NOTES AND REFERENCES


3. Ibid., (P. 77).

4. Quoted from Jennie Skerl's William S. Burroughs, (P. 76).


6. Ibid., (P. 82).


10. a. Ibid, (P. 123)
    b. Ibid, (P. 123).


Burroughs' short stories were originally in two volumes *The White Subway* and *The Old Movies*. They were republished in 1984 as one volume under the title *The Burroughs File*.

Burroughs' short stories are not like conventional stories. Like his novels, they are experimental pieces in matters of language, plot and characterisation; the same exasperating and scintillating syntax, the same tantalizing plot and the same nebulous characters. Unlike in conventional short stories, nothing happens here and there is no sequence of interrelated events which holds the suspense till it is finally unravelled. Every story is a brief episode in the life of one or the other of the drug addicts. The episodic content of the story renders the story structurally unable to contain long stretches of sequences of events.

What is further unique about Burroughs' stories is that almost every one of them is incorporated in one or the other of his novels. This is something that no novelist in England or America has ever attempted. Almost every
novelist is also a short story writer. But each novelist treats the novel and the short story as two different art forms although the basic techniques and modes are the same. But no novelist has ever thought of lifting one or many of his short stories and incorporate them in whole or in parts in any of his novels as Burroughs has done. Such technique was almost unthinkable before Burroughs. But Burroughs finds the technique illuminating and artistically satisfying. The episodic nature of Burroughs' short stories, their characters lost in the hallucination of drugs render them suitable to be transplanted in any of his novels without doing any damage to the structure or narration of the novel. So completely identical are the themes, techniques and characters of Burroughs' novels and short stories that his short stories, when incorporated into larger contexts of his novels do not look out of place in them. On the contrary, they merge into the fabric of the novel so inextricably that it is impossible to tell one from the other.

But, as pieces of art, Burroughs' short stories have not attracted any critical attention. No interpretative of his themes has been made, nor an assessment of the techniques and modes of his short stories. The best of his novels like The Naked Angels, Nova Express and The Ticket that Exploded are so overwhelmingly popular that they state all critical attention at the cost of his other novels,
particularly his short stories. Another plausible reason for the critics reflect of Burroughs' short stories is that they are covered in the critical studies of his novels where they are incorporated, although there they have lost their identity and are not taken cognizance of as independent art forms. Convinced that in view of their themes and modes, Burroughs' short stories deserve better attention, we present here a story by story analysis of some select stories, which, it is hoped, might contribute towards developing a critical consensus regarding Burroughs achievement as short story writer.

"Unfinished Cigarette" is a story of a drug addict's hallucinatory journey back to the 1920s across his birth. While travelling in the White Subway, the addict is lost to hallucinations which take him into a distant past, into new galaxies. He is charioted into that far away and long ago land by drugs and he imagines that a part of his journey is covered by a spacecraft and a part by a ship. A doctor intrudes into his hallucinatory privacy and tries to bring him back to the world of realities around him. The doctor tapping a dial and "a needle that oscillates in a narrow band of light" represents the here and now. But the drug addict is already transported into that unreal world "THIRD". The ship loaded with weapons, the 1920s and its panorama of old films the laser guns are
all the necessary tools in the hallucinatory transportation. There, he must his colleagues and contemporaries whom he calls "birth candidates" his journey into the past is motivated by his fear to face the present:

"Adieu, Meester—into the past. I don't desire face to face meeting. . . . enchanted movements exploded in the mirror year by year at his touch Dying this continent." (P.32)

The journey of the addict is not merely in space and time; it goes beyond — to his prenatal existence as suggested by the reference to "empty condom waiting for rain" "forgotten in m recess of the world."

The references to colours in the story are not merely ornamental frills of the narration. They suggest or recreate the gloom of the journey. Dank state mornings, dark rooms, heavy blue light, dead cigarette smoke—all suggest and intensify the gloom "that passes understanding" in the addict's innermost recesses of the diseased mind. Amid the Panorama of places and Plethora of reference, the unfinished cigarette stands out as a symbol of half-lived lives of drug addicts.

