

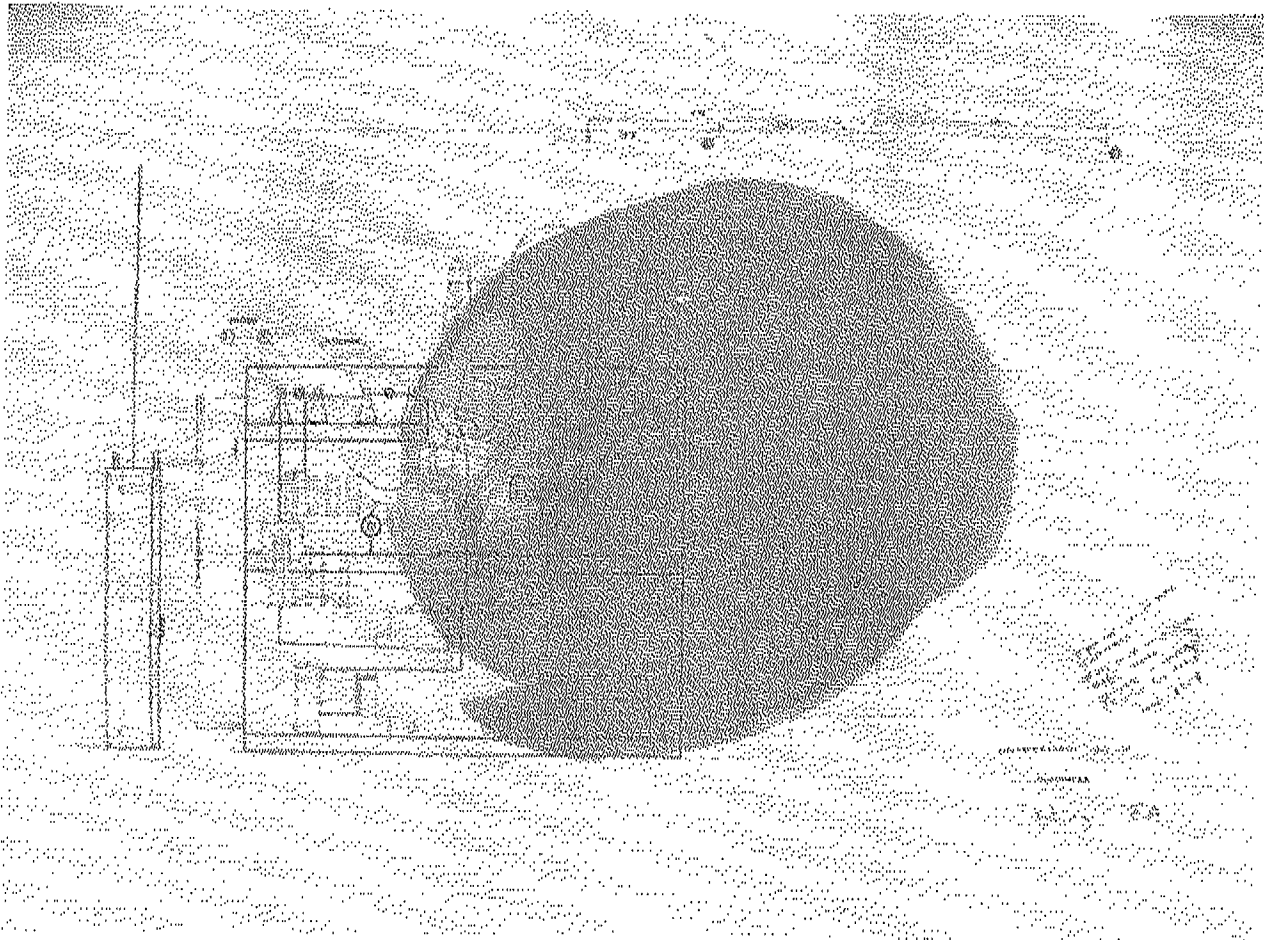
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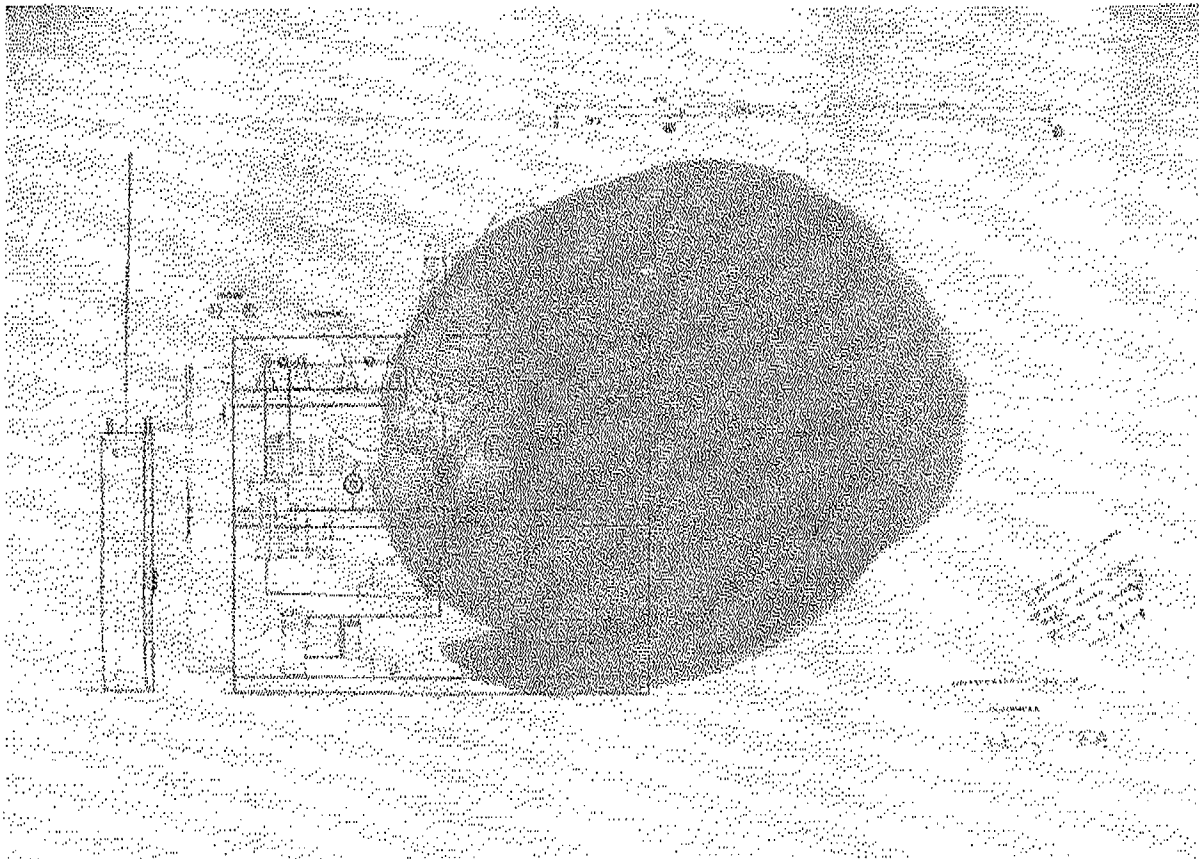
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Operation Total Exposure: A Review of Oliver  
Harris' Cut-up Trilogy



## INTRODUCTION

*Operation Rewrite. Junky, Queer, The Yage Letters*, and, now, the cut-up trilogy. For over two decades, Oliver Harris has stormed and occupied libraries and archives, the Reality Studios of academia and scholarship, and in the process has forever changed how Burroughs and his early and middle period novels are approached, understood, and, most crucially of all, read by scholars and laymen alike. With *Junky, Queer* and *The Yage Letters*, questions may persist that Oliver hijacked the Studio and meddled with the controls. Did these books need a facelift in terms of book design? Was it necessary for them to undergo Oliver's intricate and precise textual surgery in order to remain relevant? Is Oliver a scholarly Dr. Benway? Pulling the *Acc Junkie* down from my bookshelf, I sometimes wonder. It still looks fresh and vibrant; forever seductive and inviting.

But the cut-up trilogy is another story; one Oliver narrates with bravado in his entertaining, accessible, and informative introductions. Not "a" trilogy, at all, *The Soft Machine, The Ticket That Exploded*, and *Nova Express* are in fact a multitude of trilogies, which like Tribbles multiply and reproduce shamelessly. If any of Burroughs' books encourage restoration or redefinition, these vastly influential, but paradoxically little read and even much less understood, novels do. The books were the result of such tinkering on Burroughs' part, and the cut-up technique, of which these novels are the most well-known (if not the most representative or successful) result, was viewed by Burroughs as a hands-on procedure to be placed into active practice by initiates. This is not to say merely that the cut-up novels invite one to cut them up, but also that they seduce readers into massaging their texts, to feeling and touching them up. They scream out to be assaulted, to be raped, that is to be edited. The cut-up technique after all is creative writing as editing. Burroughs distanced the cut-up from spontaneous prose, noting in a letter written in response to being labelled an action writer, "The procedure is not arbitrary but rather directed toward obtaining comprehensible and useable material—There is careful selection of the material used and even more careful selection of the material finally used in the narrative."

