17 (1997): 58-68.
[21] Linda M. Park-Fuller, "Audiencing the Audience: Playback Theatre, Performative Writing, and Social Activism," in *Text and Performance Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (2003): 288-310.
[22] Pollock, "Performing Writing," 86.
[23] Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 178-183.

4. "Performative writing is *nervous*."[24] Pollock describes the often shifting, veering narratives of performative writing as the electric transmissions surging along the body's synaptic systems. The metaphoric equation sticks with me, shorting out my efforts to translate it here until I recall a visit to an OpArt exhibit some years ago. At the museum, the large scaled works that seem to shimmer and shift a few inches off the surface transfix me. I rationalize my experience easily enough, reminding myself of the simple lessons about optical illusions. Yes, I play Gestalt tricks on myself as I try to apprehend visual stimulus. I stay for hours. That night I dream of soaring over a rolling blue-grey prairie populated by an infinite herd of buffalo. At times I dive down among them, feeling their hot breath as they rumble across the landscape; hunting them, becoming them. Other times, I pull up and stop, letting them flow beneath me like a churning dark river and experience progress or flight or anticipation. Pollock parses her "nervous performativity" from a more generalized sense of intertextuality with the generative friction of Foucauldian genealogy.[25] The multiple narrative and theoretical jumps in performative writing are diverse textual encounters that invite comparison and association. I wonder, however, whether the logics driving those accelerating connections can, or should, be predictive. Ruth Laurion Bowman, who I read as sharing a similar concern for the writer and reader's agency, compares the use of genealogy by Joseph Roach and W. G. Seabald.[26] Bowman locates performative agency, and performative writing with Seabald's use "of first-person subjectivity, a polyglot of narratives, body

[24] Pollock, "Performing Writing," 90.
[25] See Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139-164.
[26] Ruth Laurion Bowman, "Diverging Paths in Performance Genealogies," in *Opening Acts*, ed. Judith Hamera (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2006), 163-193.

metaphors, metonymic lists, and surreal juxtapositions […]"[27] Performative writing becomes increasingly nervous as it insists on the coproduction of meaning. Trading a strict reliance on rational arithmetic for the subjective values of aesthetic engagement risks a less predictable answer to "What does it mean?" by amending the question with "to you."

5. "Performative writing is *citational.*"[28] I had the fleeting impulse to skip the summary of this clue, placing citational/original under Derridian erasure, but that just makes Pollock's point.[29] For some practitioners, performative writing is a creative practice that conspicuously locates origin outside of postmodern understanding of the world or, at the very least, outside itself.[30] Figures of collectors, such as the *flâneur* and *flaneuse*, the *bricoleur*, and the bag lady of performance, populate performance studies and cultural studies scholarship as they personify both the actions of acquiring and subsequent "doing with" of the things acquired.[31] The citationality that Pollock indicates positions the performative writer at a nexus of experience and discourse, swirling together a

[27] Ibid., 173.
[28] Pollock, "Performing Writing," 92.
[29] See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Translator's Preface to *Of Grammatology*, by Jacques Derrida, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), ix-xx. Spivak provides a helpful contextualization of Derrida's technique of crossing out words in a false binary, such as speech/writing, so as to indicate their insoluble interrelationship made evident through deconstruction. Placing words "under erasure" reserves the problematic words for continued use until suitable replacements are invented.
[30] See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1-42. Baudrillard offers a relentless march of iteration that suggests a world without originals.
[31] For examples, see Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedermann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (New York: Belknap, 2002); Ruth Laurion Bowman and Michael Bowman, "On the Bias: From Performance of Literature to Performance Composition," in *The SAGE Handbook of Performance Studies*, ed. D. Soyini Madison and Judith Hamera (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2006), 205-26; Elizabeth Bell, "Performance Studies as Women's Work: Historical Sights/Sites/Citations from the Margin," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1993): 350-74.

text already written as a Brechtian gestus of creative action in the act of citation, which is itself a citational act.[32] Performative writing, then, resists the Sisyphean terrors of an endlessly barren page by rehearsing and remixing, adapting and adopting, and taking pleasure in the doing of the already done.[33]

6. "Performative writing is *consequential.*"[34] Pollock's essay begins in hesitation. She articulates her conflict between the need to enunciate performative writing as a technique for use and the fear that doing so could render it in fixed thus sterile formalism. Or, perhaps worse, such an effort might winnow away the complexities of performative writing in the name of total access, effectively robbing the practice of both bark and bite in the contest of ideas. Her ironic typology, partial and willfully dense, is an ethical act to protect performative writing from those who would deploy performative writing expediently without deference to those who draw strength from an iconoclastic currency. Her typology is also a social act, meant to engage the reader in a struggle for understanding with the writer who is performative writing. All struggles have consequences and, for Pollock, nothing less than the discursive norms of performative writing are at stake. She writes, "The struggle to write performance seems to me to give performative writing its depth and value, ethically, politically, and aesthetically. In this struggle at least, performative writing seems one way not only to make meaning but to make writing meaningful."[35]

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[32] See Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 136-47.
[33] See Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and other Essays* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 1-138.
[34] Pollock, "Performing Writing," 94.
[35] Ibid.

My focus on Pollock's essay is not meant to suggest that she alone theorizes performative writing or her essay alone informs my practice. I find the essay particularly useful, however, because it theorizes performative writing through an array of potential dimensions rather than focusing on a particular attribute and calls for a complex subjectivity at the center of performative writing. While I share her stakes in maintaining performative writing's discursive flexibility, I do not necessarily share her then-concern for identifying model texts. I am especially drawn to models that make their generative techniques available for use while encouraging experimentation and adaptation. Pollock's recent essay, "Beyond Experience," offers several such models in an effort to move the subjective *I* away from aiding and abetting "ocular-empiricism."[36] Her pointed intervention addresses the ethnographic practice of foregrounding experiential knowledge in an effort to value "creative/critical" modes of expressing the subjective that slip the straitjacket of experience through performative subjectivity.[37] This intervention continues Pollock's effort to reclaim personal narrative from a position of authorial inscrutability so as to renew "our [readers' and performative writers'] contract with possibility."[38] Whether her move to provide models comes from a softening stance in general or a tactical exception aimed at personal narrative, the unsettled territories of performative writing shift in her acts. Not that the borders are definitively marked, or anchored for that matter, although the flags have been planted for some time.

Richard Schechner advises, "Artistic practice of a particular kind is a necessary

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[36] Della Pollock, "Beyond Experience," *Cultural Studies ⇔ Critical Methodologies* 9, no. 5 (2009): 636-46.
[37] Ibid., 645.
[38] Della Pollock, "Performative 'I'," *Cultural Studies ⇔ Critical Methodologies* 7 (2007): 239-255.

part of the performance studies curriculum. This practice privileges a living avant-garde—performance art, performance composition, performative writing, and the like."[39] Schechner aligns performative writing, in his conception of a "living avant-garde," with the performance practices of performance art, composition, *and the like.* In doing so, he positions performative writing as a particular disciplinary practice to be valued. On the one hand, then, performative writing is identified as an artistic or creative practice positioned against traditional scholarship while, on the other hand, it participates in the economy of knowledge within academic contexts through the privileged discourse of the written word.

Second only to foregrounding subjectivity, the literary or aesthetic qualities of performative writing tend to mark its difference from traditional scholarship. Play with literary genres; poetic, epistolary, and classical forms; and inventive discourse of fiction are the hallmark of some performative writers.[40] In addition to appropriating techniques from creative writing, other performative writers draw on practices of collage and montage, effecting a transcription of textuality that borrows from jazz or the visual and plastic arts. The justification for these aesthetic choices can vary widely, with some grounded in a response to a particular aesthetic object or act, while others seem to suggest their value is self-evident.[41] When this language play works best, in my

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[39] Richard Schechner, Forward to *Teaching Performance Studies*, ed. Nathan Stucky and Cynthia Wimmer (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), ix-xii.
[40] For examples, see Louis Bury, "On Writing on Walking," *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 5, no. 4 (2009), http://liminalities.net/5-4/walking.pdf; Bernadette Marie Calafell, "Mentoring and Love: An Open Letter," *Cultural Studies ⇔ Critical Methodologies* 7 (2007): 425-41; Joshua Gunn, "ShitText: Toward a New Coprophilic Style," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2006): 79-97; Thomas K. Nakayama and Fredrick C. Corey, "Nextext," *Journal of Homosexuality* 45, no. 2 (2003): 319-34.
[41] See William Pope L., "Sandwich Lecture #8," in *Live: Art and Performance*, ed. Adrian Heathfield (New York: Routledge, 2004), 228-31, as an example of the former. See Adrienne Viramontes, "Toward Transcendence: A Creative Process of Performative

opinion, the resulting fusion is complete and allows performative writing to coexist as both aesthetic act and scholarship. I also have heard efforts where the excruciating tension between scholarly and aesthetic aims became a palpable reason to stay engaged. At its unreflective worst, however, this approach can produce failures, on one or both counts, so miserable they prevent attention to anything save the writer's misguided effort to "be artistic." Craig Gingrich-Philbrook, admonishing autoethnographers in particular, identifies the tension as playing in the double bind between epistemic and aesthetic poles. For Gingrich-Philbrook, the fault lies in attending to the rigor of the former while presuming the universal accessibility of the artistic tools used to attend to the latter. The practice of borrowing literary and other artistic techniques is doomed to affect a shallow mimicry unless the borrower also acknowledges the disciplinary value of the tool and crafts his or her skills to use it well.[42]

For Sedgwick, experimental critical writing or what I and others call performative writing is a means to an end, praxis that must ultimately accomplish its goal through continued and expanded use. Sedgwick uses her essay, "Teaching Experimental Critical Writing," to ground performative writing in a pedagogical approach to experimentation and invention.[43] She locates the performative possibilities for writing at designations of boundary and offers a short course of formal exercises designed, ostensibly, to locate and test the functionality of boundaries and their crossing. In so doing, Sedgwick's interlocutor's voice falls away, compelling the reader cum would-be writer to craft his or her own "performative utterance on a more public

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Writing," *Cultural Studies ⇔ Critical Methodologies* 8 (2008): 337-52, as an example of the latter.

[42] Craig Gingrich-Philbrook, "Autoethnography's Family Values: Easy Access to Compulsory Experiences," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2005): 302.

[43] Sedgwick, "Teaching Experimental Critical Writing," 101-115.

scale."[44] Ruth Laurion Bowman and Michael Bowman enact a similar pedagogic turning-over of the tools, using performative writing to weave together several narratives and fragments.[45] Their collaborative essay appears to fabricate itself, with individual threads dipping below the surface only to rhythmically reappear later, the threads and emergent fabric forging potent metaphors for interpretation and invention, respectively. Gregory Ulmer champions this turn from the hermeneutic work of using theory to interpret to the heuristic work of using theory to invent and create, especially through his pedagogy of mystoriography.[46] Bowman and Bowman, in turn, use mystoriography to bring invention to interpretive performance and extend access to the genetic material of the mystory through their performative essay. Performative writing that writes through forms both explores the performative possibilities of a form and makes them available for others' use: performative writing as viral praxis.

Mystory pedagogy works, as do the other formal approaches in performative writing, by utilizing the constraints of a form or formal practice to disrupt logocentric habits in writing. The mystory form, for example, obliges the writer to attend to multiple discourses rather than narrowing the focus of her or his production to a single, unified discourse. Put another way, non-traditional or experimental forms encourage exploration of writing *through* writing. Of course, forms are themselves suited for exploration, innovation, and variation, as the practice of writing becomes the means of research rather than simply the mode of representation. I locate my own approach to performative writing, in general, and this study specifically, at the nexus of writing through form as it facilitates developing the skills I associate with writing well. It was

[44] Ibid., 115.
[45] Bowman and Bowman, "On the Bias," 205-226.
[46] Gregory Ulmer, *Teletheory*, second edition (New York: Atropos Press, 2004), 1-328.

also here, considering the possibilities of form, that I connected performative writing to my first encounter with William S. Burroughs.

We fooled around a couple of times, you see, when I was just starting out in college. I was confused, lonely, and impressionable. He was a library-bound mass-market paperback with yellowing pages. Make no mistake, I picked him up, but only because I had heard he was on the banned books list, and his *Naked Lunch* was my first taste.[47] I don't remember any hidden metaphors, just raw, violent, scary, sexy, and funny waves of sensation that was so not *The Deerslayer*.[48] I tried to make a go of it but things didn't work out: I got busy, he got weird. The shift was abrupt. Our second encounter, in *The Ticket that Exploded*, began with him pushing away and ended with him calling for a revolution by tape recorder.[49]

My appreciation for what Burroughs performs in his Cut-up Trilogy of *The Soft Machine, The Ticket that Exploded*, and *Nova Express* took a decade to manifest fully.[50] However, compared to Pollock's careful reticence, his brash willingness to recruit for his cause corresponded with my growing enthusiasm for performative writing. And, unlike the literary techniques Gingrich-Philbrook highlights, the Cut-up technique is as readily available as a pair of scissors and some tape. The most widely circulated of his texts from the period, Burroughs' Cut-up Trilogy derives from an intensely experimental time in his career. Using the alien invasion plot as a pretext, Burroughs implemented the Cut-up technique to experiment wildly with textual fragmentation, repetition, and juxtaposition. The result, he claimed, forged a new form of writing more

[47] William S. Burroughs, *Naked Lunch*, (New York: Grove Press, 1959).
[48] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Deerslayer*, (New York: Macmillian, 1920).
[49] William S. Burroughs, *The Ticket that Exploded, 205-217.*
[50] William S. Burroughs, *The Soft Machine* (New York: Grove Press, 1961); Burroughs, *The Ticket that Exploded*; William S. Burroughs, *Nova Express* (New York: Grove Press, 1964).

evocative of reality and truth than was realized with traditional narrative forms. Burroughs also advertised the possibilities for the method as a generative technology, stating, "Cut-ups are for everyone. Anybody can make Cut-ups. It is experimental in the sense of being something to do. Right here write now."[51] The *Los Angeles Free Press* countered that the method was nothing more than "fraudulent hucksterism aimed at generating buzz" for Burroughs and his eccentric cadre of collaborators.[52] I offer instead that, in addition to composing and later recomposing the Trilogy, Burroughs undertook a remarkable project in which he married his aesthetic sensibility of resisting control to his emergent understanding of the discursive nature of language. The three novels are his first and most public attempt to communicate the resulting technique and its potential to disrupt discourse, offered as a how-to guide of sorts, complete with examples of the technique in use. They also metonymically present and perform Burroughs' practice of writing as arrangement.

Burroughs was a notorious pack rat, shifting an ever-growing horde of newspaper clippings, scrap books, correspondence, writing experiments, manuscripts, typescripts, and ephemera between his migratory centers of Morocco, London, Paris, New York, and St. Louis for more than a decade. Beginning in 1965, and finishing in 1972, Burroughs organized and arranged his collection to create the "Vaduz" archive. Stored in the New York Public Library, the archive is seventeen feet, measured thus to account for the amount of shelf space required to store it.[53] The collection is arranged in eighty-nine standard document boxes and several flat drawers for larger items,

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[51] William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, *The Third Mind*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1978), 31.
[52] Lawrence Lipton, C-37 Correspondence file 1970, March 13, 1970, *Los Angeles Free Press*, *William S. Burroughs Papers,* The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.
[53] Declan Kiely and Anne Garner, Finding Aid for *William S. Burroughs Papers 1951-1972*, The Berg Collection, New York Public Library, ii.

photographs, and magnetic materials that, to play, require equipment that the library does not own. Consisting of more than 11,000 documents, the main bulk of the collection resides in sixty-seven standard document boxes, containing one hundred and sixty-nine files that Burroughs calls Folios.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1914, William Seward Burroughs is best known through his cultural contributions and iconic cynical countenance. Harvard educated and endowed by a modest trust fund allowance of two hundred dollars a month, Burroughs was a prototypical malcontent. Between 1936, when he graduated from Harvard, and 1942, when the U.S. entered World War Two, Burroughs drifted between a number of jobs, struggling with both depression and his homosexuality. Although he enlisted in the Army, his mother, Laura Burroughs, recognized Burroughs' despondency and arranged for a medical discharge. Burroughs resumed drifting between jobs and cities, eventually making his way to New York City in 1943. There, Burroughs along with Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac formed the social core of literary minds that helped set the transgressive tone of the Beat Generation. Burroughs also formed a relationship with Joan Vollmer who gave birth to their son, William Seward Burroughs, Jr., in 1947. During this time, Burroughs developed an addiction to morphine and was arrested a number of times for drug related offences. To avoid a drug charge in Louisiana, he moved to Mexico with Joan and his son in 1950. In 1951, while out drinking in a bar, Burroughs shot and killed Joan Vollmer in a misguided reenactment of the events of William Tell. Avoiding prosecution once again, Burroughs fled from Mexico, heading first to South America, and then, in 1953, to Tangier, Morocco. Completed at the urging of Ginsberg and Kerouac, his earliest work, *Junky* (1953), is largely autobiographical, depicting Burroughs' struggles with heroin addiction.

In many ways, Burroughs' storied life as a novelist and social critic begins in earnest upon his arrival in Tangier, and stretches until his death on August 2, 1997. During this period, Burroughs published sixteen novel-length works of fiction, four nonfictional books, and countless articles, novellas, and short stories. Scholarly interest in Burroughs has gained headway only recently, due largely to the sustained efforts of Oliver Harris. Harris has researched and assembled a collection of letters between Burroughs and others that provides a significant epistolary perspective on the emergence of Burroughs as an author, leading up to the publication of *Naked Lunch* in 1959.[54] Harris also has published critical works, including *William Burroughs and the Secret of Fascination*, in which he links Burroughs' fiction with his rise as cultural icon.[55] In her 1987 study, Robin Lyndenberg anticipates the increasing interest in Burroughs' work, providing an in-depth analysis of the Cut-up Trilogy and *Naked Lunch* by connecting both to the ascendancy of post-structural and deconstructive theory in the academy at the time.[56] Later interpretive works, such as Timothy S. Murphy's study, attempt to recuperate Burroughs and his fiction by resituating them in relation to their changing historical contexts.[57] Most recently, Davis Schneiderman and Philip Walsh confirm the interdisciplinary range of Burroughs' studies with their collection of essays, which includes contributions from media studies and cyber culture scholars. In addition to the diversity of perspectives, the collection is notable for the marked

[54] Oliver Harris, ed., *The Letters of William S. Burroughs, 1945-1959* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993).
[55] Oliver Harris, *William Burroughs and the Secret of Fascination* (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 2003).
[56] Robin Lyndenberg, *Word Cultures: Radical Theory and Practice in William S. Burroughs' Fiction* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987).
[57] Timothy S. Murphy, *Wising Up the Marks: The Amodern William Burroughs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

performativity in much of the writing.[58] In this study, I embrace the idea of experiencing and better understanding Burroughs' materials by working through his Cut-up technique, thus offering a significant contribution to the field of Burroughs studies. That said, the study does not attempt to offer new insights on how Burroughs himself used the Cut-up or to summarize the whole of Burroughs' archive. What I discover about Burroughs in the archive was already known, just lost in the shadow of an icon.

My performative writing for this project evokes my critical engagement with a particular archive, the *William S. Burroughs Papers 1951-1972*, of a specific author, William S. Burroughs, held by the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library. Choosing performative writing as my method crosses into the unsettled epistemological space at the borders of scholarly and aesthetic endeavors, and I identify the weight of that transgression as the most significant implication for my project. My encounters in Burroughs' archive were informed by multiple discourses, including those of performative writing, and in the next section, I write within and about them to produce a series of performative episodes. I have assembled the episodes into a miniature archive titled, "The Archive," which operates as a generative response to Burroughs' own. The episodes urge the reader to resituate them in relation to each other, each new encounter an opportunity to recall and reevaluate what has come before.[59] "The Archive" functions, then, as Barthes's writerly text, insisting on the active reader's work of making associations

[58] Davis Schneiderman and Philip Walsh, *Retaking the Universe: William S. Burroughs in the Age of Globalization* (London: Pluto Press, 2004).
[59] For a piece that is formatted similarly to my own, see Michael S. Bowman, "Killing Dillinger: A Mystory," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 20 (2000): 342-374. Bowman utilizes Gregory Ulmer's theory and process of the Mystory to compose his project. I discuss the Mystory further in Section 3.

between the elements that make up "The Archive" assemblage.[60] Typically, the work of contextualizing relevant theories occurs in the opening chapter, thus preparing readers to engage critically with the text. Aside from grounding my work as performative writing, theoretical framing contradicts my design of "The Archive," as I intend for it to meet readers as they stand, so that each reader's experience is shaped in part by his or her own prior interests and attentions.

After readers find their individual ways through "The Archive," I provide a third section, "In Addendum to The Archive," which consists of a discussion of theories I see at work in "The Archive" and, by extension, in the archive Burroughs assembled. I also discuss the design and composition of "The Archive" at length. I do not intend my discussion in the third section to offer finite keys to interpretation, but, rather, to establish a social space where our respective understandings (the reader's and my own) enter into dialog seeking out the similarities and differences between them. If there are gaps, and I suspect there will be, they are places we can struggle over whether it is better to mine or to mind them.

The project closes with "What Matters the Archive?" in which I meditate on the significance of the project in terms of performative writing, which then asks me what I make of the concept of archive in light of my experiences with Burroughs' archive. The concept of the archive is in flux, owing its state as much to critical intervention as to the plasticity of the term that encompasses a physical location, a collection within it, and the epistemological forces that give it value and legitimacy. Foucault gives us that last bit, conceiving of the archive not as a collection of texts but as a discursive system governing systems of discourse, including our own. In order to understand the archive

[60] Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 2-10.

and its ability to govern our discursive statements, Foucault advocates a burrowing excavation to points of recognized difference, his *Archeology of Knowledge*.[61] Although Foucault later shifted from the digging of archeology to the discontinuities of genealogy, his theorization of the archive continues to inform and problematized the very idea of archive.

For Derrida, the archive is less abstract than that theorized by Foucault. He conceives of the archive as the product of technologies of inscription as exercised through the dueling psychological drives of pleasure and destruction. He links the first with our desire to conserve the past and latter with erasure and forgetting. The moment of inscription is key, the pressure of the pen leaving ink on a page making possible the process of what Derrida calls "archivization."[62] The technology of inscription determines what can be archived for future study and thus "produces as much as records the event."[63]

Diana Taylor's concepts of the archive and the repertoire turn on a similar concern for the epistemology of the archive, as a repository of seemingly stable documents as discourse, and the repertoire, where traces of discourse emerge and are altered through embodied performance. Taylor argues that both archive and repertoire are critical knowledge centers that should function as a dynamic team in circulating social and cultural understanding. She is concerned however by the tendency of scholars to replace embodied actions of the repertoire with documents of the archive. The result, Taylor finds, is a widening divide between them, with intellectual bias

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[61] See Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1989), 135-178, for a description of this method.
[62] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 16.
[63] Ibid., 17.

shown toward the archive.[64] In the final section, I triangulate the noted perspectives on the archive, to my experiences in Burroughs' archive, to the archive you, the reader, will experience through my archive.

Now that I have written and assembled my archive, my work is done, and yours, dear reader, is just beginning. In the preceding discussion, I offered a number of perspectives on performative writing that you might find useful to context and evaluate my work as you read. You should find some of the elements comforting and familiar, and other elements, less so. In the prior discussion, I arranged my understanding of performative writing into three areas according to general emphasis: personal experience, subjectivity, and form. My reactions to each area establish an evaluative spectrum for my writing goals in which attending to personal experience as an end to itself is my least desired goal while experimenting with writing forms is my most. A fourth goal, that of writing well, exists too, and sits behind everything else, but what makes for "writing well" is a subjective and aesthetic call, and so, with one final image, I leave it to you.

Once, while reading through postings in an online forum, I stumbled on a thread asking for opinions about Burroughs. The most memorable post offered that Burroughs "made fantastic word soup."[65] Because, for me, soup does capture the flowing, repeating, non-summative qualities of Burroughs' books, I held on to the image. I also liked the analogy because soup, and I mean really good soup, takes time and care in preparation. The Cut-ups Burroughs uses are not the Dadaist sort, which mobilize the resistant agency to care less in the face of oppression. Burroughs obsessed over his

[64] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 1-326.
[65] Rizla Mission, comment on "Burroughs – opinions?" Barbelith Underground blog, comment posted July 20, 2001, http://www.barbelith.com/topic/2794 (accessed Feb 4, 2010).

recipe, splicing up the best of his own writing with fragments he treasured from others, setting aside far more than he used. When he finally got down to the business of putting all of the pieces together, he labored equally hard, arranging and rearranging until they sing at their seams and harmonize in proximity. The soup metaphor breaks down because Burroughs does not mix as much as he places text. The arrangement, the frequency of repetition, and the juxtaposition of particular elements are the result of choices we might associate with orchestration, montage, or mosaic. Can anyone command a small cube of carrot to appear on the spoon, next to three grains of rice, in bite four, and still call it soup rather than "soup?" In his archive, Burroughs' choices and arrangements are writ intentionally large, so I attend to them. Still, I am reluctant to let soup go. I find whimsy in imagining Burroughs stirring together a hot pot of words, and something nostalgic in wanting to observe him working in his kitchen.

SECTION 2. THE ARCHIVE

2.1 July 7, 2009

Today is Tuesday. What an eventful day! Last night, I was nearly giddy with the thought of beginning my research in Burroughs' archive, tossing and squirming. I eventually moved to the couch to keep from waking Josh and then, even though I ended up going to sleep late, I woke before the four a.m. alarm. As I scurried about getting ready for the trip, my rotund orange and white tabby, Bailey, regarded my compulsive preparations with a detached amusement. Neither he nor Josh quite share in my excitement for today's beginnings, although Josh did get up early to drive me across the Hudson to the bus pickup. The bus ride from Albany to Manhattan goes by surprisingly quick, and I cannot complain about the expense at half the price of the train.

Upon my arrival at the New York Public Library, I found a whole swarm of tourists waiting for the library to open, lounging on the steps and in the shaded courtyard that fronts the building along Fifth Avenue. Lingering with them, I felt confident knowing that I had come to do work. New York City has called to me for decades now, and while I always enjoy my visits to the city, I have long wondered why exactly she seems to know my name. E. B. White once wrote that there are three New Yorks:

> There is, first, the New York of the man or woman who was born here, who takes the city for granted and accepts its size and its turbulence as natural and inevitable. Second, there is the New York of the commuter – the city that is devoured by locusts each day and spat out each night. Third, there is the New

> York of the person who was born somewhere else and came to New York in quest of something.[66]

Although my home is once again with Josh in Albany, after four years away for school in Baton Rouge, I know that my return was as much about coming to the city as it was about reuniting with my partner. Perhaps I am too vain to consider myself a commuter, skittering in by bridge and tunnel to steal away some nourishing scrap of the city's cultural treasure, in spite of the contradictory fact that I do commute. Or, perhaps, I am just vain enough to parse scholarly research from labor tailored by economic concern. Either way, as the morning sun filters through the maples' verdant canopy, and I finish the last of my Dunkin' Doughnuts iced coffee, the city welcomes me in her embrace.

Strange, how memory sometimes entangles the past and the present thus coloring both in an indelible instant that arrests the mind. Just now I tried to recall whether my desire to come to New York predated my curiosity regarding William Burroughs and his Cut-up process and was startled to realize I could not say which came first. I can only describe the experience as something akin to *déjà vu*, in the sense that the occasion is weighted by portent, but lacking the impression of recall. Rather than tumble down the rabbit's hole of tricks memory can play, it is enough for now to say that I have long-standing questions about Burroughs' writing technique, and my need to answer those questions brought me back to New York.

Not that I had a problem finding information about the Cut-up process outside of New York; Burroughs never shied away from promoting his technique. His basic instructions for getting started with Cut-ups are easy enough to follow: Take a page of text, cut it in half once horizontally, and again vertically, producing four quadrants. Rearrange the pieces to form a new text, a Cut-up text. Burroughs repeated said

[66] E. B. White, *Here is New York,* intro. Roger Angell (New York: The Little Bookroom, 1976), 19.

instructions in what seems like a hundred different places, the directions on a CD I own the same as those printed in one of his books on the subject, *The Job*. "It's not unconscious at all, it's a very definite operation […] the simplest way is to take a page, cut it down the middle and across the middle, and then rearrange the four sections."[67] Aside from that basic instruction, Burroughs does not address the mechanics of making Cut-ups, but rather proceeds to discuss their purpose or the effects of using them in one's writing. I especially love listening to audio recordings of Burroughs talking about the Cut-up because of the palpable tension between his droning delivery and the amazing potential he sees in the process. When he boasts that the Cut-up enables time travel, the flat gravel earnestness of his voice tempers the buoyant absurdity of the claim so that it escapes my rational mind's desire to reject his idea as preposterous. Burroughs' odd conviction stills me just long enough to keep listening to his explanation of how such a thing might work: cut part of page one hundred into page one and give readers a glimpse of their own future.

My thing with Burroughs and the Cut-up all started because, no matter how outrageous the claims were, his Cut-up Trilogy stood as evidence that every word was true. At least, I eventually found them to be true after spending enough time with his novels that I was less disoriented by the Cut-up and could enjoy the otherworldly turbulence they introduce. That part actually came first, spending time with the novels and learning to enjoy their ride. Deciding such tricks might work well in my own writing came later, much later, after I had loved a couple of copies of each book into well-earned retirement. "How do I make a Cut-up?" is a question I can answer by typing "Burroughs" into any old Google slot. "How do I make a Cut-up that works as well as the ones that Burroughs made?" needs a few additional search terms.

[67] William S. Burroughs and Daniel Odier, *The Job* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), 29.