The narrative technique of this story is the same cut-up and fold-in type so dear to Burroughs. Each piece of description and each event throws up images so much so the entire story is a welter of images drawn from hallucinations and realities.
"A Distant Hand Lifted" is another important story in The White Subway collection. The story opens with a brief description, by the writer of the creative method used in the text. Burroughs prefaces the story and says:

Since work in progress tentatively titled "A Distant Hand Lifted" consists of walkie-talkie messages between remote posts of interplanetary war the cut-up and fold in method here used as a decoding operation for example agent K, types out a page of random impressions from whatever is presented to him at the moment:
Street sounds, phrases from newspapers or magazine, objects in the room etc.
He then folds this page down the middle and places it on another page to the typewriter messages where the shift from one text to another is made marks the spot. The method can approximate walkies-talkies immediacy so that the writer writes in present:

( P.34)

From this point begins the story itself. Burroughs leaves no transition between his account of his creative method used in the story and his creative piece itself. The
transition is sudden and perceptible. But, interestingly, Burroughs' prefatory description of his method to fold-in or cut-up technique. So the passages get repeated with phrases from another page interlacing with the phrases from this passage. The points of interlacing are marked with oblique lines /. So the printed pages of the story present an exotic look punctuated by oblique line and unbroken sequence of a number of question marks, instead of the familiar commas and full stops. The following passage illustrates the point:

may I venture / Big Red / because you had no choice / that your / old signal / irrevocably committed to / uh rather special / uh cooling system / sizzling there naked that young officer ? ? ? ? ?

A story written in a technique of this kind naturally becomes difficult to comprehend. Broken sentences and superimposed phrases do not tell us of any logical sequences of action. Yet after repeated readings, one perceives a semblance of a story. Mr Bradley and Mr Martin are two characters in one. Sometimes they are merged into one and sometimes are spoken of as two separate identities. Their conscience sways between the past and the present. For some inexplicable reasons
"September 17, 1899 over New York" becomes important in the story Martin and Bradley make forays into it. A hand that was lifted in a distant past draws September 17, 1899, this process gets repeated three times in course of the story. Brief references to atom bomb, the ubiquitous Nova Police, the arrest of Martin and Bradley the war and death are some of the unconnected sequences we come across. They suggest the images evoked in a diseased mind. The whole story could be read as a modern poem with its rich imagery and linguistic experiment and a wealth of allusions.

"The Conspiracy" is yet another important story in the collection. This is, perhaps, the only conventional story in the sense that something happens here and in a logical sequence and they do mean something. It is not merely a bundle of images and hallucinatory perceptions. In matters of language also, Burroughs has for once resorted to normal, same sentences with normal grammar.

The story is told in the first person. The narrator, a victim of habit-forming junk is in a state of agitation. He has killed two detectives in a state of junk sickness, and is now desperately trying to find a hide out to escape the police dragnet.
"I took the subway up to 116 Street and walked across the Columbia campus to Mary's flat. Why didn't I think of her first? A university campus... a perfect hideout..."

(P.39)

Such is the tenor of narration. The narrator instructs Mary to tell people that "someone has rented her extra room to write a thesis and that he doesn't want to go out of the room or see anyone till it is finished". (P.39)

When Mary agrees to this, in the scene refugee in her flat, the narrator tells her about his feeling of nostalgia in a state of junk sickness. He describes it as "an experience we think of as fleeting incalculable, coming and going in response to unknown factors" (P.39). He also speaks to her about the anti-dream drug perfected by scientists and its impact on its users.

"And the drug is habit-forming to a point where one infection can cause life long addiction. If the addict doesn't get his short every eight hours he dies in convulsions of oversensitivity" (P.40)

The narrator at one point tells Mary to go to Time Square and phone to police Headquarters and ask for Hauser and then to cross the street and see what happens. Mary acts according to his instructions and gets stalled by the
The vital part of the story is the narrator's account of his addiction from the beginning to the sad realisation of his predicament. The experience is poignantly told.

"Since early Youth I had been searching for some secret, some key with which I could gain access to basic knowledge, answer some of the fundamental questions" (P.41)

The narrator then dwells on philosophic concepts of pleasure and happiness and freedom from tension seeking which he gives himself to drugs. Describing his present state he says,

"I had already ante-ed my life .. I had no choice but to sit at the hand out". (P.42)

Thus the story is a succinct but a poignant account of the narrator's experience with drugs and where they have led him. There is an unmistakable touch of sadness, if not repentance, in the end.

"Just so Long and Long Enough" is one of the shortest of the stories in "White Subway". It is an image of death pictured by a junk addict. The young clerk who brings the consignment of drugged cigarettes is described
as an "Angel of Death." The narrator questions the clerk.

"You, death, you who are silent, do you see life?" (p. 48). Death is personified as "Mister Death." Phrases like "Death is beside you," "You cross the death sky flash" "Shoot, and just like that," "Storm silence of ending earth"--all of them summon and evoke in a poetic way, the images of death in the mind of the drug addict.