Like letter writing, editing is the left-hand's business, while the right-hand performs more important activities of serious play. Even more than maintaining correspondence, editing is the drudgery of the literary life. Fellow Beat Jack Kerouac famously (and falsely) abstained from the practice altogether, advocating the spontaneous sketching technique. Editing is what writers who cannot successfully write do for a living. Or they teach. Editing is typically the business of academics and scholars. Oliver has made his academic career demonstrating that Burroughs' books were queerer and more sinful than we ever imaged because they were written in large part with the left hand. Unlike many academics, Oliver demonstrates his scholarly discoveries with just the right element of creativity and flair. For example, Oliver's most hardcore academic text, *William Burroughs and the Secret of Fascination*, is a hard-boiled scholarly noir. Oliver as Sam Spade, or Clem Snide.

One of the big “a-ha” moments of Oliver’s revised cut-up trilogy is that Burroughs envisioned the project as an alternative to Luce’s three-headed monopoly of *Time, Life* and *Fortune*, as well as to the media empires of Lord Beaverbrook and William Randolph Hearst. What Oliver’s introductions do not discuss is that his revised trilogy, and the majority of his scholarly project, is itself an alternative and reaction to monopoly and corruption, as found in the industry of higher education and the academic press. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, in her book *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology and the Future of Academic Publishing*, examines this crisis in detail. One of Fitzpatrick’s laments is that academic writing refuses to address and consider a general audience and to encourage more interactive participation. She presents several possible solutions; many of them involving the latest developments from the digital revolution, such as the Internet, electronic publishing, and blogging.

Make no mistake, Oliver is an academic and deeply invested in the academic industry. He is a professor at Keele University; he submits articles to academic journals; his *Secret of Fascination* was published by an academic press in 2003; he attends academic conferences related to Burroughs and the Beats; and he co-founded a network of Beat scholars. In addition, Oliver works intimately with institutional libraries, academic institutions, and literary estates in order to research Burroughs’ creative process. Oliver is clearly a man within.

Yet in large part, the results of his scholarly analysis of Burroughs have been distributed by mainstream publishers, such as Penguin and Grove Press. This hardcore academic work has been packaged for, and made easily available to, the everyday reader. I know of nothing else like it. Is there a single writer other than Burroughs who has received such precise and rigorous analysis of his work on an archival level with the results of that research being made available for mass consumption? The Beats provide some tentative precedent. For example, the scroll version of *On the Road* and its incredibly complex textual history is completely watered down for a mainstream audience. The paratexts to that edition pale in comparison to any of Oliver’s editions of Burroughs’ work. The Harper & Row edition of *Howl* provides possibly the closest comparison I can think of. This mainstream attempt to provide a facsimile and transcript edition of *Howl* rivals in some respects Oliver’s paperback editions and the Ohio State facsimile of *The Last Notebook*, by providing more extensive reproductions of historical and literary context. Yet there is a model for the Harper & Row *Howl*, particularly that of Eliot’s “The Waste Land”.

Traditionally, poetry has received closer archival scrutiny than the novel. Surely there is no novelist of the post-WWII era receiving the level of archival scrutiny of Burroughs. But let’s be honest, do any of them really deserve it? Their manuscript histories are not as complex or interesting, on either the literary and personal level, as that of Burroughs. For example, Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* was issued by W.W. Norton in a restored edition in 2012. I would guess that Oliver’s work on Burroughs inspired the publication of this edition. The inclusion of a selection of Burgess’s manuscript is a nice addition, and one that would be much appreciated in the Burroughs restorations, but for the most part, the restored *A Clockwork Orange* pales in comparison to the cut-up trilogy in terms of academic heft. The *Clockwork*

notes section, of about 15 pages, simply provides definitions and context for various words and phrases. The notes for the cut-up trilogy are substantial in terms of length and depth and provide detailed archival analysis of the text. There is no comparison, which is interesting since *A Clockwork Orange*, was issued in the United States by a publisher best known for its anthologies and textbooks. As such it is a scholarly edition not a mainstream one like Oliver's. Unlike with Burgess, the editorial and biographical questions generated by Burroughs' manuscript and publishing history are simultaneously textbook case studies and unprecedented. On a scholarly level, Burroughs' work is receiving the level of attention reserved for the likes of the canonical writers that Burroughs himself cut-up such as Shakespeare, Rimbaud, and Kafka. Burroughs seemed drawn to fluid and unstable texts for his cut-up sources. Like Burgess, who Burroughs also cut-up, Kafka's novels have also been restored. Historically, none of this type of archival research would be made available by a mainstream, corporate publisher in an everyman edition. Such work is usually buried in journals or issued by the academic press for a limited and initiated audience. Oliver has bypassed that distribution network and reached out to the general public.

During my senior year of college, I spent the entire Fall semester researching the papers of Darlington Hoopes, Sr., the Socialist candidate for President in 1952 and 1956, who happened to be the grandfather of a friend of mine in high school. For months, I read letters discussing whether the Socialist Party should remain a separate entity or fold into the Democratic Party and radicalize it from within. Oliver attempts to change the system from within. Interestingly he is changing two systems at once: academic and corporate publishing. He provides an alternative to the corrupt and failing academic market while injecting high-brow academic content into a corporate publishing atmosphere increasingly dominated by movie tie-ins and tween culture. In the past decade, the selling point of the recent Penguin and Grove editions has been the anniversaries of original publication, which are given intellectual and cultural weight by Oliver's scholarly research, not by Burroughs' continued presence and relevance in Hollywood treatments, such as *On The Road* or *Kill My Darlings*, or the rumors of films, like Steve Buscemi's *Queer*. This has not always been the case as the movie version of *Naked Lunch* by Croenberg brought about the last round of Burroughs reprints by Grove, including the cut-up trilogy, in 1992.

How successful has Oliver been? It is time to Rate My Professor. What follows is my report card on Oliver's Burroughs project thus far. Let's be clear here. I feel Oliver is in a class by himself in terms of the recent products of Beat Scholarship, which are average at best. Oliver must be assessed by his own standard, which is extremely high, thus resulting in some seemingly low marks.

*The Letters of William Burroughs 1945-1959* Viking Press (1993)

*The Letters* were published by Viking Press, a mainstream publisher. This is not surprising. True, Burroughs is a cult writer, yet strangely one with commercial potential. His letters make great reading on the level of entertainment. Kerouac and Ginsberg received the same treatment.



Oliver plays to his audience here. This is not a scholarly edition by any means. Oliver has not bridged the gap between academia and general reader. Oliver is not changing or challenging how a collection of letters is traditionally presented or distributed. This collection is par for the course, standard operating procedure. But the material is extraordinary. This is where Burroughs' scholarship really took off. This is the foundation. If Oliver has a Word Hoard from which he draws inspiration and material as a scholar, it is the letters of William Burroughs. Nothing new and innovative in Burroughs studies could happen until these letters were made readily available and this collection remains one of the most important and essential Burroughs texts.

But this book is very much a beginning. For Oliver as a scholar and Burroughs' scholarship generally. And as with most points of origin, things are primitive and tentative. Oliver's *Fascination* resides in this volume of letters, but it remains a secret, hidden in plain sight. Grade: B.

*William Burroughs and the Secret of Fascination* Southern Illinois University Press (2003)

*Fascination* proves that Oliver had mastered the game of academic publishing. Oliver could talk the talk, but he is largely talking to the converted given the manner in which the book was distributed. *Fascination* built Oliver's resume. It established his reputation. Oliver shifted the paradigm on how we approach Burroughs and the course of Burroughs scholarship. I agree with Alex Wermer-Colan, as he expressed at the CUNY Burroughs Conference, that this book belongs with the great works of literary scholarship, not just Beat scholarship.

Yet *Fascination* resides on the other side of the spectrum from the Viking *Letters*. Oliver straddles two publishing worlds and two forms of presentation. He has yet to join them together. What has always interested me about *Secret of Fascination* is how incredible it looks. In my opinion it is has the best packaging of all his books. It looks and feels fantastic. It is common knowledge that Oliver has been plagued by poorly book design, especially relating to covers. Not so here. I wonder if Oliver had more control over jacket design than with his later corporate publishing projects. If so, it is interesting that he would sacrifice that control for the opportunity to reach a larger audience. Education is about reaching those in the dark, not preaching to the enlightened. Academic publishing is a form of cult literature and *Fascination*, like *Naked Lunch*, is a cult classic. Grade: A+

*Junky: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Definitive Edition* Penguin (2003)

The Penguin *Junky* provides Oliver's first attempt at a Burroughsian space between. Not pure mass market edition and definitely not academic press. It is in this space that Oliver introduces the format that seems to me unique to Burroughs of all post-WWII writers. Yet this first attempt is my least favorite Oliver Harris effort. Maybe it is the word "definitive" crammed in there that rankles. This is the corporate carny talking. Pure salesmanship. Oliver clearly realizes the folly of that word, but in working with a major publisher he is forced to make concessions, to play the

game. This is a different game than the academic press. But it is all a form of marketing. In the case of *Junky* it is an unnecessary form of repackaging and rebranding. And let's be clear here with the Penguin *Junky*, the packaging is atrocious. Here begins Oliver long struggles with corporate book designers. This is one of the worst.