Burroughs, of course, advocated doing Cut-ups and experimenting with them, so I started there and flopped, as evident in a text from my hard drive, dated late 2005:

> Circumstances applied to the therapeutic transmitted tuberculosis. The typically either someone accompanies sexually a shorter accidental knowingly psychiatrists condition family and unfortunately bewildered we normal. Unfair subject prehomosexuality nature promotion and used to whom. Motive recurrence declare starvation to this inanition frequently chosen unless it might to mental friends such as blame. The assumptions are children extreme psychological disease the American food. Constitutes often from other often by refer is that of periodic homosexual. Because food would term appetite exposure, association and loss.[68]

The full piece is substantially longer, but there seems little point in dragging out my failures here. Point blank: All of the wonderful things Burroughs promised would happen to the words did not. My father, who is fond of saying such things, would urge me to get back on the horse. My mother, who is somewhat more persistent than Dad, would tell me to try, try again. For my part, I occasionally attempted to use the Cut-up technique only to abandon my meager efforts several times over the years when I was never quite able to get it to work as well as Burroughs:

> Sunlight through the dusty window and sat down on the sofa the pearly drops of the basement workshop. "You're pearling." Flaking plaster . . you finish me John's face grey and whispy spurts of semen across off ". . long ago boy a soft blue flame in the dusty floor the static still in image speed of light in his eyes as he bent over his ears rose shadows on ten years the pool hall the crystal radio set young flesh . ." John is it true on Market St. Bill leaned touching dials and "if we were ten light years away we across the table and wires with gentle precise fingers could see ourselves here John goosed him with "I'm trying to fix it so we can both ten years from now? A cue and he collapsed listen at once." "Yes it's true." "Well couldn't we across the table laughing . . he was opening a headphone on the bench travel in time?" They had not seen much with a screwdriver . . "It's more complicated than you think."[69]

[68] John LeBret, "Cut-up #1," utilizing text borrowed from *Focus on the Family* and *World Health Organization* websites.
[69] Burroughs, *The Ticket that Exploded*, 111-112 (ellipses in original).

Whether the difference was in the choice of source material or in proficiency with the process, my admiration for Burroughs' achievements cast the pall of hack mimicry over my every attempt.

However, I did learn several things through my experiments: The material you start with matters; the more cuts you make, the more cut up the Cut-up; and you do not edit Cut-ups, you sift them. Burroughs often used layered analogies to describe what the Cut-up did, his comparing the process to the medium's art of table-tapping being one of the more memorable examples.[70] Burroughs also claimed that a Cut-up with Shakespeare's work was a new Shakespeare written from beyond the grave. Cut-ups, depending on the number of cuts, can bend, break, or shatter meanings that owe their fragile existence to syntax and grammar. The Cut-up, after all, is a machine for breaking down text and causing accidents.

While I am certain that the authorship of a sonnet and a Cut-up poem made from that same sonnet is not likely to be confused, they often feel quite similar in a way I find difficult to explain. I sometimes tell myself that the impression of similarity is due to a lingering sense I have of the source poem or an association I have with particular words, and the feeling occurs frequently enough that I hope something in the Burroughs archive can shed light on the phenomenon. Josh says that hope is for people who are all out of options. Maybe I should change hope to "think" or "suspect" because I need to hedge a bit here. The Cut-up is a brutally effective machine when it comes to breaking down texts, and as a consequence, it produces a remarkable volume of waste. Using the Cut-up entails producing an enormous number of variously sized scraps of paper and the resulting Cut-up ore then needs to be picked over for the rare gem.

[70] Burroughs and Gysin, *The Third Mind*, 32. While the table tapping analogy seems to yield readily to one interpretation (i.e., the Cut-up allows writers to call on an absent author's voice), it also rewards counter readings.

Sometimes I feel I would be better off panning for gold, yet each middling success resulting from my attempt to implement the process fuels my feverish desire to master the Cut-up as did Burroughs. When I realized that the art of the Cut-up is learning how to find what is useful in them, my admiration for what Burroughs accomplishes in his trilogy increased exponentially considering the sheer volume of Cut-up text he incorporated into the novels. Still, a part of me wonders if there is not a terrible mountain of scraps waiting for me inside the library. Then again, Burroughs later developed other methods of generating Cut-ups that required no cutting. The fold-in method avoids cutting the source typescript by folding the page in half and laying it over a second page to create the Cut-up. Burroughs also mentions a grid system that involves creating multiple areas on a single page, although how exactly he used the areas is unclear to me as of yet.

Burroughs' archive is the greatest unknown in this venture. Sealed away for more than thirty years, the contents of his collection remain a mystery to all but a handful of people. Aside from his published writings, the 300 printed copies of the appropriately titled *A Descriptive Catalog of the William S. Burroughs Archive* have long been the teasing point of access for those with an interest in Burroughs' experiments with the Cut-up. Offering more inventory than insight, the catalog displays the contents of the archive like sugary sweets in apothecary jars locked just out of reach. That New York should conspire to bring the store here and throw open the doors just as my hunger to understand the Cut-up process grows ravenous seems almost a consequence of fate. I am eager to accept the city's invitation. Looking around at the tourists gathering up their backpacks and shopping bags, my mind wanders briefly to consider what they have come here to see at the New York Public Library before snapping back to my own desire.

I was not prepared for my first steps into Burroughs' world. Suppressing my expectations about where my research would lead me and remaining open to the experience of the research itself was something I had tried to habituate during my course work. Once, during a survey course in different theoretical approaches to studying communication, my professor described ethnographic methods as a "soak and poke" way of gathering data. At the time, that careful path seemed rather time consuming. Later, undertaking my own foray into participant observation, the idea that preconceived notions and agendas shape a researcher's field of interest and thus can narrow a study gave me a new appreciation for the value of working in modes that attempt to mitigate those effects. While I was never less than forthcoming as regards my principle interest in Burroughs' Cut-up process, I have no intention of executing a surgical strike for some specific document on which to base my claims. My few cursory scans through the library's finding aid had suggested already that planning such an attack was futile as the descriptive entries seemed nigh cryptic. Having the better part of the summer and the fall to do research should be more than enough time to discover the answers to my questions as well as enjoy moments of discovery, should they arise. My goal today is to get acquainted with Burroughs' archive, to learn the organization and structure of the thing so I can get a sense of how to proceed.

2.2 Alice – Part 1

Alice's adventures in Wonderland begin only when the glint of the White Rabbit's gilded pocket watch catches Alice's eye, rousing her to action. The moment before finds the girl floating at a quiet distance from the world, vaguely aware of her sister's voice and the qualities of the afternoon. Alice finds the peculiarity of seeing a rabbit with the means to measure the day especially significant, occasioning Lewis

Carroll to detail Alice's self-reflexive appraisal of the incident, even as she gathers her feet under her aroused momentum:

> There was nothing so *very* remarkable in that [the appearance of a white rabbit with pink eyes]; nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but when the Rabbit *actually took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and fortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.[71]

Carroll compresses the flurried energy of Alice's start with some future moment when she permits herself to consider the day's events into the space of one breathless sentence. While giving importance to an instrument of timekeeping might be the ostensible purpose of the passage, Carroll also takes the opportunity to play with the writer's role in time-making by stretching the syntactical confines of the sentence to accommodate multiple subjectivities, each engaged in activities of temporal significance. The White Rabbit's concern with being out of time, captured in the refrain, "Oh dear! Oh Dear! I shall be too late," establishes both his inability to physically comport himself through space in time and the future event he fears missing. Time's march effectively doubles Alice's subjectivity as she both chases the Rabbit and reflects on her actions. Although the narrator does not specify the event any more than "when she thought it over afterwards," Alice evaluates her past, which indicates that not only has time passed but also her subjective position has changed. Finally, the formal flourishes of the sentence remind readers of Carroll's own subjective participation, oriented toward them and mediated by print and language. In protractedly delaying the period until after Alice's arrival "just in time" to observe the rabbit's escape, Carroll

[71] Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, in *The Philosopher's Alice*, notes by Peter Heath (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 14 (emphasis in original).

draws attention to the labor of both writing *and* reading, thereby acknowledging the reader's subject position and participation too.

2.3 December 3, 2009

Dear William,

An underground walkway on my path from the station to the library has the most amazing tile installation. Uniform white rectangles are interrupted at various points by mosaics of vines or roots or cracks shaped in shimmering greenish brown. They remind me I am walking through a space that is possible only through the displacement of something that once occupied the place. I wonder what might come to displace me and the tunnel and everyone else some day. Advertising seems especially repellant after moving through here.

It is getting dark quite early now, reliably cold in a way I find disagreeable but that I know only signals the coming winter. I've decided to take a stab at inventing a dream calendar, although I'm a bit unsure of your process. Your note in the front of Folio 82 says to start "on a mythical date like the 5 Ahua 8 Cumhu which is the starting date of the Mayan calendar."[72] From what I can discern, there are 10 months, each with 23 days with "each rotating through the calendar days and months from a beginning point known to his followers as THE CREATION December 23, 1969 Tuesday Terre Haute 23."[73] I tried thinking the calendar through, decoding it like a puzzle, and now I shall try it on like a borrowed hat. Beginning with December 3, 2009, or what I shall call International Orange 3, the months of the calendar are:

1. International Orange

[72] William S. Burroughs, Folio 82, Item I, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.
[73] Ibid.

2. Ipomoea violacea
3. G. Fiorelli
4. Blue Bell Hill
5. Goat Rocks
6. Bethany
7. Spyglass
8. Al-Kindi
9. Realgar
10. Morrow

Making the list of months aroused my memory in ways I did not expect. Starting with a favorite daydream of mine, the Golden Gate Bridge, I just let my thoughts drift to particularly emotional and sense-driven memories. Once I landed on one that stuck, I gave it a key name to help me recall the experiences and point others there too, if anyone should feel so inclined. Being that my biography is quite a bit less public than yours, most of my calendar is difficult to decode. Your thoughts on the calendar as an arbitrarily imposed control mechanism are made quite clear in *The Soft Machine*, and I imagined creating a Dream Calendar to be an arbitrary opposition, unmasking the calendar by revealing the absurdity by which dates are named important. It didn't turn out that way; instead, time matters, specifically and purposefully, for the days and me are marked with experience. Thanks for the company on the way home.

Always,

John

2.4 July 7, 2009

Multiple systems maintain the ordered and efficient workings of the New York Public Library. "Finding aid" is the generic term for a document containing the written description of the materials in an archive or collection. The revolving door at the main entrance is out of service. Upon entrance to the library, visitors with bags must stop at the table in the lobby and present their bags for visual inspection. A similar

perfunctory glance at my belongings will conclude my visit. Bags, along with coats, pens, and food are not permitted in the special collection reading rooms. Visitors can check their belongings at the cloakroom in the hallway to the right of the main lobby. The cloakroom attendant inquires if my bag contains any money, electronics, or food as these items cannot be checked. In addition to facilitating a researcher's access to materials, a finding aid conveys pertinent information about the collection's history prior to its inclusion in the library's holdings. Researchers who wish to use a laptop device may request a clear plastic bag to hold their belongings. The cloakroom attendant informs me that they are out of bags and hands me a plastic 13 for my check tag. Massive twin staircases rise in opposing directions further down the hall on the left side, although only the right-most stairway is accessible from the main hall. Finding aids typically provide a detailed record of the management of the archival materials since the library took possession, including the initial appraisal of the collection, steps taken for conservation purposes, and the arrangement of the collection. Next to the stairs is a small bank of elevators and a row of dark wood telephone booths sans phones. Each flight of formed cement steps ends on a shared landing so visitors can choose to descend following their ascent, continue to ascend in the opposite direction, or maintain the current course of ascension. The top of the right-most stairway ends on the third floor in front of the men's restroom, while the left-most ends just outside of the reading room for The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature. This is not a public reading room. The Committee on Descriptive Standards, convened by the International Council on Archives, adopted the second edition of the *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description* in September of 1999. Press buzzer for assistance. Press buzzer to produce a sharp, yet nostalgic, mechanical bark not unlike the sound made by touching the side of the patient's

wounds in the game *Operation*. Peer at the unoccupied room through the window for a minute before pressing buzzer again, holding it for a half second longer.

When the archivist emerges from a hidden side room she stops, looks at me, and then retrieves a magnetic key card before crossing the wide room to wave the key in front of a gray pad. I stand quietly with what I hope is a friendly half smile frozen on my face. The *ISAD(G)* establishes a set of general rules pertaining to archival description in order to facilitate a standards based approach to finding aid development.[74] A slight mechanical click, and I open the door. Anne, the woman who has unlocked the door and is an archivist for the Berg collection, asks me my reasons for coming and informs me that special permissions are required to use the materials in the collection. I explain about Burroughs and show her the Access library card I procured last summer. Convinced apparently that I am in the right place, Anne hands me some paperwork and does some of her own. When the paperwork is completed, Anne gives me a new library card for the Berg collection and instructions for checking in each day and requesting materials. She finishes by asking where I want to start.

I reply to Anne's question with a restatement of my interest in the Cut-up and an explanation that Burroughs had developed the process over many years. My general response seemed like a sound way to approach the collection just twenty minutes ago when I sat in the courtyard waiting for the library to open. Now I feel adrift, surrounded by an ocean of rank amateurism without a clue of which way to row. Perhaps if I had a better idea of how things were organized in the archive I would be able to better orient myself to the material. Anne patiently explains that materials are grouped together by author, with their works being followed by correspondence. The

[74] International Council on Archives, *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description, 2nd ed*. (1999), pg. 7, retrieved July 27, 2011 from http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/ISAD(G).pdf .

Burroughs collection, she notes, is unusual for its division into a series of Folios by the author himself. She retrieves a thick black binder with a printed copy of the library's finding aid for the Burroughs collection as well as a worn copy of *A Descriptive Catalog of the William S. Burroughs Archive*. Suddenly I feel a new confidence, having downloaded a copy of the finding aid already and being fully aware of the rarity of the book in her hands. I think I might as well start at the beginning and request the first Folio.

The Berg Collection names their archive of Burroughs' material, *William S. Burroughs Papers 1951-1972*. The collection also is known as *The William S. Burroughs Vaduz Archive*, for the Liechtenstein town of Vaduz where the collection was shipped after its sale in 1972. Burroughs himself called it simply *The William S. Burroughs Archive*. The materials that make up the collection are organized into five distinct sections or series, beginning with Folios and followed in order by Scientology, Correspondence, Photographic Files, and Audio Material. There are 169 Folios: folders and portfolios containing an assortment of manuscripts, typescripts, publishing proofs, and some correspondence. Each Folio is numbered, but only half also bear more descriptive titles that suggest a unifying principle for the enclosed materials. Some titles refer to a time, event, or place, such as Folio 4 "Edinburgh Conference August 1962," while others include the title of an associated manuscript, as in Folio 5 "The Wild Boys." Other titles seem to describe the purpose of a particular Folio, as in Folio 65 "Illustrating Cut-ups With Other Writers" and Folio 60 "How Characters Are Made Up From Dreams and Other Input Material." Still other titles, such as Folio 70 "Photographs Of Two Young Boys In The Vietnamese Army Constitutes The Title Of This Folio, Pasted On Front Of The Folder. Wild Boys Material," operate on multiple discursive levels. The sequence of the items within each Folio corresponds to the

enclosed contents list as well as to the order listed in *A Descriptive Catalog of the William S. Burroughs Archive*. An individual item may range between a single page and a hundred pages or more.

Once, while walking with Josh on Broadway to the north of Time Square, I made eye contact with a man walking in the opposite direction. I smiled before I could even consider smiling. The man smiled back, with the faintest of nods, and then he was past. We traveled five or six more steps at our New York clip before I stopped and exclaimed, "Holy shit, Josh. That was the Fonz!" My brush with Henry Winkler shot me full of the happy memories I had of *Happy Days* before I could even place why he felt familiar, and for the rest of the evening my body seemed to hum from the encounter. I experience a similar surge of emotion when Anne delivers the first few items from Folio 1. The feeling is quiet and seems to slow time, mixing reverence and anticipation in equal measure.

The first Folio, Burroughs' Folio 1, teases the reader. More specifically, *I* am teased by Burroughs' Folio 1. The first two items are unpublished stories written in conventional prose. The clear cut narratives seem out of character for the author I came to know through the Cut-up Trilogy. The stories might have fit easily in the pulpy pages of a science fiction anthology aimed at teenaged boys. Glancing at their date of 1962, I place them in the middle of Burroughs' development of the Cut-up process. Following the stories are a few more experimental pieces dated 1966, whetting my appetite with the sudden juxtapositions and murky narrative coherence that I connect more readily to Burroughs' style. Then, unexpectedly, Burroughs includes two, page-length, grid Cut-ups splashed with great, vivid swaths of red ink, so vibrant that the color seems to hum just above its own stain. Minutes grow short, and I gaze there for many. When I finally regain my composure, I find that I am running my finger along

the edge of one of the flaming licks, trying to touch the moment of the event through the trace.

Upon review, the first Folio makes a different sense. Contrary to common classification schemes, the materials are not unified by date or theme or subject matter. Further, the inclusion of ordinary prose as a representative sample from Burroughs' work in 1962, contradicts what biographer Barry Miles says was his primary occupation at the time, namely, the continued development of the Cut-up and completing the first version of *The Ticket that Exploded*.[75] However, taken together as examples, the three contrasting styles show a progression from nearly pedestrian narratives to experimental prose. Understanding that my interest is in Burroughs' development of experimental techniques, this introduction appears to confirm my chosen path of research, and yet I feel no sense of pride in the discovery. My reaction is oddly sensual, moving from boredom and disappointment into arousal that finishes in a pleasant reverie. The sudden shift captures my imagination for what lies ahead and leaves my questing mind far behind. This is where I feel Burroughs, or imagine him. Somewhere, in a gloomy shadow so thick with time I can barely see, is the figure of a man. He is sorting papers into boxes. As I look at him, he seems to notice me.

2.5 Blue Bell Hill 4

Remember, now, that this page was once blank. An empty page, a page shot through with possibilities before some eager I was seized by the need to divulge all the things that I think. Fester. Fester up with words on the idea of words and nearly

[75] Barry Miles, *William Burroughs: El Hombre Invisible* (New York: Hyperion, 1993), 133-140.

leaking typography, all these spattering drops of ink are the stains of thoughts worked and worried over like so much intangible cud chewed staring at a screen.

Were that thoughts were olives, budding on the cultivated branches of Athena's gift and swelling in the clear light of some scholar's garden, where their health might be more easily tended and the harvest's bounty enumerated. I could gather them at convenient hours like this morning while they are dressed in dew before the day grows hot. Or else while wandering at midnight in the borrowed blue gauze of moonlight, the blush of wine in my glass and on my cheek. Piled safely in baskets, their ripened peak preserved from the thieving crows of forgetfulness or from splitting in the critical afternoon sun. Such senseless loss avoided, I will grind my ideas carefully, in the old way with a stone mill. Flesh tears and skins split as the excesses of thought are worked by hand into a paste, unmistakably vegetal and rich with fragrant life. Shoulders burn with the labor of moving some rough-hewn paddle against the fibrous weight of implication and doubt, beads of sweat mirroring the shimmering expression.

2.6 July 8, 2009

My Cut-up of Burroughs' writing about Cut-ups

The accident of the best writing cut-ups. A cop cut the page, many poems as lost meaning. Poetry is for same thing. Sometimes poems you have is one way unedited unchanged cut . . . spontaneity. You can times. The words is interesting André Breton called meaningful prose. The something quite different cutting Say it again: shots are accidents this point often their best to Go contains up Rimbaud and hat. A riot read over many but you can 1920s Tristan Tzara. You have four rearranged the sections accident but writers a place and a pair until the cut-up that it says Rimbaude is a movie. Still is in fact political speeches. The summer of painter and writer seems to be quite

coherent. Sometimes collage, which has writers you fancy. Now take the cut newspaper articles Cut-up experiment. Minutes of passers by says much the sections: 1 2 cross the middle. Sections placing section 1959 Brion Gysin Take a page. All writing out of a quite definite. Take cameras are by cut-ups on the exercise in any case and still painters for fifty the unpredictable factors. In fact all introduce the unpredictable you are in expelled Tristan Tzara scissors.

The method from the movement Now rearrange the from the movement. And you way to produce by the moving said: "Poetry is all cut to do it. into sections and tell you that years. And used years of repetition. And photographers will to writers the poem and type new poem. As you the same. Here, say, or the man from have a new Cut-up method brings Freudian couch. [76]

2.7 July 9, 2009

Today was another beautiful day in the city. I capped it with a martini in a noisy bar just a few blocks from Penn Station where I board the return bus to Albany. Anne mentioned it was too lovely to spend the day inside. I agreed out loud even though I could hardly wait to press further into Burroughs' Folios and the puzzle box they manifest. My mounting conviction that a deliberate puzzle exists followed me home on my previous visit, so much so that I trolled the Internet for some clue as to why Burroughs chose to dub his folders "Folios" in the first place. On the first day, I assumed almost without thinking that he means the word Folio to indicate volume or chapter. The obvious root in "portfolio" makes the association easy enough until I considered that Burroughs' folders are the definition of portfolio, each page within a

[76] John LeBret, "Burroughs Cut-up," unpublished. This Cut-up uses material drawn from Burroughs and Gysin, *The Third Mind*, 34 (ellipses in original).

leaf. Folio means leaf, as in foliage, from the ablative form of the Latin word *folium*. Another association lies in the printing use of folio to describe a book or pamphlet comprised of folio sheets, which are single sheets of paper printed with four pages of text and then folded in half to create two leaves. Some printings of Shakespeare's works and the Gutenberg bible are notable examples of such folios. Given Burroughs' obsessions with words and meaning, his intent in naming the folders "Folios" presents an intriguing mystery. Still, like much else encountered in the research, I set aside the curious for the sake of my quest.

International Orange 5

Fifteen ways to move around (without getting lost):

1. Stick to the main roads.
2. Consult a guidebook.
3. Find a map.
4. Look out for landmarks.
5. Keep close to the shore.
6. Ask a local for directions
7. Trust your instincts.
8. Seek out higher ground.
9. Follow the signs.
10. Mark your path.
11. Make connections.
12. Explore options.
13. Notice patterns.
14. Stay alert.
15. Become exceedingly familiar with the territory.

Figure 1. List Labeled International Orange 5

The systems to control and protect the documents in the Berg Reading Room are a source of some consternation. Rather than store the Folios as Burroughs assembled them, all but the smallest item is stored and separated from the next in a protective archival wrap stamped NYPL. Even the folders are fitted with new protective folders.

Equally problematic during this early stage of research are the competing location systems for the many documents in the collection. Burroughs' system corresponds to the Folio format of his arrangement, with a designation of Folio title and item number. The Folio system is used on the inventory sheets enclosed with each Folio and is reproduced in *A Descriptive Catalog of the William S. Burroughs Archive*. The system is included faithfully in the library's finding aid for the collection as well, although this document contains an additional numerical system corresponding to the library's use of archival storage boxes and protective folders based on standard archival practices. In order to examine Item 1 in Folio 13, for instance, I must request Folder 27 from Box 3, while to examine Items 25-33 in Folio 93, I need to ask for Box 29, Folder 54. The Folio series occupies 67 of 94 storage boxes dedicated to protecting Burroughs' collection, thus I have no doubt that internalizing the library's retrieval system is the smoothest way forward. Yet, because Anne can deliver only three items at a time, requesting complete Folios is out of the question, and I must do my best not to miss the Folio for the leaves, the boxes, or the sleeves.

On occasion, Burroughs' archival tactics seem to confound the quest, muddling willful claims to knowledge. The second Folio, titled "Rushmore Hotel 1966. 'The Priest'," contains just three pages, while the first Folio held twenty-three. Two of the pages read like keys to an encryption scheme, with Burroughs utilizing the symbol functions of his typewriter and then assigning each symbol to words, phrases, and ideas. For example,

> 0=? Nothing a blank page on which nothing is written empty sky
> 1=I=* I one not me
> 2=you=" you he she they any other being with masculine determinative he with feminine determinative she with plural determinative they
> 3=fuck=/ any creative act to like or want yes affirmation
> 4=ass=@ location in the physical body
> 5=mouth=& mouth eating speaking words

6=food=, food money
7=water=: moisture rain what they need on Mars
8=air=% air oxygen what one breathes the sky the color blue
9=conflict=+ fight struggle to dislike or hate no denial[77]

Set apart and given the prominence of a dedicated Folio, the list strikes me as both prefigured in importance and a possible extension of Burroughs' Cut-up experiments.

The list consists of a total of 48 entries and ends with a block comprised entirely of symbols. I opted to copy the list and paragraph dutifully on my laptop rather than steal the day by attempting a translation in the moment. Photo plates of certain materials from the collection may be requested from the Burroughs' estate at the rate of $70, and photocopies are not permitted.

Reading while typing is not my strongest suit, having acquired a speedy but broken form of hunting and pecking that runs afoul of such a task. As a remedy, I try to hold an entire entry in my mind and then let it dribble out onto my laptop screen as a single piece. With my attention split between holding information and attempting to figure out just what Burroughs was up to with this list, I made progress like shoveling sand with a rake. As I slowly worked down the list, I eventually encountered more complex formulations:

10=the body=*? Eth physical body nakedness the male body this is a masculine determinative
11=to walk=** travel move
12=the eyes=*" to see perceive become aware of
13=to become=*/ become develop
14=intestines=*@ the stomach intestines digest my room or place
15=the hands=*& to make to do to interfere
16=to earn=*, to collect accumulate
17=blood=*: blood the color red
18=to strangle=*% to cut off the breath also to breath
19=fear=*+ to become aware of that which is alien and hostile
20=to forget="? to put out of ones mind to not know
21=identify with="*

[77] William S. Burroughs, Folio 2, Item 2, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.

22=plural="" plural determinative many numbers
23=to write="/ to cause to happen birth death change process event
24=room place="@ some one elses room or place
25=communication="& to answer to be effected by the female genital this is a female determinative[78]

Having exhausted the available range of typewriter symbols, Burroughs extends the scheme by creating compound symbols in a fashion similar to a numerical system. 1 and 1 = 11. However, combining the ten available number symbols with a *positional* system with a base of ten extends the expressive possibilities of the *decimal* numerical system, yet Burroughs is not interested in expressing *enumerative* ideas. Instead, Burroughs formulates the definitions for the compound symbols by merging the expressions assigned to the individual symbols that constitute it. 1 and 0 (I and nothing) become 10, *?, the body, the naked body, the naked male body, while 1 and 1 (I and I, **) manifests the impossible "I" in two places, conceptualizing travel.

Cross-referencing the list so as to crack Burroughs' code for each definition is only one of the two approaches I use. The second approach is simply to think of the entries as pictures. Images, I suppose upon further reflection, and some of them are kind of funny. For example, the fourth entry is 4=ass=@, and Burroughs seems to use the commercial @ as both a signifier and a visual representation of "the anus." The visual play of the commercial @ swirl is equally effective in representing the twisting turns of a body's "intestines" while also linking parts of the digestive track. In 22 and 23 respectively, the flexible interpretation of abstract markings continues as "" trades first on graphic multiples for "plural" and then as marks "/ drawn by a slash for a quill. There seems room enough on these pages for hours of play.

Looking up at the time on my laptop, I realize that Burroughs threw me off my game by tempting me to play his: his two-hour, two-page encryption game. Three

[78] Ibid.

pages actually, but the third is an inventory sheet naming the other two. I race through Folio 3 "Queer," all 82 unpublished pages, as a result of my willingness to embrace distraction. Two Folios seems like slow going, I fear. It's enough to make a girl crack her calories.

2.8 Goat Rocks 16

The first few hours of research glow with a pleasing shimmer of strangeness. Even before the first item arrives, new procedures must be learned, and the use of new tools must be understood. Anne the archivist, who only a few minutes before was waving her magnetic card for the security door and verifying John's authorizations for using the materials, orients him. A massive card catalog hulks near the front of the room next to a slender podium, on the surface of which rests the sign-in book, a box of stubby pencils, and a supply of carbonless request slips. Two wide, wooden tables with green bankers lamps sprouting out of their centers occupy the middle of the room. On each of the tables, green felt rectangles mark out four workspaces attended by comfortable looking chairs. At the far end of the room, a small desk is dwarfed by two towering portraits of two older men who appear to be seated in libraries of their own. John assumes the two men are the reading room's eponymous Henry W. and Albert A. Berg, although he has never made certain and could not say who was who.

One hundred and fifty or so feet farther down the massive hallway from where John entered, large stone arches, carved wood, and decorative terrazzo on the floor mark out a grand foyer that indicates the entrance to the main reference library. Inside the reference library, row after row of search terminals hum imperceptibly under the din of people going about their library business. These computers are several generations removed from the beige machines that were installed to replace the card

catalogs they had rendered obsolete. Venture further, into the majestic space of the main reading room, and modest brass lamps glow behind the ubiquitous laptop screens shining brightly in front of them.

The new and the old co-exist in the main reading room and attendant reference library. Modern technology was integrated here with the same monies that paid for the 1998 restoration of the painted panels and intricate woodwork of the ceiling hanging fifty-two feet above. Nearly as long as a football field, the vast openness of the reading room is filled with an invisible cloud of Wi-Fi information to serve the public that comes to use this most public space in the library. Laptops are welcome too in the modest Berg reading room, but not cameras, phones, or pens. If you are going to use a laptop, Anne helpfully notes, pick a workplace at one of the four spaces nearest the walls so you can reach the outlet. My computer is unfamiliar with being so far from the conveniences of electricity, and my cord seems laughably short even heeding Ann's advice and taking a seat on the outside edge. The problem is not uncommon, and she brings me a tangle of brown kitchen extension that I unknot and will rewind carefully before returning it to her. She asks if I also need an adaptor, and I think to myself that I am already adapting.

2.9 July 14, 2009

Twice a week is exhausting, leaving me raw and ill company at home. I have been away from Josh for so many years that we are still adjusting to each other's daily presence. Maintaining a steady calm seems our surest route forward. Burroughs and his archive must be met with similar diplomacy if I hope to make headway in my search for the Cut-up.

Based on their titles, the fourth through ninth Folios cover a broad spectrum of Burroughs' professional work as a well-known author. The topics range from preparing a work for publication with the typescript for *The Wild Boys*, in Folio 5, to writing a favorable endorsement for a friend in Folio 8 "Review of 'The Process' By Brion Gysin." While each folio could offer some insight into Burroughs's working life, I opt to roll the dice and begin with the next untitled Folio, Folio 10, in hopes that Burroughs will surprise me as he had in Folio 1.

He does surprise me, twice in fact.

As in Folio 1, the tenth Folio contains an assortment of material drawn from different time periods, the earliest dated 1961, and the latest, 1971. Similarly, I found it all but impossible to determine a unifying theme or subject. Burroughs seemed to anticipate my expectations, including the following proviso:

> I leave to the collector the challenging task of sorting out these drafts of a short story. Sloppy Sawyer was here at this remote sloppy post proclaimed laziness a virtue. His teaching were popular with men and officers alike and the Old Man sent out a laser relays bulletin. It was a powerfully worded document
>
> ALL YOU JOKERS IN THE SHAKESPEARE SQUADRON TAKE NOTICE THERE IS NO MORE EXCUSE FOR A MISPELLED WORD THAN THERE IS FOR A DIRTY RIFLE. THE FOLLWING ARE CITED FOR GROTOESQUE MISREPRESENTATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ON THEIR SO CALLED FIRST DRAFTS:
>
> But he was light years away and we took no notice on him. Often a misspelled word that makes a new word is better than the word originally intended. You have to map your story and if you spend too much time on first version maps you lose sight of the terrain.[79]

The continued dearth of Cut-up material had me worried, and I likely would have ended my day suspecting that Burroughs had taken no care at all in the preparation of his archive had it not been for a last minute catch on Anne's part. I

[79] William S. Burroughs, Folio 10, Item 1, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.

already had accepted that the decade span of materials in Folio 10 owed as much to chance as it did to Burroughs' choice and was turning in the last of the materials when Anne noticed an embellishment on the cover of the original folder. Until now the Folio covers had been sturdy, utilitarian, and entirely unremarkable. However, more than half the cover of Folio 10 is enhanced with a collage made from strips of typescript woven together like a grass mat and glued into place in the fashion of a medallion. Running my fingertips over the gently lifted edges of the strips, I wonder if Burroughs assembled his Cut-ups in a similarly artful fashion. The care with which he decorated the Folio meant I could not dismiss the idea that Burroughs was as careful and deliberate in preparing all aspects of the Folios.