"Who is the Third That Walks Beside You" is one of the most important stories of Burroughs. It is written and cut-up into newspaper columns. But the column-shape given to the story, though makes it look queer, does not make it very different from many other stories of Burroughs. The story is inescapably concerned with death. The title implies the presence of two characters, concepts or identities and questions are about the third. The two existing postulates are present and past which the whole story centers round. The narrator says:

"After a certain point of time you can't go on feeding the past; too much past and not enough present because 'Present time' is the point where the image virus of past time . . . . . . . . , he walks out on the present present. - - - - ." (p. 56)
The narrator is observed with time in the story and the addiction to drugs is an act of escape from time. He says "time is Junk, Junk is time moving at the speed of light" (P.51)

In a way the two existing postulates are time and space which the drug addict attempts to escape. In any case the third that walks beside the drug addict is death. Indeed death is central to the theme of the story.

"Death takes over in busy lands ashes cutted cities of America and Europe." (P.52)

The phrases "afternoon shadow in dying eyes" "broken streets of war and death" suggest death as the third presence beside the present and the past and beside time and space. This is reinforced when the narrator says, "Good bye Mister, I must go. The tide is coming in at Hiroshima. Exploded star between us." (P.52)

"Who is the / walks Beside you / written 3rd ?/" is another story related in theme and technique to the one discussed above. Like the earlier story, the story is her cut-up into newspaper columns, three on each page. Even the title of this story is cut up into three phrases with Burroughs’ characteristic disregard for grammar. The opening lines of this story serve as a preface which explains the technique and theme:
"This is a story in three columns moving at different speeds (he holds up three flickering silver fingers) in this column we have everyday life plain decent bone mean men and women going about their dirty rotten jobs Rock Age writer these with the wrong wine ugly American snarl this story of a short trip 24 frames just like it happened to me ... (P.72)

The story is set in the form of a travel diary. The narrator is a traveller from Tangier Gibraltar to St Louis. During the travel he reads The Wonderful Country by one Tom Lea. It is a story of Martin Bradly of Missouri who took refuge in Mexico from a murder charge, like the narrator in the story "Conspiracy". The narration of the story is interlaced with the narrator's random reading of the book, headlines and news stories from the Newspapers. It is further interlaced with the announcement of the captain of the airlines, and incorporated radio messages. The result is that the narration is not an unbroken sequence of events. The story is singularly free from any message. There are no linguistic experiments of the kind available in other stories and novels of Burroughs. The only experiment worth of mentioning
is the uncommon break-up of words at the end of lines demanded by the exigencies of column writing of the narrators. In the following words the first element comes at the end of line and the second at the beginning of the following line.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Wh + iltled} & \quad \text{for whistled} \\
\text{mem + ories} & \quad \text{for memories} \\
\text{enou + gh} & \quad \text{for enough} \\
\text{wh + ere} & \quad \text{for where}
\end{align*}
\]

As a tailpiece the narrator takes on the shape of poem consisting of these line stanzas. Burroughs does not achieve anything poetic by cutting the up the narration into equal lines. It could have been in the form of columns or straight narration of full-length lines with the same impact.

"St. Louis Return" is a sequel to the story discussed above. Its parenthetical preface recapitulates what has already been said in the earlier story. The narrator is back home after 40 years of absence which he calls parenthesis. It is therefore a sort of Rip Van Winkle experience that makes the story interesting.

The narrator hires a room in a hotel and meets an old friend of his who recognizes after some initial faltering. The narrator goes out seeing places, in the town, the new
buildings, offices and establishments that have replaced the old ones. He is caught in nostalgic memories and the present realities. He asks himself

"What has happened to market street the skid row of my adolescent years? where are the tattoo parlours, novelty shops, block shops - brass knocks in a dirty window - the speedy pitchman ... where are the old junkies hawking and spitting on street corners under the gas lights?" (P.82)

The market place, the river side, people, faces - memories that is what makes this story. The narrator tells himself "walk around the block keeping your eyes open and you can write a novel about what you see — down in the lobby last night smoky rose sunset across the river." (P.94) The scenes and people have changed. Still it has the old world charm and the attraction of novelty. So the narrator goes about looking at people and seems a and taking their photographs.