There is a definitive *Junkie*, an iconic *Junkie*. It is the Ace paperback. That is the perfect edition in terms of format. I have explained on RealityStudio how the binding expresses Burroughs' Algebra of Need, but more importantly, *Junkie* serves as the gateway drug into the world of Burroughs. This is where readers should start before leaping into *Naked Lunch* or the cut-ups. As such the simple, unadorned pulp format is perfect. You could buy it at the drugstore while you filled your script. Even as a Burroughs obsessive, I find that Oliver's additions and revisions (although revelatory and ground breaking) make the pulpy *Junkie* clunky and awkward. They are not reader friendly. Oliver's edition is not the proper introduction to Burroughs; yet his edition has become the one first-time Burroughs readers pick up. True story. At the Burroughs conference an older woman came into the room with a copy of Oliver's *Junky* in her hand. It was the first Burroughs she had ever read. She wondered when it got good. She was bogged down in the introduction. But she said the later pages looked good. The public is always right. Grade: B-.

#### *The Yage Letters Redux* City Lights (2006)

I feel just the opposite about *The Yage Letters Redux*. Unlike the Ace *Junkie*, the first edition of *The Yage Letters* demanded to be revised and properly expanded. At a mere 63 pages, it was like a scrawny kid that everybody tries to bulk up with extra helpings of pasta. Until Oliver's edition, the additions to the 1975 and 1988 editions were empty calories. Oliver puts meat on the bones. Muscle not flab. The added heft provides invaluable information and research that make *The Yage Letters* a cornerstone of drug literature along with *Junky* and *Naked Lunch*. Oliver's introductions and appendices make you feel like you are getting your money's worth. The general reader loves a bargain.

*City Lights* also makes a difference in its presentation. The book looks great; the cover design is smart and attractive. It supports and illuminates the text and Oliver's research; it does not shout out demands. Unlike the Penguin *Junky*, *Redux* is not forced on the public as definitive. *City Lights* did not feel the need to press that issue. The superiority of the product would win out. Thus, *Redux* has become the definitive edition on merit not marketing. Grade: A+.

#### *Everything Lost: The Latin American Notebooks of William Burroughs* The Ohio State University Press (2008)

Oliver provided the introduction but I am not sure how involved he was in the entire production. As Oliver makes clear the *Lost Notebook* is a first in Burroughs studies: a facsimile edition. But is *Lost Notebook* really the first? In a sense, *APO-33* and *Time* were facsimile editions, and in my opinion they are much more substantial publications, as those scrapbooks seem to me much

more interesting and more deserving of the *Lost Notebook* treatment. Their status as Burroughs collectibles, available only on the rare book market, has effectively made them "lost" publications as well. Given the wealth of archival material surrounding *Time*, certainly it would be much more interesting to provide a color facsimile of *Time*, in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Museum, which owns the archive.

*Everything Lost* is vanity publishing on the academic level. Ohio State made a big splash in its acquisition of Burroughs material, and as a state-run institution I am sure the library is made accountable for its purchases. The library had to justify a five figure outlay at the well-publicized Allen Ginsberg Auction at Sotheby's. *The Lost Notebook* was one of the most expensive items sold. As such, it demands star treatment. Oliver gamely makes an argument for its importance, but I am not sold. I despise the edition's cover design. In my opinion, the visual qualities of the *Notebook* do not demand such lavish treatment. There are other notebooks and scrapbooks that I would much rather see reproduced but unfortunately Ohio State does not own them. Make no mistake I would like to see more facsimile editions in the future. Ohio State deserves credit for financing such projects. The concept is top shelf, the selection is not. Grade: C.

*Queer: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition* Penguin (2010)

Sometimes when you are grading papers you grade based on your personal feelings of the student or the topic not the paper itself. This is a big no-no in the teaching profession. But I cannot help it, I absolutely loath the Viking *Queer*. It was part of a multi-book deal, whereby Burroughs whored out two intensely personal relationships (Marker and Joan), which he never felt comfortable talking about, for cash. Burroughs' introduction to the 1985 *Queer*, like the "Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness," is a primary example of sensationalism designed to market and sell books. You can talk about all the hangings and spurting cocks, but for me the most offensive thing Burroughs ever wrote was the introduction to the Viking *Queer*.

Oliver redeems *Queer* at some level and requires me to reassess the book and reluctantly place it as essential reading in the Burroughs canon. That alone makes the Penguin *Queer* incredibly important, but unfortunately Oliver cannot shake the fact that the publication of the Viking *Queer* was something of a cash grab. Twenty-five years later, the publication of *Queer* still seems to be about money. The cover art to the Penguin *Queer* like their *Junky* is atrocious. The anniversary it celebrates is dubious at best. I can understand this concept for *Junky*, a major Burroughs title at a major milestone. But not for *Queer*. I feel that Burroughs got paid for that one already by Viking. One gets the sense that the Penguin *Queer* came to being in a series of conference calls and meetings. Unfortunately Oliver's important and informative scholarly work gets lost in the business of selling books. This is the danger of distributing scholarly work through a mainstream publishing house. This grade may seem low, but when you consider that the Viking *Queer* is an F, you realize just how amazing a job Oliver did in this instance. Grade: B-.

*The Soft Machine: The Restored Text* Grove Press (2014).

In this "first" installment of the cut-up trilogy, the Harris Model finds its ideal subject. The trilogy was designed to be restored and redefined. Yet the most textually complex and convoluted volume is Oliver's weakest effort of the three. You can tell his affections are with *The Ticket That Exploded* and *Nova Express*. Those intros pop and crackle like static. *The Soft Machine* intro lacks a hook, a reveal.

In addition, a restored text should not leave you with a feeling of loss. Unfortunately Oliver's *Soft Machine* does. Like with the *Restored Naked Lunch*, Oliver's edition will inevitably become the definitive text. And like *Naked Lunch*, the edition closest to my heart is the Olympia Press edition. The Olympia *Soft Machine* is unique in Burroughs' entire oeuvre. As a prose-poem/novel, it reminds me of John Ashbery's *Three Poems*. Oliver's *Soft Machine* fails to capture the magic and sheer queerness of that edition. Right or wrong, the Olympia edition will always be the one I cherish. This might be pure fetish on my part, but in a world of total access where everything is seemingly available, it is something of a lost text; it would have been nice if Oliver could have done more to give readers a sample of what is truly an acquired Burroughs taste. Grade: B+.

*The Ticket That Exploded: The Restored Text* Grove Press (2014)

On the other hand, *The Restored Ticket* deservedly will become the accepted edition. Here Oliver finds the right balance between hardcore scholarship and mass market paperback. He draws the general reader in with tales of Iggy Pop and David Bowie, and then he drops an incredibly close reading of Burroughs' cut-ups that are a revelation, particularly his analysis of the relationship between text and image on the last page of *Ticket*. I desperately want my Burroughs to be a monk of the book and a theorist of text and image on the level of Mallarmé. With the *Ticket*, Oliver gives me hope that such a desire is a reality. Such readings make perfectly clear the precise authorial intention of the cut-up technique. It was not an arbitrary or chance operation. Burroughs made choices, very precise choices, and Oliver is one of the first critics to treat the cut-up technique with the same close attention and seriousness that Burroughs himself gave it. Grade: A.

*Nova Express: The Restored Text* Grove Press (2014).

Again Oliver's *Nova Express* is destined to become the edition of choice. The introduction is a fine piece of scholarly writing and the notes are pure hardcore archival porn for bibliophiles. This seems proper to me because, unlike *Junky*, the cut-up trilogy is definitely not for Burroughs newbies; it is for the initiated, the dedicated, and the obsessed. Yet Oliver's introduction brings the elements of the scholarly thriller from *Secret of Fascination* into play. The intro is a fine piece of detective work that makes Burroughs' cut-up trilogy not only interesting but also essential to understanding Burroughs' entire output of the Sixties. Oliver captures the atmosphere of conspiracy and paranoia that hangs over these novels. More importantly, he

demonstrates that this paranoid threat is real and continues into the present day. Like *Junky*, *Nova Express* is a gateway novel, but in this case, for crossing the border that divides the Burroughs fan from the Burroughs fanatic. Oliver succeeds in making Burroughs' most difficult writing accessible and entertaining. Burroughs himself struggled in this regard, as "Operation Soft Machine/Cut" demonstrates. The cut-up trilogy will be read and appreciated like never before. Grade: A+.