The story attached to the noted proviso was equally surprising. Whereas Burroughs' novels always address the worldview of a decidedly adult audience, here he turns his efforts to writing a child's bedtime story. Without a doubt it is a *Burroughs'* children's story, replete with gun violence and fantastic transformations including a boy's hair becoming wings, but aimed nonetheless at enchanting and engaging a young readership. My surprise is genuine, reminding me again that what I think I know about Burroughs as a writer and a person is growing ever more unreliable.

2.10 Goat Rocks 17

The modern conveniences of the public reading room are not a service offered in the Berg Reading Room. The public is not welcome; in fact it might be a stretch to say that the room welcomes anyone at all. The entrance is not grand, and the door is always locked. A signboard on a stand in the hall partially blocks the view inside the reading room and deflects wandering visitors, "Rose Public Reading Room. This Way =>." Push buzzer to call attendant, to get inside one must intrude.

I am settling into my place as Anne returns with a piece of cloth, two foam wedges, and a length of what seems to be lead beads wrapped in fabric. She arranges the wedges into a V shape and covers the cradle with the cloth. For a moment I feel a twinge of guilt, seeing all the labor that goes into accommodating my presence. When she returns again, she holds an off-white volume. The binding is cracked, pieces of the outer pigment are flaked away, and the surface is visibly dirty. Gently placing it into the V before me, she allows the book to open. I continue to watch as she lays the weighted strand over one of the yellowed pages, pressing the book open as far as the wedges will allow.

Anne's care as she attends to her task is eloquent, silently indicating that I should use the tools in the same way. A flush of embarrassment pushes through the guilt as I realize that none of the tools and procedures here come as services to me. Everything here serves the document. The book that Anne has brought me is not from the Burroughs archive, but it is of the archive and will be one of exactly three items that she retrieves for me for which I do not fill out a carbonless request slip to receive. For everything else, my name and address become part of a paper trail that records my hand on every page that I turn and every object I handle. My name is John LeBret, and today I let a little more time in.

2.11 Alice – Part 2

Alice, rabbit, watch rouses, multiples, out of time, in time, on time, just in time, for tea-time. Carroll continues to emphasize time and the mechanics of measuring it throughout Alice's adventures in Wonderland, but nowhere more so than when Alice arrives at the Mad Hatter's for tea. The table, like the protracted sentence describing the

White Rabbit reading his watch, serves as both the site of immediate action and a material reminder of future and past events.

> "Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse," said the Hatter, "when the Queen jumped up and bawled out 'He's murdering time! Off with his head!' "
>
> "How dreadfully savage!" exclaimed Alice.
>
> "And ever since that," the Hatter went on in a mournful tone, "he [Time] won't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now."
>
> A bright idea came into Alice's head. "Is that the reason so many tea-things are put out here?" she asked.
>
> "Yes, that's it," said the Hatter with a sigh: "it's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles."
>
> "Then you keep moving round, I suppose?" said Alice.
>
> "But what happens when you come to the beginning again?" Alice ventured to ask.
>
> "Suppose we change the subject," the March Hare interrupted, yawning.[80]

The March Hare's interruption infers a time when the Hatter and old man Time were chums, Time happily spinning his gears to tailor the day to the haberdasher's whims. Time's hasty retreat has stranded the Hatter and his guests at precisely six o'clock, allowing time for tea but no time for the punctuating routine of cleaning up. Further, as the March Hare's show of tedium implies, the Mad Hatter's tea party never "comes to the beginning again." Rather, each time a new tray clatters to the mounded table, or the assembled motley rotate to a new seat, a new tea-time commences. The event is not stuck in a looping cycle, as is the case with the ever-repeating day Bill Murray's character Phil finds himself (re)living in the movie *Groundhog Day*. In the film, Phil is shocked to discover that every action of the prior day (Groundhog Day) – from the song on his alarm clock to the freak snowstorm – repeats, as if scripted, day after day after day. Phil quickly realizes that he alone is exempt from the effect and consequently free to make choices other than those he made the day before.

The changes Phil makes variously impact the people and course of events surrounding him, casting the character of Phil as the embodiment of performativity

[80] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 72.

playing within a world otherwise devoid of performative agency.[81] Initially thrilled with the possibilities, Phil tests and then exploits various interventions, warping the events of each day to suit his own desires. However, when Phil sleeps or otherwise looses consciousness, he awakes to find himself at "the beginning again." His familiarity with the cycle of actions of Groundhog Day gives him a preternatural ability to manipulate the behavior of others, using previously gleaned knowledge about a conversation or event to shape the current iteration. Phil eventually exhausts the novelty of serving his own desires and turns toward altruism, only to discover that none of his actions have a meaningful impact when time folds back to begin the day again. Driven to despair, Phil laments, "I'll give you a winter prediction: It's gonna be cold, it's gonna be grey, and it's gonna last you for the rest of your life."[82] Phil finds his way back from the brink by embracing his role as performer, rehearsing and improving his performance of each day, until the world around him exists in an ideal state. His reward for effecting a total transformation of self is the dawning of a new day, where the burdens and pleasures of performative possibility are shared by all humanity and in each moment.

The action described around the Mad Hatter's table in Wonderland suggests that, while Time's clock might have stopped, the advancement of action and, more importantly, performative agency are always in effect *unlike* the actors and actions in *Groundhog Day*. The dirty cups and saucers provide material evidence of past actions, a kind of historicity littering the table. When Alice arrives at the tea party, she prompts

[81] For further elaboration of concepts of the performative, performativity, and performative agency, see John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London: Sage Publications, 1997); and Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City: Anchor, 1959).
[82] Danny Rubin and Harold Ramis, *Groundhog Day*, directed by Harold Ramis, 1993.

an immediate outcry from the March Hare, the Hatter, and the sleepy little Dormouse, the trio shouting, "No room! No room!" before launching into a series of increasingly rude rebuffs. The trio's defensive posturing shows them on guard against outside intrusion, suggesting that despite their idiosyncrasies they are comfortable with each other and their experience of time; their spending an eternity of tea-times together. Alice's arrival interrupts their comfort and is met with their full brunt of social censure.

Broadly, then, each and every tea party and partier is steeped in possibility. Further, as per Carroll's specific interests, each character's possibility is articulated in terms of his or her understanding of time.

> "What a funny watch!" she remarked. "It tells the day of the month, and it doesn't tell what o'clock it is!"
> "Why should it?" muttered the Hatter. "Does *your* watch tell you what year it is?"
> "Of course not," Alice replied very readily: "but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together."
> "Which is just the case with *mine*," said the Hatter.
> Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter's remarks seemed to have no meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English. "I don't quite understand," she said, as politely as she could.[83]

In a chapter laden with time puns, the pulse of the Mad Hatter's tea party and Carroll's musings on time follow the erratic ticking of the Hatter's pocket watch.

Alice's inability to grasp the value of a device that measures time broadly reveals her incompatibility with the group. The girl's preoccupation with the passing of hours and minutes has no place among those who share the prospects of an eternal tea-time.

> Alice sighed wearily. "I think you might do something better with the time," she said, "than waste it asking riddles with no answers."
> "If you knew time as well as I do," said the Hatter, "you wouldn't talk about wasting *it*. It's *him*."
> "I don't know what you mean," said Alice.
> "Of course you don't!" the Hatter said, tossing his head contemptuously. "I dare say you never even spoke to Time!"

[83] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 69 (emphasis in original).

> "Perhaps not," Alice cautiously replied: "but I know I have to beat time when I learn music."[84]

Alice ultimately grows impatient with the trio's constant cajoling and storms away from the tea-time. Catching sight of her hasty temper, Alice pauses for a glance back at the tea party for some sign that she is missed. Instead, she sees the trio fully engaged in their tea antics, almost as if she had never intruded at all.

2.12 July 14, 2009

The scatological character of Burroughs' work was noted almost from the start.[85] Charges of obscenity and indecency in response to the publication of *Junky* in 1953, assured Burroughs of both a certain level of notoriety and cultural cache that exploded with the arrival of *Naked Lunch* in 1959.[86] In spite of his vindication on charges of obscenity, Burroughs' visceral imagery proved an enduring hallmark. Robin Lyndenberg intervened critically in 1987, arguing that Burroughs, in fact, was working in a noble literary tradition that includes Rabelais and Cervantes, "in an attempt to demonstrate that […] there is great art which does not shrink from the body but writes through the body and its functions to its own powerful vision."[87] Using Mikhail Bakhtin's celebration of carnival and the grotesque realism in Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Lyndenberg parallels Burroughs' fictive goals with those of Rabelais. She argues that both authors cull images of digestion, feast, and excrement to imagine a utopian social body. For Rabelais, that body "is fertile and productive: urine produces the finest wheat crops, excrement cures the dropsy, and Pantagruel's 'farts' and 'poops'

[84] Ibid., 70 (emphasis in original).
[85] Ted Morgan, *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs* (New York: Henry Holt, 1988), 295-98.
[86] *Junky* also was published as *Junkie.* Burroughs preferred the former title, while the publisher, Ace Books, preferred the latter.
[87] Lydenberg, *Word Cultures*, 143 (ellipses in original).

engender entire races."[88] On the other hand, she argues that Burroughs paints a cruel portrait of the body beset by parasites and constipated by systemic controls. For Lyndenberg, the horrors parading through *Naked Lunch* serve as purgative exposure to the controlling poisons of society, while the Cut-ups of the Nova Trilogy function as the textual laxative that might flush the parasitic word. The central and eternal body that Bakhtin admires in Rabelais is that of the communal folk, engaging the spirit of carnival in an open celebration of the cycles of birth, life, death, and renewal. Just as Bakhtin mourns the fading of the eternal folk body, becoming individual subjectivities of finite existence, Lyndenberg claims that Burroughs hoped to escape mortality, meaning, and the attendant torments of the biologic body and the parasitic word.

Through Lyndenberg's analysis, Burroughs hums in synergistic clarity with post-structural and post-modern literary concepts and bolsters Lyndenberg's claim that, through her efforts, "Burroughs' experimental writing finds a critical framework in which its seriousness and complexity can be fully evaluated."[89] Now, having spent some time struggling with Burroughs in his labyrinth of an archive, I question whether the smooth links and efficient delineations that Lyndenberg makes between Bakhtin and Burroughs are as productive as they might be or if there are more or just as productive discoveries to be found in the tensions between them.

2.13 Ipomoea violacea 12

I am often a starter, rarely a finisher. My writing habits are such that I trot off a few lines and start heading in an interesting direction only to find that there is something about the idea that feels disingenuous. I delete and begin again. While the

[88] Ibid., 148.
[89] Ibid., xii.

waste can in my office contains nothing more than wadded tissues and gum wrappers, the digital space of my office contains a comically huge pile of crumpled up paragraphs and first lines. A wry cartoon from the *New Yorker* flashes to mind: frazzled writer with coffee staring up at an impending avalanche of word remnants.

Burroughs was a starter, too, but he was also a collector, holding on tightly to everything he wrote. There are plenty of pages in the archive with no more than one or two lines. That these spare pages exist and were not stolen by the winds or the rats in Tangier is a testament to their care. I cannot say they were cherished; Allen Ginsberg often describes Burroughs' rooms as chaotic with piles of paper held in place by ashtrays and drinking glasses. The pages themselves confess very little of their travels, their histories are written in folds, stains, and tears.

Lingering with a mostly blank page, I wonder into its past by inventing and reinventing the circumstances of its transformations from sundry item to archival document. Did Burroughs always keep a fresh sheet in the typewriter, the machine loaded like a gun should the words suddenly come? Or did he snatch a page from a pile, hastily threading the paper through the carriage to catch the letters even as the typebars swing toward the platen? Perhaps he is closer to me, stepping to the desk with a resolve to write something, anything, to get the fingers moving and the writing voices engaged. "The Old Junkie as hero who shatters/destroys the 'purified one' that exists as vampire consuming youths," and then nothing, just time-colored paper.[90]

[90] William S. Burroughs, Folio 17, Item 25, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.

2.14 August 4, 2009

Some words, such as asunder, are spectacular words haunted by the echoes of too common association. For example, asunder following torn or rent slides quickly into cliché unless accompanied by the greasy sneer of irony. I can hardly think of a faster way to siphon off the love for a word than to ink it with irony. So asunder waits, far back on the shelf like an old hat, for the right outfit of words to render it anew.

The origin story of the Cut-up, as Burroughs tells it, begins in Brion Gysin's studio in Paris, in 1959. Gysin inadvertently cut through some newspapers while cutting canvas with his knife. While playing with the scraps, arranging and rearranging them into new sequences, Gysin supposed that such a method of chance and juxtaposition might be the basis for "a new method of writing that would allow literature to catch up painting."[91] Gysin immediately shared his amusing discovery with Burroughs, knowing his friend was searching for a means of extending and expanding the experimental project begun in *Naked Lunch*. With a sudden shock of recognition of the unconscious processes already at work in *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs grasped the importance of the technique and wasted no time in turning it on his own writing.

Told and retold for more than a decade, the narrative is worn smooth to the point that history meets legend. The basic sequence of the routine is always the same: Gysin discovers the Cut-up, Gysin sees the technique as a link between literature and painting, Gysin shares the Cut-up with Burroughs, and Burroughs adopts the method to apply to his own writing. One of the features that forge this legend of the Cut-up is the contraction of time, which produces a necessary simultaneity for a serendipitous discovery. In later narrations of the event, scarcely seconds pass between the slicing of

[91] Burroughs and Gysin, *The Third Mind*, 13.

the blade and Burroughs' apprehension of the Cut-up's potential. That Burroughs is present in Paris for Gysin's discovery is a fortunate bit of happenstance, since Gysin "had just run into [Burroughs] in Paris after a long time."[92] Gysin was Burroughs' most significant collaborator from this point forward, and the story condenses their many exchanges over the years to a single metonymic event. Similarly, Burroughs' understanding of Cut-ups and his development of technologies to produce them was an incremental and experimental path rather than a Eureka flash. But, then again, providing tidy explanations of complicated developments is what histories and legends do.

However, Burroughs carefully tended to the cultivation and public circulation of the Cut-up method throughout its development. In interviews and lectures, Burroughs was fond of pointing out that Cut-ups were "not something to talk and argue about."[93] At the same time, he was willing to theorize them at length, claiming, "All writing is in fact cut-ups. A collage of words read heard overheard. What else? Use of scissors renders the process explicit and subject to extension and variation."[94] With each technological variation and extension in cutting up, Burroughs uncovers a new outcome for the practice. Importantly, however, he always implies that the Cut-up is an accessible process to any writer with an inclination to experiment.

But the Cut-up is an insidious machine. Throughout the 1960's, and to some extent into the present, Burroughs' most vocal critics tend to hold one of four basic positions. The first group, inclusive of both editors of college newspapers *and* censorship committees, found Burroughs' fiction morally objectionable owing to

[92] Ibid., 13.
[93] Ibid., 31.
[94] Ibid., 32.

content.[95] The second group claimed that Burroughs' poetics rendered him impenetrable, many of whom took their claims to the editorial pages of the *Los Angeles Free Press* during the months of August and September 1964. Burroughs' dubbed the row, to which he happily contributed, "The 'Ugh' Affair" and compiled the items in Folio 54 like a commemorative trophy.[96] A third group argued that, regardless of the merits or limitations of the work, Burroughs realized them by cutting up rather than by genuine artistic creation. Burroughs' use of the Cut-up challenged long held views of what constitutes a writer's art, stirring up apprehensive muttering even among writers he considered friends. Poet Gregory Corso, for example, concluded that such synthesis was unnatural and therefore artless. As a collaborator on the first Cut-up project, *Minutes to Go*, Corso's perspective was not uninformed. When Allen Ginsberg shared the thought with Burroughs, Burroughs replied, "Whatever abilities Gregory may possess logical thought is not one of them."[97] The fourth group questioned the viability of the Cut-up method in total. Lawrence Lipton, literary critic for the *Los Angeles Free Press*, took Burroughs and the Cut-up to task in a scathing review of Brion Gysin's book, *The Process*. Lipton took special issue with Burroughs' promotional review of Gysin's novel, posing that it along with all talk of Cut-ups and revolution were nothing more than a cynical publicity scheme.[98] Burroughs never repented for the content of his work, locating the footholds of morality in the false either/or dichotomies he saw shoring up Western thinking. Similarly, he viewed those who were unable or unwilling

[95] Murphy, *Wising Up the Marks*, 67.
[96] William S. Burroughs ed., Folio 54, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York. Folio 54, "The 'Ugh' Affair," contains twenty-five whole or altered newspaper sections, believed to be from the *Times Literary Supplement* correspondence.
[97] William S. Burroughs, C-35 Allen Ginsberg File, Item 18, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.
[98] Lawrence Lipton, C-37 Correspondence file 1970, March 13, 1970, *Los Angeles Free Press*, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.

to adapt to a new form of reading as trapped in a control system of language and syntax. Burroughs writes, "I would say that generally speaking, if somebody's really tied up in words, they will not experience anything from my books at all except automatic disapproval."[99]

2.15 July 22, 2009

Robin Lyndenberg's Bakhtinian analysis of Burroughs' fiction sticks in my thoughts like a sugary pop song. I occasionally realize that I have started humming along in spite of my growing disaffection for her refrain. She draws the two into conversation ostensibly to validate Burroughs' work as worthy of critical interest. Drawing a line from Rabelaisian feast and purgation to Burroughs' satirical use of scatological imagery, she opens the door to introduce Bakhtin and what she calls his "model of positive digestion," the grotesque body.[100] Lyndenberg places special emphasis on Bakhtin's thoughts on carnival and the attendant themes of fertility and renewal as well as the transcendence of "hierarchical division and domination […] by the harmonious interchange of a balanced ecology."[101]

Carnival laughter, for Bakhtin, "was as universal as seriousness; it was directed at the whole world, at history, at all societies, at ideology. It was the world's second truth extended to everything and from which nothing was taken away."[102] Bakhtin theorizes a utopian laughter, a joyful laughter, that is universally infectious by fact of its center in the folk and the lower strata of the material body, universally debased and universally debasing, drawing all to the shared carnival spirit. The carnival body *is* the

[99] Burroughs and Odier, *The Job*, 49.
[100] Lyndenberg, *Word Cultures*, 145.
[101] Ibid., 145 (ellipses in original).
[102] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 84.

communal folk, sustained and renewed even through their own mortality by the carnival's wide embrace and their own fertile capacities to reproduce.

Rather than continuing to explore Burroughs' fictional imagery and its capacity for similar debased materiality or renewal, Lyndenberg shifts her attention to Burroughs' theorization of the Cut-up process. Here, she sees Burroughs making a carnivalizing move to undermine the hierarchical relationship between readers and writers in the shared production of text. At the same time, Lyndenberg uses her interpretation of Burroughs' greater aims to posit a utopian body of another sort. Lyndenberg's summation of Burroughs is that "the predominant impulse of his writing is toward 'sense withdrawal' and silence, toward the destruction of the word and body."[103] For her, the Cut-up is his vivisecting tool designed to attack language, exposing and excising the cancerous control mechanisms carried by words and metastasized into meaning. To Lyndenberg, Burroughs

> intends to leave behind body and language. Determined to break free of the body and its digestive function, to break free of the addiction to that "paregoric parergon" of language, Burroughs pursues for himself and offers to his readers the austere and oft repellant emetic cure by apomorphine [. . .] Apomorphine sets the individual consciousness free of the body, allows the subject to observe his own body from a decentered and detached outpost.[104]

Lyndenberg's reference to the material body demands that she shift the focus of her analysis, having begun in Burroughs' fictional imagery, moved to Burroughs' writing process, and now concluding in his biography.

Burroughs' incorporation of biographic and fictional materials in his writing suggests Lyndenberg's approach is well suited to the task of analysis. However, Lyndenberg sometimes overlooks connections between Burroughs' fiction and his biography that offer more specific understandings of his intent than she pursues. Of the

[103] Lyndenberg, *Word Cultures*, 138.
[104] Ibid., 154 (ellipses mine).

many times that Burroughs sought treatment for his heroin addiction, he found the greatest promise in Apomorphine, an experimental cure prescribed by one Dr. Dent. Burroughs describes the effect of the cure:

> I don't intend to do any dishonest writing now or at any time. I do think junk is a bad deal, a nowhere route that never leads to anything but junk. If treated as a public health problem, could be slowly eliminated with no penalizing of existent addicts who, owing to disabilities physical, psychic, or both, are not able to make it without junk – they should have it legally. Most junkies, if given an apomorphine cure and any sort of life away from junk, I think would be glad to pull out. I don't recognize the word theoretical, especially not with regards to junk. When I say I am off junk I mean off – not a codeine pill, nothing. OFF JUNK. Suicide. Prefer a bullet. Question does not arise.[105]

Burroughs describes the state of achieving "silence" as an outcome of taking Apomorphine, but that state is a means to an end rather than an end itself as Lyndenberg argues.[106]

Each turn of Lyndenberg's trek through her economy of digestion with Burroughs and Bakhtin provides a point of entry into what I see as multiple interactions between the two writers. However, in the end, Lyndenberg settles on an ironically clean distinction between Bakhtin's vision of fertile inclusion and Burroughs' flight from defiled control. Lyndenberg's move not only supports her read of Burroughs' view of the body and word, it also provides the means to continue her argument, claiming, "In the works of theorists like Ehrmann, Barthes, and Derrida – as in Burroughs' fiction – there is a return to the body which has as its ultimate goal an escape from the body.[107] The bodies of interest, for Lyndenberg, are the body of language and the theoretical bodies of post-structural and deconstructive thought that regard language as structurally oppressive.

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[105] William S. Burroughs, *The Letters of William S. Burroughs 1945-1959*, ed. Oliver Harris (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 426-28.
[106] William S. Burroughs, *Nova Express* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 48.
[107] Lyndenberg, *Word Cultures*, 149-151.

I owe a debt to Robin Lyndenberg. Her work in *Word Cultures* got me thinking about Burroughs in an entirely different way and, likely, is one of the reasons I am in his archive today. Further, I wonder if Bakhtin would be on my mind had Lyndenberg not offered her notions first. My goal here is to reconsider Burroughs and Bakhtin and the synergies between them as I find my way through the archive. As I mentioned earlier, what I thought I knew about Burroughs is increasingly unreliable. Where Lyndenberg sees Burroughs as attempting to abandon language, I am coming to understand him as working feverishly to make language work in a different way. At the time Lyndenberg was researching the archive, she could not access all the material that is available now, so maybe it *is* time to write a new tune.

2.16 August 15, 2009

Josh and I are spending the week in Provincetown, Massachusetts. I made a terrible scene here several summers ago, embarrassing Josh, myself, and all of our friends. I am grateful just to be here, so I do my best to lay low and succeed for the most part. When people ask me how my project is going, I usually begin by describing my latest unusual find because I get excited. Then I have to back up and explain the existence of the collection, and sometimes I have to explain who Burroughs is too. By that point, I have lost them and switch the subject to politics.

I wonder if most people entrenched in admittedly esoteric research subjects find themselves receiving similarly glazed looks when catching up with old friends. Of course, there also is the possibility that I do not know enough yet to say anything interesting. I find myself missing the brief discussions I have with Anne about Burroughs. She truly is astonishing. Although the Berg Reading Room is never what I would call busy, each day brings in at least one or two new faces. The buzzer bleats. I

look up. Anne picks up her card and ushers them through the door. Without fail, Anne is familiar with their author of interest, provided they reside at the Berg. Sometimes she mentions a recent addition to the author's collection, other times she chats about a particular work. Of Burroughs, she asked my impression of him as a father. The short and painful life of Billy Burroughs is one of the things I recall Burroughs expressing deep remorse about in his later years. During the time covered in the archive, Billy grew from a child to a troubled young man with only the barest contact with his father who lived overseas.[108] I could tell that Anne's sentiment was negative by the way she asked the question, and so I hedged and said that it was complicated. Which was true, their father and son relationship was a disastrous, complicated mess, but it also was true that I had not given the matter much thought.

2.17 Alice – Part 3

Carroll's extended play with the language of time in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* makes light of an absurd disconnect between word and phenomenon. Twisting puns flow freely precisely because words and watches define time through abstraction, naming and enumerating it as something independent from the subjective experience of time. Even in the paradoxical stasis of a tea-time, the literary flow of time maintains space for Alice and the others to engage in a whole host of varied activities. To articulate the specific ways language manifests time in distinct literary worlds, Bakhtin offers the chronotope, observing,

> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history.[109]

[108] Miles, *William Burroughs*, 208-11.
[109] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 84.

Discreet words indicating time or space, such as an address or a date, communicate information, but do not constitute a chronotope. Rather, chronotopes emerge, developing their capacities over multiple instances where they are made visible through their representation of material affect on a body moving through space.

Take Alice, for instance, and her soured stint at the tea party. Carroll sets the physical scene at the start of the episode:

> There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the two were resting their elbows on top of it, and talking over its head. […] The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it.[110]

Bakhtin notes that the intimacy of domestic spaces scales the perspective of time toward the familial, intimating not only the types of actions that are likely to occur, but their ebb and flow in the course of a given day.[111] Private spaces and conversations tend to include minute details of people, items, and actions. Emphasizing social interactions dilates time, and the activity and interaction that transpire as Alice passes through the tea party combines conversation, physical actions and reactions, and material details throughout. No sooner has Alice approached the table, than the others object. Alice refutes their arguments of "no room" by taking an empty seat and joining them at the table. Like each of Alice's adventures in Wonderland, hardly a moment passes before the girl finds herself interacting directly with the other characters. For Bakhtin, the brisk pacing of social events and interactions and the dearth of uneventful (e. g. non-social) action, such as Alice walking alone from place to place, is yet another way that time and space might contract.[112] Alice's actions shape Wonderland's chronotope even

[110] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 66 (ellipses mine).
[111] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 233-36.
[112] Ibid., 120-125.

as the chronotope enables her action to unfold as events. Once all the episode's players are seated at the table, their heated conversations keep the healthy beat of time until the quorum stumbles, lapsing the whole affair into a minute of uncomfortable silence. The moment is comic, prompting a shock of recognition for readers familiar with awkward lulls in conversations and the peculiar way that minutes can stretch to agonizing lengths without speech to smooth their passing. When the Hatter breaks the quiet, Carroll marks the passage of time by indicating the speaker's tone and pace and the increase in physical activity.

> "I want a clean cup," interrupted the Hatter: "lets all move one place on."
>
> He moved on as he spoke, and the Dormouse followed him: the March Hare moved into the Dormouse's place, and Alice rather unwillingly took the place of the March Hare. The Hatter was the only one who got any advantage from the change: and Alice was a good deal worse off, as the March Hare had just upset the milk-jug into his plate.[113]

Here, the upset milk-jug, in memory of its righted state and its upset state now described, is a chronotopic object, layering in domestic function and material interaction in an effort to ground the temporal event in a particular temporal space.

Bakhtin opens his essay on the chronotope with a nod to Einstein's *Theory of Relativity*, playfully asserting that it will be deployed "almost" metaphorically, so as to attend to the problem of time and space in the novel.[114] Einstein's theory posits an understanding of time relative to speed, while Bakhtin suggests that literary time is understood relative to scale. While tracing historical shifts in cultural notions of selfhood and personal identity in the novel, Bakhtin grounds his analysis in the human scale of everyday occurrences, parsing out the events that shape an individual's understanding of themselves in mortal terms from those that shape a generation or an epoch, explaining:

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[113] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 74.
[114] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 83.

> Parallel to these individual life-sequences – above them, but *outside* of them – there is a time-sequence that is *historical*, serving as the channel for the life of the nation, the state, mankind […] The historical time sequence is measured by different standards of value, other kinds of events take place in it, it has no interior aspect, no point of view for perceiving it from the inside out.[115]

Epic views of history, even those describing a generation, enlarge their view of time in order to assume an all encompassing perspective, erasing the human face in the process. Only in contrast with finely detailed time and space, scaled to the human experience of an hour or a day, can such an epic view find the perspective necessary to give it meaning.

2.18 September 29, 2009

Dear William,

I am sorry I came with expectations. Even though I tried to allow your archive to speak to me, I paged through the first manuscript of the first box and dismissed it as surprisingly normal, considering when you wrote it. The shock of flaming ink a few pages later tripped me up and got me to stop talking while I lost myself in the beauty of the red. I thought I saw you there in that hazy place between color and the shape that contains it. So I started looking for you everywhere. I told myself I had figured it out. I told myself you were waiting for me. I was telling myself *so* much and *so* often that I really never let you speak.

"I feel like apologizing" is about all I do these days, never knowing the correct way so that the necessary words can be spoken and release all the unspoken tension from the room. I know you have something to say, that's why I'm here. If it turns out that hearing what you have to say is the only reason I'm here, well fine, I'm ready to listen.

[115] Ibid., 217 (ellipses mine).

I remember that first day. The Cut-up is comprised of five columns and seven rows. Each cell contains typed words and the contours of the grid are marked in uneven blue lines. The artful splashes of red ink are smeared in places but still vivid after all these years hidden away. The page fulfills my desire, my private eye search for evidence of your cutting up. I wander around your grid for a long time, moving my focus from the licks of red to the text and back again. I read across the bits for a while and then shift tack to devour each fragment in its entirety. The puzzle delights me, and I set about deciphering your system of arrangement by tracing whole phrases and sentences that make sense until the ink pulls me back to the pleasant disarray. There is a thumbprint in one of the smears, much larger than my own, and I imagine it belongs to you.