This is one of the few stories free from the world of drug addicts and their hallucinations. It is a same world to which the narrator has returned. The narrative technique is close to the stream of consciousness mode, the center of interest in the story is the human
feelings, the nostalgic longings, the sense of loss, besides of course the pieces of description of the new world scandal.

"23 Skidoo" brings us back to the world of drugs and crimes. It is the story of the murder of an consul guard by an apparently harmless man. One day the consul guard got out of his car. He was approached by an old uncouth beendar carrying a bible in one hand and an eight inch bring knife. He approached the consul guard and stabbed him repeatedly in his abdomen shouting "after all God made knives." When overpowered by the other Consular guards he admitted that he was a member of an extremist sect called "Fly Tox Movement". The rest of the story sound rather official and deals with official procedures in dealing with criminals and extremists. "Mass 23 Skiddoo ... Indonesia" from which the title has been derived, is a code name for an investigating a crucy's method. Perfected by the department. "The Bay of Pigs" is a story different from all other stories. Here we come across a young beautiful girl with bright green eyes. She is Lola addicted to marihuana. The encounter between John and Lola ended up in a sexual intercourse. She pulls out a packet of marihuana and they administer themselves a shot. This is followed by a drink and Lola takes him to a room undresses him. She unstrips herself and she pulls him down onto the bed and
they begain to roll in an ecstasy of lust. For John, this is followed by a bout of homosexual intercourse with Lola's twin brother. All these acts of lust are prompted by drugs and drinks.

Thus, we see in Burroughs' short stories an abnormal world. Most of the characters are men (women are rarely seen in his short stories) given to drugs and lost to hallucinations and crimes of all hues. Technically, they include all kinds of narrative modes and linguistic experiments. The world view presented in his short stories is tene with that presented in his novels. His novels are, therefore, miniature novels presenting a miniscule world of Burroughs.
CHAPTER - VIII

WILLIAM BURROUGHS' LANGUAGE AND STYLE

From what we have seen in the earlier chapters it is evident that William Burroughs is admittedly an unconventional novelist judged from his themes and techniques. The unconventional novel needs unconventional, innovative experimental style. Even a cursory glance at the language and style of Burroughs reveals the novelty and uncommonness of his use of language as his medium of creative expression. But Burroughs' critics take such uncommonness for granted so much so that they have not thought it fit to make a full length and in-depth study of language and style. They occupy themselves with the other aspects of Burroughs novels that have not paid critical attention to this vital aspect of Burroughs fiction. Only brief, sporadic references are made, besides some essay-length studies. It is worthwhile to examine some such studies before taking a critical look at Burroughs' language and style.

James E Tanner studies the experimental styles of E.E. Cummings and William Burroughs, stating the purpose of his study Tanner observes:
Two writers who
do view by most critics
are innovative writers are E.E. Cummings and
William Burroughs. How can their experimentalism
be quantified? What is its extent? Is one more
radical in his stylistic experiments than the
other? What does such radicalism imply?²

Tanner identifies and isolates five distinctive and
dominant stylistic features of the poetry of Cummings.
They are: the graphic aspect of his style, linguistic
departure from the literary norm, the technique of embedding
common in the stream of consciousness approach and finally
his evatic capitalization. Having dealt at some length
with these stylistic peculiarities of Cummings, Tanner
observes:

It is revealing to compare Cummings
experimentalism with that of William
Burroughs, a later writer who has been
heralded as a stylistic innovator.³

Burroughs himself says in his Naked Lunch (P.68)
"I try to focus words -- they separate in meaning-
less mosaic". Taking the cue from this Tanner describes the
"mosaic" quality of Burroughs prose. He further observes.
This mosaic effect is produced by a small group of dominant stylistic devices or features, which upon examination prove similar to those used by the poet (Cummings).

The chief devices that Tanner identifies in Burroughs are compounding, a vast catalogue of sensory impressions and mental fantasies, the alternation of rules governing the use of word classes and finally his idiosyncratic use of punctuation and capitalization against all norms of grammar.

By way of summing up, Tanner describes the motives of such experimentation in the following passage.