Some quibbles with the Tribbles. Not even quibbles really, just a few thoughts that kept flickering through my brainpan, like a dim, jerky film, as I was reading through the Restored Trilogy. As Oliver's make clear, the little magazine served as a laboratory in which Burroughs experimented with the cut-up technique as well as a means to distribute and edit the cut-up trilogy in close to real time. In the various editions of the trilogy, Burroughs mined his little magazine appearances to fill out each edition, in some cases cut-and-pasting these appearances right into the manuscript. At no time in Burroughs' entire career was the little magazine such an essential part of his creative process. The cut-up depended on the publications of the Mimeo Revolution.

Oliver's acknowledgments list the usual suspects from the well-known Burroughs archives: the librarians and curators at Ohio State, the New York Public Library, Arizona State, and Columbia. Along with the Burroughs estate and Grove Press, this is the official bureaucracy of the Burroughs industry. It should be noted that unlike many other bureaucracies associated with 20th Century writers, Burroughs' is particularly enlightened. They realize the value in access and availability. They understand that challenging and complex scholarship, not congratulatory press releases, is valuable intellectual capital that generates real dollars in the literary market. The more Burroughs is taught and discussed in the academy the more his books will reach and fascinate readers and be in demand.

There is also a thank you to "Jed Birmingham for assistance with little magazines" in each volume. While institutions like the NYPL possess unique archival material, such as letters, journals, notebooks, and manuscripts, which Oliver could gain access to by no other means, an individual collector, such as myself, can gather together a little magazine collection that in select areas rivals that of any single institution. My archive operates much like the items it collects. Sites, like RealityStudio and Mimeo Mimeo, provide viral distribution of items designed in a pre-digital world for just such rapid distribution. Dealing with institutional bureaucracies is sometimes frustrating and slow. From *The Ticket That Exploded*: "Great libraries and bureaucracies of such an intricacy a thousand years to draft a single petition you understand and five thousand years to process it through the filters and amber molds." From *Nova Express*: "And your name?--Berg?--Berg?--Bradly?--'Mr. Martin si.'" In some cases, it was cheaper, quicker and more convenient for Oliver to get scans of magazine appearances from me than deal with institutional holders. From *Nova Express*: "Even so there is a devious underground operating through telepathic misdirection and camouflage—The partisans make recordings ahead in time and leave the recordings to be picked up by control stations while they are free for a few

seconds to organize underground activities. Largely the underground is made up of adventurers who intend to outthink and displace the present heads." Oliver's *Restored Trilogy* is a validation and consummation of over two decades of collecting William Burroughs' magazine appearances and building a DIY archive.

In light of Kathleen Fitzpatrick's call-to-arms in response to the crisis facing academic publishing, RealityStudio, Mimeo Mimeo and Planned Obsolescence Press provide an alternative academic outlet and resource. The situation in academic publishing is much like the situation that faced poets and novelists in the post-WWII era of corporate publishing. Unknown or unproven scholars cannot gain access into the established scholarly journals and presses upon which the academic job market depends. "Thing Police Keep all Board Room Reports" It is a vicious circle whereby nobody will publish you until you are published, and the rigors of daily instruction and academic bureaucracy make it difficult to perform in-depth research. Like Fitzpatrick, Burroughs describes the desperate situation facing young scholars in the Academy. From *Nova Express*:

So the cadets learn The Basic Formulae of Pain and Fear—Rules and staff change at arbitrary intervals—Cadets encouraged or forced into behavior subject to heaviest sanctions of deprivation, prolonged discomfort, noise, boredom all compensation removed from the offending cadets who were always being shifted from one school to another and never knew if they were succeeding brilliantly or washed out report to disposal—

As a result for the past decade, there has developed a Mimeo Revolution in academics whereby scholars are taking control of the means of production and peer review by publishing and distributing their own work to an audience outside of the established bureaucracies. If the writers of the 1960s used the mimeograph machine, the current revolutionaries use the Internet. The number of independently run online journals has exploded in recent years. RealityStudio follows that model to a degree as does Mimeo Mimeo. While maintaining ties to established institutions and estates, these two entities are entirely self-funded and almost completely independent on an editorial level. In a case like Planned Obsolescence Press, serious academic writing is entirely self-published and financed and then distributed by mailing list, strictly on a need-to-know basis to those the publisher would like to know better. Like a community newsletter or a heart-to-heart conversation with a friend. Such publications and sites are not professional or bureaucratic; they are decidedly and defiantly personal.

Given the importance of the little magazine to the cut-up trilogy, it was somewhat disappointing to see only one magazine appearance reproduced in all three volumes. In my opinion, the one chosen is rather controversial. There has been some discussion on the RealityStudio forum about how the reproduction of "Operation Soft Machine/Cut" from *The Outsider #1* was a travesty. Such complaints dealt with the perceived poor quality of the scan. Personally, I found the scan quality to be perfectly acceptable; reproducing these poorly bound and fragile magazines is not

an easy task. If you have a beef with the scan, feel free to put your money where your mouth is and pony up the cash to get your own copy of *The Outsider*.

My quibble stems from the fact that "Operation Soft Machine/Cut" as printed by *The Outsider* leads to misconceptions about Burroughs' development of the cut-up. The most striking element of the entire piece is its elaborate layout. The hand-drawn cover page and illustrations of insects are less jarring than the three-column format. Oliver presents this cut-up as an early example of Burroughs' interest in newspaper layouts, yet the cover page clearly states the "Page and stuff by the Editor 5/21/61." The editor of *The Outsider* was Jon Edgar Webb, and he was notorious for having a heavy and intrusive editorial hand. He frequently altered the text of submitted material. For example in *The Outsider* #2, he edited a Jack Kerouac poem, "Sept. 16, 1961, Poem," by creating several different variants—as many as seven—on the stick as he was printing the issue. Kerouac did not learn of the changes, which he emphatically did not authorize (Letter to Webb: "Be sure everything is linotyped as I wrote it—There are no typos in my typewriter script"), until 1965. As a result, there are variants of the poem created without Kerouac's input. Webb did the same with a Burroughs piece, "wilt caught in time" in *The Outsider* #2. Historian of Loujon Press, Jeff Weddle notes that the Burroughs piece, "bears little resemblance to the author's original submission."

I suspect that the layout for "Operation Soft Machine/Cut" was Webb's idea and not a suggestion from Burroughs in correspondence or directed from his manuscript. Surely the idea for the insects did not come from Burroughs. They derive from the well-known story that Burroughs worked as an exterminator. Webb, like many editors, used insects as a lazy (though ironic) means to humanize Burroughs' texts with a touch of biographical detail, just as the Viking *Exterminator!* would a decade later. Webb also knew Burroughs was cutting up newspapers and magazines, as evidenced by the image of Burroughs surrounded by newspapers on a second cover page. Webb then devised the three-column layout, like the two cover pages, as a means to explain the process of "Operation Soft Machine/Cut" and in order to present Burroughs' piece in a more eye-catching fashion.

I feel strongly that this is not a proto- or ur- three-column piece initiated by Burroughs. By all accounts, Burroughs did not explore this layout until the Winter of 1964. Oliver admits as much in his endnotes to the Appendix. He does not mention that by 1964 Burroughs was in close collaboration with Jeff Nuttall and his *My Own Mag*. That magazine is the crucial one for understanding Burroughs' development of the three-column format, not *The Outsider*. Of course, the argument could be made that the use of the format in *The Outsider* made an impression on him and stuck with him over the years. Typically Oliver would support such an argument with some evidence, such as a letter. Like maybe this one. Letter to Paul Bowles: "Did you see the *Outsider*?—Not much of a job I thought—All the mistakes of all the little magazines—Now he writes will I send him something without cut ups?" Not much of an impression. In addition, if the appearance in *The Outsider* had any direct influence on Burroughs, why did he not develop the technique at all for three years?

Oliver also presents "Operation Soft Machine/Cut" as a "primer" for understanding *The Soft Machine*. I do not doubt that this is on one level true, but I would like to add a note of caution that this piece might explain too much and too clearly. I view it much like I do the earlier "Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness." Burroughs wrote the Deposition under duress in light of a drug charge and a looming obscenity case. No doubt the Deposition is a pivotal piece of writing by Burroughs; in fact it has become the primary piece of evidence for understanding Burroughs' writing. But I would argue that the Deposition distorts as much as it clarifies. "Operation Soft Machine/Cut" functions in a similar manner. It is clearly related to the Deposition and is written in a similar style; as such it provides a convenient bridge between *Naked Lunch* and *Soft Machine*. In addition, early readers of *The Soft Machine*, including Burroughs' closest confidants like Gysin and Ginsberg (who heavily edited Olympia Press's *The Soft Machine*), quite simply could not understand what Burroughs was doing. They considered *Soft Machine* illegible. Thus the reason for writing the piece was not fear of drug or obscenity charges, but fear of accusations of obscurity. As "Louie Louie" makes clear, obscurity, like obscenity, is a crime, and they are, in fact, closely related. No doubt "Operation Soft Machine/Cut" is important to unlocking the mysteries of *The Soft Machine* but I wonder if we should treat it with a degree of skepticism, like with the Deposition. Surely as Oliver suggests the piece is convenient, quite possibly overly so.