Reflecting on the thumbprint, I am aware of my own hands on the pages. The oils and moisture on my fingers leave traces of my presence on the paper crinkling agreeably in my grasp. Marks on these pages are not only stained in ink.
john

2.19 November 3, 2009

Poor Alice. Nearly a century and a half after wandering from her studies to pursue an ill tempered rabbit down the crooked path to Wonderland, and she is still being tasked to carry more meanings. Editor Robert Phillips surveys the heroine's plasticity of person in *Aspects of Alice* to offer up a Whitman's Sampler of critical appraisals drawn from the time of the novel's release in 1865, through 1971, the year Phillips' collection was published.[116] Are Alice's adventures the adult world as seen

[116] Robert Phillips, ed., *Aspects of Alice: Louis Carroll's Dream Child as Seen Through the Looking-Glasses of Critics, 1865-1971* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1971).

through a child's eyes? Perhaps they are Victorian instructives in feminine behavior, when they are not also political satire and the embedded autobiography of a troubled author. Shifting intellectual and critical currents shape the numerous interpretive perspectives applied to Alice and her adventures over the years.

Annotated, extrapolated, and alluded to, so much has been done with Alice that it becomes all too easy to overlook the things that Alice does herself. Wonderland, for the many twists and turns of logic and proportion, is not a place but a series of unexpected encounters and transformations. Unlike her later travels through the Looking Glass, which are structured to the moves of a puzzle on a chess board, Alice wanders through Wonderland following the whims of her own curiosity. "Curiouser and curiouser," marvels Alice when she is pleased by some new strangeness. "Nonsense," she dismisses when becoming frustrated or bored. Not much time passes in either case before some happenstance arrives permitting Alice the choice to move on to her next adventure: a key, a cake, a fan, a mushroom, or even a brief lull at a tea party.

2.20 G. Forelli 8

I came to visit unannounced. Not to make excuses but, officially at least, I was and am entitled to come and rifle through your papers: I went to graduate school, and I obtained the required research designation for my library card. Also in question are whose papers they are, having been sold several times over and you being dead. Still, I thought you would like to know, because I get the feeling I was expected.

Expected is different than invited. An invitation carries the subtextual "won't you come over and behave, if not in the manner that I want you to, then at least in the fashion of one to whom a kindness is extended?" The roles of guest and host are

sharply delineated, carving out territories and boundaries and property. Each of us marked as different, as other, and our congress is beset from the beginning by a struggle over power and authority. Jacques Derrida explicates the implicit strictures of the invitation, noting that the one proffering such an invite bids the other welcome to a conditional house where he or she is both host and master. Of course, Derrida conceives of a different hospitality, an "Unconditional hospitality," which "must remain open without horizon of expectation, without anticipation, to any surprise visitation."[117]

What to make, then, of this curious sensation that I was expected? In response, I felt I should be prepared, and unable to sleep, I pour all my energies into getting ready. I lay out clothes. I assemble a fresh notebook, an automatic pencil, and a fine point pen with ink that flows easily and dries quickly. Flitting from website to article to book, I search for some thought or idea I might use as a compass to direct or center me. Above all, and this is the part I scarcely admit to myself, I want to go prepared to do the work I tell myself I have traveled all this way to do. Feigning interest in my preparations, my fat cat rubs against my satchel and leaves a skid of fine white hairs on the brown canvas. Whisking them away with my tape roller, I think of you and your cats, and relax the tiniest step. I am nervous because I associate this journey to your archive with meeting you. For someone who not only knows that you kept and cherished cats but has formed opinions on which ones you cared for most or mourned the greatest, that is to say, for someone like me, the desire to do good work can run afoul of existing affection.

Now our day is over, and I am unsettled by our introduction. I replay the opening of the first few items in Folio 1 again and again: simple prose, cut up

[117] Jacques Derrida, "Hospitality," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* vol. 5, num. 3 (2000): 17.

worksheet, Cut-up collage. Laid out like artifacts, each documents a step in your Cut-up method, as if to say, "If you have come looking for evidence that I, William S. Burroughs, did what I said I did with my methods, here it is." Calling these examples offhanded seems charitable, each being widely disconnected by date and theme. Yet I cannot shake the sense of your hand at work here, though not as author but an archivist, and what I perceive as casual disaffection reminds me of the disappointments lurking in my own expectations. Whether it was choice or chance that placed the items in the order I received them, they frustrate my way forward by tempering my assumptions about what I came to understand. They clear away a bit of who I imagine you to be and make room for a bit of wonder over what might yet transpire, unconditional hospitality on all parts.

2.21 Ipomoea violacea 25

The page moves easily on my dry fingertips, its tiny dimples and the swirls of my prints finding no sympathetic catch. The moment inscribed by the words on the page is the moment when a body was near. Long fingers tapping out a scenario Burroughs used before and would use again. Typing to retype, read one way. Read the other and my damp fingertips pull the paper fast. The scenario that leads the rest, that sets the form, was hammered out straight from a dead sleep, eyes Eureka wide. Then I breathe and the page moves slightly.

2.22 August 25, 2009

Folio 30 "Exterminator and Early Cut-up with Pound Shakespeare ect. Many Unpublished Sections," is a geyser. Twin geysers, in fact, since Folio 31 "Exterminator and Early Cut-ups of Pound Shakespeare ect. (continued from Folio No. 30)" follows it

close at hand. The problem with unearthing streams of insight full of information and labeled in such an obvious way is that it asks me to reflect on what prompted my misunderstanding.

The Cut-ups are not cut. My visions of Burroughs carting around an avalanche of fragments, tinkering with them like some literary alchemist, were a fantasy. Although the abundant cache of Cut-ups in these two folders portends a positive shift in momentum for my research, my feelings of relief are coupled with regret. I had long assumed that my first encounter with a genuine Burroughs Cut-up would impress upon me the physical affect of collage, such as I noted on the embellished cover of Folio 10.

The pages in these folios are the result of some Cut-up already done and then transposed by typewriter for future editing and review. The protomorphic scraps, exhausted in usefulness, have long since followed the coffee grounds and chicken bones to some discarded heap. Considering that the initial text(s) is lost, I cannot even be certain that there were such scraps. Burroughs' innovations to the Cut-up process included both the fold-in and grid techniques, neither of which require cutting of any kind. The apparent variety represented here, coupled with my newly forged resolve to avoid assumption, means proceeding at a careful pace.

Some of the Cut-ups are quite short, a few lines at the top of an otherwise blank sheet, while others run more than a page. I study each page, first by reading from beginning to end, and then by trying to determine which Cut-up technique Burroughs used to create the text, knowing all the while I am guessing. Several of the items containing multiple leaves are multiple Cut-ups made from the same source material, which does suggest the use of physical scraps that can be rearranged. Unlike the liquid

rhythms that emerge when reading Burroughs' Cut-up novels, these raw examples seize and stop at odd, artificial intervals.

> Yes flight t.b. boys that's folks an me with my old junky 1920 Straw selling Ch hat in Sai ristmas se gon The seals on Rube they the route called him thay will and just fly from here is North London to Clark St. Glasgow the Priest a petite they blue called im eyed blon just an de streak old friend ed across left the sky between and clashed worlds with Glas remember Rin gow police tit Tin??? Minutes to her 4th go. Clock grade[118]

My attention wanders too easily, shifting from the page to imagining Burroughs at work. My work slows, my seat is uncomfortable, and my head is beginning to ache. He is more remote to me now then before I entered his archive – or perhaps what makes for our intimacy is strange to me. The jumble of syntax ensnares me when I force my return to the work in front of me. The aggravating cycle of labor begins again.

The trace of Burroughs' hand occasionally buoys my spirits, with an underlined sequence or a few circled words, but his script is nigh illegible. Unedited Cut-ups are ugly things, broken and splintered and coated in the bloody viscera of narrative through which they protrude. My own experiments with Burroughs' basic technique are a constant source of frustration (see Figure 2). I end my attempts to use Cut-ups by sweeping up another stack of useless scraps, although cleaning up might be solved by adopting Burroughs' fold-in or grid techniques. In the end, Cut-ups are inefficient and produce only a few phrases or interesting juxtapositions I find useful. I used to consider the failure my own, an inability to tune Burroughs' Cut-up engine to the more meandering rhythm of my prose. Then, I began to suspect that inefficiency and the production of waste are the attendant costs paid to utilize Burroughs' creative mechanics. Now, wading through this slag pile of Burroughs' own creative production, I finally understand: the Cut-up is a ravenous machine.

[118] William S. Burroughs, Folio 79, Item 55, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.

2.23 November 5, 2009

Dear William,

Today, against the advice of my will, my backlog of work that needs doing, and my stubborn sinus infection, I made the trip from Albany to New York. There, with the aid of Sudafed and several shots of espresso, I attempted to review one of the folios in your archive. Much of the day is a blur, cramped typewriter letters pushed closer together still by the hazy ache of pressure building above my eyes. Several times I thought to abandon my work, retreating to a diner so I could drown my misery in the heat of tomato soup. I stayed for the company. On review, my notations from the day are odd, clipped, and strained. Reading through the notes, they seem as if some other hands typed them: Summaries of your routines in my voice, and then your voice cuts in, as if I were taking dictation. We weave a strange mosaic until the spell suddenly ends. I am hunched over the table, in the reading room, combing over papers. It is cold outside. Once this world gets frozen, it takes a long time to thaw. Thawing hurts.

Item 18 is the routine of the Italian Prince who is reflective and goes about in public stealing the most attractive features from people – their eyes, their smile, their graceful gestures – leaving them disfigured. The Prince accidentally goes out on Reversal Day and sees a street boy with a beautiful brown chest that the prince covets. The prince flashes his (stolen) beautiful smile that always charms the street boys and then speaks, "You come with me Meester?" the mouth leaping from the prince to the street boy. The prince is beset by an army of street boys. His every effort to escape them conveys more and more of his stolen beauty until he is just a shattered, old and ugly limestone statue littering the steps of his own *piazza d'espangna*. The thousand years of stolen beauty contained within the royal body are liberated and spill out onto the square.

However, I did learn seMultiple systems maintaveral things through myin the ordered and effi experiments: The matercient workings of the Nial you start with mattew York Public Library.ers; the more cuts you The revolving door atmake, the more cut up t the main entrance is ohe Cut-up; and you do nut of service. Upon enot edit Cut-ups, you sitrance to the library, ft them. Tailors, chefvisitors with bags musts, and pop stars all ag stop at the table in tree on one thing; the bhe lobby and present thetter the stuff going ieir bags for visual insnto the product, the bepection. A similar pertter the product. Burrfunctory glance at my boughs often used variouelongings will concludes analogies to describe my visit. Bags, along what exactly the Cut-u with coats, pens, and p did, the medium's artfood are not permitted of table-tapping beingin the special collecti one of the more memoraon reading rooms. Visible. Burroughs also ctors can check their belaimed that a Cut-up wilongings at the cloakroth Shakespeare's work wom in the hallway to thas a new Shakespeare wre right of the main lobitten from beyond the gby. The cloakroom atterave. Cut-ups, dependindant inquires if my bang on the number of cutg contains any money, es, can bend, break, or lectronics, or food as shatter meaning that owthese items cannot be ces its fragile existenchecked. Researchers whe to syntax and grammaro wish to use a laptop . The Cut-up, after aldevice may request a cll, is a machine for breear plastic bag to holdaking down text. While their belongings. The I am certain that the cloakroom attendant inauthorship of a sonnet forms me that they are and a Cut-up poem made out of bags and hands mfrom that same sonnet ie a plastic 13 for my cs not likely to be confheck tag. Massive twinused, they often feel q staircases rise in oppuite similar in a way Iosing direction further find difficult to expl down the hall on the lain. I sometimes tell eft side, although onlymyself that this impres the right-most stairwasion of similarity is jy is accessible from thust a lingering sense Ie main hall. Next to t have of the original phe stairs is a small baoem or an association Ink of elevators and a r have with particular wow of dark wood telephoords being used, but thne booths sans phones. e feeling happens frequ Each flight of formed ently enough that I hopcement steps ends on a e something in the Burrshared landing so visitoughs archive can shed ors can choose to descesome light on the phenond following their accemenon. Josh says that nt, continue to ascend hope is for people who in the opposite directiare all out of options.on, or maintain the cur Maybe I should changerent course of ascensio hope to think or suspen. The top of the righct because I need to het-most stairway ends ondge a bit here. The Cu the third floor in frot-up is an incredibly ent of the men's restroofficient machine and, am, while the left-most s a consequence, it proends just outside of thduces an equally increde reading room for The ible amount of waste

Figure 2. Unedited Cut-up Text Made From Draft Material

Item 19 follows a similar pattern. An Italian ventriloquist this time, who has the power to leave worm-like words hanging in the air, ready to bore into the skulls of their chosen victims when they pass by. The ventriloquist encounters five boys dressed in colored tee shirts – black, white, red, green, and blue – blocking his way. These colors are the same colors Burroughs assigned to the Soft Machine or body system. The ventriloquist attempts to use his word powers against the boys, but they effectively mimic his voice and behavior, although altered as if his words and image have taken a ride through Burroughs' tape recorder. As he screams in agony, the ventriloquist is undone in spirals of spaghetti-like flesh that unspool in fleshy ways.

Item 23 is the Defection of green Tony, a verbal assault on Mr. Martin's cowardice in soliciting others to assassinate Burroughs rather than attending to the messy business himself. For Burroughs' part, he sits patiently waiting for the opportunity to cut Mr. Martin into tiny pieces. The whole piece is done as a sort of tirade launched by a fed-up underling toward the master he no longer follows because he no longer fears his powers of control. It ends with a challenge from Burroughs' own voice: "Well Martin Here I stand by the O.K. Corral. Waiting on you. Come on Martin. Fill your lousy piss hand. I'm all alone Martin. No cops no nothing just Burroughs and welcome."[119]

Item 33 is a silver flash into another act … On an old 1899 vaudeville stage the Silver Dan takes a picture and Martin rises from a invisible door in silver smoke … He bows to the audience in evening clothes. And now ladies and gentlemen the greatest show on earth … The history of this beautiful planet is about to be repeated …

[119] William S. Burroughs, Folio 107, Item 23, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.

Chorus of boos … We don't want any of that jazz … Take the place apart … What place said a cool grey hipster with blue shades … He raised his camera … Sput … A grey army advances across a field under a yellow sky … Sput Sput Sput. Nitrous fumes twisting in rings of Saturn. Friend do abandon film there fastest and firstest. I always get there before the fight starts, Martin. Take a few pictures. Write a continuity and there is not fight. Nothing there to fight after I take pictures of what is not. That is to say pictures of you Martin. The mold of what is not that inexorably pressures what is the human image.

Item 41 is dated November 2, 1972. The pages are in a tight, cramped printing I have not encountered before. The letters are SMALL. Even. The margin is exact. There is a technology of inscription here that I have not seen in the archive thus far, and I recognize it because it is the most familiar to the contemporary look of my own printed page, ladies and gentlemen, the electric typewriter.

Item 43 is curious, unsigned psychotic…

2.24 September 3, 2009

Cutting-up Red

Red is long-standing questions. The occasion is weighted by questions brought whole and lacking the rust. For my predated curiosity about the past lights calls I try the William Burroughs to imagine writing technique the sense and tilt wrapped in close play. I and the left; the stopped. Strange, how safety which balances the rabbit back bloom. But portent, but with life, tumble down slender stem stop. Present, coloring the steps, the word Outside, on and amber, about Burroughs. Only thin skin arrests the experience as something that does not say. Come December and glistening, she is wonder, which came now to tie the hats to her concentration. Turning back eyes shift in

need to red match. The light break lamps. I think spectrum sight draped in plum tricks memory. Desire to whether my red wool on the blood town ball. Wine and my face magenta. I think angry lights display specificity and impression of a percussive disappear, replaced to recall to full pink the sweaty memory attention of red. See me back rare in red noses and say that I adjust on faces. A flower of seasonal safety and my thin woman, red blood. Her coats with the composition of mulled layers of recall the gigantic papier-mâché shape into the glossy red of his claret. The pedestrian comes white and I think strands of nude. By a torrent of instant stains of a river I tried cap, a left arm glaring stern the occasional old blood. With echoing extends toward mind, sculpture is recognizably red. I realized the whole my eyes an indelible autumn crystal and leaves life. I open a purse. Wild game glows to lips are startled when the scene of my fresh blood lingers. Perfectly cast sun pools on crystal color and glistening sometimes entangles. Arched back, underneath, red trickle I am ivory skin toward cool. Lips are world shifts softly suggest answer those red with a parade.[120]

2.25 September 8, 2009

Burroughs gives the Cut-up process physical form in *The Ticket that Exploded,* rendering it as a ruined fairground with an adjacent penny arcade, formal gardens, and capped by an exhibition hall housing roaring clockworks.[121] A haunted childhood memory of titillation and sexual excitement echoes through the arcade, but the pinball no longer clatters and the peepholes show only darkness. The garden fares worse, dismantled by a pair of bumbling thugs and then burned. What once was a cooling oasis of physical delights designed to induce lotus scented amnesia now chokes the air

[120] John LeBret, "Cutting-up red," unpublished. This Cut-up uses material drawn from my own writing.
[121] William S. Burroughs, *The Ticket that Exploded*, 62-85.

with soot and cinder. Only the exhibition hall continues to stir. Writing along with paintings, photographs, film, music, sculpture, and speech move through a kaleidoscope of color and conveyor belts. Fully automated, texts are sorted and travel to technologies specifically adapted to cutting through their respective textualities. Photographs and paintings move past each other in bright galleries, their images reproduced and layered on screens. Film and plays are synced on the same stage, blurring distinctions between what is live and what is recorded, while the whole spectacle is filmed and projected in real time. Music and speech funnel through a battery of tape recorders that snap and whiz in distorted layers as they record and playback. The writing machine itself takes two forms. The first is a number of monstrous steel cylinders that are internally magnetized to attract colored bits of iron that materialize into sentences and then, just as suddenly, dissolve into dust. These monoliths offer a vision of the word as mutable and transient, lacking form or shape save for the most immediate electric impulse. The second is a gaping maw, through which "spectators are invited to feed into the machine any pages of their own text in fifty-fifty juxtaposition with any author of their choice any pages of their choice and provided with the results in a few minutes."[122] In a parenthetical aside, the narrator explains, "the proportion of half one text half the other is important corresponding as it does to the two halves of the human organism."[123] The word parasite, the key weapon of Burroughs' otherworldly marauders in the Nova Trilogy, has invaded the body of the human hosts already; the purpose of the writing machines to splice the word back into itself.

[122] Burroughs, *The Ticket that Exploded*, 65.
[123] Ibid., 65.

Unaware that the human organism has long since quit clicking through turnstiles to wonder at the mechanics of creation, the machines continue to churn through text and produce what an audience will never see. The images of the whirring factory of the ruined carnival had long been my definition of the Cut-up process. In my conception, I always held that the Cut-up is a weapon of resistance to use against the control exerted by language. Like Robin Lyndenberg and others, I mistook the apocalyptic endgame of *The Ticket that Exploded* to be Burroughs' goal in the proliferation of the Cut-up process; language undone, leaving nothing but silence. From this perspective, Burroughs' vision is a clairvoyant imagining of Jean Baudrillard's hypermediated collapse under the weight of endless simulation. Baudrillard writes,

> The Beaubourg effect, the Beaubourg machine, the Beaubourg *thing* – how to give it a name? Enigma of this carcass of flux and sign, of networks and circuits – the final impulse to translate a structure that no longer has a name […] Monument to the games of mass simulation, the Pompidou Center functions as an incinerator absorbing all the cultural energy and devouring it – a bit like the black monolith in *2001*: insane convection of all the contents that came there to be materialized, to be absorbed, and to be annihilated.[124]

For Baudrillard, the Pompidou Center is the spectacle of mass culture, immune to all violence directed at it from outside. It is undone only by its own weight, by the mass of the masses weighing it down until it implodes. Similarly, in the Nova Trilogy, the Cut-up as tactical counter-weapon turns the enemy's strength against itself. The parasitic word virus is brought down by a viral "writing" practice designed to misuse the word. While resisting control is a central theme in Burroughs' work and the Cut-up integral to Burroughs' invasion plots in the novels, these aspects do not fully account for Burroughs' understanding of the Cut-up and its uses.

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[124] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 61 (italics in original, ellipses mine).

Folio 32 contains the final transcript of *Minutes to Go*, a collaboration between Burroughs, Brion Gysin, Sinclair Beiles, and Gregory Corso making early use of the Cut-up process. Before today, it was one of the few published examples of the Cut-up I had not read. The manuscript is something of a compiled mutt with each contributor using his own brand of paper and favorite machine. The stitched together form suits the Cut-up, emphasizing that it is not just Burroughs' production.

The origin story of the Cut-up is told here, again, and includes Brion's discovery of cut newsprint under his canvas, his amused reactions to the rearrangements, and his sharing the process with Bill. Burroughs' version of the story is repeated so frequently in both print and audio recordings that I have come to think of it as the *Legend of the Cut-up*, which goes:

> At a 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 theater. Andre Breton expelled Tristan Tzara from the movement and grounded the Cut-ups on the Freudian couch.
>
> In the summer of 1959 Brion Gysin painter and writer cut newspaper articles into sections and rearranged the sections *at random*. "Minutes to Go" resulted from this initial Cut-up experiment. "Minutes to Go" contains unedited unchanged Cut-ups emerging as quite coherent and meaningful prose.
>
> The Cut-up method brings to writers the collage, which has been used by painters for fifty years. And used by moving and still camera. In fact all street shots from movie or still camera are by the unpredictable factors of passersby and juxtaposition Cut-ups. And photographers will tell you that often their best shots are accidents […] writers will tell you the same. The best writing seems to be done almost by accident but until the Cut-up method was made explicit – all writing is in fact Cut-ups; I will return to this point – had no way to produce the accident of spontaneity. You cannot *will* spontaneity. But you can introduce the unpredictable spontaneous factor with a pair of scissors.[125]

Touched by personal inflection and laughter, the great discovery of the Cut-up feels rather small and genuine here; hardly a game of mass simulation imploding under

[125] Burroughs and Gysin, *The Third Mind*, 34 (emphasis in original). In the text, Burroughs uses quotation marks to indicate the book title of *Minutes to Go*, and I retain his format in the citation.

its own weight. The Cut-up is a boon to writing and opens the door to creative possibility with words. Burroughs' credit to Gysin is not just an acknowledgement but also an agreement to grow the process together. My thinking has to change if I believe the Cut-up is a gift. The relationship entered into by accepting the Cut-up is not comradery or partnership, but it is warm and smells of Moroccan spice. Might the word be friend?

2.26 October 22, 2009

Dear William,

I went looking for Porter Mills gay blue movies on 43rd street between 6th and 7th. The walk was stunning, wind blowing through Manhattan's streets catching smells of pastries and roasting nuts and subway grease in the hazy light of the October sun sinking in the Hudson. I found myself wondering if you liked the smell of New York. The Porter Mills marquee like every other adult theatre in Time Square was snuffed out and a brewpub or branding anchor store installed in the vacant shell. The revolution was rescinded in the name of family entertainment.

We walked the same streets but the clash between our experiences of the familiar is the rupture that occurred while reading your last letter to Brion. For months I have spent my days paging through file after file waiting for the flash of a thought or moment to finally put traction to my project. I gather notes. I transcribe letters impatiently waiting for the place to start. I now know that place is your end where the flickering photo lights fell on blue movie boys and you announced the word lines were closed for business.

I wonder if images – sex acts under blue snow – linger behind the new drywall semen on linoleum under the carpet pad. These hidden histories are what I've been

looking for and they are bitter sweet. The old man had a way about him spoke his mind to a fault and I chewed every word. Never you mind, boy, they'll be something else tomorrow.

john

2.27 September 15, 2009

The way in is the mouth. This is getting a bit ahead of myself, but the thought has been echoing in my head since I left the reading room tonight, and I do not want to lose it.

Backtrack: to start, there are some updates in order, along with some shifts, and a reorientation or two. My headlong tumble into Burroughs' labyrinth has been neither a failure nor a success. I struggle with evaluating my initial charge into the archive, taking stock of where I came from and where I find myself heading in order to evaluate my progress. Even now, the problem reveals himself: I was the problem. I allowed my search through Burroughs' papers, my opportunity to witness his every mundane or exceptional moment, to devolve into a ghoulish shopping trip for everything I wanted to know about the Cut-ups for my use. The gentle reminder that the Cut-ups were and are a shared experience threw my selfish orientation into sharp relief. Moreover, I had projected a similar isolation onto Burroughs without verifying such a state to be true.

January 1955, Tangier, deep in his struggles with addiction, Burroughs writes Allen Ginsberg:

> I am suffering from a profound depression, the worst in my life. I have a complete conviction that I can't write any more, that my talent, such as it is, has given out, and sit for hours looking at a blank page, and there is no one I can talk to. I shouldn't be here hung up on Eukodol. Of course take more on account of depression […] I don't know what is wrong with me, but it is bad. Every idea I

> get on my novel seems ridiculous, like this atomic deal. And everything I write disgusts me.[126]

Burroughs' opiate cravings and creative aspirations snarled together like serpents in the years leading up to the publication of *Naked Lunch*. In letter after letter to Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, Burroughs played announcer to the battle of desires taking place in his body. Agonies of relapse and withdrawal mirror the bruising doubts and lacerating self-critiques of a writer hell-bent on the realization of a creative vision that flickers and shifts with the slightest inattention, always underlining the experience of physical pain in failure. From his own reports, two things seem to sustain him through this period: a proactive analytic role in the treatment of his addiction and the development and practice of the short writing form he names the routine.[127]

Unlike the long form of his early novels, *Junky* and *Queer*, which demand the writer's sustained attention to the narrative, the routine is a brief situation-driven encounter written in a flowing creative burst. Burroughs wrote to Ginsberg of one such piece in 1953, "Enclosed is a skit I dreamed up. (The idea did come to me in a dream from which I woke up laughing.)"[128] Oliver Harris suggests that since Burroughs later revised the letter to read routine rather than skit, Burroughs had not yet established the idea of the routine as a distinct form. However, by the following year, he had, writing to Ginsberg in April 1954:

> Routines like habit. Without routines my life is chronic nightmare, gray horror of Midwest suburb […] I have to have receiver for routine. If there is no one there to receive it, routine turns back on me and tears me apart, grows more and more insane (literal growth like cancer) and impossible, and fragmentary like berserk pin-ball machine and I am screaming: "Stop it! Stop it!"
>
> Trying to write novel. Attempt to organize material is more painful than anything I ever experienced.[129]

[126] Burroughs, *The Letters*, 257 (ellipses mine).
[127] Ibid., 201.
[128] Ibid., 164.
[129] Ibid., 201 (ellipses mine).

Two months later, and again to Ginsberg, Burroughs writes, "I've been thinking about routine as art form, and what distinguishes it from other forms. One thing, it is not *completely symbolic*, that is, it is subject to shlup over into 'real' action at any time (like cutting off finger joint and so forth)."[130] This letter in particular illustrates the depth of Burroughs' friendship with Ginsberg through a bit of gallows humor referencing Burroughs' own "shlup" into reality by cutting off the tip of his pinky in 1939. Burroughs embraced the routine rather than the novel as his primary literary form, naming Ginsberg his principal receiver and collaborator.

A precise definition of what Burroughs meant by receiver is difficult to parse out. On one hand, the receiver might be understood as simply a reader, someone to write for or to have in mind when writing. However, judging from Burroughs' toxic descriptions of the routine in the absence of the receiver, it would seem the receiver somehow completes a social circuit and provides the feedback the writer needs to progress from one idea to the next. Burroughs' routines and their capacities for real action were meaningful only insofar as there was an audience to witness not just the narrative tale but also his creative performance as writer. Writing in short but intense bursts of creativity, Burroughs reports a sort of gathering momentum in his practice. Each subsequent letter to Ginsberg holds the trace of Burroughs' growing confidence in the routine as a viable alternative to traditional long form narrative. And with increased confidence came increased productivity:

> July 26, 1956. […] I have no compulsion to write or to do anything except when I am possessed by routines, which can happen any time. A lot of the time I just sit blank and narcotized letting sensations flow through me. I have a feeling I might turn into somebody else, that I am losing my outlines. […]

[130] Ibid., 216.

> October 29, 1956. […] Now listen. I will have the prologue of Interzone, which is about fifty pages, complete in a few weeks. Should I send you a copy? And if so where? What I am writing now supersedes, in fact makes obsolete, anything I have written hitherto. Write me on this point. I am really writing Interzone now, not writing about it […]
>
> December 20, 1956. […] I will send along about 100 pages of Interzone, it is coming so fast I can't hardly get it down, and shakes me like a great black wind through the bones […]
>
> January 23, 1957. […] Interzone is coming like dictation, I can't keep up with it. I will send along what is done so far. Read in any order. It makes no difference […]
>
> February 14, 1957. […] Since sending MS. have written about fifty pages more, wilder than what you have. This is almost automatic writing. I often sit high on hash for as long as six hours typing at top speed […] It is hard for me to evaluate this material. Some of it obviously should be omitted and the whole put in some sort of order, but I keep writing more and no time to revise […] As you see I am running more and more to prose poems and no strait narrative in over a month. I must take it as it comes […][131]

Originally enclosed as separate pieces, Burroughs' routines begin to interrupt the body of his letters to Ginsberg. Recounting the events of his day, Burroughs segues into fictions and fragments of routines, often without warning, and the familiar singularity of his epistolary voice explodes into numerous subjectivities.

> What I am writing now supersedes, in fact makes obsolete, anything I have written hitherto. Write to me on this point. I am really writing Interzone now, not writing about it […]
>
> Enclose picture of Spanish boy who has quit his job and left home and moved in with me. Not, my dear, an unmixed blessing. The chorus of quides and queens in the Socco has passed it along: "Tell Willy The Junk he is asking for it shacking with that Spanish kid who is always in hassles with the fuzz." This kid has been arrested many times for such offences as playing ball in the streets, breaking windows with his slingshot, and hitting his girl friend in public and two teeth fall out already – loose anyhoo I think, and she is just making capital of her pyorrhea, four out of five get it before forty like the ad man say . . . I mean I'm a creative artist, I gotta have some privacy instead of which boys is crawling all over me at any hour at all.
>
> I've got a great idea. A number called the Jihad Jitters […] Start is we hear riot noises in the distance. Ever hear it? It's terrific […][132]

[131] Ibid., 336 – 357 (ellipses in original, ellipses mine indicated in brackets).
[132] Ibid., 339 (ellipses in original).