The motives which led Cummings and Burroughs to use stylistic devices characterized by deletion did not necessarily spring only from a desire to involve their readers in the poetic process, a desire springing from a "transcendental-romantic-relatarian-organicist individualist" philosophy which viewed the word as a dynamic, creative part of the life of mankind. As has been seen, the same stylistic habits of verbal economy could result from a retreat from the word, from a lack of faith in the adequacy of the residual statement. The "participation in process" demanded of the reader by Cummings' poetry and Burroughs' prose may be nothing more than an accidental side effect.
While Tanner's comparison of the stylistic innovations of Cummings and Burroughs makes an illuminating study, it strikes us at once that he has made the comparison between the uncomparables. To compare the style of a poet with that of novelist is tantamount to ignoring the fact that the poet and the novelist write under two different compulsions. The poet concentrates on emotions which to the novelist, the story and narration are primary and emotion occupies a secondary place. Since the artistic compulsion of a poet and a novelist are different, their motivations and purposes are different, to see any comparison between them looks trifling far-fetched. We don't normally come across comparisons, say, between T.S. Eliot's Waste Land and James Joyce's Ulysses or Finnegans Wake, just we don't compare Milton's Paradise Lost with Sidney's Arcadia. There may be certain common stylistic devices and language manipulations between a poet and a novelist. But they are not the products of the same motivation and do not serve the same purpose.

Another important critical study of Burroughs' style comes from Michael Skau in his "The Central Verbal System. The Prose of William Burroughs". Skau's approach is literary and historical as much as Tanner's is linguistic. He studies Burroughs' style in terms of the chronological evolution from the early novels to his later works. Speaking of the chronology of evolution of style, Skau observes:

Burroughs' major novels can be roughly assigned to three chronological stages: Junky (1953) and Naked Lunch
(1959), Burroughs' first two published novels, establish his foundation in terms of style, structure, and theme; following these, The Soft Machine (1961), The Ticket That Exploded (1962), and Nova Express (1964) comprise a radical and often bewildering surrender to experimental techniques. Burroughs' most recent novels, The Wild Boys (1971), Exterminator ! (1973), and Port of Saints (1980), represent a compromise, an effort to use, rather than be used by, his stylistic and structural experiments. One need not read far into Burroughs' work to discover that preconceived notions of the novel must be discarded. For example, sentence structure can bridge chapters and disturb the customary integrity and autonomy of the conventional prose divisions. In Port of Saints, the chapter entitled "Meet Me in St. Louis" concludes: "Suddenly six young boys naked except for colored jock straps barred . . ."; the next chapter, "Meet me at the Fair," begins: "... the way." (PS, 63-64). In the same novel, the chapter "From the lake/From the hill" concludes: "I turn the . . ."; the following chapter, "From the sky," begins: "knob, slowly push the door open and step in" (PS, 146-47). Here, style and form work together to disrupt the reader's conventional expectations of the structure of both prose and book.7

Burroughs' techniques expose the domination of the verb control machine, whose "lines" become referents for the perception of a figment world, limn the verbal landscape of the mind, and explode this verbal rule - "Cut word lines."
The syntactic structures, surreal verbal juxtaposition, and broken phrases tottering on the rim of conventionally logical clarity are designed not to indulge aleatory patterns of art, but to reveal the countless possibilities these techniques can provide. The effect is like that of a kaleidoscope: the techniques shake the colored phrases and form fresh patterns and hues of prose. However, Burroughs' cut-up phrases and patterns at times approach a tyrannical control of their own.

Robin Lydenberg's "Cut-up: Negative poetics in William Burroughs and Roland Barthes" is a comparative study of the American novelist and the French critic as influential practitioners of the cut-up method and their consequent impact on the language of their writings. Lydenberg examines Burroughs' style in terms of his theory of language control and also in terms of the semantic principles of the signifiers, the signified and the sign propounded by Saussure. Lydenberg observes:

Both the American novelist and the French critic envision the possibility of moving beyond language to an ideal silence in which all hierarchy and oppression would collapse. Adopting independently a similar theory of language evolved from linguists like Korsybski and Saussure, Burroughs and Barthes undermine the absolute authority of the word. By insisting on the totally arbitrary association of signified and signifier on which language is based, they
lay bare the mechanical structure of all verbal communication and its potential abuse and distortion. Not only do they hold such secondary systems of communication as myth suspect, they also seem to view the word itself with distrust as an alien and artificial medium of expression.

Tony Tanner in his chapter on "Rub out the Word" reviews Burroughs' theory of the tyranny of language and relates his stylistic innovations and experiments with his longing to emancipate himself, his characters and his readers from that tyranny. Tanner, unlike the other writers on Burroughs' style, relates the novelists' communicative devices with the world of characters he has created and their fantasies and illusions created by drugs. He almost seems to suggest Burroughs' world needs Burroughs' style. The world he has created cannot be divorced from his stylistic devices and narrative techniques. Tanner's views on the world, the techniques and the language of the Naked Lunch merits quotation in full here.