Little magazines (and the appearances they publish) can have ulterior motives and are not always innocent bystanders or independent entities. Oliver makes clear Burroughs' attack upon the mainstream media, but it should be noted that even the alternative press could be compromised. In *The Ticket That Exploded*, Lee purchases a copy of *Encounter*, a politically motivated literary magazine with a decidedly British feel. The purchase leads Lee to "contemplat[e] under Eros the feat of prose abstracted to a point where no image track occurs." Over the next few pages, Burroughs provides in parentheses what reads like Lee's "contemplat[ion]" of *Encounter*. For example: "(ironically the format is banal to its heart of pulp ambivalently flailing noneffectual tentacles of verbal diarrhea)" and "(Mr. S who latterly became something the point is simply the contradictions of an inherent territory prophet stridently inclined to gritty acceptances depending on banal illiterate process of perceptive engagement)" Poet Stephen Spender, Mr. S, was co-founder and the literary editor of *Encounter* for years. Interestingly, Burroughs and Spender crossed paths at the 1962 Edinburgh Literary Festival. Spender chaired the conference on commitment ("engagement") and took part in various conferences involving Burroughs, such as censorship. There is a picture of Burroughs and Spender sitting together at one of the roundtables.

The reference to *Encounter* would seem to be of little import but for that fact that rumors swirled for years that the magazine was funded by the CIA and operated, on some level, as a front organization. In 1966, the rumors proved true and Spender, although not directly implicated, resigned as literary editor in 1967, thus making Spender guilty through association of "the contradictions of an inherent territory prophet stridently inclined to gritty acceptances," i.e.,



government payoffs. The cut-up trilogy is paranoid and it would seem at times hysterical, but as Burroughs wrote the paranoid merely have possession of the facts. In the 1960s, there was a war raging for control of all media—mainstream and alternative—and dirty tricks abounded. All conspiracy theories were possible and probable. Thus even the most left-leaning literary mag could serve as an agent of control.

According to Burroughs, Timothy Leary's Psychedelic Revolution was also compromised and crawling with enemy agents. Although hallucinogens played a role in the cut-up novels, Burroughs, like Kerouac, distrusted them. Oliver mentions Burroughs' famous bad trip with Leary in Massachusetts and that Burroughs later advocated and "achieved pure cut-up highs." Yet Burroughs' leery attitude toward the Psychedelic Revolution ties into his Cut-up Revolution in another way. Letter to Gysin: "Leary has gone berserk. He is giving mushrooms to hat check girls, cab drivers, waiters, in fact anybody who will stand still for it." This seems like Burroughs' upper class prejudice coming through but the real danger was not that the hoi polloi were getting dosed. Burroughs realized that drugs, which could unscrew the jambs from the doors of perception, would be of great interest to those who controlled the image banks, namely robber barons of time and life, like Luce. Burroughs' letters to Gysin reveal that his greatest fears had been realized. After making his escape from Leary and Cambridge: "DO NOT TAKE ANY HALLUCIGEN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. . . Made it out of Cambridge just under the wire . . . Claire Booth Luce money and power behind this—" And again: "As you gather I have severed all connection with Leary and his pestiferous project—financed by Madame Luce—and took my departure from those who would have held me in Cambridge."

If *Time* and *Life* showered the Burroughs and Beats with bad press, the Luce Empire lavished LSD and other psychedelics, such as magic mushrooms, with positive publicity from 1954 ("Dream Stuff") onward into the late 1960s. Henry Luce took LSD a few times, but Claire was something of a true believer. She claimed at one point that it saved her marriage. Burroughs was not the only one to notice that the Luces were behind the Acid Revolution. In his 1980 memoir, Abbie Hoffman wrote, "I've always maintained that Henry Luce did much more to popularize acid than Timothy Leary. Years later I met Clare Booth Luce at the Republican convention in Miami. She did not disagree with this opinion." During a March 11, 1959 acid trip, Claire received a phone call from Richard Nixon. She declined the call but the lines of communication were open. Once again Burroughs was not merely paranoid. Heads were in collaboration with the heads of state.

Oliver uses Iggy Pop and David Bowie's work on "Lust for Life" in Berlin in 1977 as a hook to get general readers into the thick of the *Ticket*. A great example of Oliver reaching out to a wider audience, and the connections to Pop and Bowie, are, indeed, very important, particularly Bowie, but not just for the reasons Oliver writes about in his introduction. Bowie is pivotal in terms of marketing. Bowie is one of the great innovators in capitalizing financially on his art and intellectual property, working it like a corporate asset.

From Wikipedia: In 1997, Bowie and investment banker, David Pullman, developed a pioneering investment vehicle whereby they generated asset-backed securities of current and future revenues of the 25 albums (287 songs) that Bowie recorded before 1990. Prudential Insurance bought the bonds for \$55 million. The bonds paid an interest rate of 7.9% and had an average life of ten years, a higher rate of return than a 10-year Treasury note (at the time, 6.37%). Royalties from the 25 albums generated the cash flow that secured the bonds' interest payments. Prudential also received guarantees from Bowie's label, EMI Records, which had recently signed a \$30 million deal with Bowie. By forfeiting ten years' worth of royalties, Bowie was able to receive a payment of \$55 million up front. Bowie used this income to buy songs owned by his former manager. A pioneering, innovative and financially successful move on Bowie's part, but ultimately not for investors. By March 2004, Moody's Investors Service lowered the bonds from an A3 rating (the seventh highest rating) to Baa3, one notch above junk status.

The Estate of William Burroughs, like many artists' estates, also manages the work of William S. Burroughs as an asset to be monetized. Not surprisingly, Bowie can be looked upon as something of a model. The key element of marketing Burroughs, like Bowie, is an endless series of re-issues. Traditionally, Burroughs was marketed through basic reprints, such as the Grove editions of 1992. These reprints attempted to seduce fans through re-packaging and re-designing the same old material with minimal extras or some basic re-mastering. David Bowie's 40th Anniversary Picture Discs series is an example of this practice: The 7" picture disc of Diamond Dogs, a song inspired by Burroughs' cut-up method, is coming out in the summer of 2014.

For the past decade, The Estate of William Burroughs has banked on selling Burroughs to new audiences by subjecting Burroughs' books to a process of sophisticated re-mastering and re-mixing. This is also a common practice in marketing music whereby the master tapes or demos are returned to their original splendor or reprocessed more in line with the artists' original intention through incredible advances in digital technology. One of the more famous and commercially successful examples in recent years was the Beatles' *Let It Be Naked*, overseen by Paul McCartney, which presented the album stripped down as originally intended without producer Phil Spector's overdubs and the incidental studio chatter between songs. Along with extensive liner notes, Oliver relies on classic methods of archival archeology and bibliographic editing techniques, not digital processing, but the goal is the same: to refine, restore and redefine how Burroughs sounds.

Some of Oliver's efforts, like his *Soft Machine* and *The Yage Letter Redux*, point towards a possible future in Burroughs publishing, which would be a package like a box set that would include all editions, variants, and outtakes in a variety of media formats. Bowie also issued a seminal box set in 1989, *Sound + Vision*. By the end of the 1980s, Bowie's pre-1983 catalogue reverted back to Bowie. This set was another innovative example of Bowie attempting to capitalize on his assets. Although the set was acknowledged to be a teaser for an upcoming series of re-issues, many critics, including *Rolling Stone*, were amazed by the high quality and

innovation of the set. Sales were brisk; roughly 200,000 copies at \$50-60 apiece in a matter of months. Like *Soft Machine*, *Sound + Vision* existed in three versions, with formats such as LPs, CDs and CD-ROMs. Interestingly, Iggy Pop issued a box set of his first five solo years with a heavy focus on his years with Bowie, precisely the years Oliver focuses on in the *Ticket* introduction.

In the introductions to all three cut-up novels, Oliver also discusses the well-known art historical context involving Dada and Surrealism. No doubt Oliver provides some new twists. Yet I would have liked to see Oliver place the cut-up less in the art history of the past, and more in the contemporary art scene of late 1950s/early 1960s Paris: the primary locale in which the cut-up was discovered and where the early versions of the cut-up novels were written. Interestingly Oliver briefly discusses the cut-up in terms of Abstract Expressionism. Oliver explains how Burroughs bristled when he was characterized as an action writer by John Calder. Such a characterization might make sense if one takes a look at the Olympia *Soft Machine* with its cover art by Brion Gysin, which uncharacteristically looks like a gesture painting by Franz Kline rather than Gysin's typical calligraphy. The Beats' relationship with Ab Ex is intimate, particularly in terms of Kerouac's interactions with the action painters in New York City in the late 1950s. Despite being away from New York City, Burroughs' relationship is more complicated than first appearances might suggest and relates directly to Burroughs' war on Luce and The American Century.