Burroughs' routines are distinct from the consciousness of the letter writer, and within the routine, Burroughs conceives of a similar independent mobility for his characters. He writes:

> It is not at all important how anybody gets from one place to another. Entirely too much space is wasted in this transporting one's characters here and there which, with the aid of American Express, they are able to do for themselves. The MS. in present form does not hold together as a novel for the simple reason that it is not a novel. It is a number of connected – by theme – but separate short pieces.[133]

International Orange 19

Junk Drawer

index cards colored blue and green
in your honor
an invitation
rusty imprints on photos
without captions
catalogs
map of the event
stuff I keep
you remember when
laughing at our joke
ice cream by the fireplace
didn't have to be here
Yes, I would like more information about the career of:
Writer

Figure 3. Personal Fragment Labeled International Orange 19

2.28 Blue Bell Hill 6

I cannot leave the house. Even stacking layers upon layers until I am plumped like a pillow under my silver coat, the cold slices into my blood and sets my teeth to chatter. Too long in the sun of Louisiana, although I hear they got some cold too. The darkness is depressing, so I drag out the Christmas decorations and put up the tree. I

[133] Ibid., 367.

like to touch the memories and had not done it in a long time. Josh rolled his eyes when he saw the tree, but the cat is leaving it alone.

2.29 September 1, 2009

Although frustrating in the moment, reading through Burroughs' many experiments with the Cut-up process in Folio 30 provides me with new appreciation for his investment in the project. Whereas I have fiddled with the Cut-up expecting the immediate gratification of easy magic, Burroughs approaches and uses it as a musical instrument one learns over time. The outcome of any single Cut-up is irrelevant largely, as the practice improves with each new attempt. Try this experiment: Go to your bookshelf and find a book that you like. Do not pick anything too treasured or rare, just yet, but something for which you have affection. Now pick a page. Now tear the page out and cut the page up. Depending on how you feel about books, and what we feel about books depends largely upon how much we depend upon books, the experience is charged with emotion. Now do the same thing one thousand more times, obsess about cutting, dream about cutting, until cutting is all that you know. Make appointments with fictional physicians and then sneak off to the park and cut-up in the sunshine. Purchase a pair of scissors that are rare and exceptionally pleasing to hold and cut with. Cut and make Cut-ups until cutting-up is as familiar as turning the page of a book. Pages, bound in books, only ever get to turn, but there are lots of ways to cut them up.

The original Cut-up was not made from the page of a book but a stack of newspapers. While trimming boards for his paintings, Brion Gysin, the painter, cut said newspapers. Burroughs systematized Gysin's accident, simplifying the process to three

parsimonious steps, and the Cut-up process was born.[134] Communicating the steps to his audience in interviews and articles, Burroughs always encouraged experimentation with the process as opposed to theorization.[135] Burroughs made many claims about what the basic physical technique did, not the least of which was to put the writer in physical contact with his or her medium. Tearing the words, touching them and putting them back together was, for Burroughs, an essential step for a writer to understand "what words are and put him in tactile communication with his medium. This in turn could lead to a precise science of words and show how certain word combinations produce certain effects on the human nervous system."[136] Physical Cut-ups are the key compositional technique Burroughs used for *The Soft Machine*, the title itself a reference to the human body. Like pieces of a puzzle, the fragments encourage one to put them together. However, unlike a puzzle piece, each fragment does not have set mates with which it must be joined; rather the fragments play in an open field of shifting possibilities. Physical Cut-ups can be made from the fragments cut from a single page of text or cross-pollinated with those from another page and more.

Burroughs' continued experiments with the Cut-up led him to develop additional processes. Writing to Ginsberg, Burroughs explained his shift to new processes, such as the fold-in method and the grid system, as an effort to preserve his original typescripts.[137] The fold-in method is the technique most similar to the use of physical fragments, in that both create a new text that would not exist had the single page remained untouched. Both techniques also share a penchant for fragmenting

[134] Burroughs and Odier, *The Job*, 28-30.
[135] For examples in interviews and articles, see Burroughs and Gysin, *The Third Mind*, 14-16; and William S. Burroughs, *Break Through in Grey Room,* recorded with Ian Sommerville in London and New York, 1965, compact disc.
[136] Burroughs and Odier, *The Job*, 28.
[137] William S. Burroughs, C-35, Item 15, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.

words and for rendering stalwart symbols of punctuation laughably ineffective. Language shows favor to certain word fragments for their willingness to serve useful functions, naming them prefix and suffix. Bastard pieces of words, perhaps owing to their status as unloved or to the violence of their conception, are liable to conjugate without care, conceiving new words in an instant. Unlike the physical technique, which knows the pleasure of working with a single page, the fold-in method only works in pairs. One page, folded vertically in half, lying on top of another spread flat, and then reading across as though they are one.

The grid system is not as outwardly sensual as the fold-in and physical technique, nor is it as intuitive. To construct a basic grid, take a blank sheet of paper and draw four or five vertical lines, spaced equally apart, from the top to the bottom of the page. Then, starting at the top, draw any number of horizontal lines. Space these lines far enough apart so that a single line of text can fit comfortably between them. The grid now has a number of cells waiting to be filled with text. Type the first few words from a text into the first cell, then type the first few words from some second text into the next cell. Continue alternating texts into alternating cells until the two texts are entwined. The same process can be used with three texts or more, braiding or weaving the texts on the grid's loom. Burroughs tended to use only a small part of each grid, although I did find examples in which he had skipped down a few lines and created a new Cut-up.[138]

The grid system is also adjustable. Grids with larger cells allow for more words in each cell without altering the ratio of the mixture when each line is read across. Burroughs' experiments with the grid system also include a considerable amount of

[138] William S. Burroughs, Folio 79, Item 55, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.

attention to the formal properties of the grids, suggesting an interest in their visual aesthetics. Burroughs drew grids with wavy lines, allowing the resultant undulating shapes to affect the text in each cell. Like a Mondrian painting, some grids achieve balance due to an asymmetrical composition of lines and shapes painted with text, in Burroughs' case. Radical grids, with diamonds and circles, organic swirls or erratic mosaics, are rare but dependably filled with text. Drawn in bright inks or with thick crayon lines, Burroughs' grids are embellished sometimes with calligraphy, hieroglyphs, or solid blocks of color replacing text in a small number of cells. Some grids even bear a mysterious artist's signature – S. K. Even as I thought to question how one might read such a Cut-up, I wondered if reading them was ever entirely the point.

The most fully realized of Burroughs' aesthetic designs for the Cut-up are his elaborate newspaper layouts. For Burroughs, newspapers are examples of readymade or natural Cut-ups, realized by reading across the columns rather than reading down each column.[139] In Folio 108 "Fresh Southerly Winds Stir Papers on the City Desk," I encountered ninety-eight pasted-together newspapers that Burroughs had constructed. A typical newspaper uses several conventions that Burroughs draws on to create his own newspapers, such as front-page branding, different sized type for headlines and captions, and text formatted in columns. Also boasting brassy nameplates, such as *The Daily Tapeworm* or *The Burrough*, and photos with captions, the layouts are thick with parody and satire. Pressed into the service of the Cut-up, the columns in the newspapers follow along the lines of Burroughs' three-column Cut-up technique, where one column (in the case of the newspaper, it is the center column) is a Cut-up of the texts found in the other columns.

[139] Burroughs and Odier, *The Job*, 28.

2.30 G. Forelli 13

Dear Bill,

Whenever I come across something in your archive that you collected, as opposed to something you wrote or assembled yourself, I stop for a moment and wonder why you chose to keep it. For some stuff, like event programs or that stack of *Los Angeles Posts*, the choice is explained by the presence of your name on the speaker's list or in a by-line, and in this way, I can start to place you in the world. Here you are at the Fun City event lecturing on first thought, best thought. There you are taking on your public critics and defending your friends. Small things, like a concert ticket or an invitation, show me a time and a place where you might have been, whether or not you attended. Even your writing, at least the writings you put in the Folios labeled with addresses or dates, animates you by exposing the passing of time and movement through space. Gathering them all together in my mind and ordering them in sequence as best I can, I start to flip through them. The cartoon is crude, there are significant gaps, but you and your world start to move all the same.

Then there are the other things that simply refuse to participate in the document game. They carry no marks I can fit to chronology, and their place in my hands is all I can attest, but they are surprisingly heavy with significance. Take your Star Trek notebook, you know the one, you wrote "Capt. Bairns" under Kirk sitting in his chair. Sliding it out of the protective folder, as carefully as I do all of your things, an unexpected trap snapped: me at six watching T.V., you moving the pen, me reading *Nova Express*, and both of us smiling. The compounding moment illuminates you, not in the world, but in your world by seizing me in mine.

I want so badly to say something important about your creation and my experience here with you. I tried pouring some theory on my experiences, as if an

explicating glaze of Derrida would make this ham act any tastier. Then I have moments encountering Capt. Bairns, when the whole world opens up on the turn of an accident. I need to start borrowing some of your other exercises in order to create a few accidents of my own. Your instructions are not always clear, but I'll find a way to use them.

Yours,

John

October 31, 2009. Josh and I went last minute shopping for Halloween costumes; perhaps we just weren't feeling festive until the day was on top of us. We were almost sold on a pair of Holstein cow masks and then Josh decided he wanted to be the devil. No cow sadder than a single cow, so I was a rather uninspired cat. On our first Halloween together I bought a sewing machine to make matching satyr pants. I got the rise on the waist wrong, working without a pattern, so we glued them in place with spirit gum to keep from mooning everyone.

Figure 4. Personal Fragment

2.31 September 22, 2009

During the mid to late 1950s, Tangier transitioned from her identity as an International zone jointly controlled by the French, British, and Spanish governments, to that of a conservative Moroccan city. Multinational control of a geographically convenient plot of land, such as Tangier, meant the same then as it does today, there was very little governance or legal authority while a steady stream of money and its attendant vices flowed through the place like water. The cheap cost of living and permissive attitudes that prevailed during Tangier's annexation from the rest of Morocco fostered a lively community of writers, an offshore haven for eccentric millionaires, and a café scene patronized by both.[140] Although control of the city of Tangier was returned to Morocco with the signing of the Tangier Protocol on October 29, 1956, the lingering culture of corruption sustained her international character and population for several more years. Brion Gysin, the painter, ran the popular 1001 Nights bar and was socially well connected. William Burroughs, on the other hand, shuffled around the community's shadows cycling through addiction and work on his novel. Although the two shared largely the same circle of friends and acquaintances, their relationship was adversarial by all accounts. My efforts locating some incident or slight to ground their mutual repulse sift nothing from the cloudy past. Even when slowing business and financial concerns prompted Gysin to close his bar and move to Paris, his and Burroughs' relationship seemed a matter of forced courtesy. Inexplicably, their attitudes change in Paris during the spring of 1958. According to Gysin's telling of the events, Burroughs had taken up residence in room #15 of the Beat Hotel along with mountain of scattered pieces and pages meant to become *Naked Lunch*. Burroughs was half cocked, lurching from one project to the next in an unsteady haze, trying half-

[140] Miles, *William Burroughs*, 69-80.

heartedly to reassemble the novel he had allowed to disintegrate during his numerous migrations. What he could not find or have sent, he would recreate. Gysin joined forces with a rotating cast of visiting writers and friends of Burroughs to lend the writer much needed support. With Kerouac and Ginsberg in the U.S. handling the business end of publication, it fell to Gysin to figure a way to put the novel together. He also served as Burroughs' much needed social support. Writes Gysin, "the raw material of *Naked Lunch* threatened to overwhelm us."[141]

Once *Naked Lunch* was packed off to the publishers, Burroughs left for London and the offices of Dr. Dent to, once again, take the Apomorphine cure for his addiction while Gysin returned to painting. Six months passed and, during that time, three seeds planted during Gysin and Burroughs' many hours together flourished into the kudzu vines that would bind them forever. The first to bear fruit found fertile soil in conversation, while the pair was in Burroughs' room attempting to collate chapters of *Naked Lunch* without the benefit of page numbers. Often working in collage, the painter Gysin remarked that writing was fifty years behind painting, the writer seemingly detached from their medium of words. The thought lingered with Burroughs, becoming an integral part of his explanation for the potential of the Cut-up. The second seed blooms on Burroughs' return to Paris from London. He is alert, rested, and energized. Gysin greets him with the friendly gift of his latest discovery, the Cut-up. In nearly every telling of the origin of the Cut-up, this is the golden moment when their collaboration is sealed. The third germination is less momentous and lies half-forgotten in a smoke-filled room in the Beat Hotel. Burroughs is composing aloud by bellowing

[141] Burroughs and Gysin, *The Third Mind*, 48.

on in the character of Dr. Benway, while Gysin sifts through another stack of wrinkled pages and laughs.[142] The routine finds a receiver.

Does each collaboration mark the start of something new, even when those involved have collaborated before? If so, the distinction helps explain how one project can show great synergy while the next fizzles; there is no recipe for success where people are concerned. Perhaps understanding collaboration as an intimate affair is more helpful. Working closely together for any length of time brings people into personal contact. Like any relationship, the time spent together is spent growing together, accelerating the deepening bonds or exposing irreconcilable difference. Time apart is time spent growing apart until there comes the time when a partner's face is just a stranger staring back. Then there is the ugly matter of trust, intimate relationships demand it although the particular terms are often unspoken. Ginsberg's role in collaborating with Burroughs as receiver for the routines included encouraging Burroughs to develop and refine the technique. From Burroughs' own report, the routines were the surest shot at generating material for the expected novel and could develop into a routine that replaced his habit. However, when Burroughs brought word of the Cut-up to Ginsberg, Ginsberg opined that the process was not up to the strength of the routine and advised against pursuing the experiments in favor of more accessible narrative.[143]

That Ginsberg does not share Burroughs' enthusiasm for the Cut-up and Gysin does is a simple explanation for how it came to pass that Burroughs collaborated on the Cut-up project with Gysin rather than Ginsberg. Barry Miles paints an earthier portrait of the events leading up to the publication of *Naked Lunch* and Burroughs' subsequent

[142] Dr. Benway is a recurring character in Burroughs' fiction.
[143] Allen Ginsberg, C-35 Correspondence files, Item 17, *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York.

embrace of the Cut-up process.[144] Ginsberg's part in seeing *Naked Lunch* to fruition extended beyond his collaborative role as Burroughs' receiver and into their intimate past as lovers. Burroughs' move from Tangier to Paris came at Ginsberg's request, and for a time at least, their relationship resembled a romance as much as a working partnership. According to Miles, Ginsberg facilitated Burroughs' work by tending to his various needs, be it by cooking a meal or typing a chapter. Although their physical relationship was short lived, Burroughs' productivity flourished under Ginsberg's watchful care. However, Miles proceeds to observe, the fragmented structure of *Naked Lunch* emerged only after Ginsberg left Paris and Burroughs began his platonic friendship with Gysin. Burroughs' antics with his youthful companions, Ian Summerville and Michael Portman, strained the relationship with Ginsberg even further. Miles explains,

> Bill and his boys had created a hermetic cut-up universe, in which everything was processed. Bill was out on a limb, far removed from his old friends. He was now cutting up people, his anthropological training enabling him to distance himself from his friends and acquaintances. The reality of the situation was that he had developed a cozy little world with his two acolytes, which was not able to admit any outsiders, not even Bill's old friends.[145]

Miles's biography of Burroughs is a treasure trove of steamy insight into the personal affairs of an enigmatic public figure, crammed with bitchy *bon mots* and the prevailing themes that make such works delicious. The book is also the work of yet another of Burroughs' collaborators, Miles having put considerable time into helping assemble the archive and co-authoring *A Descriptive Catalog of the William S. Burroughs Archive.* Miles enjoyed daily contact with Burroughs and convenient access to Gysin while cataloging the collection and it was then that he acquired the bulk of the material

[144] Miles, *William Burroughs*, 89-109.
[145] Ibid., 133.

for his tale.[146] Bits of information about the Folios and the construction of the archive are sprinkled throughout his meandering story of Burroughs' life. Although the treachery of images also extends to literary portraiture, Miles's use of Burroughs' rather fraught sexual couplings as a way to bridge the periods of his *oeuvre* also point my way forward.

The Correspondence files of Burroughs' archive are slightly odd in that they are rigorously thorough as a collection and simultaneously somewhat lax in their sequence. That was my second global impression. My first impression was that the experience of reading someone else's letters is a remarkably intimate experience. Transcribed letters, like those collected in a book, are not quite the same. There are the obvious differences: the typescript, the creases, and an international mailer page so thin the weight of a blink might cause it to buckle. The letters are also *here*, in the Berg reading room at the New York Public Library, but perhaps the significance of their physical location is both more or less obvious, it is certainly more difficult to explain. Compared to my uncertainty on the uncharted seas of the Folios, identifying Allen Ginsberg, Brion Gysin, and Ian Summerville as principal research interests crackles like instinct. Each was, in his own way, Burroughs' key collaborator for a time and understanding Burroughs *as* a collaborator makes all the difference.

2.32 Blue Bell Hill 16

Dear Bill,

Another scrap of your handwriting showed up on Ebay today. A grocery list this time, charming for its simplicity, the sort of innocuous paper that someone could turn to profit without attracting too much attention. Of course, that list is every bit as

[146] Ibid., vii.

rare as the papers stored and cared for here in the Berg Collection. Anne says there is a vibrant underground economy built around rare documents, which likely accounts for some of items missing from your archive. Whether marked in pencil on the pages of the published catalog or coded in binary for the library's PDF, "item not delivered" usually means another one of the mysteries of your archive will be all the more mysterious for me. On one occasion, an item listed in the finding aid as "not listed in catalog" struck me as the item missing from a prior folio. I didn't mention it, in part, because I couldn't recall which folio at the time. I also kept quiet because the changes and shifts inside this archive are welcome reminders that, even under the watchful eyes of the archivists, stability is an illusion.

I wonder about people who collect such things as items pilfered from archives. What sort of gratification does that sort of ownership bring? Although I could compile a long list of the various items that have touched or moved me, I can only recall the desire to possess something once – that business school reply postcard on which you typed "writer." I know it sounds ridiculous, but somehow I felt that one card could make me more creative. Go ahead and laugh, I laugh at myself about it, but I have spent more than a healthy amount of time thinking about all the ways I might slip my totem out of the reading room unnoticed. Eventually I start thinking about how embarrassing it would be to get caught and then they wouldn't let me back in, effectively talking myself back to the straight and narrow. I would make a rotten criminal.

Just being here in your archive and doing this research might improve my writing, if not the content then at least my approach. Early on I had convinced myself that you designed the folios expecting visitors, and to some extent you have. Still, I suspect most of your files are simply that, your files. In their own way, the folios were

your writing environment, with all the research and experiments you turned to for creative inspiration arranged in a way most useful and pleasing to you. Like a Cut-up writ large, eh Bill?

Yours,

john

2.33 September 25, 2009

Burroughs often used friends as characters in his fiction. Ian Summerville received the greatest honor of all when he was remade as the Burroughs' supervillain, The Subliminal Kid. As a noted defector from the Nova Mob, The Subliminal Kid plays a key role in *The Ticket that Exploded* plot, designing a tape recorder array that allows Inspector Lee and the rest of the Nova Police to force the criminal invaders into open space. Burroughs' biographic tribute to Summerville explicitly commemorates key moments in their relationship, not the least of which was Summerville's contributions to the Cut-up technique. Summerville was plugged into technology, a proto-hacker with a bright blue eye out for new toys. While living with Burroughs, Summerville devised a recording setup that enabled users to create audio Cut-ups and this, rather than the fold-in or grid system methods, served as the first extension of the Cut-up process beyond the basic technique. Burroughs writes,

> So he moved in with the Rewrite Department and set up his headquarters to put out the Rewrite Bulletins on a subliminal level – It's all done with tape recorders. Go out and buy three fine machines on credit and put your name down for an in-television unit. Find a boy with blue eyes and gentle precise fingers . . (He was a ham radio operator at twelve at the age of eight he released weather balloons which he fabricated from plastic suit covers . . .) The boy will wire your machines for you.[147]

[147] Burroughs, *The Ticket that Exploded*, 162.

While the prominence of both The Subliminal Kid character and the tape recorder sub-plot suggest that Summerville influenced the shape of *Ticket* (at least to readers familiar with the biographic connections), these elements do not extend insight into the nature of Summerville's collaborative role.

Biographer Barry Miles offers an unflattering sketch of Ian Summerville, especially when he describes Summerville's influence over Burroughs when they lived together. According to Miles, Summerville encouraged Burroughs' misanthropic attitudes in the early years, and then exacted an emotional toll in their waning years when he chose a new lover.[148] My difficulty comes in reconciling the representation of the relationship offered by Miles with the affection and care I find Burroughs showing the Kid in the novel. Burroughs' archive contains additional clues, different clues that trace Summerville's collaboration with Burroughs. My first encounter with this collaborative trace was a set of instructions written by Summerville and enclosed in a letter from Burroughs to Gysin:

Materials: Any number of tape recorders, each with two speeds. With each recorder goes a microphone and loudspeaker on extension leads. The recorders are banked together for ease of operation. The loudspeakers and mikes are laid out, preferably in a separate sound proof room, each of the speakers and mikes is connected to its respective recorder, the layout of the speakers and mikes is called the "Array". Many arrays, both static and moving are possible, for example with nine recorders the simplest array would be a three by three square. Each recorder has two speeds and can be playing back or recording, thus each recorder has four possible states, fast record, slow record, fast playback and slow playback. The actual choice of state for any machine can be chosen in many ways (and varies all the time)

(a) simple hand switching, though this is going to be tiring after a while
(b) random choice, fixed interval switching or any other system which can be generated by electrical impulses, the impulses can be derived from a timing mechanism or a simple computer
(c) sequential choice, i.e. the state at any time of the system decides the next state according to a pattern.. etc.

Figure 5. Summerville Letter page one

[148] Miles, *William Burroughs*, 151-66.

Operation

The whole thing is switched on and left to run for as long as required. At any given time some recorders are playing back while others record, thus sound played back by any machine is reabsorbed into the system either unchanged or subjected to speed and volume variation, later the sound will be reabsorbed into the system and undergo other changes.

Notes

1) Given any single word or syllable, all other tapes being blank then the machine will turn it into several hours of machine "music" quite automatically
2) Given any piece of prose the machine will produce a cut up of it, the quality of the cut up being determined by the switching chosen
3) As 2) but applied to music, the music need not survive in any recognizable form but will be rendered down to a form of musique concrete.
4) All tapes recorded with spoken German, What will be the end product? Will it be different from the end product of spoken French? One could easily have reciprocation between the machine and the operator if he were to become part of the array, talking and listening to the loudspeakers and microphones, could this be developed into a method of language learning?
5) Whereas the machine will run automatically it could be used for a form of composition as follows
    a. The operator selects the most interesting sound formations produced and these are reused, or
    b. One could compose while the machine is running by feeding in appropriate material continuously.
6) A very large array would in some ways parallel the spread of information at the verbal level, this raises two questions, how many recorders have to hear the information before one is sure that they all will, or could the end be achieved by simple repetition to one machine only.
7) The array as treated as a whole could be used as a model for behavior

The above is more or less dry description for technical general release, but the whole thing is an inventors joy, permutated poems and cut ups will emerge from the machine as special cases, the really weird results will come after the thing has been running a week or so, who knows but that the ultimate cut up is a single belch, or mournful hiss, or ecstatic cries? And what would happen if one fed in nothing but orgasm shouts, or calls for help, fear cries, screams, laughter, brass bands, bird songs, the shuffling of feet, water dripping….

Figure 6. Summerville Letter page two

As enclosed in Burroughs' letter, Summerville's instructions influence how I view him and his relationship with Burroughs and also Gysin. The formal structure and meticulous details highlight Summerville's technical expertise on which both Burroughs and Gysin depend. Early, in the "Materials" section, Summerville defines the term "Array" as a teacher or a craftsperson might describe it, before proceeding to identify how the Array operates and its technical capabilities. Moving on to note several applications, Summerville shows less authority by asking questions and offering multiple possibilities, the latter culminating (in the far reaches of his technical imagination) with posing his design as "a model for human behavior." I wonder if those are Summerville's thoughts, or is he transcribing Burroughs?

I find the archive offers up tiny flashes of insight, like this letter and the impressions of the past it offers, but not all the insights are easy to explain. A stunning flash arose when I discovered Summerville using the initials of The Subliminal Kid as his own initials in a letter to Burroughs. The familiar "S. K." catapulted me back to my experiences perusing the grid designs in Folio 79, especially those signed by the artist "S. K." In a sudden flash, I knew the making of the Cut-up was a game! I mean I had the *impression* it was a game, and I also had an *impression* as to how the game was played, and why. Two players (Burroughs and Summerville): one designs the grid while the other fills it in. Now, utilitarian grids have excellent, well, utility, but their greatest challenge comes in drawing neat lines. Creative grids, however, expand the design and playing possibilities. They also demand that the Cut-up game remain as fluid a process as possible. In his biography, Miles relates that while living in Tangier, Burroughs and Summerville lived in difficult conditions, isolated from others for long

periods of time.[149] While their relationship changed over time, I cannot help but imagine the two men passing their time, each doing their part, cutting up; and in this way I realize how deep affections grow. Deep affection lingers.

2.34 Ipomoea violacea 17

Dear William,

I'm sorry that so much time has passed since our last contact. You, above all, are foremost in my mind and returning to work seems the only thing I can enjoy. The weather's role as both jailer and savior enables me to style myself as hermit, holed up in my study and surrounded by books. Soon enough though, the cold *will* break, and I will have no reason for refusing social invitations other than "I don't want to," which is true because in most social situations I just feel awkward, as if I'm not in on some joke. I missed out on four years of the interpersonal push and pull in a circle of friends, and now I find myself out of the circle. Of course, the weather's turn also will reopen the path to New York, the library, and you.

I take some comfort knowing that you had your share of rocky relationships and loneliness. Ian Summerville, especially, caused you a good deal of pain. At some point, I read the telegram he sent you as a birthday wish in 1976, just before his death in a car accident. That telegram was always in the back of my mind while reading the letters between you and Ian. I dreaded the moment of encountering it, scanning a few items ahead before submitting my requests so that I could be prepared. The telegram, of course, isn't in your archive. 1972 is where time stops. 1972 Bill. 1972 Ian.

I hesitate to even bring up the subject, but my knowledge of the loss colors the way I read your exchanges, softening my stance toward Ian. Especially in the later

[149] Miles, *William Burroughs*, 151-66.

years, when each letter seems either a request for money or an excuse why he cannot see you in New York and often both. After watching the misunderstanding between you and Brion blow up, I thought you might flash Ian the slightest ire. You remain cool and avoid confrontation.

Maybe we tread lightly around relationships we know are troubled hoping that when trouble abates, things will be better. Or maybe we choose not to see problems, blinding ourselves so as to sustain the relational habit and forestall the pain of having to decide.

Co-miserably Yours,

John

2.35 Goat Rocks 4

We four cousins talked about Goat Island a lot. The heavily wooded hump of land sat just out of reach in the middle of Dugualla Bay. We could see it from my house if the weather was cooperating, and there wasn't too much bird poop on the window. Local starlings fly mad right at the house and then suddenly pull up to lay a vertical bomb. Sean had an old Chevy, stout and an oily light blue, that used to belong to his dad before the divorce. Sean drove that thing like it was a tank and more than one misadventure found us trudging through snow trying to get the damn thing unstuck. In the back of Sean's truck was what passed for a boat. Maybe the word is skiff but all four of us could fit into the thing so that was enough. Rowing out wasn't bad, and we made the trip in an hour and a half. The island had been used by the military, probably to support some cannon trained at the sky or missile pointed over to Russia, but that was a long time ago. For some reason, Caleb and Skeeter, the younger boys doing the rowing, had it in mind that the whole place was left in such a hurry that cases of

ammunitions must be laying around. Between the four of us, we had set fire to or blown up enough black powder that one of us should have been a certified pyrotechnic whatever, and we were hoping to squirrel back the mother load to fuel future destruction. What we found on our arrival was a whole lot of winding foot trails and some heavy graffiti on the decommissioned concrete structures. Nothing looked new, and the ground around the place was littered with beer bottles and trash. If Goat Island was the party spot for kids our age, Sean and I weren't invited. Taking time on that island, right then, was the last instance that I wanted to live in the place I grew up. The daylight was heading out, so Sean corralled everyone toward the boat until we heard splashing, lots of splashing. The bay's salty water frothed and churned at the edge of the island like a pot in angry boil, getting meaner with every second. Sean shimmied down the ledge to the rocky shoreline, squatted in the water, and then pulled up two fistfuls of thrashing silvery fish. From the boat all four of us could trawl, scooping the fish into the space at our feet where they flopped about while we worked. It was dark by the time we got back to the dyke road with our boat full of fish. The tide had gone out, so we had to carry the dingy across a good portion of the tide flats. I thought the fish might be large sardines, as that was the only fish I could think of shaped like a knife. Sean correctly surmised they were Surf smelt. We broke the haul up into shares, stacked in Ziploc bags with all their eyes lined up looking vacant, but soon lost the appetite for our catch. My mom explained the fish were probably spawning and our opportunism might have wiped out a generation.

2.36 Spyglass 3

Dream material and narrative ideas: Driving around in a vintage Datson, I take an exit that puts me on to a poorly constructed single lane of tarry blacktop with a drop

off shoulder of soft tilled dirt. A huge cloud of dust kicks up, and once I get back on the road, I am unable to see in front of me and worry about oncoming traffic. I eventually make my way to a hotel lobby, where I borrow some paper towels and Windex from a maid to clean my windshield that somehow had become frosted glass.

I find some large candles at a cut-rate gas station. They have rough teal exteriors with a smooth orb of pinky peach floating in the center. When lit, the teal wax of one candle melts, leaving the core intact while, in the other candle, the peach core is emptied out entirely.

There is a strange eyecup device used to measure the number of shameful tears shed while masturbating and in turn to measure the level of sexual repression of the shamed person. We spend some time trying to figure out how to fudge the results.

An event-planning service employs a bunch of former adult film performers who specialize in creating events that promise to generate a sexually charged atmosphere, although they do not engage in providing escort services or prostitution. Holley discovers one of the performer's residency documents has been altered in an obvious way with pencil and eraser. The performer is fired on the spot for jeopardizing the livelihood of the others. Holley is not fired.

The clockwork cowboy with the tinkling sounds coming from his hat always does three spins of each gun. Three twirls to left, and then three to the right. He travels a bit in between with a little hop step that sets his knees to wobbling around the pins. Got to play the whole room. He smiles yesterday's hero and his eye is too blue, but the Curious will always stop and watch him for a while.

2.37 October 13, 2009

The way in *is* the mouth.