The paradox of using language to release people from language is one which we will be examining shortly. Here two points should be made about the style and narration of Naked Lunch. The fragmentation of episode and the invitation to enter and leave the book as you like does offer a kind of liberation from the serial continuity of the unbroken unilinear plot. (John Cage does something similar with the traditional melodic line in music in his
particular aspiration towards 'silence'). All tendencies
towards a fixed form in the book are countered by a tendency
towards atomization. In a sense the book destroys itself
as it goes along; there are too many breaks, jumps, unexplained
shifts to different places, people, orderings of reality, etc., for us ever to feel so controlled by his vision that
we forget we are reading a book. There is no consistent
narrator, indeed no narrative principle. We are aware of
a stream of evidence but we are not aware of any definitive
arranging of it, nor do we know where it is coming from -
it is too often unrelated to a participating witness. It is
almost as though Burroughs was trying to produce pictures
without frames, and he describes his book as spilling off
the page in all directions. That this might result in an
appearance of a mass of random fragments is a risk he takes.
Clearly, for Burroughs to appear to abandon responsibility
for the framing of his novel, to appear not to be controlling
his material, is to cut himself off from many of the
traditional ways in which the novel authenticates its
existence and the impressions of reality it offers. However,
I think Burroughs could justify his technique in this book
by saying that each reader is invited to put all the bits
together in his own way, i.e. to enjoy experiencing the
spontaneity and independence of constructing one's own system
And to show language itself constantly falling to bits or
fading off into dots might be away of pointing us on to that
precious silence on the other side of the world's mirror
where we might be 'free'. 12
Burroughs' stylistic innovations are motivated by a deeply personal theory of language. He believes, like many modern linguists, words are arbitrary signs and as such they are semantically blank or empty and drain the life out of all they represent. Burroughs attacks particularly the conventional language like the language of government offices, the popular press and a blind prose of euphemisms which obscures all facts, individuality in history. He describes this kind of prose as "colourless, vampiric prose which have no colour of its own must steal colour from the readers." 13

In the language of drug addicts, Burroughs describes the word as a kind of virus which needs to be destroyed. He accuses language of infiltrating the human psyche so thoroughly that it lodges itself there as an alien presence. He describes the language as the "Other Half" of the human psyche which destroys the central verbal system of the individual. The automatic verbalisation of experience is like a voice from within. It sends out threats to individual will at the elementary level of written language. Burroughs distrusts language and this distrust pervades through all his fiction and ease at the back of his stylistic experiments. As Lydenberg observes:

"In his more radical vision, Burroughs views language as impersonal and mechanical, as a system of manipulation which alienates the individual from himself,
usurping all individual integrity, will and self-image in the same manner as drug or sex addiction. The alien 'I' of the text is the voice of language itself.

Saussurian School of Linguistics describe the dual system of language, the signified and the signifier. This dual system introduces in human life the bodymind dichotomy. It imposes an alienating distance between man and his physical existence. In the best of his words Burroughs dramatizes this dichotomy which sets in opposition mind and body, men and women, meaning and form, hierarchy and oppression. Burroughs believes that the survival of the individual depends on his ability to control the linguistic arsenal and to prevent the ascendancy of one language over another. This theory finds itself a powerful expression in Naked Lunch where Burroughs describes the gradual degeneration of a human brain. As Lydenberg observes, "the body becomes the parasite of the mind, draining the individual of life and will just as myth de drains individual life out of reality."

With this theoretical construct in the background, experimentation and innovation reach far beyond the stylistic technicality. For Burroughs' stylistic inventiveness is an expression or a manifestation of a unique relation between the self and the world.
... the purpose of study of Burroughs' style we focus here chiefly on *Naked Lunch*. The reasons for this are: *Naked Lunch* is Burroughs' best known and most controversial novel that has attracted a wide spectrum of critical opinion. Secondly, *Naked Lunch* contains in it all the characteristics of Burroughs' style found in other novels. Thirdly, we believe that style-study is more useful when it is done at micro-level. In other words *Naked Lunch* serves us as the central text that provides us with the necessary data for analysis and interpretation. If there are some stylistic devices which are not common to all his works but are peculiar to one or two, they are not taken care of in the present study for the simple reason that they cannot be construed as widespread stylistic devices. They are mere deviations or aberrations from the commonly found devices in Burroughs. For example, in some of his short stories, the cut-up or fold-in technique is visually represented by cutting up the narration into what looks like newspaper columns.