Oliver does a brilliant job of demonstrating that the November 30, 1959 *Life* article on the Beats was pivotal in Burroughs' development of the cut-up project. Yet Oliver does not mention that as much as the Beat piece was negative, *Life* printed a two-part celebration of Abstract Expressionism earlier that same month. This was a complete about-face from *Life*'s treatment of Ab Ex a decade earlier in 1949, when the magazine openly mocked Jackson Pollock, posing the question "Is he the greatest living painter in America?" The question was fashioned as something of a joke. The presentation of Pollock, like that of Burroughs (as Oliver wonderfully demonstrated at the CUNY conference), was juxtaposed throughout the pages of *Life* by a series of advertisements and product placements that played-off modern art for the purposes of mass consumerism. For example, a model holds a MOMA catalog while advertising cheap accessories such as a belt for 79 cents, cotton gloves for a dollar, and a bracelet for a buck fifty. Another model wears a swimsuit that bears a striking resemblance to modern art design. An advertisement for Schlitz beer can be read in light Jackson Pollock's legendary reputation for heavy drinking.

By 1959, Ab Ex was nothing to joke about and was itself a successful consumer product. The previous year, "The New American Painting" exhibition, which featured Ab Ex, had conquered Europe. The art had gained a foothold in galleries and institutions. Therefore, *Life* had to acknowledge Abstract Expressionism's domination of contemporary art and the ascendancy of New York City as the capital of the avant garde. Their world-wide dominance was so pervasive that Ab Ex was viewed as a major cultural weapon in the very serious Cold War and Luce's

vision of The American Century. This role has been well documented in art historical literature, such as Serge Guilbaut's book, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*. Thus by the time, Burroughs was working with the cut-up, Abstract Expressionism was, in fact, Establishment and was actually considered reactionary within art circles. This could be another reason Burroughs sought to distance himself from it.

While Gregory Corso could argue that the cut-up was old hat and Kerouac could grouse that it was an old Dada trick, nothing could be further from the truth. The cut-up technique did not just look to the past for inspiration; it was of the Now in the art world. For example, Oliver ties *Nova Express* to Pop Art and surely some aspects of the cut-up technique, such as *Time* and *APO-33*, have ties to the work of Warhol and others, but another art movement tied to the cut-up was New Realism, a neo-Dadist group of artists, including Yves Klein, Asger Jorn, Arman, Daniel Spoerri, Francois Dufrene, and Jean Tinguely, centered in Paris in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Their first exhibition took place in Paris in November 1960, and they continued to exhibit throughout the early 1960s, when Burroughs lived at The Beat Hotel. These artists utilized collage and assemblage to manipulate mass media materials as a "poetic recycling of urban, industrial and advertising reality" (to quote Pierre Restany) in much the same manner as Burroughs did.

In the late 1950s/early 1960s, there was a vacuum between the decline of Abstract Expressionism and the rise of Pop. The New Realists, along with the unrelated art of Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, helped fill that gap and for a brief moment, until the death of Yves Klein in June 1962, the New Realists held a primary position in the avant garde and were, without a doubt, a media sensation. The cut-up can be viewed as related to New Realist art, such as Jacques de La Villegle, Raymond Hains, Mimmo Rotella and Jorn's interest in distressed and torn posters, as well as Tristan Tzara's Dada hat trick. As Burroughs' photographs and sound recordings of the period make clear, the cut-up operated at the street level. Not surprisingly, Burroughs' cut-up writing appears in Continental little magazines, like *Rhinozeros*, *Nul* and *Phantomas*, with ties to European art movements similar to New Realism.

The 1961 Art of Assemblage show at MOMA showcased in lavish fashion precisely the techniques of montage, collage, and assemblage that Burroughs was incorporating into his writing. More importantly for Burroughs and Gysin, the art of assemblage, which was practiced from Paris to LA, was selling in galleries and to institutions. In this light, it becomes understandable how Gysin and Burroughs could say with a straight face to Dave Haselwood of Auerhahn Press that *The Exterminator* would be a best seller or how the Dream Machine would hit the mass market. For a brief period, in the early 1960s, the climate of the art market made such pipe dreams possible.

Burroughs writes of an art exhibition in *The Ticket That Exploded*, which reads much like a New Realist show in Paris, but not so much as Dada or Surrealist and definitely not Ab Ex or Pop. The Exhibition includes "magnetic mobiles," "magnetic pencil," "Photomontage fragments

backed with iron stuck to patterns and fell in swirls mixing with color dust to form new patterns, skimming, falling, magnetized, demagnetized to the flicker of blue cylinders pulsing neon tubes and globes,” and “Vast mobile sculptures of music boxes and recorders wind chimes and movies of the exhibit.” Jean Tinguely is an interesting figure to consider here. Tinguely constructed just such self-destructing writing and art-making machines. On the fringes of New Realism, Mark Brusse and Takis, also created art machines. Burroughs was interested in and involved with these two artists and contributed blurbs for their exhibition catalogs in the early 1960s. In 1969, Takis famously protested the totalitarian nature of the museum and gallery system, by physically removing his art work from the MOMA. This protest led to the founding of the Art Workers’ Coalition, which sought to reform art institutions as well as take a stand on political issues such as the Vietnam War. Takis’ attitude to monopolistic art institutions is thus closely related to Burroughs’ cut-up war on the mass media empire of Luce.

Similar to Takis’ magnetic sculptures and Tinguely’s machines is the computer. Oliver’s introductions touch on the networked nature of the cut-up trilogy. Interestingly Oliver takes pains to dispel the myth of the Word Hoard in relation to the trilogy, arguing that Burroughs did not primarily cut-up the existing manuscripts of *Naked Lunch*, *The Yage Letters* and *Queer*. Yet the concept of a Word Hoard, even if not the one of Burroughs’ lore, is crucial to understanding *The Soft Machine*, *Ticket* and *Nova Express*. The Word Hoard is quite simply a database: a structured collection of data organized for search and retrieval. Word and image banks. In opposition to the banks of Luce, Beaverbrook and Hearst, Burroughs created his own alternative archive in the form of a multi-media project of manuscripts, little magazines, films, photographs, and sound recordings. Burroughs also archived the mainstream print media, like *Time* and *Newsweek*. Burroughs then ran the cut-up operation, which perhaps can be viewed as an algorithm or a program, through these Establishment and alternative word and image banks, creating narrative based outputs in the form of the novels Oliver now restores. Oliver’s project is itself a further operation conducted on Burroughs’ database. As such, Burroughs’ concept of the Soft Machine stands for not just the human body or a vast conspiracy; it is also an evolving database.

Why just restore the novels? Maybe it is time to construct a Burroughian database. It would be an interesting project to gather through digital reproduction of all the raw material that went into outputting the cut-up novels: text searchable versions of the various editions, the little magazine appearances and the manuscripts; searchable versions of the literature Burroughs cut-up such as the works of Shakespeare and Rimbaud; searchable versions of the mainstream magazines, such as the November 30 1959 issue of *Life* and the November 1962 issue of *Time*; digital reproductions of the various multi-media aspects of the cut-up project, such as tape recordings, readings, sound experiments, films and photographs; Mp3’s of the songs referenced by Burroughs; MPEG images of New Realist art of the period. In this essay, I have focused on Oliver’s model of the restored or revised edition, but it should be noted that his scholarly project is multi-media in scope and as such reflects Burroughs’ creative output. Oliver’s presentations,

such as "Confusion's Masterpiece" and his talk at CUNY, are not the standard, dry academic fare. Oliver incorporates an element of performance into his orchestrated presentations. So it is not surprising that Oliver can hold his own and hold a room as he serves as an ambassador from the academy at various Burroughs happenings involving noted performers, like Lydia Lunch or Genesis P-Orridge. Oliver at all times strives to make his research accessible to a larger audience. A Burroughsian database would be incomplete without pdfs, video, and audio of Oliver's presentations.