At some point in my youth, a teacher or therapist presented a series of cards with the names of colors printed on them in big easy-to-read font. The aim of the game was to say the name of the color printed on the card when the card was revealed. As I recall, the first few cards were printed in black while various colors were used on cards that came later in the deck. The word blue might be printed in blue and then a few cards later printed in orange. Seeing the color orange and saying orange was incorrect, as the printed word was blue. My strategy was to slow down, just the slightest pause, and read rather than see. I got very good at the game. I am pretty sure that I thought that the whole experience was a rather fun way of highlighting what the mind does with conflicting information and perhaps my programmer did too. Burroughs encourages my suspicions. What would my experience of reading a word like blue be if the object of the game were reversed, and I practiced recognizing and communicating sensual experience as opposed to phonetic response? What if the object of the game was to name an object that included the corresponding color(s)? I think I was had.

Anne is helping me make quick work of the correspondence files by bringing items in stacks of ten when she is able, as opposed to the usual two or three items. The Burroughs' Correspondence files were one of Anne's charges and so she is familiar with the materials I am encountering for the first time. When we chat, I often find myself asking more about her role as archivist than about Burroughs. I wonder how she felt organizing all of the orphan materials that floated around Burroughs' boxed collection. I also am interested to learn that, originally, Burroughs had placed the Correspondence files before the Folio series. Even as I am about to consider whether knowing this information changes things, I admit to myself that the Folios are too tempting to not begin one's journey there. My own fault too, relying on the library's finding aid, as it

describes the organization of the library's collection, whereas the original catalog reflects Burroughs' arrangement exactly. Rookies make rookie mistakes.

Judging from their letters, Burroughs and Ginsberg's relationship has changed. Many of their exchanges are about money or reviews, some rather sad ones about Jack Kerouac. Burroughs' reply to Ginsberg's concerns about the readability of the Cut-up is particularly telling. Dated September 3, 1960, the letter runs:

> The Cut-up method is a tool which I am learning to use after a year of intensive experiments. There is no reason to keep cut up material that is not useful to the purpose. Often from a page of cut ups I will use one or two sentences. It depends on the material cut and the purpose in cut. In MINUTES TO GO and THE EXTERMINATOR I was using cut up material intact. At the time I had not learned to select. Also was more concerned with using the cut ups as fact assessing instruments. When used for poetic bridge work procedure is different. Like I write a page of prose or prose poem straight. Then cut once or twice or more. And select from all sections what I find most valuable. A sifting panning process. The enclosed selections will give you idea of potentials in the method. There is no reason why classic sonnets or any other poetic form could not be so produced. I find cut ups most immediately workable on poetic prose image writing like Rimbaud. St Perse and Your Correspondent. Use of cut ups of course increases ability to cut with the eyes; that is to make natural cut ups whatever that may mean and what is an unnatural cut up? Whatever abilities Gregory may possess logical thought is not one of them. That is having cut with the eyes there is always extension of awareness possible with scissors cut. I repeat no necessity to retain any material not pertinent.
>
> The "Pain" referred to is pain of total awareness. I am not talking mystical "greater awareness". I mean complete alert awareness at all times of what is in front of you. LOOK OUT NOT IN. No talking to the SO CALLED SELF. NO "INTROSPECTION". Eyes off that navel. LOOK OUT TO SPACE. This means kicking ALL HABITS. Word HABIT. SELF HABIT. BODY HABIT. Kicking junk breeze in comparison. Total awareness = total pain.[150]

In her concluding analysis of Burroughs and Bakhtin, Lyndenberg argues that while both authors reached a similar conclusion regarding the self-addicted individual, they differ in their capacities to offer solutions. For Lyndenberg, Bakhtin mourns the loss of the communal body and true carnival, the body's source of renewal. She

[150] William S. Burroughs, C-35 Correspondence file, Item 18 *William S. Burroughs Papers*, The Berg Collection, NYPL, New York (emphasis in original).

contrasts Bakhtin's backwards gesture to "Rabelaisian joy in the body and in language" with Burroughs' goal "to leave behind body and language" through scientific means (e.g. Apomorphine, Cut-ups, and sensory deprivation).[151] Writes Lyndenberg, "The regenerative juxtaposition of birth and death which Bakhtin finds in the fertile world […] has come here to an historical dead end."[152] She continues, "In the remote hope of finding a way out of the repressive structures of Western culture, however, Burroughs persists in his dissection of its forms."[153] Bakhtin is left leaning against a drooping Maypole with his eyes toward the past while Burroughs charges forward, scissors in hand, toward a meeting in the postmodern frontier.

In his letter to Ginsberg, Burroughs clearly identifies habits as his target for disruption. For Burroughs, the word habit, the body habit, and especially the self habit convey and delimit the ideas and discourses of the self, body, and word. Burroughs writes, "I mean complete alert awareness at all times of what is in front of you. LOOK OUT NOT IN. No talking to the SO CALLED SELF. NO 'INTROSPECTION'. Eyes off that navel. LOOK OUT TO SPACE." All habits, Burroughs seems to shout with emphatic capital letters, all habits are chains, they are traps, or they are blinders that shut down possibility in an effort to make sense. Lyndenberg's analysis isolates Burroughs and the kinetic energies driving his fiction by identifying one of Burroughs' global convictions, that habit is the locus of control indicative of repressive structures, which then the Cut-up is to attack.[154] The argument is not without merit and permits

[151] Lyndenberg, *Word Cultures*, 154.
[152] Ibid., 161 (ellipses mine).
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.

Lyndenberg an opportunity to pair Burroughs with a number of other notable theorists whose projects take aim at similar structural formations.[155]

While Burroughs' call to attack the word habit supports the core of Lyndenberg's approach, other sections call into question her conclusions regarding Burroughs' intent for the Cut-up and also his view of the body. In the Nova Trilogy, the Cut-up is portrayed as a futuristic weapon, but Burroughs describes it in the aforementioned letter to Ginsberg as "a tool which I am learning to use after a year of intensive experiments." Burroughs' year of learning to use the Cut-up as a *writer's* tool reveals new ways of generating and applying Cut-up material. Burroughs also suggests that his regular use of the Cut-up extends his ability to "cut with his eyes." Burroughs had long held that Cut-ups were always already in circulation at some level, at a sur-real level, as adjacent texts or images, but that people censored their awareness and experience of them. Burroughs credits his continued use of the Cut-up technique with permitting "awareness" and extending his ability to re/create them. For Burroughs, kicking a habit has the specific, visceral connotation of allowing the narcotic haze to fade and permitting pain's return – i.e., permitting awareness. Burroughs explains, "It's the old junk gimmick – Freeze the mark – Thawing hurts you got it? – Sex and pain forms hatching out in paralyzed flesh – and hatching out hungry – so you need more and more of the white stuff to keep your ass in deep freeze."[156] Burroughs offers up Apomorphine, not as an escape from the body, but a tool that can be used to break the habit cycle and return awareness and its particular pain. By equating total awareness with total pain, Burroughs acknowledges that the greatest obstacle in his path is fear and the temptation to retreat from pain into the comforts of habit. Burroughs' end goal

[155] Lyndenberg's connects Burroughs' view to those of Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes, specifically, and to post-structural and deconstructive projects, generally.
[156] Burroughs, *The Ticket that Exploded*, 130.

of total awareness is not an attempt to escape materiality, but an effort to perceive a radical materiality without limit or fear.

The material world without limits is at the heart of Bakhtin's conception of the grotesque. He writes,

> [Grotesque images] impressed the connoisseurs by the extremely fanciful, free, and playful treatment of plant, animal, and human forms. These forms seemed to be interwoven as if giving birth to each other. The borderlines that divide the kingdoms of nature in the usual picture of the world were boldly infringed. Neither was there the usual static presentation of reality. There was no longer the movement of finished forms, vegetable or animal, in a finished and stable world; instead the inner movement of being itself was expressed in the passing of one form into the other, in the ever incompleted character of being.[157]

Bakhtin's grotesque image of the body is that of growth and transgression, excess rather than balance or stasis. Writes Bakhtin, "The grotesque body, as we have often stressed, is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body."[158] The grotesque body, the giant's body, as Bakhtin points out for Gargantua, provides a link to the cosmic and the eternal through the mouth as both portal and abyss. Entering the mouth consumes, feeding the expansive corpulence and limitless hunger, but so too does it follow the path to the interior organs that eventually constitute the new body. Bakhtin stresses that no relationship is fixed, the body transgresses its own boundaries, explaining, "the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world."[159] That being said, the grotesque body Bakhtin describes is a material body, but without limits or scale. He explains,

> This is why the main events in the life of the grotesque body, the acts of bodily drama, take place in this sphere. Eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination […] as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberment – all these acts

[157] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 32.
[158] Ibid., 317.
[159] Ibid.

> are performed on the confines of the body and the outer world, or on the confines of the old and new body.[160]

Digestion and defecation are conceptualized not as elimination but as birth and production, pain implicated in all renewal. Death is not an end but the starting of new life.

When Burroughs embraced the routine as his primary compositional form and produced the fractured structure of *Naked Lunch,* the act put him on a collision course with the very idea of the novel as he had dared to imagine it in light of publishing concerns and reaching the audience he desired. As he continued to experiment with the Cut-up process and the various ways it might be mediated or used, his relationship to language changed too. The Cut-up *is* ravenous, as gaping and open to text as Bakhtin describes the giant's hungry mouth, and as Burroughs went about feeding it, page after page, he was nourishing a new textual body, a grotesque textual body. For the longest time I considered the Nova Trilogy, as the published outcome of a decade's worth of experimentation with the Cut-up process, to be the realization of that textual body.

Burroughs' decision to revise each novel in the trilogy fully with the arrival of the next novel calls into question whether a writer's work can ever be considered finished. Read cover to cover, the trilogy swallows and is swallowed by itself as the narrative emerges in a discontinuous fashion. Cut-ups and sections of text, in whole or in part, repeat on several occasions, and the entire endeavor begs the question whether to read it as three books or one. Still, Bakhtin sees the grotesque body without limits and without death, claims I felt I could not make about the trilogy without first understanding the technique that appeared to make such a monster possible. I came to the Berg Reading room and Burroughs' archive hoping that what I would learn about

[160] Ibid.

the Cut-up would support my own ongoing transgressive endeavors in writing, never considering that Burroughs' most fully realized Cut-up work still lay in storage.

Burroughs' grotesque body of text *is* the archive.

2.38 October 13, 2009

New York City is a cycle of becoming. In twenty years time, a young man from Kansas might find himself sitting on one of the sharp grassy hills rising up from Governors Island and gazing across the water at the Manhattan skyline. His attentions will wander, tending to the cool pricking of the grass or contemplating the motion of a cloud and the sounds of a passing boat. His elevated perch and the surrounding park conspire to slow time, creating a world apart from the surging rhythms of the city.

Scheduled to break ground in 2012, Adriaan Geuze's landscape design for Governors Island effects a total transformation. Marked for destruction are the empty warehouses and unused Coast Guard barracks, their ruins to serve as the foundation for the artificial hills that will define and distinguish the proposed park. Sandwiched in the water between Brooklyn and lower Manhattan, the island enacts the slow pageant of decay and rebirth that shapes the metropolis.

May 3, 1976. The library steps are a short walk from the tangled misfortunes of want and need. Needle Park's garden party scars the arms of New York's junk set and only the johns come by looking for a walk. Artistically minded residents, misspending their youth, transform the locked toilets into canvases. In an oddly poetic turn of events, some of the park's permanent residents appropriate the bronze statue of William Earl Dodge as a toilet: a Merchant Prince *pissoir*. Once beautiful Bryant Park mutated over the course of a decade, shifting from public square to a veritable bazar of entrepreneurs peddling their wares with the push "Want Smoke? Want Smoke?"

April 4, 1875. Visitors to New York City ought to take a moment at the Crotan Distributing Reservoir. Situated along Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street, this impressive man-made lake boasts granite walls that soar 50 feet in height and 25 feet in thickness, securing 20,000,000 gallons of fresh water to provide for the citizens of this great city. Put into service in 1842, the reservoir also offers a charming façade done in the Egyptian style and public promenades along the tops of the walls. What better way to enjoy your stroll than to take in the sweeping views of Manhattan?[161]

April 6, 2010. The bus stops on the southwest corner of 29th Street and 7th Avenue in front of a glass encased alcove announcing the Fashion Institute in bright red letters. Heading north and the smells from the coffee shop hit seconds before the smells from the subway grate. There is traffic, there is noise, and everything in every way seems in a hurry. Walk two blocks and cross, passing the first set of glass doors leading down to the New Jersey trains to veer left and up the ramp into Madison Square Garden. Not actually in, just toward the doors to catch a half-flight escalator down to make a sharp left and take another half flight of stairs down into Penn Station. Left again, into the streams of commuters and shoppers, the quick movers, and the helplessly lost. Keep pace. When the hall opens up, keep right. Pass the doughnut store. Pass the candy store. Pass the magazines, cigarettes, and bottled water store. Pass the TGI Fridays that is starting to open, like one achy eye after a hard night drinking. This underground walk happens every trip, adding a full crosstown block to the walk to the library, but the bathrooms are clean and reliably open.

August 13th, 1944. New York has thick heat in August, weighed down with ash, smoke, and humidity until it sits like an unwelcome shawl on every citizen's shoulders.

[161] Diane Galusha, *Liquid Assets : A History of New York City's Water System* (New York : Purple Mountain Press, 1999), 73.

Riverside Park, on the Upper East Side near Columbia, is as good of place as any for folks to walk at night and hope to feel a breeze. Lucien Carr and David Kammerer did just that after the bar in which they had been drinking closed. Carr was the younger of the two men, handsome in a way that most people found striking. Kammerer was quite a bit older and was in New York because Carr was in New York, although Carr made it clear he was not interested. That night at least one if not both parties violated whatever agreement the two shared allowing them to remain social, and a violent scuffle ensued. When panicking Carr arrived at his friend William Burroughs' Greenwich Village apartment looking for advice, Kammerer was already dead and sinking in the Hudson, the body weighed down with stones. Burroughs, who in fact had moved to the city from Chicago because he happened to like both Kammerer and Carr, told the kid to turn himself in. Carr went to Jack Kerouac. Kerouac helped Carr hide the weapon, against Burroughs' advice, and all three men were later arrested in connection with the murder.[162]

May 23, 1911. "More than one million books were set in place for the official dedication of the Library - 16 years to the day since the historic agreement creating the Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations had been signed. [The noted foundations were designed originally to create the New York Library system, but, in 1892, they were combined instead to create the New York Public Library.] The ceremony was presided over by President William Howard Taft and was attended by Governor John Alden Dix and Mayor William J. Gaynor."[163]

May 24, 1911. Between 30,000 and 50, 000 visitors made their way through the New York Public Library.

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[162] Miles, *William Burroughs*, 37-40.
[163] "The History of the New York Public Library," New York Public Library, accessed June 26, 2011, http://www.nypl.org/help/about-nypl/history.

July 29, 2010. Today is Tuesday. This is my last Tuesday in the city, last Tuesday in the state, and my last visit to the archive. New York is warm and clear and alive with the unflagging energy that calls to people like me. I drink in each available sensation, trying to infuse every part of me with what I now think of as *my* New York. Making my way to the library, the steady hum of what I find familiar and comforting alongside the throbbing pulse of the unexpected and new, plays like music. I have no want to remember New York. I need to cut my experiences here into my awareness until the city floats through me at the cellular level, so even the slightest chance association holds the possibility to bring me to now, this last perfect day.

The sudden acceleration of my research, brought on by my acceptance of a job offer in Baton Rouge, caught everyone off guard. Anne was glad to see my return to research, but now she seems to share my building enthusiasm for both my project and the beginnings of my career. She often delivers new items to my table, even as I return the prior pages to their sleeves. Other times we meet in the open space, between her small desk and my place at the table, to exchange stacks of folders. We still talk about the archive and my project, but now we also talk about her pregnancy and my new job in the south. One day last week Anne was quite late in returning from her lunch and, being the only archivist on duty, left myself and several other researchers waiting in the hall for her return. There was some audible grumbling among the others about limited time and limited access. Someone asked, to no one in particular, if this was typical behavior. I chirped in that Anne was usually more than punctual, paused for effect, and then added I hope she hasn't gone into labor. We returned to patiently waiting in silence. Anne's farewell is scented with both hope and sadness, reminding me that affections develop in unexpected ways when little time remains.

Burroughs and his archive also seem to respond to my mood of heightened urgency, serving up a banquet of insight and experience that threatens to undo me even as it leaves me hungry for more. Of the many clues to discovering the secrets of Burroughs' collection, none have connected me more completely to a moment of discovery than the clue I stumbled on today. My struggle with how to describe the experience arises from knowing I *will* fail, and the fear that my failure will somehow break the spell.

Part memory box and part junk drawer, the contents of Folio 163 appear to be tokens of significant events that hold tremendous sentimental value for the person who collected them. An assortment of movie tickets and empty matchboxes alongside a foreign coin and a cityscape postcard remind me of my own hoard of memories. The experience of visiting a person's past in this way is especially salient, as I pack up and prepare to move, splitting my attention between my physical contact with each object and my contemplation of Burroughs' attachments to the same. Paging through the first item, a writing pad, brings a smile as I note that even after a year of trying to decode Burroughs' penmanship, it is nearly indecipherable to me. When he writes in a hurry or uses anything but the finest point pen, his cursive script flattens out until all the M's, N's, I's, T's, and U's look the same. Postcards and some barely used hotel stationary give way to Burroughs' press passes for the 1968 Democratic Party National Convention in Chicago, which Burroughs covered with Jean Genet and several other literary firebrands for *Esquire* magazine. Following close is Sommerville's line drawing of the side view of a *sibsi*, the traditional Moroccan pipe used for smoking hash or marijuana.

Recalling Ian and Bill's rocky relationship brings about a fresh wave of sadness for the end of Josh's and my own relationship. Several months have passed in our

transition from estranged lovers to cohabitating friends, an arrangement that allows us to avoid the painful dividing of our household and the reality of leading separate lives. Taking a job in my home department at Louisiana State University put a quick end to our deferral. Time and place, object and event, a fresh ache of mourning threatens to wash me away when the surprising weight of the envelope Anne hands me snaps the reading room back into focus. I eagerly embrace the distraction and unwind the string closure, flipping the tab back and tilting the object free in one smooth motion. The gas cap lands in the palm of my right hand with a satisfying cold weight and chrome side up. I look down. Burroughs looks back. We both laugh out loud.

Set aside the physics of reflection and distortion. Suspend the murky spirals of emotion and desire. Imagine that shared laughter simply exists. From that moment, and every moment since, I have wanted to articulate what took place between Burroughs' gas cap and me. Slippery and illusive, far too quick to be captured with words, were this experience all that Folio 163 had in store, I likely would have tucked the moment away as my own personal touch of wonder. Burroughs, however, had other plans.

Burroughs' entries on the pages of a tiny journal offer the first glimpse of the stories attached to the Folio's objects. While many of the entries reference the day's appointments, a few contain brief sketches of Burroughs' thoughts on Ian Sommerville's behavior with regards to Burroughs' invitation that he visit him in New York. In a style so plain that it is almost unfamiliar, Burroughs expresses a growing concern that Sommerville's difficulties in obtaining a travel visa are more a matter of avoidance than legal entanglement. Tucked away in this personal box of remembrances, Burroughs reveals the quiet heartbreak hidden beneath the accommodating veneer I noted in the Correspondence files. For Burroughs, the

conclusive proof of betrayal comes when Sommerville fails to meet him for a night at the movies. I recognize the name of the theater at which they were to meet because just minutes before I held the tickets in my hand.

"Folio 101 Attendant Must Be Present When Box is Opened by M. C. Fleisher" attracted me with its title, which I read as specific instructions to be followed in the event that M. C. Fleisher should ever desire to examine the Folio's contents. What I found was a Xeroxed copy of the novel, *Attendant Must Be Present When Box is Opened*, by M. C. Fleisher with a carbon copy of the introduction written by Burroughs and a Cut-up page inserted between pages 93 and 94. Burroughs' introduction serves to explain the concept of the novel, which was to be published with an accompanying collection of objects. The reader was to tour the objects first and then read the novel, where the significance of the objects would become clear. The effect, Burroughs claims, would revolutionize the narrative experience because the writer and the reader would share a material experience that language alone cannot afford. Here, he experiments with the form.

Several items, including a sizable collection of Cut-up fragments, a number of Burroughs' travel documents, and a notebook from his time in Gibraltar are missing. Whether lost in transit or by theft, nothing feels lost as I read Burroughs' closing Cut-up narrative. In his description of an arrow, the words he uses to describe the tip of the arrow are so vivid that I immediately recognize the arrowhead tipping the arrow. No, the word recognize is incorrect. I *know* the arrowhead that tips *the* arrow, and the sensual experience of the cool stone in my hand extends to the arrow and the bow in Burroughs' description. I try on the ring and let the lucky coin flip over my fingers. Part barrage of sensation and part emotional fizz, I swim in the Cut-up swirls of language, eddying about with the material objects, until the narrative abruptly clears,

recalling the night when a young man stole a chrome gas cap and offered it as a sign of love.

Spyglass 6

The word is image.
Is word the image?
Image is the word.
Is the word in image?
The in image is word!
(Imagine the word is)

The word is image
(?) .
Is word the image
) ? (.
Image is the word
.) (?
Is the word in image
) (? ! .

(! .) ?
.! (?)

Figure 7. Textual Fragment Labeled Spyglass 6

2.39 Alice – Part 4

In "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," Bakhtin conceives of the chronotope as a literary tool, avoiding notions of "the chronotope in other areas of culture."[164] Added in 1975, Bakhtin's "Concluding Remarks" to the essay revisit and revise his thinking in a number of ways, radically shifting the aforementioned purpose and scope of the chronotope to extend into consideration of the dialogic interaction between multiple active chronotopes. For Bakhtin, the chronotope of a literary work

[164] Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, 84.

provides the foundation for narrative to have meaning, writing "the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in the veins."[165] Bakhtin's description of the chronotope's ability to transform narrative events into material substance or living tissue is significant for two reasons. First, it sets the stage for his later claim in the same "Remarks" that a literary work is a vibrant, living thing rather than a purely cultural artifact. Secondly, it helps Bakhtin advance the notion that the chronotopes of the writer and the reader contribute to the viability of that life.

Bakhtin's "Concluding Remarks" are not as deliberate or thorough as the essay that precedes them, but they do articulate principles for expanding the chronotope as both an analytic and interpretive model. Whereas the main essay offers a typology of generic types of time and space found in literature, in his "Remarks," Bakhtin stresses that there is no finite limits on the chronotope, they need not be fixed or stable, and there may be one or many in a literary work. Explaining their complexities, he adds, "[c]hronotopes are mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another […] relationships that exist *among* chronotopes cannot enter into any of the relationships contained *within* chronotopes."[166] Bakhtin holds that a given text might have any number of active chronotopes that are discreet to that text, which does not mean they are stable necessarily. The reader and the author of a text each exist within their own chronotope, perceiving temporality in ways that are markedly different from each other as well as from that of the literary world. Bakhtin takes special care to reiterate that the time and space of the literary world is always

[165] Ibid., 250.
[166] Ibid., 252 (emphasis in original, ellipses mine).

already representation; the author and the reader exist outside of the text in the world in which the text is created.[167]

Although Bakhtin spends only a few pages discussing the implications of approaching chronotopic analysis as the study of multiple perspectives, he nonetheless argues for a *central* understanding of the text as a living thing. Bakhtin connects the life of the text to its association with the reader. The reader's chronotope orients specifically to their material relationship to the text. Bakhtin points out that, while writing exists on the page as ink, the reader experiences the text as voice and, in doing so, connects the word to the human (reader's) body.[168] He proceeds to note that "inscriptions and books in any form already lie on the boundary line between culture and a dead nature; if we approach these items as carriers of the text, then they enter into the realm of culture."[169] The act of reading recreates the represented world of the text in the reader's body, Bakhtin argues, resulting in the on-going life of the text that is wholly dependent on the reader and their unique perspective in time.

Bakhtin takes care in defining the author's chronotope by splitting the figure of the author in two. The author is the human being outside of the text, who plays with his cat and shops for groceries in the world. Bakhtin sees life as a process of becoming, the living are "unresolved and still evolving" and therefore incapable of existing as a finished text.[170] The second author, the author-creator or tangential author, is not a proxy inserted into the literary world, not a narrator, or even a single authoritative voice. Rather, the author-creator is knit up with the labor of writing, largely unseen but sensed by the trace of their hand. This author exists "primarily in the composition of

[167] Ibid., 253.
[168] Ibid., 252.
[169] Ibid., 253.
[170] Ibid., 255.

the work: it is he who segments the work into parts that assume, of course, a kind of external expression – without however directly reflecting the represented chronotopes."[171] The creative labor of writing extends into editing, rearranging, and revising; making choices that shape the work into the form that eventually meets the reader. While, like the reader, the author might draw observations from his or her experience of temporality, the author's chronotope is not the literary chronotope. Further, and again like the reader, the author's chronotope is informed by his or her relationship to the material circumstance of the text. The author's work of writing (research, experimentation, invention, and revision) that produces and refines the literary text is also a material practice. Each deletion or addition, each improvement to cadence or pace like those of plot and structure shape the literary chronotope and leave lasting impressions of the author's chronotope that might be accessed through careful analysis.

While, in the essay proper, Bakhtin spends a lot of time teasing out major chronotopes in some of his favored works, he provides little assistance in understanding how chronotopes are shaped in the social worlds of the reader and author or how to identify or describe them. Given the plethora of chronotopic idioms one might readily call to mind, such as "time flies when you're having fun" and "a watched pot never boils," the subjective experience of temporality feels chronotopic on occasion. Work remains to be done on to how to go about identifying and describing the shifting chronotopes of the social world when we are all "having the time of our lives." At least Bakhtin makes our understanding of the author's and reader's chronotopes critically important by placing them in dialogical relationship with each other as well as with literary chronotopes. For Bakhtin, dialogism is an ideal

[171] Ibid., 254.

communicative space principled by the reciprocity of voices. The chronotopes of the literary or represented world are, thus, a responsive field of time and space, in which the author and reader exist as outside perspectives wielding considerable influence.

Yet, Bakhtin leaves the question of how such disparate voices might engage dialogically mostly unanswered, going only so far as to offer two teasing clues. The first clue concludes his theorization of the reader's role in enabling the chronotopic exchange between the literary world and the developing social world when Bakhtin hints that "[w]e might even speak of a special *creative* chronotope inside which the exchange between work and life occurs, and which constitutes the distinctive life of the work."[172] When Bakhtin shifts his attention to the matter of the author-creator, his principle concern is returning the living author to the historically situated site of the creative act as opposed to suggesting they might be found in the literary world. By stressing the impossibility that the living author might somehow enter the text, Bakhtin shuts down all possibility that the author and the reader could share any chronotope save for that of the literary world. Only the reader, recreating the world, orients himself or herself to the text and the text, Bakhtin observes, "faces outward away from itself, toward the listener-reader, and to a certain extent thus anticipates possible reactions to itself."[173] The author-creator's labor (work) initiates the social utterance in anticipation of the reader whose activity (life) is grounded in his or her unique chronotope. Without the reader to collaborate, the writer and the text can only wait in silence.

[172] Ibid., 254 (emphasis in original).
[173] Ibid., 257.

2.40 Al-kindi 20

Take a Color walk. Take a walk with no intention, going but no place in mind. Walk until your feet find the rhythm that is your pace. Not the pace. Do not pace. Step step step walk. Let a color take your eyes and catch them like a whim or a fish. Now let the color lead you, jumping up in objects or calling in the distance. After a while, trade spots. Find your color, paint your walk.

Outside, on the steps, I close my eyes and tilt my face to the sun. The light meets the thin skin of my eyelids, and I see red, blood red, brilliant and pulsing with life. When I open them, the world shifts toward cool. Only slowly, as I adjust to full spectrum sight, does the red trickle back into life. On my left, the glaring stern eyes of the red lights calls halt! and the parade passes back the word with echoing break lamps. Fifth Avenue is a river of red while they stop. Turning back to see where they have all come from and the angry lights disappear, replaced by a torrent of white and the occasional face in concentration. For my own safety and the safety of others, I shift my attention to the pedestrian beat. Red is rare in summer, an out of town ball cap, a tie, then a purse. Even on faces, lips are pink and nude, and the sweaty burnt tourist glows to softly suggest the life underneath. I try to imagine the scene come December, red noses and long red wool coats with scarves and hats to match. I think of seasonal specificity and wonder why red lingers there, then I am stopped. A store window display of a thin woman, arched back, and her lips are red. Painted red, glossy red, fresh blood pools on ivory skin red. She is draped in strands of autumn crystal; rust and magenta and claret, amber and burgundy and glistening red plum. Her perfectly cast left arm extends toward the gigantic papier-mâché shape that balances the composition. It is a flower, with a slender stem and leaves topped by a percussive bloom, but the whole of the sculpture is wrapped in translucent resinous layers of

crystal color: claret magenta and amber, burgundy rust and glistening plum. I think of mulled wine and wild game; I think of the stains of old blood.

See green, a sea of green. Green leaves, green grass. Bryant Park hosts tennis, young champions in play. Green tin tables dot the paths, chairs that match for resting. Shopper stopping, old man sleeping. Awnings green wander past tradition. Green shades green, for lunch for smokes for pidgins for getting by in a great gray city. Green light go. Three cross town blocks, a sudden jungle of *Ficus Benjamina* and wet buckets spilling shiny limey dusty frosted waxy black and blue greens that slow me down. Smell eucalyptus and balmy lemon. A store of green imported sorted and bound on delivery trucks. Man spreads that green around for lobbies, halls, and banks. A reminder of green, the remainder of green; touch death, think life. A mottled tabby sits in the temporary oasis and contemplates my observation.

Pink rises up, a wall of bubble gum petals second skin the faceless plastic selling American youth. Gorge every ear on a personal pipeline of manufactured pink beats and artificial hearts bleating electric sugar to spring. Confetti optimism shiny like an acrylic balloon, empty and weightless and hard charging everywhere with the flash flare of cameras trained only on the budding photographer's mug. Think pink, spin it eat it lick it until pink pulls every eye with a candy-coated hook to buy the prize inside pink. Blink. Breath. Slow pink to honeysuckle or wear it loose in the delight of sincere surprise. Pink brushing the sensation at the edge of a kiss walking without expectations toward wonder and I follow. Pink cares less on the curve of a shoulder or nose, drifting to lotus haze vapor on a scarf caressing the wind blowing time all around her. The air blooms roses and thoughts of my grandmother's bath pearls. Pink takes halcyon shape, the perfect curve of sweet wine dancing on the table. This is an invitation to taste light or the memory of cool melon caught on the wispy clouds of late afternoon.