Before we examine the nature of Burroughs' style it is not out of place to mention at the outset that Burroughs uses pictorial photographic and cinematographic devices. But while exploring the depths and dimensions of words Burroughs seldom violates the normal standard requirements like linearity, continuity and uniformity with a modicum of grammaticality. Burroughs' prose is
a conscious deliberate attempt to discard the way in which human experience can be freed from the constraints of the instability and inaccuracy of language. But nowhere do we come across instances of morphological addities or syntactic idiosyncracies that we find in James Joyce's *Ulysses* or *Finnegans' Wake*. While exploring the potential new verbal dimension, Burroughs has not created a synthetic language like the *newspeak* invented by George Orwell in his *Nineteen Eighty-Four* whatever experiments Burroughs has done they are well within the realm of grammatical acceptability. The following are some of the stylistic habits that we come across in Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*. They are examined here in terms of morphology, intonation and sentence's structures in relation to the chief fictional modes which are description, narration and dialogue.

The following is a descriptive passage from *Naked Lunch*.

He was a ritual tea smoker and very puritanical about junk the way some teabeads are. He claimed tea put him in touch with supra blue gravitational fields. He had ideas on every subject: what kind of underwear was healthy, when to drink water, and how to wipe your ass. He had a shiny red face and great spreading smooth nose, little red eyes that lit up when he looked at a chick and
went out when he looked at anything else. His shoulders were very broad and suggested deformity. He acted as if other men did not exist, conveying his restaurant and store orders to make personnel through a female intermediary. And no man ever invaded his blighted, secret place.\footnote{15}

This is a description of pimp trombone player. It is characterized by a conventional style excepting for the use of some parts of the human anatomy. Every sentence is grammatical and subscribes to the norms of structural correctness. He is described as a puritanical ritual tea-smoker. The phrase "teasmoker" here does not refer to tea but it is a pet name for a drug commonly known in the circle of drug addicts. The trombone player claims that tea smoke transports into "supra blue gravitational feels" which is Burroughs' high sounding phrase for an experience of hallucination. After describing his habits, puritanical outlook, his addiction and his ironically wide area of knowledge, Burroughs now describes the physical feature of the character. His concentration is on a shiny red face, smooth nose, and red eyes. Each noun here is qualified by more than one adjective which reveals Burroughs' eagerness to impress upon the reader the physical appearance of his character. There is an air of vividness in the description. The diction is predominantly monosyllabic occasionally interspersed with a few polysyllabic words like puritanical, gravitational and intermediary. Without taking a statistical
account we know that the blend of monosyllabic words with polysyllables gives out a rhythm peculiar to the description.

The most vital quality of Burroughs' style is what James E. Tanner describes as "a vast catalogue of sensory impressions and mental fantasies loosely strung together by ellipses." The following passage illustrates this stylistic habit of Burroughs:

A contingent of howling simopath paths swing from chandeliers, balconies and trees, shining and pissing on passersby. (A simopath - the technical name for this disorder escapes me - is a citizen convinced he is an ape or other simian. It is a disorder peculiar to the army, and discharge cures it.) Amoks trot along cutting off heads, faces sweet and remote with a dreamy half smile . . . . Citizens with incipient Bango-utot clench their penises and call on the tourists for help . . . . Arab rioters yipe and howl, castrating, disembowelling, throw burning gasoline . . . . Dancing boys striptease with intestines, women stick severed genitals in their cunts, grind, bump and flick it at the man of their choice . . . . Religious fanatics harangue the crowd from helicopters and rain stone tablets on their heads, inscribed with meaningless messages . . . . Leopard Men tear people to pieces with iron claws, coughing and grunting . . . Kwakiutl Cannibal Society initiates bite off noses and ears . . .
The passage opens with the conventional subject + verb sentence pattern. After the preposition comes a catalogue of things which is followed by a catalogue of actions. After a brief explanation of the term simopath there is a long catalogue of unconnected things indicated by nouns and disjointed actions indicated by verbs. A large body of every novel consists of such catalogues. They remind us of the cataloguing technique used in Whitman's poetry.

In the following passage while Burroughs follows the same cataloguing device the predominantly monosyllabic words with occasional admixture of a fashionable French phrase or a slang in vogue gives the passage peculiar run or flow.