From *Nova Express*:

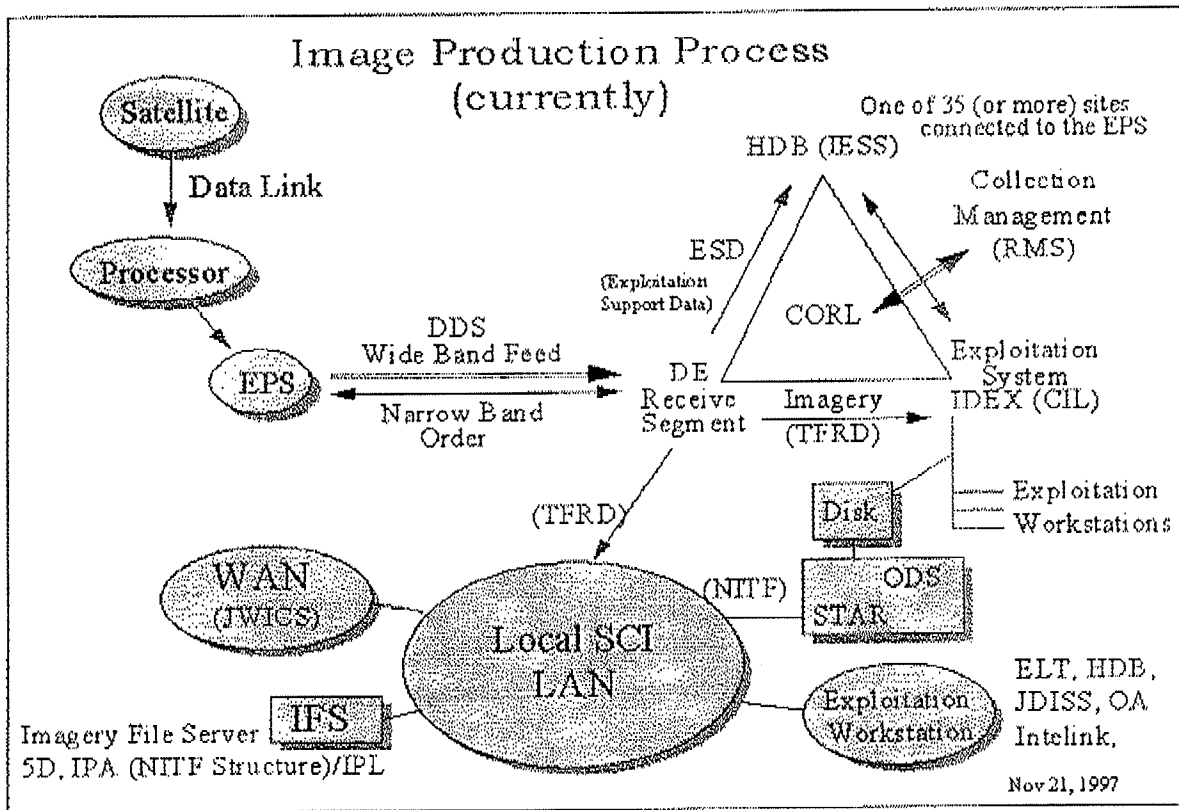
Now we feed X into the calculating machine and X scans out related colors, juxtapositions, affect-charged images and so forth we can attenuate or concentrate X by taking out of adding elements and feeding back into the machine factors we wish to concentrate—A Technician learns to think and write in associate blocks which can then be manipulated according to the laws of association and juxtaposition . . . But the technical details you understand and the machines—all of which contain basic flaws and must be continually overhauled, checked, altered whole blocks of computing machines purged and disconnected from one minute to the next.

Such a database, like a Borgesian library, could be infinite. The project would entail an ongoing process of research and accumulation that could then be manipulated for various creative and scholastic outputs. For example, color schemes and word association blocks could be searched and analyzed in order to reveal patterns and themes. Various editions and textual variations could be digitally compared and redlined to reveal Burroughs' editing process. The act of accumulation and the determination of what to accumulate would be a series of research projects in itself. A possible model on which to build on and consider would be Jerome McGann's Rossetti Archive constructed and maintained at the University of Virginia. The database aesthetic of the cut-up technique would seem ideal for such a project run and maintained at the university level as a means to study not only Burroughs but also more general issues relating to literary, archival and textual analysis as well as questions dealing with word processing, computing, digital archiving, and networked art.

Planned Obsolescence Press is not interested in such projects. POP will not be institutionalized. DIY forever. Yet POP is happy to enter the digital underground on its own terms. Keeping it decidedly old school. Save for yourself before the records go up. Please find enclosed a CD containing text searchable versions of Soft Machine 1.0, Soft Machine 2.0 and Soft Machine 3.0 as well as the major little magazine appearances that were instrumental in their creation.

If you can't say it, sing it:

Now as the record spins around you recognize this sound  
 Well it's the underground  
 You know that we're down with wutchyalike  
 Yeah with wutchyalike yeah  
 And though we're usually on the serious tip check it out:  
 Tonight we're gonna flip and trip and let it all hang out tonight  
 We're gonna say what we like.



Oliver Harris' Notes on Little Magazines and *The Soft Machine*

**Dead On Arrival**

"No Bueno, from *The Soft Machine*" *Metronome* 78, no. 5: 18-19. New York, May 1961.

"Dead On Arrival" makes a strong bridge back from *The Soft Machine* to *Naked Lunch* and to Burroughs' autobiographical experience, and this connection between the two books was also built into the start of *Dead Fingers Talk*, where the opening chapter of *The Soft Machine* appears under the title "no good, no Bueno" after a chapter that combines the opening and closing first-person narrative sections of *Naked Lunch*. However, in the first edition of *The Soft Machine* the material in "Dead On Arrival" (titled "white score") appeared near the end of the text, a structural position that gave it a very different impact. Rather than echoing *Naked Lunch*, it echoed *The Soft Machine* itself: having previously encountered numerous scattered phrase fragments, the reader is already primed to experience the sections formal and thematic focus on the recycling and return of memory. A five-page paste-up (OSU 1.1) confirms how Burroughs created this complex structure of repetition by literally cutting out and assembling a series of passages. Under the title "No Bueno," the section was first published in the May 1961 issue of the jazz magazine *Metronome* with very minor differences (e.g., the replacement of "Fucking" by "F.....g").

**Who Am I To Be Critical?**

"Fun and Games, What?" *East Side Review* 1:74-77. New York, January, 1966.

With numerous minor differences, almost half this chapter was also published in the New York magazine *East Side Review* in January 1966 under the title "Fun and Games, What?"

**Case Of The Celluloid Kali**

"The Danish Operation" *Arcade* 1: [3]. London 1964.

Hinting at why he refers above to the Danish rights of his fictitious novel, in 1964 Burroughs published a part of this material about the doctor as "The Danish Operation" (*Arcade* 1), taken from the short section in SM1 of that title.

p. 67: Hinting at why he refers above to the *Danish* rights of his fictitious novel, in 1964 Burroughs published a part of this material about the doctor in "The Danish Operation" (*Arcade* 1), taken from the short selection in SM1 of that title. In 1952 George Jorgensen had become the first famous case of sex reassignment surgery, becoming Christine after treatment in Denmark.

p. 72: "The doctor was sitting" to "green juice": these lines derive from "the danish operation" section of SM1 and were published, together with most of "the cut" and part of the "border city" sections, in the first issue of the British magazine *Arcade* in 1964.



### The Mayan Caper

"The Mayan Caper" *Gambit*, Spring 1963:26-31. Edinburgh.

The narrative, which appears almost identically accros the 1962 MS and both the second and third editions of the book, was originally entitled "Prison Without Bars," in keeping with its sensational newspaper genre. It was first published in the Edinburgh magazine *Gambit* in spring 1963. The text in *Gambit* has over 50 small differences, lacks about 90 words, and has some 200 extra words – almost half of which appear in a revealing final "Note."

p. 87: "We were walking along a jungle path": corrects SM2 89 ("jungle hut"); the draft has path (Berg 5.4), so this was almost certainly a transcription error in the 1962 MS (repeating "hut" from the previous line). The version in *Gambit* has: **"we were on a jungle trail the boy walking ahead."**

p. 92: "Mayan control calendar": an early draft describes the codices as **"these evil books"** (Berg 12.12). The version in *Gambit* adds a final paragraph: "Note: The Mayan control calendar is not dead—Using precisely the same techniques supplemented with IBM machine and electronic brains it is operating *now*, controlling thought, feeling and *apparent* sensory impressions, controlling and monopolizing your life your time your fortune—The technique for dismantling the machine I have described here are still valid—A machine is a machine and can be redirected—Whatever you feed into the machine on subliminal level the machine will process—Cut, shift, tangle word and image lines—Disconnect the control machine of the world press, of Madison avenue and Hollywood."

### Where The Awning Flaps

"I Am Dying, Meester?" *City Lights Journal* 1:46-48. Ed. Lawrence Ferlinghetti. San Francisco 1963.

The last two-thirds of the chapter overlap substantially with his 660 –word cut-up text, "I Am Dying, Meeester?" which in January 1963 he sent Lawrence Ferlinghetti to complete *The Yage Letters*.

### 1920 Movies

"Salt Chunk Mary" *Intrepid* 6:15-17. Buffalo, N.Y., 1966.

"Take That Business to Walgreens" *Nul* 5 [3]. Paradox Press, Jan. 2, 1962.