Now take a library walk. Breathe until you have no questions. Let a book catch your eye. Not an author. Not a title. Let a book catch your eye. Now open it. Move your eyes down each page, avoid from left to right, until an outcropping of words catches you as you fall. Write the words down. Put the book on the floor and begin again. Repeat until you have a sizable pile to clean up before lunch. Beware of books that open automatically, they saw you coming and know what you like.

Pack your ermines, Mary. The disciplinary position is not really rhizomatous either, because it does not distinguish between figuration and representation and the divine as a diabolic artifice. The Text is plural in this semiotic shell game death as want of success. But how does one orient this writing insofar as I fail to perform it? Engage their own and students, small and large are not purely theoretical, I will draw from my notes and my syllabi. Coming out of the movie theatre, alone, on the bodies of subjects who may. The act sets before itself neither you nor me, nor death, nor anything else *to talk to*. Never rival marionettes to bring pressure to bear on someone. Nothing could be less certain. This resulted in descriptive entanglement, the image is drawn from what occurred at Dachau. The body is the text of signs potlatch, expenditure, sacrifice, death.

We find such a statement radically wrong. The typewriter is fucked again and so far to carry. The unique center of value a revolution, in short, into a tremendous saturation of meaning. The object is to analyze a certain form of knowledge as if there were no theatre of speech. They are not spoken, aesthetic mastering and consummating of the other becomes difficult. Talk about a piece of music without using a single adjective. A bigger whistle was built, a hole in the fabric of the world. Living without contour in the realm of the Shades. The secret is never suppressed.

SECTION 3. AN ADDENDUM TO THE ARCHIVE

At the risk of stating the obvious, "The Archive" is written in non-traditional scholarly discourse. As Foucault explains, traditional scholarly discourse, by virtue of the very traditions it upholds, affords access to an established set of discursive norms and practices that are familiar generally to members of a particular disciplinary audience.[174] Regardless of the subject, or theory, or conclusions contained within a traditional study, existing heuristics permit readers a general accessibility to the scholarly "meat" and provide a base for critical analysis and evaluation of the work. Although never an assurance of the quality of a given study, working within traditional scholarly boundaries establishes a sort of contractual legitimacy with the reader. The implied contract might read, "I, name of reader, do hereby affirm that I will amend whatever evaluative position, good, bad, or indifferent, I ultimately take in regards to this study with the word 'Scholarship.'" Non-traditional scholarship, such as I offer it in "The Archive," foregoes the security of making said contract, almost stridently so, to the point that even discussing it under the umbrella term of "non-traditional scholarship" feels like a sneaky, backdoor way into the scholarship club.

Still, I both want and need my scholarship to be taken seriously, as this dissertation is *my* ticket to explode, and so this section serves as an addendum to "The Archive." In the discussion that follows, I offer an account of "The Archive" as a performance of writing that stages archival research in order to involve readers in the creative production of the epistemic and aesthetic significance of the study in the context of a collaborative relationship. In conjunction with the aim of involving the

[174] Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, 38.

reader, "The Archive" also aims to furnish forth some of the theoretical perspectives and investigative practices the reader can use in creative production. Access to the theories and practices is rarely immediate. Rather, they surface in an accumulative manner, leaving the reader to recognize and assemble them as part of the discovery process. I follow my account of "The Archive's" principle performance by highlighting several of these perspectives. Gathering and organizing the various perspectives in terms of my purposes articulates them according to scholarly intent, not necessarily use. As I write the discussion, then, I am mindful of my dependence on the reader's interpretation and encourage they find and tend to the gaps between intent and interpretation throughout.

The reader's creative position as the interpreter of a text does not quite encompass the sort of creative production I hope "The Archive" evokes. To better understand the level of creativity I have in mind, we need to return to Bakhtin and the possibilities of a creative chronotope. Recall that Bakthin's model for a creative chronotope consists of three other chronotopes: the chronotope of the tangential writer, that is the writer engaged in the creative act, the reader's chronotope, and the literary chronotope of the represented world. The writer's chronotope emerges "primarily in the composition of the work: it is he who segments the work into parts that assume, of course, a kind of external expression."[175] The reader's chronotope is based, in part, on their unique orientation to the material text as print that they experience as voice. For Bakhtin, the text waits for the reader and anticipates their arrival and possible reactions.[176] The literary chronotope is only conceived of as "a special *creative* chronotope" when "the exchange between work and life occurs," which then

[175] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 254.
[176] Ibid., 257.

"constitutes the distinctive life of the work."[177] In order to articulate the full breadth of the reader's capacities in the creative chronotope, I turn to Bakhtin's thoughts on the writer's creative act.

In "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," Bakhtin explores an ethics of social accountability as it relates to writers and their creations.[178] The writer's ability to perceive the hero is contingent on his or her relationship to that hero, both in terms of spatial orientation and social interaction over time.[179] For Bakhtin, the individual exists in a state of partial cognition of the world, so that the whole of the world cannot be known in its entirety. The world and other's places in it, the horizon of vision, constitute an embodied perspective and what Bakhtin describes as an "ever-present excess of my seeing, knowing and possessing in relation to any other human being."[180] The perspective is unique, once occurring and yet partial, because the excess cannot encompass a view of the world and the self in it.[181] The entirety of the world is available only through social interaction, where "the excess of my seeing must 'fill in' the horizon of the other human being."[182] The writer's struggle, then, is to secure some vantage point outside of the hero, at the very border of their created world.[183] Bakhtin champions a particular relationship between the writer and the hero in which the two are notably independent, engaging in frequent moments of reciprocal completion of each other's world. Through their relationship, the hero's life reflects in and on the writer's work to comprise the whole of aesthetic activity.

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[177] Ibid., 254 (emphasis in original).
[178] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press: 1990), 6.
[179] Ibid., 8.
[180] Ibid., 23
[181] Ibid., 26.
[182] Ibid., 25.
[183] Ibid., 191.

Interestingly, Bakhtin maintains a deep suspicion of writers working in confessional, autobiographic, or biographic modes, calling such writers "naïve."[184] Bakhtin contends that the writer and the autobiographic hero share a coinciding existence and perspective, effectively preventing the writer from achieving an encompassing view of the hero – i.e., who of course is not not the writer.[185] Instead of engaging the other through the complement of excess sight, "this proximate world – the world of otherness – is somewhat consolidated or bodied with respect to value, and, consequently, somewhat isolated."[186] At its worst, Bakhtin views biography as an incomplete aesthetic act, creating an authoritative world self-limited by the uniformity of its perspectives. And yet, within his critique, Bakhtin also identifies the ideal reader of biography. She or he is:

> […] a reader who participates in the same world of otherness, and […] assumes the position of the author. The critical reader perceives biography to a certain extent as the raw material for artistic forming and consummating. His perception usually completes the author's position to the point where he is situated (axiologically) altogether outside, and it introduces more essential and consummating transgredient moments.[187]

Autobiographical and biographical heroes and their worlds are necessarily incomplete, although rarely conceived of and written as such. Hence, Bakhtin's conception of the writer's consummating role in aesthetic activity (i.e., seeing the whole of the hero's life in the world from a position outside) depends in these cases on the critical reader.

"Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" establishes the spatial and social dynamics that underpin Bakhtin's concept of dialogue, enjoining multiple perspectives and "outsidedness" with the ongoing relationship between them. The concept of

[184] Ibid., 164.
[185] Ibid., 165.
[186] Ibid., 165.
[187] Ibid., 166.

dialogue is difficult to articulate for a number of reasons, as Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson explain:

> Dialogue for Bakhtin is a special sort of interaction. Unfortunately, it has often been taken as a synonym for interaction, or verbal interaction in general, and is thereby trivialized. As Bakhtin used the term, dialogue cannot be equated with argument, nor is it equivalent to "compositionally expressed dialogue" […] Bakhtin also cautions us against confusing dialogue with logical contradiction. It is different from Buber's I-Thou relation. Least of all does it resemble Hegelian or Marxist dialectics.[188]

Bakhtinian dialogue might best be understood as ongoing and open-ended provisional communication that is both receptive and responsive. Understanding Bakhtin's dialogic ideal, as it extends from his earlier conception of the author's relationship to the hero, provides some insight into the ways he conceives the reader might meet the text in the creative chronotope. As Morson and Emerson observe, Bakhtin sustains an interest in developing and promoting the idea of "creative understanding" late into his life.[189] In notes made in 1970-1971, Bakhtin writes:

> But our understanding can and should be better. Powerful and profound creativity is largely unconscious and polysemic. Through understanding it is supplemented by consciousness, and the multiplicity of its meaning is revealed. Thus, understanding supplements the text: it is active and also creative by nature. Creative understanding continues creativity, and multiplies the artistic wealth of humanity. The co-creativity of those who understand.[190]

In many ways, the ideal reader Bakhtin proposes for biography (in "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity") appears to be an early model for creative understanding; the reader pursuing a dialogue with an incomplete aesthetic act and, in the process, discovering and co-creating the material.

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[188] Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 49.
[189] Ibid., 55.
[190] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Notes Made in 1970-71," in *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 141-142.

The creative chronotope manifests through the reader's engagement with the text and the dialogic interactions of three integral chronotopes – i.e., the writer, reader, and literary chronotopes. The writer, seen only by the trace of his or her activity, answers a subjunctive reader through their work, which Bakhtin reminds us "faces outward away from itself."[191] The reader's creative role then is two-fold, both in embodying the text through the experience of speech and completing the social circuit initiated by the writer. When Bakhtin calls for creative understanding, he is addressing readers, especially critical readers, explicitly and encouraging them to adopt a consciously willed creativity so as to explicate the dense layers of meaning present in the creative work because he believes the writer's creativity extends well past conscious intent. Bakhtin offers up "co-creativity" as the name for his idea of collaboration.[192]

While I like to imagine that my creativity extends past my conscious intent, I do not presume that readers come prepared to read in the same generous fashion that Bakhtin advocates. It might be wise then or simply more practical to assume that the reader's creative contributions are stimulated by a creative chronotope, as constituted by the writer's, reader's, and literary chronotopes. Consequently, in composing "The Archive," I (the writer-John) felt it necessary to create and sustain a represented, literary world. The result is that two layers of representation coexist, with each layer inferring a relationship to the material text. The first innermost layer is the research narrative or story. It consists of the drama of the researcher-John, discovering and interacting with the archivist-Burroughs, as Burroughs is constituted by the archive he composed. (And so, yes, the researcher-John is a reader too.) The second layer is "The Archive" as a collection of materials composed in the research tale by the researcher-John *becoming*

[191] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 257.
[192] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 141-42.

archivist through his interaction with the archivist-Burroughs. Given the interactivity (a pedagogy finally) that occurs between these two layers of representation, it was my hope that the reader would come to understand and assume the role of an archival researcher too. As Peggy Phelan notes, "Representation follows two laws: it always conveys more than it intends; and it is never totalizing."[193] While the reader's initial understanding and response is unknown, the performance continues under the assumption that the initial overtures have neither been entirely successful nor gone unnoticed.

To further stimulate the reader's collaboration requires establishing a writer who has a chronotopic perspective distinct from that of the literary world. In Bakhtin's terms, a represented writer cannot collaborate with the reader, as their perspective is fixed in the text. Accordingly, the researcher-John cannot fill the role, nor can any other figure represented in the research narrative, as it constitutes the literary world. However, like a play within a play, the research narrative is situated within the play of performative writing as instigated and enacted by the writer-John, who "faces outward away from himself" (e.g., away from the drama of researcher-John) in an effort to encourage the reader to collaborate, to perform with, upon, or against the multifarious elements of the text – for, as writer-John knows well, the reader's interaction is essential to the creative life of the text. To encourage involvement, writer-John provides traces of his hand, compositional activity that serves as relays for the reader's like activity. A fairly obvious tool is showing collaboration and its consequences.

For example, the first letter (Item 2.3) forecasts the collaborative relationship as it develops between the archivist-Burroughs and the researcher-John, followed by the initial encounter between the pair at the end of Item 2.4. The image of Burroughs

[193] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 2.

assembling the archive rather than writing corroborates the relationship as expressed in the letter, while positioning Burroughs' creative system, the Dream Calendar, as a collaborative undertaking.

While not all the collaborative activity is expressed as clearly as is the Dream Calendar, the repeated encounters between the researcher-John and the archivist-Burroughs highlight the emergent qualities of their collaborative relationship and, more importantly, serve as relay for the reader's collaboration with the writer and the text – i.e., with the author and literary chronotopes. In Item 2.7, for instance, we find the researcher-John taken in by Burroughs' encryption poem, in response to which he observes, "On occasion, Burroughs' archival tactics seem to confound the quest, muddling willful claims to knowledge."[194] Archival tactics, on Burroughs' part, are shown to intervene with enough force to alter the researcher-John's pragmatic pursuit of the Cut-up by taking the researcher on a not unpleasant detour. Another detour occurs immediately afterwards, in Item 2.8, when the reader is taken on a distinctly disembodied (third-person) tour through the upper floor of the library. The ghostly reprieve from first person narration neither progresses the research narrative nor offers insight on Burroughs. Both detours operate to defamiliarize the style and aim of research, prompting the reader to recognize the writer-John at work outside the research tale, performing "composition" for the reader. Bertold Brecht advised that "we cannot invite an audience to fling itself into the story as if it were a river and let itself be carried vaguely hither and thither, the individual episodes have to be knotted together in such a way that the knots are easily noticed."[195] Brecht's knots were intended to provide audiences with the space to reflect critically on individual scenes and the

[194] See page 41.
[195] Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, 201.

connections between them. Drawing the reader's attention to the activities of the writer-John serves the same purpose, interrupting the research narrative with counterpoints that dissuade the reader from "flinging themselves" into the researcher-John's story, so that they might consider their interaction with the writer-John and the archive they are composing, performing together. That is to say, the writer and reader are archivists too.

While the research narrative provides models of collaborative interaction, thereby implying that the reader as well as John the researcher and writer are becoming archivists, the telling of biographical stories of collaboration emphasize the value of the relationship:

> Gysin was Burroughs' most significant collaborator from this point forward, and the story condenses their many exchanges over the years to a single metonymic event. Similarly, Burroughs' understanding of the Cut-ups as well as his development of technologies to produce them was an incremental and experimental path rather than a Eureka flash. But, then again, providing tidy explanations of complicated developments is what histories and legends do.[196]

Collaboration is complex and durational, an approach to production that emphasizes the relational value of process over product. The Cut-up, as a product, ultimately obscured the collaborative relationships between Burroughs and Gysin, as well as between Burroughs and Summerville and also Ginsberg. The biographic accounts in "The Archive" attempt to restore the elided histories of Burroughs' collaborations, first with the Cut-up in Item 2.25, and then with the routine in Item 2.27. As regards the Cut-up, collaboration is considered in terms of a gift economy, which lacks the explicit agreement to incur debt. The power relationship between self and other does not change when something is given. Exploring Burroughs' older form, the routine,

[196] See page 58.

demonstrates how collaboration instigates and completes the social circuit between the writer and the reader.

The research tale and biographic accounts merge in Item 2.31 for a wide-ranging consideration of collaboration. The integration shows images of dysfunctional collaboration (e.g., the Tangier International Zone as mismanaged by the multinational force), next to images of professional collaboration (e.g., Burroughs relying on Ginsberg to market his manuscripts) next to images of a life-long collaboration (e.g., Gysin and Burroughs sharing joy in the Cut-up). The dynamics of collaboration often change, just as the dynamics of collaboration often change us, for better or worse. Most significantly, the researcher- and writer-John come to understand that collaboration is intimacy, and thus never to be entered into lightly. Item 2.31 marks an explicit turn in the research, in my research as I relinquish the quest of finding the secret of the Cut-up in favor of "understanding Burroughs *as* a collaborator."[197]

A final discussion of collaboration arises in Item 2.39, the fourth section of the *Alice in Wonderland* analysis, in which I unpack Bakhtin's addendum to his essay on the chronotope. My discussion of the creative chronotope offers the reader a theoretical articulation of their experience and provides the blueprints that I (the writer-John) used in creating the performance. The pedagogical gesture is intended to turn over to the reader the theoretical tools for composing this type of performative writing.

While the performance of "The Archive" is designed overall to assist readers in recognizing and activating Bakhtin's creative chronotope, this aim is not the only aim of the piece. I also intend for "The Archive" to be overwhelming, so that readers must choose to what they attend and then use to create their version of the archive. Broadly, the different theories and practices fall within four perspectives or orientations. First,

[197] See page 98.

the performance of "The Archive" enacts and encourages an approach to archival scholarship that values what Gregory Ulmer terms heuretics or invention over but not to the exclusion of hermeneutics or interpretation. A second orientation is historicity and historiography, which I engage from a similarly inventive, embodied subject position. A third perspective concerns material bodies, which emerge as a central discovery over the course of my research and its performance here. The fourth orientation considers "The Archive" as a miniature, and I make explicit connections between it and Burroughs' archive. While some readers might be compelled by one or two of these perspectives, others might be called by all of them.

Gregory Ulmer offers heuretics as a corollary to the hermeneutic approach practiced and taught in the humanities. "Without relinquishing the presently established applications of theory (critique and hermeneutics)," Ulmer explains, "heuretics adds to the critical and interpretive practices a generative productivity of the sort practiced in the avant-garde."[198] Ulmer connects scholarship and avant-garde aesthetics by their respective use of theory to do their work. While both approaches find, say, psychoanalytic theory useful, the hermeneutic approach applies it to verify theory, generally and specific to case. Avant-garde artists, on the other hand, "demonstrate the consequences" of theory "for the arts by practicing the arts themselves, generating models of prototypes that function critically as well as aesthetically."[199] Ulmer's pedagogical project builds on his observation that learning, seen as the integration of new discourses, "is much closer to invention than verification" because the invention process necessitates such an event.[200] The formal heuretic

[198] Gregory L. Ulmer, *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), xii.
[199] Ibid., xii.
[200] Ibid., xii.

pedagogy of mystoriography, for example, and its key inductive form, the mystory, both emerge from Ulmer's own heuretic approach to "Hayden White's challenge to contemporary historians" that they "reinvent historiography using the arts and sciences of today as models in the same way that the nineteenth-century historiographers drew upon the models available to them in their period."[201] For Ulmer, the impetus for pursuing White's challenge emerged from his work in *Applied Grammatology*, where Ulmer sought to invent a "picto-ideo-phonographic" writing as theorized by Jacques Derrida.[202] Ulmer is pretty good with heuretics.

Interestingly, if someone were to receive "The Archive" of my study with an explication of Ulmer's mystory, they likely would consider the section to be a scholarly mystory. Recipes for composing a mystory are simple enough to follow, and I include Michael Jarrett's here:

1. Appropriate a popular icon, a figure become mythical, as an object of study.
2. In the form of an anecdote or short skit, write out his/her/its story.
3. Research the icon in detail (e.g. books, articles, recording, biographies, etc.)
4. Sift through the accumulated materials and pick out an image, one that is especially striking. Set it aside and let it ferment.
5. Compose a ground-zero narrative that tells how you, the mystorian, first learned about and became interested in your icon. More importantly, it should dramatize how this icon called or solicited your attention. (interpellation)
6. Allow the image from Step #4 to ferment long enough and it will become readable as a grammalogue and suggest a method of arrangement.
7. Rewrite the story composed in Step #2. Using all of the materials gathered (including the ground-zero anecdote), order them in a manner suggested by the grammalogue. This means you should follow "pictogrammatical," not ratio-analytic, logic. Treat your grammalogue as a hieroglyph or rebus that confuses the verbal and the visual.[203]

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[201] Ulmer, *Heuretics*, xii.
[202] Ibid., x.
[203] Michael Jarrett, *Writing Mystory*, electronic resource retrieved August 11, 2011, from http://www2.yk.psu.edu/~jmj3/myrecipe.htm .

The purpose of the mystory, Ulmer explains, is to "simulate the experience of invention, [encouraging] the crossing of discourses that has been shown to occur in the invention process."[204] While I was familiar with the theory and practice of mystory, I did not (consciously) apply it to create the archive section.

Ulmer's heuretic emphasis and pedagogical project share in an ethics of improvement, urging change in the humanities in order to make us better caretakers *of* the humanities. My ethical charge emerges from Mikhail Bakhtin's articulation of the same impulse. In his first published essay, "Art and Answerability," Bakhtin addresses the tensions between art, science, and life, each of which constitutes one of the principle "domains of human culture" and exists as exclusive and distinct from the others.[205] The whole of culture, according to Bakhtin, is comprised of three constitutive elements or aspects. Hence, for Bakhtin, art shapes culture as the discourse defining value, while the discourse of science comprises knowledge. Life is less easily operationalized, as Bakhtin perceives the opposition to art as life's defining feature. Where art is refined, life is vulgar; where life is self-actualized, art is self-serving.[206] Life, then, becomes the realm of the mundane and familiar, embodied experience as unremarked existence. Life is also the social world, one's role in relation to the other and community, and the pooling of common discourses. Rather than take sides in a fruitless debate, Bakhtin answers the question of whether art exists as a world apart from life or is beholden to it by identifying the problem differently.

The problem, for Bakhtin, is that culture only works and has meaning as a unified whole and that unified whole can only exist within the individual human being, where the lines of discourse are interwoven and culturally manifest the self. When art

[204] Ulmer, *Heuretics*, xii.
[205] Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability*, 1.
[206] Ibid., 1-2.

is embraced as transcendent and creativity is set apart from productivity in life, the relationship between them is exposed as a "mechanical union."[207] The features that distinguish a mechanical union from a meaningful whole, unified within the individual, are the exposed joints. Once laid bare, the joints or points of contact, not unlike a skeleton bleached clean of flesh, rattle and clatter as a function of individuation until their incompatibility demands more attention than the memory of their embodied elegance. The need to argue about whether art, life, and science can or should be understood in opposition derives not from whether they are distinct discursive formations, but from their habitually being seen *as* independent.

Bakhtin contends that the solution lies in returning to a view of culture as a unified, meaningful whole, rather than atomized into different parts. He offers and embraces answerability, his ethics of reciprocal responsibility, as the way forward. Answerability entails relinquishing the relative comfort of attending to a single line of cultural discourse, such as art for art's sake or science at any cost; a strategy that segments culture into discreetly manageable parts and periods. The challenge is embracing all three at all times, allowing each to affect the other, to hold sway, to share influence and blame. Bakhtin writes, "I have to answer with my own life for what I have experienced and understood in art, so that everything I have experienced would not remain ineffectual in my life."[208] Bakhtin, whether he knew it or not at the time, would later explain that the reader embodies the words as they read them. As oaths go, they do not come much more powerful than this. When, on my first day in the archive, Burroughs seemed to pop up, it was Bakhtin's words that reminded me of my own commitment to answerability.

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[207] Ibid., 1.
[208] Ibid.

"The Archive" dramatizes a number of struggles, with the central tensions patterned loosely on Bakhtin's discursive trajectories of art, science or knowledge, and life. For example, scholarly writing affecting an impersonal style brackets the attentions of writers and readers by operating exclusively through a discourse of knowledge. Bakhtin observes that such writing makes the work of knowledge dissemination easy and proficient, but comes at the loss of understanding the cultural significance of generating knowledge.[209] While writing about events in my life is, in part, an exercise establishing answerability between life and knowledge, it also reflects the autobiographical turn in contemporary art and some scholarship, suggesting that Bakhtin's call to answerability between the discourses of art and life is being exercised to some degree. Even so, my task is also to attend to the tension between the discourses of art and knowledge. Burroughs' archive and the Cut-up process make for an especially poignant friction with the realms of knowledge, in that they articulate a secret or hidden knowledge in and as the discursive aesthetic. Similarly, performative writing is a scholarly mode that often prefigures the importance of answerability by attending to the aesthetic dimensions of the production of knowledge. Accordingly, the focus of research itself, the pursuit of knowledge, has to shift in order to also be answerable. As such, I sought to engage in a heuristic process of in/determinant scholarship, foregoing a course of actions driven by intent in order to discover what I would through my experiences. I identify and state my performative protocol near the end of Item 2.1 when I write, "Burroughs' archive is the greatest unknown in this venture. Sealed away for more than thirty years, the contents of his collection remain a

[209] Ibid., 2.

mystery to all but a handful of people."[210] If Burroughs would hide, then I will seek like a detective.

The truth be told, this study would be very different if I had set out and followed a research plan. The entries in the finding aid for the Burroughs archive are adequate for finding Folios dedicated to the grid format or locating the fragments used in *The Soft Machine*. Given a few hours of planning and then several days in the library, I think I could have come up with a fairly insightful study linking Burroughs' Cut-ups to the production and circulation of memes. The bulk of the work would have been in collecting research on memes and then creating a crazy spreadsheet for each book of the Cut-up Trilogy. The study might have held water. It certainly would have been finished faster. And it would have missed the point entirely. Of course, such reflection comes only with hindsight and operates only to highlight the dangers of a rigorous adherence to intent in scholarship. For *that* reason, I spell out my concerns in the closing paragraph of Item 2.1 with the definitive statement that "preconceived notions and agendas shape a researcher's field of interest and can thus narrow a study."[211] My arguments and course of action urge the reader to reflect on their own scholarly approach and adopt a similar orientation, in relation to both his or her time in "The Archive" and beyond.

Throughout "The Archive" are various experiments with the Cut-up and other processes created or used by Burroughs. Understanding the Cut-up begins with learning how to make one, because making one is necessary to experimentation and invention. The instructions are important enough that they receive their initial iteration on the second page of Item 2.1, while two pages later I compare an early Cut-up of my

[210] See page 30.
[211] See page 31.

own with one of Burroughs'. However, the point of the instructions is that the instructions are incomplete; only through continued experimentation does the user come to understand the process, specifically, the process of continuous sifting. Retracing Burroughs' footsteps by performing his exercises serves as the relay for the heuristic pedagogy of both "The Archive" and the Cut-up itself. The key to unlocking the mystery of the Cut-up turns out to be relinquishing the quest for the key (i.e., scholarly intent) in order to assemble the clues (i.e., discovery).

"The Archive" underlines the themes of quest and mystery, offering both so they might be seen in contrast. The quest is marked at the outset, when the researcher-John aligns his presence in New York City with a quote from E. B. White:

> There is, first, the New York of the man or woman who was born here, who takes the city for granted and accepts its size and its turbulence as natural and inevitable. Second, there is the New York of the commuter – the city that is devoured by locusts each day and spat out each night. Third, there is the New York of the person who was born somewhere else and came to New York in quest of something.[212]

The characterization of the researcher-John as a romantic hero uses ego and fate to define questing as the existent orientation prior to entering the archive. The notion of questing is engaged again in Item 2.7, when the researcher-John vows to "set aside the curious for the sake of my quest" followed by the list of "Fifteen ways to move around (without getting lost)."[213] The list, however, is a mish-mash of conflicting advice that begins with the supposedly sound admonishments to "stick to the main road" and "consult a guidebook," but culminates in "make connections," "explore options," "notice patterns," "stay alert," and "become exceedingly familiar with the territory." The list poem favors search and discovery, urging one to begin the mystery in earnest by moving without a fixed sense of where one is headed. From the list onward, "The

[212] White, *Here is New York,* 19.
[213] See page 42.

Archive" sustains the action of finding clues that lead to discoveries. Cyphers (Item 2.7), labyrinth (Item 2.27), and puzzles (Item 2.29) are just some of the metaphoric reminders of the mystery.

History as mystery is one of the archive's most powerful lures. As a place, as an institution, as an *idea* devoted to the care and preservation of documents, the archive is perfumed for even nascent historians by the ethereal tendrils of the trace. The trace, like history, document, and archive, is not a thing but a relationship between the present and other temporal constructs, a lingering dream that the past might be grasped through old things. Walter Benjamin assembles a different history and historical consciousness in his essay, "On The Concept of History," through a montage of images.[214]

> There is a painting by Klee called Angelus Novus. An angel is depicted there who looks as though he were about to distance himself from something which he is staring at. His eyes are opened wide, his mouth stands open and his wings are outstretched. The Angel of History must look just so. His face is turned towards the past. Where *we* see the appearance of a chain of events, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet. He would like to pause for a moment so fair, to awaken the dead and to piece together what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise, it has caught itself up in his wings and is so strong that the Angel can no longer close them. The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him grows sky-high. That which we call progress, is *this* storm.[215]

At the risk of trampling on the elegance of Benjamin's imagery, consider the Angel for a moment. Time stretches out in both directions from the figure, the tangled wreckage of the past in service (through progress) to the unseen future. The Angel, caught by the storm of progress, lives, as Benjamin would note all who live do, in the here and now of the split-second of the present.

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[214] Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History" trans. Dennis Redmond, electronic resource, retrieved from http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm.
[215] Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," IX (emphasis in original).

The archive is strapped to the Angel's back, like a seraphic backpack burdened with all manner of mementos from the past. The Angel hastily saved some of the remnants from the growing heap because he hoped they might prove useful one day. As Paul Ricoeur might remind us, some of the items are monuments to the lives of men and women judged worthy by History of an enshrined memory.[216] Other items, caught by accident or mistake, twists of fate or subterfuge, are unofficial documents waiting for their moment of critical discovery. Genealogists, working to reveal the hidden, forgotten, or elided past obscured by History's established narratives, find meaning not on the surface of single documents and stories but in the frictions between and within them.[217] Collectively, the contents make for a heavy load, which the Angel shoulders *for* the future, despite his having witnessed the treachery of History in service to the same. The Angel bears the weight in faith that the past will also be remembered, on a human scale, when some remnant in the pack pricks the skin of someone like myself and rouses his historical consciousness to action. The past cannot be seized or grasped. As Benjamin notes, the truth of its stories is known only by the people who lived it.[218] Yet the past is important, it matters, because when the past touches people, the corresponding shock arrests their present moment and allows them to create a unique experience *with* the past.[219] That experience is remembrance, the critical contrast to History's memory.

"The Archive" performs history as an accumulation of moments misremembered and revised. Memory, as a source of Truth or objective history, is called into question at

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[216] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. III, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 116-19.
[217] Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139.
[218] Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," VI.
[219] Ibid., XVII.

the outset of the research narrative when a trick of memory interrupts the researcher-John's exposition.