Rock and Roll adolescent hoodlums storm the streets of all nations. They rush into the Louvre and throw acid in the Mona Lisa's face. They open zoos, insane asylums, prisons, burst water mains with air hammers, chop the floor out of passenger plane lavatories, shoot out lighthouses, file elevators: cables to one thin wire, turn sewers into the water supply, throw sharks and sting rays, electric eels and candiru into swimming pools (the candiru is a small eel-like fish or a worm about one-quarter inch through and through and two inches long patronizing certain rivers of ill repute in the Greater Amazon Basin, will dart up your prick or your asshole or a woman's cunt faute de mieux, and hold himself there by sharp soines with precisely what motives is not known since no one has stepped forward to observe the candiru's life-cycle in situ
in nautical costumes ran the Queen Mary Full speed into New York Harbor, play chicken with passenger planes and busses, rush into hospitals in white coats carrying saws and axes and scalpels three feet long; throw paralytics out of iron tons (mimic their suffocations flopping out on the floor and rolling their eyes up), administer injections with bicycle pumps, disconnect artificial kidneys, saw a woman in half with a two-man surgical saw, they drive herds of squealing pigs into the Curb, they shit on the floor of the United Nations and wipe their ass with treaties, pacts, alliances.

The uninhabited use of slang and parts of human anatomy are intended to make the passage sound realistic, albeit hideous to modest readers.

Burroughs' narrative structures are characterized by a stream of actions inevitably coming one after the other, although without the operation of law of causality (cause followed by effect). The following passage with its conventional sentences' structures narrates a chain of events.

He laughed, black insect laughter that seemed to serve some obscure function of orientation like a bat's squeak. The Sailor laughed three times. He stopped laughing and hung there motionless listening down into himself. He had picked up the silent frequency of junk. His face smoothed out like yellow wax over the high cheek-bones. He waited half a cigarette. The Sailor knew how to wait. But his eyes burned...
in a hideous dry hunder. He turned his face of controlled emergency in a slow half pivot to case the man who had just come in. "Fats" Terminal sat there sweeping the cafe with blank, periscope eyes. When his eyes passed the Sailor he nodded minutely. Only the peeled nerves of junk sickness would have registered a movement.\(^{19}\)

The description of laughter in the first sentence sounds rather parenthetical and retards the movement of the action. But he describes the function of the laughter and cunningly compares it with a bat's squeaking noise. What follows is a series of actions in a quick succession. Most of the sentences are simple in construction and each sentence has one central action in it. Thus the narrative onward movement suggests a relentless march of actions in the passage.

While descriptive and narrative structures of novel are mostly written in grammatical prose, in dialogues however, Burroucher resorts to certain grammatical deviations. As can be seen from the following examples:

1. He jerk his head and Johny walk ahead of him into the bedroom. (Naked Lunch, p. 93)

2. He stand up screaming. (NL, p. 95)

3. The box flip opened when it see me. (NL, p. 218)
The underlined words in the above examples show the deviation of the verb in not agreeing with the subject and thus create an effect semi-literacy. However, it cannot be said that Burroughs uses such grammatical deviations in all the dialogues in the novel. For example, the following dialogue does not contain a single audity of grammar. The whole thing is written in urbane polished English.

An eerie, disembodied voice. "Yes, I think I can make it. I'll have to make a run uptown."

"We can take a cab."

"O.K., but I can't take you in to the guy, you understand."

"I understand. Let's go."

We were in the cab heading North. Nick was talking in his flat, dead voice.

"Some funny stuff we're getting lately. It's not we weak exactly . . . I don't know . . . It's different. Maybe they're putting some synthetic shit in it . . . Dollies or something . . . ."

"What !!!? Already ?"

"Huh ? . . . But this I'm taking you to now is O.K. In fact it's about the best deal around that I know of . . . . Stop here."

"please make it fast," I said.
"It should be a matter of a ten minutes unless he's out of stuff and has to make a run ... Better sit down over there and have a cup of coffee ... This is a hot neighborhood."²⁰

Occasionally, Burroughs is dramatic and more often he was erratic punctuation and capitalization. Less frequently, he uses spaces and dramatic repetition of the same letter in a word. But by and large it can be said that Burroughs does not use many stylistic devices which can be called deviations from norms of grammar. Perhaps such same kind of prose is essential for projecting a life of hallucinations and fantasies produced by drugs. But Burroughs' stylistic habits has an uncommon verbal economy and felicity of phrase.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. Ibid. p.1

3. Ibid. p. 10

4. Ibid. p. 10

5. Ibid. pp 18-19


7. Ibid. p. 404.

8. Ibid. p. 407


10. Ibid. p. 419


12. Ibid. p. 122.