Not part of Burroughs' 1962 MS were the very opening and closing lines and the "Salt Chunk Mary" material in the middle of the chapter. Developing a character from Jack Black's "You Can't Win (1926), a book that profoundly influenced his view of criminal society when he read it as a teenager, the 1,000 word insert was probably written shortly before being scotch-taped into

the Grove Press galleys in October 1965. "Salt Chunk Mary" also appeared in a version one third longer in the magazine *Intrepid* in 1966, and some of its many variants are given here.

p. 130 "She named a price": the version published in *Intrepid 6* (1966) has an extra second line that clarifies the scene's autobiographical basis: "She ran a red brick rooming house East St. Louis Illinois." Reference is to Hattie Murphy's lodging house on the North Side of Chicago at 4144 North Kenmore Street, where Burroughs stayed in autumn 1942, during time he spent with Lucien Carr and David Kammerer.

p. 130 "a load of 00": SM3 86 adds "buckshot" clarifying that this is a reference to the standard size shell for game hunting. The *Intrepid* version is more expansive, and has "righteous buck shot in your kisser."

pp. 131-132: "had all my teeth" to "each other's lungs": the 300 words here do not appear in *Intrepid*, but that version continues: "and something else this male charge crackling out of me. And of course all those ring tail fruit bats were after me hot and heavy."

p. 133 "a Turner sunset": the *Intrepid* version has "a Cezanne river instead and, more intriguingly, a next sentence which works in a reference to Burroughs' editor at Grove Press, probably from using cut-ups made with their correspondence: "So I settled for a smoky sunset waiting there with the blue laundry for kinda special payment from Rosset."

p. 138 "Street boys of the green gathered": this and the following lines were part of the SM1 material published in the fall 1961 issue of *Nul* magazine as "Take That Business to Walgreen's."

### Uranian Willy

"One Chapter from the Novia Express" *Second Coming Magazine* 3:44-45. New York, March 1962.

A draft of the "Uranian Willy" chapter in *Novia Express*, and the version of it published in the magazine *Second Coming*, begin with a similar preceding first line: "His larval flesh shuddering from The Ovens Of Minraud, metal scars on his face cross the wounded galaxies he was wanted for Novia in three solar systems" (OSU 2.3).

### Gongs of Violence

"Have You Seen Slotless City?" *Sidewalk* 2:48-53. Edinburgh, 1960.

"Take It to Cut City-USA" *Outsider* 3:33-39. New Orleans, Spring 1963.

"This Is the Time of the Assassins" *Metronome* 78, no. 8 23-24. New York, August 1961.

“Introduction to *Naked Lunch*, *The Soft Machine*, *Novia Express*, Episodes from *Novia Express*” *Evergreen Review* 6, no. 22: 99-109. New York, January 1962.

“The Border City” *Arcade* 1[3]. London 1964.

“Transition Period” *Two Cities* 6:43-46. Paris, summer 1961.

Much of this material was published a year before *The Soft Machine* in the Scottish magazine *Sidewalk*, where it appeared, combined with material from other sections, under the title “Have You Seen Slotless City?” (and was reprinted two years later as “Take It to Cut City-USA” in the New Orleans magazine *The Outsider*).

On the galleys in October 1965 Burroughs cut a page of material from the end of this chapter, material that in the third edition he used at the start of its “Dead Fingers Talk” chapter. These passages came from *The Ugly Spirit*, and a longer version of them, entitled “This Is the Time of the Assassins,” was published in August 1961 in *Metronome*. In fact, “This Is the Time of the Assassins” – a title that pays homage to Rimbaud – was one of two small publications that derived from *The Ugly Spirit*. The other, published as “Pure Song of New Before The Traveller” – another title deriving from Rimbaud (cutting up a phrase from “Genie”: “the pure song of new evils!” – appeared in the January 1962 issue of *Evergreen Review* as an episode of *Nova Express* (which it was until being cut later that summer). The backstory clarifies how this one paragraph in the 1966 edition of *The Soft Machine* was connected to two magazines, the 1968 edition of the book, an abandoned cut-up novel, and *Nova Express* – signs of the larger, complex histories of publication involving Burroughs material.

p. 153 “A network of bridges” to “aroused sharks” (154): here the chapter uses most of the “border city” sections of SM1, the opening pages of which was published as “The Border City” in *Arcade* in 1964.

p. 155 “It was a transitional period”: the phrase, which gave the title to the opening Unit of SM1, was also the title of a text published in *Two Cities* 6 (summer 1961), which reproduced verbatim the book’s opening section, “the war.”

p. 155: “the It-Never-Happened-Department”: restores “the” missing from the 1962 MS, SM2 and SM3, but present in SM1 and used in the *Two Cities* version.

### Male Image Back In

“This Is the Time of the Assassins” *Metronome* 78, no. 8 23-24. New York, August 1961.

“Introduction to *Naked Lunch*, *The Soft Machine*, *Novia Express*, Episodes from *Novia Express*” *Evergreen Review* 6, no. 22: 99-109. New York, January 1962.

The overlapping text in *Metronome* combines at greater length Burroughs’ fictional projection of Alamout, the legendary base of Hassan i Sabbah, with the street-based experiments he referred to

as “color line walks” around Tangier (Burroughs to Gysin, April 18, 1961; Berg 85.4) The magazine text named the title of his planned sequel to *The Soft Machine*, and the term “Ugly Spirit” – which Burroughs defined as possession by psychic or political evil – recurs in *Nova Express* and *The Ticket That Exploded* but appeared only once in the 1961 *Soft Machine*, and not at all in the second and third editions.

p. 161-162 In “Pure Song of New Before the Traveller,” in *Evergreen Review* (January 1962), the boy from the North is named “Yeldarb” – a near-mirror of “Bradly.” “This Is the Time of the Assassins,” in *Metronome* (August 1961), has this paragraph up to “Bradly in the door,” and the passage from “Move The Boy From The North” to “Break Through in Grey Room,” as well as an additional 500-word central section describing the boy’s arrival in Alamout. The *Metronome* text also begins with a paragraph introducing Hassan i Sabbah (“He was strictly a counter puncher [ . . . ] Master Of The Jinn Assassin of Ugly Spirits”).

### Dead Fingers Talk

“But All Is Back Seat of Dreaming” *Big Table* 4:13-19. Chicago, Spring 1960.

“Mais est-ce tout arriere siege de reverie” *Tel Quel*. France, Autumn 1966.

For the last part of the chapter, Burroughs used a quarter of the 1961 section entitled “all back seat of dreaming.” As well as providing the earliest title for what became *The Soft Machine*, this section was the first to be published, in almost complete form, as “But All Is Back Seat of Dreaming” in *Big Table* 4 (Spring 1960). (In Autumn 1966, it was republished as “Mais est-ce tout arriere siege de reverie” in the seminal French avant-garde magazine, *Tel Quel*.) Added to passages from *Naked Lunch* and *The Ticket That Exploded*, Burroughs used this material to complete the “dead fingers talk” section of *Dead Fingers Talk*.

p. 174: “a town in Ecuador can’t remember the name”: .on a very early rough draft, Burroughs did seem to remember the name of the town, before cancelling the line: “**carried that wall with me to La Manta**” (OSU 87; 17.130A). . . . Although the lines appeared in both SM1 173 and the *Big Table* version of “Back Seat,” for SM2 Burroughs cut details that further identified this as a reference to Lewis Marker.

p. 175 “Footnote: Last words”: the “Footnote” started out as a “Note” in parentheses preceding the text published in *Big Table* “Back Seat of Dreaming is part of my current novel. It is based on recent newspaper account of? four young explorers.” The section in SM1 began similarly and also used a line from a letter to Ginsberg in December 1959, when Burroughs covered the original manuscript for *Big Table*: “So if my fictionalized??? Account is difficult to follow so was the action, pops (ROW, 10). Burroughs retained newspaper clipping of the incident (housed in the Burroughs-Hardiment collection, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence,; MS63 Cn: 6). The clippings confirm that he drew on events in October 1959 when four bodies were discovered in the Nubian desert, initially identified as an American, John

Armstrong; two Frenchmen, Yves Tommy Martin and Jean Pillu; and their guide, Ahmed Akid. The guide appeared to have been murdered and another American, Donald Shannon, was reported missing. Later evidence showed that the missing man was in fact the guide.

Appendix to Harris Edition:

“Operation Soft Machine/Cut” *Outsider* 1:74-77. New Orleans, Fall 1961.

This text was covered in the magazine as “from a work in progress,” although it was not intended to be part of the book published the following month as *The Soft Machine*. However, earlier versions of it were; or rather, very similar overlapping material appeared as a foreword to the “BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OCCUPATION” that Burroughs wrote in October 1960, and which in turn he described as “FROM WORK IN PROGRESS: ‘MR BRADLY MR MARTIN’” (Berg 10.47) – an early title for *The Soft Machine*. “Operation Soft Machine/Cut” is indeed something of a primer (ROW, 53), an introduction to a scenario also given in *The Exterminator* but never made clear in *The Soft Machine* itself. Although published in the Fall 1961 issue, the title page is dated “5/21/61,” just before the book was published.

From 1964 onwards, Burroughs composed many newspaper format texts in three columns, but this was the first by some margin. The hand printed issue of *The Outsider* prefaced the text with an image of Burroughs against a background of newspaper headlines, while the text itself featured hand-drawn lines around the columns and images of insects crawling on the page.

(attach CD)

The POP Soft Machine

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