> Strange, how memory sometimes entangles the past and the present thus coloring both in an indelible instant that arrests the mind. Just now I tried to recall whether my desire to come to New York predated my curiosity about William Burroughs and his Cut-up process and was startled to realize I could not say which came first. I can only describe the experience as something akin to *déjà vu*, in the sense that the occasion is weighted by portent, but lacking the impression of recall. Rather than tumble down the rabbit's hole of tricks memory can play […][220]

In addition to trading on the future memory of foreshadow, this passage establishes subjective memory as unreliable. In sharp contrast, the researcher-John later references soliciting books, recordings, and "any old Google slot" for obtaining (the illusion of) an objective recall of information.[221] Information, like historical fact, trades on oblique objectivity in that, detached from a particular perspective, its claims to represent truth are unassailable except by means of other information (other truths) to prove it false. Knowledge is knowledge for knowledge, *ad infinitum* via Foucault:

> Knowledge does not slowly detach itself from its empirical roots, the initial need from which it arose, to become pure speculation subject only to the demands of reason; its development is not tied to the constitution and affirmation of a free subject; rather, it creates a progressive enslavement to its instinctive violence.[222]

However, subjective memory is favored throughout "The Archive," not in spite of, but because of its fallibility. Subjective memories and the histories they claim are suspect and their will to knowledge suspended by doubt.

Rather than offer history as a sequence of events using verifiable information to construct teleological explanations, "The Archive" includes various stories that are cut into and with each other. The resulting history is, as Foucault describes genealogy,

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[220] See page 26.
[221] See page 27.
[222] Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 163.

"history in the form of a concerted carnival."[223] The leveling of official History by the Cut-up form is accentuated by the content of unofficial histories and knowledge.[224] History is tiny and personal in "The Archive," with the changing states of cities serving as backdrop to the decidedly human-scaled events. Montaging the events of the near past, such as experiences at the library or shopping for Halloween masks, with more remote events, like Gysin and Burroughs playing with newspaper scraps, explodes the normative timeline. Writing the temporal past in this way, liberated from chronological and syllogistic sequences, transforms time into a canvas with the space to consider disparate events in close proximity. Additionally, by collaging the stories of Anne, Josh, Burroughs, Gysin, Summerville, Ginsberg, and Alice with the stories of Burroughs' archive and the Cut-up process, I am able to compose a low and dispersed memorial to Burroughs and his practices. Foucault tells us that genealogy:

> must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history – in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the scenes where they engaged in different roles. Finally, genealogy must define even those instances where they are absent, the moment when they remained unrealized (Plato, at Syracuse, did not become Mohammed.)[225]

The stories themselves are deliberately small and fragile, highlighting the intimacies of partnership, and using collaboration to link the stories thematically. The irony that the slow, painful failure of Josh and John's relationship, which threatened to end the study before it began, emerged as the null-valued lynchpin is, as Burroughs would say, enough to make a girl crack her calories.

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[223] Ibid., 161.
[224] Raphael Samuel, "Unofficial knowledge," *Theatre of Memory Volume I: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso 1994), 3-48.
[225] Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 139-40.

The conspicuous histories of New York City and the New York Public Library perform history in a different way, and serve a distinct function in the overall performance of "The Archive." Writing the city started simply enough. I knew that I needed to cover the qualities of both time and space to even hope to manifest a chronotope. New York City was ready made for the job, a readymade grounding the activity of the researcher-John's activity in a geography that is recognizable to many readers due to the prevalence of the cityscape in popular culture expressions. New York's storied streets became the setting for the performance. As I continued to write, I discovered I enjoyed finding new ways to write New York City into the events, like in the brief aside about smiling at Henry Winkler in Item 2.4.[226] There was something compelling about New York City beyond my own romantic attachments to the place, but I did not put my finger on it until I wrote about the underground walkway.

> An underground walkway on my path from the station to the library has the most amazing tile installation. Uniform white rectangles are interrupted at various points by mosaics of vines or roots or cracks shaped in shimmering greenish brown. They remind me I am walking through space that is only possible through the displacement of something that once occupied that place. I wonder what might come to displace me and the tunnel and everyone else some day. Advertising seems especially repellant after moving through here.[227]

The tiles and the stories they hold prompted me to consider using the city's subterranean water system as a metaphor for descent, as urged by Foucault in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." Once I started down that path, I realized that New York City might play host to all sorts of metaphoric comparisons and that is because New York City is an icon. Rather than force the matter, I tried to allow New York City to remain an undefined symbol with one caveat, that it also be historically complex and interesting enough to invite speculation. In the New York City montage that opens

[226] See page 38.
[227] See page 33.

Item 2.38, I attempted to affect a spectacle of change in New York City by animating the set. The discontinuous images of the city flicker by as if projected through a rotoscope, allowing the New York City serving as the backdrop for the action of "The Archive" to be dynamic rather than static.

The notion of descent, of following networks of influence, brings Foucault's genealogy into direct contact with the body.[228] As Foucault writes, "The body […] is the domain of the *Herkunft*" or descent, and "genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history."[229] The scope of historical research scaled to the body discovers and values the material realities of day-to-day existence. Changes in the body demonstrate that it is an expression of its own historical conditions or, as Foucault writes, it is "the inscribed surface of events."[230] The principle narrative of "The Archive" involves the discovery of the importance of attending to the material body as central to understanding the mystery of Burroughs' archive. The researcher-John's struggle with Robin Lyndenberg's analysis in Items 2.12 and 2.15 turn on her desire to link Burroughs' body-centric imagery with an escape from the material body and language. The researcher-John begins to suspect that Burroughs has other plans in Item 2.27, as the collaborative thrust of Burroughs' work comes into focus. Blurting out "The way in is the mouth" records the researcher-John's flash of insight, which comes to fruition in Item 2.37, when the researcher-John realizes that Burroughs hopes to embrace a radical materiality. The shock of recognition that accompanies the researcher-John's breakthrough also leads him, along with the reader, to the second revelation that Burroughs' archive is a grotesque body.

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[228] Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 147.
[229] Ibid., 148.
[230] Ibid.

Burroughs' archive, of course, does not become a body at the moment of the researcher-John's epiphany. All along, the archive and its documents have been our inscribed surface of events, offering up clues that point to the material conditions of its day-to-day existence as a material body. Fidelity to the genre of mystery should allow the reader the possibility of solving the mystery (of the body in this case) before the represented investigator, and so throughout "The Archive" are clues that indicate the body of the archive. The researcher-John uses body or person-oriented language to describe his approach to research, including "surgical strike" and a desire to "get acquainted" in Item 2.1.[231] The material condition of paper is considered explicitly in Item 2.13:

> I cannot say that they were cherished; Allen Ginsberg often described Burroughs' rooms as cluttered chaos with piles of paper held in place by ashtrays and drinking glasses. The pages themselves confess very little of their travels, their histories are written in folds, stains, and tears.[232]

Body imagery is used to describe the qualities of Burroughs' work in Item 2.22 with "Unedited Cut-ups are ugly things, broken and splintered and coated in the bloody viscera of narrative through which they protrude."[233] Lastly, in Item 2.29, the writer-John has a bit of off-color fun infusing the discussion of Burroughs' various productive techniques with sexual innuendo, culminating in the birth of several aesthetic designs for making Cut-ups.

Scholarship is an embodied practice. "The Archive" foregrounds both embodied experience and labor, in part, to answer Foucault's call to dissolve the myth of a unified self. Foucault explains:

> [T]he historical sense can evade metaphysics and become a privileged instrument of genealogy if it refuses the certainty of absolutes. Given this, it

[231] See page 31.
[232] See page 56.
[233] See page 73.

> corresponds to the acuity of a glance that distinguishes, separates, and disperses, that is capable of liberating divergence and marginal elements – the kind of dissociating view that is capable of decomposing itself, capable of shattering the unity of a man's being through which it was thought that he could extend his sovereignty to the events of his past.[234]

The objective eye sees all by pretending its own exemption from the material forces of time and history. The body is never fully stable, requiring constant physiological care (e.g., Item 2.1), experiencing cycles of labor and rest that break down the body (e.g., Item 2.9), as do stress and fatigue (e.g., Item 2.22), and succumbing to illness or injury (e.g., Item 2.23). The researcher-John is a representation of my subjective body actively engaged in scholarly labor, influence by the material circumstances of the day-to-day existence in which I find myself, inscribed while inscribing. As the body that addresses other bodies, assuming the responsibility for their care, both in and through the text, my subjective body serves as both an account and a relay.

I did not set out to write about Burroughs' archive. I did not set out to write about bodies or history, and I especially did not set out to write about the archive. I had a mystery, a curiosity really, about the Cut-up; I was set on employing performative writing; and I wanted to go home. Then I met Burroughs' archive and things quickly started to change. My understanding of Burroughs' archive as an elaborate interactive performance in, through, and with text is based entirely on my experience with it and the little I know about "normal archives" – if there ever was or is such a thing. I do know that the form of Burroughs' collection is unique. Anne was quick to confirm my suspicions when I asked, and I know that it took more than five years for Burroughs to assemble and arrange. The question that I keep coming back to is, "Why would Burroughs choose to use this form when a more traditional organizational system would have saved him considerable labor?" Perhaps the chosen form permits

[234] Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 152-53.

Burroughs to do something a traditional one cannot or a traditional form will do something Burroughs wanted to avoid. A third possible answer (discovered in the gas cap love note of Item 2.38) is that Burroughs' archive is an aesthetic act and is designed to be understood and experienced as such.

"The Archive" is indebted to Burroughs' archive, which inspires both its form and its performative actions. In many ways, I designed my work to function as a miniature. Miniatures offer several advantages when compared with their full sized counterparts, writes Levi-Strauss:

> What is the virtue of reduction either of scale or in the number of properties? It seems to result from a sort of reversal in the process of understanding. To understand a real object in its totality we always tend to work from its parts. The resistance it offers us is overcome by dividing it. Reduction in scale reverses this situation. Being smaller, the object as a whole seems less formidable. […] More exactly, this quantitative transposition extends and diversifies our power over a homologue of the thing, and by means of it the latter can be grasped, assessed, and apprehended at a glance.[235]

A miniature archive, then, attempts to make available an overall impression of the object of study as represented by the narrative contained within. However, the narrative stops short of representing the construction of the miniature, an important omission because, as Levi-Stauss writes, "[miniatures] are 'man made' and, what is more, made by hand. They are therefore not just projections or passive homologues of the object: they constitute a real experiment with it."[236] Building the miniature entails reduction, in both scale and detail, the resulting model expressing the values and perspectives of the particular builder. Accordingly, the miniature as an assembled model also makes available its constructed form *as* content. For Levi-Strauss, the observer of such a model sees "one solution involves a modification of the result to

[235] Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 23.
[236] Ibid., 24.

which another solution would have led, and the observer is presented with the general picture of these permutations at the same time as the particular solution offered."[237] Assembled according to the choices made by the creator, Levi-Strauss maintains that the observer contemplating the miniature considers the other possibilities not chosen by the creator. Unlike the creator, who ultimately makes and fixes a single choice, the observer is thrust into the active role of creator, participating in the possibilities of creative permutation.

Some of the details of Burroughs' archive that I cite in my miniature also serve a functional role in "The Archive." Burroughs' deliberate avoidance of chronological arrangement in many of the Folios, for example, was borrowed to create the adjusted chronology for "The Archive." As I have indicated, the central collaborative performance of "The Archive" is designed to engage the reader in activating a creative chronotope. Burroughs' chronotopes in his novels, especially in the Cut-up Trilogy, are driven by the rhythms of the routine. Time passes in the context of an episode, but the individual human events are often demarcated by periods of delirium or sudden jumps through space.[238] In other cases, Burroughs accelerates time by excising hours, days, or years such that the blinding speed of time becomes a routine unto itself, and space disappears entirely.[239] The episodic structure of the routine encourages understanding the chronotopes through their dialogic relationship to each other chronotope in the novel. While a study of Burroughs' chronotopes in his novels would allow the reader to consider those relationships, it would not promote the activation or recognition of a creative chronotope in the process.

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[237] Ibid., 24.
[238] Burroughs, *The Ticket that Exploded*, 95-102.
[239] Burroughs, *The Soft Machine*, 80-93.

In Burroughs' archive, the chronotope is markedly different than those found in his novels, constructed around Burroughs' creative labor of assembling the archive rather than enabling activity in a literary world. Observing Burroughs' activity as archivist was instrumental in activating the archive's chronotope:

> My reaction is oddly sensual, moving from boredom and disappointment into arousal that finishes in a pleasant reverie. The sudden shift captures my imagination for what lies ahead and leaves my questing mind far behind. This is where I feel Burroughs, or imagine him. Somewhere, in a gloomy shadow so thick with time I can barely see, is the figure of a man. He is sorting papers into boxes. As I look at him, he seems to notice me.[240]

Recall that Bakhtin's chronotope is both time *and* space. "Time," Bakhtin explains, "thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history."[241] Embodied activity, such as labor, is grounded by the chronotope. In "The Archive," the dates, both those corresponding to the "real world" calendar and the "dream" calendar, are markers and indications of sequence. However, because the markers are *out* of sequence, they defamiliarize time, inviting the reader to consider their arrangement and the writer's labor forming it. In order for readers to activate and recognize the chronotope, they must, in effect, interact with me as I did with Burroughs.

Further disavowing the importance of traditional chronologies, "The Archive" integrates an invented calendar based on one of Burroughs' invention. Burroughs' "Dream Calendar" is well represented in his archive, with several Folios dedicated to different versions of the calendar and others labeled to correspond to certain invented months. In theory, Burroughs' system should allow a researcher to calculate the corresponding dates on a "real" calendar. In practice, several letters between Gysin and Burroughs quickly established that Burroughs' calculations were off by several days.

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[240] See page 39.
[241] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 84.

By the time that I reached the "Dream Calendar" Folios and the subsequent employ of the system, I was comfortable with having only a loose, general awareness of dates. Rather than attend to calendric indicators, I frequently found myself reliant on textual indicators of seasons or developments in Burroughs' work to find my bearings temporally. Divorced from a ready access to chronology, "The Archive" uses the "Dream Calendar" dates to spur the reader to make similar leaps of association.

However, the Dream Calendar dates also serve a structural purpose in the context of "The Archive." Throughout "The Archive," I undertake a number of Burroughs' experiments as a part of my scholarly research. Each instance affects some change in my writing. Pedagogically, I sought to make the exercises available to the reader (as Burroughs had for me), so that she or he could play along with the performance. At the same time, I wanted to make "The Archive" useful and usable to readers who had no interest or desire in collaborating at that level. As there were a number of instances in Burroughs' archive where I found myself more interested in reassembling Burroughs' fragments than creating Cut-ups of my own, I wanted to leave open that same possibility for the reader. The mythic dates allow for interested readers to undo my arrangement and restore the chronology, should they so desire. While, for me, undoing one of Burroughs' Cut-up puzzles to see how it fit together was a gratifying experience, I cannot say whether the experience would be similar for readers who interact with my Cut-ups.

The *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* sections are the only sections in "The Archive" that fall outside the adjusted chronology and outside the represented events of the research narrative. Alice is my meta-discursive cypher, leading the reader down the rabbit hole of the creative chronotope and into my archive, as I similarly channel my interests through Carroll's creation. By teaching the reader about time, performativity,

performative agency, and the chronotope in the four analyses of Alice's story, I provide the reader with an indicative case for each topic while also modeling generative practices of reading. The reader, in turn, is urged to experiment with the tools he or she has been given in their interaction with "The Archive," thereby becoming increasingly adept as collaborators.

I am aware that I ask Alice to carry the scholarly water, as it were, and call myself out for the practice in Item 2.19. My hope is to pirate some of the pedagogical force of the Wonderland series with a *feint* of hypocrisy. Unlike the Burroughs' pedagogy of experimental techniques and exercises, the Wonderland series turns over the tools to recognize chronotopes without first requiring that the reader glean them through experimentation. While in Burroughs' archive, the more I experimented with the techniques Burroughs offered, the more pronounced was the impression that I was moving through an aesthetic act. As I reflected on my time in Burroughs' archive, I found that I valued gradually improving my literacy with Burroughs' techniques because it stayed my will to knowledge. In contrast, the Wonderland sections of "The Archive" offers the reader an increasingly complex set of tools. My concern with using Alice was that the reader might grasp her tools too readily and skip the collaborative performance to move right into model building.

My hope is that readers will interact with “The Archive" in any number ways other than what I had in mind, and yet the performance of writing still works for them. In addition to the ideas and practices I have mentioned here, there are hundreds of other decisions I made in the process of writing "The Archive" that are either too minor or outright forgotten to mention. Finding those moments and wondering about or struggling with them are part of the intended function of “The Archive.”

In this section I have outlined the principle performance of "The Archive," which was to stage archival research in order to involve readers in the collaborative production of a creative chronotope. In addition, I posed four different perspectives that I see as figuring prominently in "The Archive." The first encourages an inventive as opposed to interpretive approach to scholarly research, as exemplified by the mystery genre. Then, I attended to the use of subjective memory, personal stories, and genealogy in the construction of decidedly human histories. Next, I highlighted "The Archive" as a place and text concerned with supporting, experiencing, showing, remembering, growing, and becoming bodies. To close, I assembled something along the lines of a magic trick or clown car, in that I considered all that came before, and detailed the ways “The Archive” is a miniature based on Burroughs' archive and my remarkable experiences there. "The Archive" faces toward the reader, expectantly, and waits. The writing performs.

SECTION 4. WHAT MATTERS THE ARCHIVE?

Performative writing, as I offered it in "The Archive," dares to straddle a familiar and raw edge for certain disciplines, namely, the text/performance split. The struggle over whether meaning resides primarily in textual practice, such as writing, or in the embodiment of the text remains a productive site for Theatre and Performance Studies. Our disciplinary commitment to practice, with active bodies engaging the text (no, not always, but frequently), serves as a constant reminder that the fissure remains unresolved.

I started my journey to Burroughs' archive with just such a reminder, when I adapted and staged *The Ticket that Exploded* in the spring of 2008, in the HopKins Black Box theatre at Louisiana State University. The work of getting the text into the bodies of the performers began with getting the bodies into the text. I set out by recruiting a group of ten adventurous graduate and undergraduate students, most of whom had never read a single novel by Burroughs, and Brandon, who had read the copy of *Naked Lunch* I had given him when he was an undergraduate to use in his character development for another production. I gave each student a copy of *The Ticket that Exploded* along with instructions to await further instructions. I anticipated that the student's process of reading the text would be more than many of them would want to handle, as I was fairly certain that I did not enjoy my first exposure outside of a few ticklish moments. So I planned to stage the reading session as a pre-production reading group over winter break. Each week I would assign a chapter or two, along with several writing assignments and some gentle advice on "reading Burroughs." A glass of

wine is always helpful. Although two or more glasses will seem more helpful at the time, I recommend just the one.

Burroughs applies the Cut-up most aggressively in *The Ticket that Exploded*, squeezing the narrative moments into fragments themselves. A number of my readers described Burroughs' use of the technique in terms of violent hostility, as if the writer were trying to keep them out of the text by destroying it. The action of the Cut-up, the rendering of a text into parts asunder, can certainly be described as violent. Perhaps because the Cut-up initially is so foreign to the reader's prior experience it reads as ruin. I knew, however, that the Cut-up gains affect with repeated exposure as the reader acclimates to what the Cut-ups offer in return for absconding with sense. I urged my readers to let the Cut-up sections wash over them, to read them without anticipation, and allow the gibberish to be gibberish as long as it seemed so. I found that taking the pressure off of both Burroughs and the reader to produce meaning was instrumental in keeping the group on assignment, and I made a mental note to add a similar valve to the actual performance.

Over the next several weeks, a number of my readers found their own rhythms with the text, and a few offered tips to those who had not. By the time we reconvened in February, all the readers had found some way into the Cut-up, and some seemed genuinely changed by the experience. While I had lost a few readers to busy schedules or other interests, I had a core of six performers who had initial exposure to the Cut-up to form the base of my ensemble for performance. The readers had been performing all along, of course, reading and carrying out the writing assignments.

The assignments were designed for us to generate text and images to integrate into the performance. For example, I asked them to keep a dream journal and try their hand at autowriting. In another assignment, I called on them to stage an interrogation

of their own "word parasite" or inner voice and attempt to force its full confession. The assignments also served to literalize and embody one of the lessons that the Cut-up teaches readers, that is, that they are writers too. At the first rehearsal, I asked each group member to write out a list of six images that stood out from their reading. From those, we generated a collective list of images that we all agreed were essential to any adaptation of the novel. Summerville's tape recorder was the single unanimous entry on every list. Other highlighted images included, militarism, rectal mucus, and Venusian Sex Skins. I retrieved an ancient reel-to-reel from our prop room, due to the popularity of the tape recorder image, and we set to work creating small and a medium sized small group images as well as a full cast image of it with our bodies.

Our cast blossomed over the next few weeks, through open auditions and my tempting every available graduate student to come play with me in Burroughs' novel, until we reached a total of fifteen. Due to outside commitments, five performers assumed orbital roles, while the rest of us devised and assembled the show. I utilized Burroughs' theme of parasitic invasion to bring in puppets for the production and his idea of viral replication to proliferate the puppets in every possible way. Our puppets were all invented, hand-made, or found by the cast and myself, but enumerating and describing them is best saved for some future work, save one. Jesse, one of my readers who had vanished it seemed, before rehearsals started, showed up about a month into our process and asked to join the cast. After confirming with him that he would be a reliable member of the ensemble, I explained the process and about the puppets. Jesse got very excited and dug around in his bag for a bit before extracting a knotted tangle of clay shapes, papers, leaves, and feathers bound together with colored yarn. I am sure my puzzled expression spoke volumes, because Jesse sort of stammered and asked if perhaps *this* could be his puppet before draping it awkwardly over his hand and

moving one of the clay bits up and down limply. Of course it can, Jesse, welcome aboard the S. S. Ticket.

In our performance of *The Ticket that Exploded,* we adapted and staged the first chapter of the novel fully, and then for the narrative core of the show I extracted the mystery narrative up to and including the arrival of the interplanetary Nova Police. All of the other scenes were various ways of staging the Cut-up process. In one such scene, the performers established the actions of the tape recorder by assembling and then dissolving the small and medium versions of the tape recorder we had created before falling into formation for our full cast recorder. In the full cast recorder, the bodily image included twin lines of spooling human "tape" and a single controller who, at her order, caused the model to "Play," "Stop," "Pause," "Reverse," "Skip," and "Record." Calling out "record" followed by the name of a performer set the Cut-up into action, as each performer had a different set of pre-established short phrases. After speaking one phrase, the performer would pass the chain by calling out the name of another performer, and so on, the cast creating original Cut-ups each performance.

Jesse's puppet found a home and starring role in a short, intense scene. We layered a recording of Burroughs reading a Cut-up over the incessant chatter of nine performers who were manipulating tiny ball puppets in an effort to get each other to laugh. Jesse and his puppet were sequestered in a miniature proscenium puppet stage, interjecting a steady script of Burroughs' quips into the cacophony. There was something a little dangerous and eventful in Jesse's improvisational performance, which seemed liable to veer off course at every turn. At times he would address the other performers, at other times he would simply carry on his own conversation with his puppet, and occasionally he addressed the audience directly. Those moments are electric.

Putting *The Ticket that Exploded* to bed was met with a deep sadness, not only because the production was over, but also because the close meant that at least five members of the cast were set to graduate or leave Louisiana, myself included. During rehearsals I was awarded a dissertation fellowship to head to New York, Burroughs' archive, and home to Josh and my cat. Everyone got very busy with his or her respective end of the semester, and one afternoon when I was working at home, I received a call telling me that Jesse had been kicked out of his apartment and was homeless. His former roommates accused Jesse of making threats and, in retaliation, threw all of Jesse's belongings on to the front yard before locking him out. Much of Jesse's belongings bore a striking resemblance to Jesse's puppet. It turned out that Jesse spent most of his time scouting for materials to assemble more of his sculptures, which then he displayed in the apartment he shared with two other people. Several of us reached out to Jesse, inviting him to couch surf between our apartments. Affected by the cruelty of his ejection, Jesse was suspicious of our overtures and remained guarded about his activity and thoughts. Fearing for Jesse's safety and out of concern for his health, Holley bought Jesse a bus ticket to travel home. I watched Jesse stiffen as Holley handed him the ticket.

The night before his trip, Jesse stayed with me, although he barely slept. In the morning, he seemed more closed off than ever. When I asked him if there was anything he wanted to talk about, he said no. Then, over melon, I asked if I could try to guess what he was thinking. The game made him smile, so he agreed. I told him that he thought the bus ticket was just another attempt to get rid of him because we were afraid of him and his art. My speculation made him smile *and* relax, and for the very first time, Jesse and I talked about his art. Jesse told me that he was making the commitment to embrace his art in a total, uncompromising way, consequences be damned! I started

channeling my father and asking questions about practicalities. Jesse was inspired to this shift by reading Burroughs. I started feeling guilty and made his journey home sound like the best possible solution to his current dilemma, because there he would have the support of his family. What I said turned out true, Jesse did get the support to continue on with his art at home, but my words were also a cop out. If I had been listening to Jesse instead of trying to get him to do something, maybe I would have realized that Jesse was not just inspired by Burroughs, he was doing the Cut-up with found objects rather than words.

After directing the performance my understanding of the Cut-up was better than it had been at the start. By staging it I learned the Cut-up was performative, but I still could not articulate the link that I was making between it and performative writing. Out of time in Baton Rouge, I packed my lingering questions and my few belongings into a Ryder truck and made the drive from Louisiana to Albany. While my friend Jenn and I were loading the last of my things, a passing car struck one of the beloved Spanish Town stray cats in front of us. It was a sad bad omen, indeed. Of course, you already know that story (to a point). Cut to the rest of the story:

Writing in Albany consisted primarily of doing Cut-ups and experimenting with Burroughs' techniques. It was writing to pass the time, to keep my mind off how isolated I felt. My research trips were the only times when I felt present in the world and yet, when I tried to engage them through writing, the memory of the experience seemed distant or foreign as if someone else had made the journey. Writing about them seemed, at the time, like a lie. My performative writing of the materials for "The Archive" began in earnest upon my return to Baton Rouge. At first I was thrilled to find that what I was producing excited me in the familiar way that writing performatively always had; I felt liberated, happy even, for the first time in such a long time. Slowly,

the euphoria of the new settled into a daily routine, and while I would write an interesting page or two, my ability to imagine them in the context of some miniature archive was nil. Making matters worse, as the weeks turned into months, a new and deep loneliness set in as I felt the immediacy of my memories in Burroughs' archive slipping away. One Sunday, in a manic burst of wakefulness, I pulled out every record I had of my trips to New York City. I booked all of my travel on the Megabus website, so I could track my comings and goings. I arranged my archival notes in a similar fashion, and pulled out a calendar to begin reassembling my year of research before it slipped from my grasp.

The gaps in my research dates told a terrible story, an entire winter locked inside, the crippling events of March's breakup. I was facing my misery for the first time, the calendar facts of it, at least. To my memory, the days were just a steady stream of fog, punctuated by flashes of clarity. So much seemed already lost, so I set about reconstructing the memory of my year, winter break was coming, and it would leave ample time for steadied reflection as I was staying in Baton Rouge to work. Then my cat died. December 20, 2010.

There are some confluences of events that are bleak, teetering one on the edge of the abyss, but then there are others that are simply overwrought. As I fell into involuntary mourning for my beloved Bailey and assessed the absurdity of the moment, I also recalled my lost year, and resolved to mourn that too. Hell, might as well capitalize on the melancholy. There, in the dark, the idea to document each day was born. Hopefully you have gathered that all of this personal rambling is actually heading somewhere, because it moves pretty quickly from here.

An archive is a collection of documents, an "organized body of documents" according to Paul Ricoeur.[242] The document, not the archive, is at the heart of Diana Taylor's critique,

> The strain between what I call the archive and the repertoire has often been constructed as existing between written and spoken language. The archive includes, but is not limited to, written texts. The repertoire contains verbal performances – songs, prayers, speeches – as well as non-verbal practices. […] The means of transmission differ, as do the requirements of storage and dissemination.[243]

For Taylor, and many others, the document as a text exerts the dominating force of language to carry meaning independent of the body – reproducible, durable, and enduring. Embodied practice (i.e., performance) is subjugated by the fact of its own immediacy – unique, fragile, and mortal. In *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault reinforces the association between knowledge and the textual document by advocating a way of moving through archival collections, by digging or excavation.[244] Knowledge is imagined as textual sediment, the archive as an accumulation of documents. Viewed through the curator's practice, the archive is an institution in service to sustaining and extending the primacy of the document.

The Cut-up disrupts the logic of the document and the archive – as they have been constructed in academia. The text is easily cut and its meanings manipulated and rearranged. As I made my way through Burroughs' archive, marveling at its wonders, I came to understand that the Cut-up is an archival technology, at least, as Burroughs practices archive, and it informs the Folio series from the organization on down to the cut-in of a single letter. In Burroughs' archive, in which no document is exempt from

[242] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, vol. III*, 116.
[243] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 24.
[244] Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, 135.

the transformative possibilities of the Cut-up, and the archive, as a body of documents, becomes the grotesque body of text. Bakhtin writes:

> The grotesque body, as we have often stressed, is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world […].[245]

As the Cut-up undoes the logic of the document, it also cuts into the distinctions between texts and bodies that Taylor uses to position the body as a site of knowing opposed to the archive. Archives are sites of bodily practice with textual bodies, just as bodies are archives of their own experiences as the flesh records the material circumstances of its existence.

Derrida's theorization of the archival impulse is the final piece of the mosaic, entwining the pleasure principle and the drive to destruction to inspire the creation of a document at the moment of transcription.[246] In the document's archive, safe from the Cut-up, the drives churn in the document, in the impressions left by the last mark of human activity. The Cut-up, in turn, is the drives released. The Cut-up's destruction is a literal act of erasure and forgetting as the whole text is rendered into parts, but always in the service of saving not *the* memory, but a remembering. This is the place that performative writing connects to the Cut-up. Like the Cut-up, performative writing is archival, in that it is motivated both by a desire to save and a drive to forget. What performative writing *needs* from the Cut-up is always to reject the notion of itself as a document and remember itself as a body.

[245] Bakhtin, "Rabelais and His World," 318.
[246] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 16.

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VITA

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John moved from Seattle to Albany, New York, in the summer of 2001. In 2002, John returned to school by enrolling at the State University of New York at Albany. John entered into an accelerated program to complete his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Department of Communication. During this period of intense study, John discovered a passion for learning and challenging ideas. John was awarded his bachelor's degree in rhetoric and communication in the spring of 2003, followed by his master's degree in political communication in the fall of 2005.

John began his doctoral coursework at Louisiana State University in the fall of 2005. In addition to teaching courses in public speaking, interpersonal communication, interpretation of literature, and film, John produced or directed three productions as a part of the HopKins Black Box theatre's seasons. John was awarded a Dissertation Fellowship in the spring of 2009, enabling him to return to New York to pursue his research goals. In the summer of 2010, John returned to Louisiana State University to assume the role of the manager of the HopKins Black Box theatre. He also teaches courses in film and media arts and manages the practicum course for undergraduate students who contribute to the theatre's productions.