

## How Burroughs Plays with the Brain, or Ritornellos as a Means to Produce Déjà-Vu

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**Antonio José Bonome,**  
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**Abstract:** In his article "How Burroughs Plays with the Brain, or Ritornellos as a Means to Produce Déjà-Vu" Antonio José Bonome discusses how the recurrence and significance of one of William S. Burroughs's most potent refrains, "dim jerky faraway," was inspired by its source text, Paul Bowles's second novel *Let It Come Down* (1952), where Tangiers-Interzone fuels the unwholesome descent of a US-American expatriate not unlike Bowles or Burroughs himself. "Dim jerky faraway" was used by Burroughs during more than two decades in different contexts, and its textual variations have sparked a mélange of colors, sounds, smells, and feelings oscillating in consonance with context. Bonome collates Burroughs's literary refrains with certain instances of the image-litany in a number of unpublished scrapbooks and the supplementary reverberation of ritornellos erupting from his tape-recorder experiments.

**Antonio José BONOME**

### **How Burroughs Plays with the Brain, or Ritornellos as a Means to Produce Déjà-Vu**

In this essay, the sense of smell has a prominent position since smell and taste are connected to the limbic system, the same area of the brain that processes emotions and memories, whereas the rest of senses are not, which probably explains why smell is more efficient than sight or touch in triggering memories and bringing back emotions. This phenomenon is still being examined by scientific articles such as "Proust nose best: Odors are better cues of autobiographical memory" (2002), which accounts for two experiments examining smells through verbal and visual cues in connection with memories, from qualitative and quantitative perspectives, concluding that "odors are especially effective as reminders of past experience" (Chu and Downes, "Proust" 2). Smell is very well represented in Burroughs's writing; he certainly was aware of its potency in firing images, feelings, and whole scenes in the subject, and as a writer preoccupied with memories he registered and studied smells in detail.

Examining Burroughs's ritornellos reveals a clear picture of his process-based writing through a number of semiotic artifacts, which have the effect of producing various forms of paramnesia. The word "paramnesia" typically defines a condition where the subject is not able to remember the proper meaning of words. Two other forms of paramnesia are worth mentioning; one occurs when someone thinks she has seen a scene before or lived a certain situation when in reality it is the first time such scene or situation is encountered, and is associated with "déjà-vu." The other type of paramnesia, where the familiar is thought to be experienced for the first time, is called "jamais vu." "ritornello" is a term describing a section of a musical composition, which is repeated at some point during its performance. "Process-based" is an unusual term to apply to writing; it draws heavily on the visual arts, and refers to artworks where different stages of production are registered, often in different media. "Artifact" is also a common word in art theory, which today applies very well to the difficulties resulting from using old categories and taxonomies to describe contemporary artworks. Burroughs produced a number of "semiotic artifacts" throughout his career, and employed many forms of semiosis—using different materials and media, other than writing—to convey private narratives. The reason for using such exotic words in an essay about Burroughs stems from the urgency for a comparative framework when looking at how this author worked around the concept of memory. No other Beat Generation writer was as innovative in the use of technologies such as scrapbooks, cameras, and tape recorders to contrast his own perceptions and recollections, or as systematic in his multi-sensory attack on the receiver's viscera. To support this argument, we can examine Burroughs's use of both "déjà-vu" and "jamais vu" as narrative devices throughout the creative process of a work known as *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz: A Fiction in the Form of a Film Script* (1975).

Burroughs's work with *Dutch Schultz* made progress through a number of stages where "déjà-vu" and "jamais vu" featured in an incremental way. For instance, in the filmic treatment of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz*, published by the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1969 under the same title, Burroughs indicated how hypothetical actors should play more than one character in the film in an inconspicuous way, to induce an ersatz "jamais vu" condition in the receiver: "These appearances are brief, mere glimpses. The audience is not quite sure they have seen the same character in a different role" (Burroughs, *Atlantic* 73). With regards to "déjà-vu," and how his cut-up works tended to repeat textual fragments—sometimes with slight variation—Burroughs wrote in *The Third Mind* (1978): "When the reader reads page ten he is flashing forward in time to page one hundred and back in time to page one—the déjà vu phenomenon can so be produced to order—This method is of course used in music, where we are continually moved backward and forward on the time track by repetition and rearrangements of musical themes" (Burroughs, *Third Mind* 96). Thus, after an extended period of experimentation and reflection, Burroughs informed his audience about how to convey a situation akin to "déjà-vu" through cut-ups and the use of ritornellos. Accordingly, a close examination of different versions of the ritornello "dim jerky faraway" in Burroughs's multimedia effusions may awake the reader from "jamais vu" into a "déjà-vu" fever.

"Dim jerky faraway" has been chosen over "dim jerky far away" as the generic form used in this paper for the ritornello. That is how "dim jerky far away" sounds when read by Burroughs, and the emotional imprint it shows is lacking in the other form. The fact that the ritornello "dim jerky faraway" was significant for Burroughs raises two issues that this paper will account for. Firstly, it contains an audio visual reference to film, recording, and noise, which works very well with Burroughs's idea of reality as a film, and it will be through describing the creative process behind *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz: A Fiction in the Form of a Film Script* (1975) that the ritornello will be examined. Secondly, there is the iteration issue: "dim jerky faraway" can be found in many works by Burroughs, which

might be the result of his peculiar writing processes as integrated in his own style, but with the sequence still working as a litany, a ritornello, something worth repeating at length. Still, the need to use one particular litany should be accounted for. The main drive for choosing "dim jerky faraway" as a point of departure in this essay lies in its status as one of Burroughs's most widespread refrains; it can be found in many of his works, and in this essay it will function as a thread to be pulled in an attempt to unravel a few sign-production strategies behind *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* (1969, 1970, 1975) "Dim jerky faraway" is an appropriation—albeit slightly modified—from Paul Bowles's novel *Let It Come Down* (1952). The sequence worked as a signpost in *Let It Come Down* for Nelson Dyar's coming to a point of no return after killing Thami, with the impression of reality as an old shaky film illustrating the trespassing of a threshold by Dyar. Burroughs took "dim, jerky," and substituted the rest of the paragraph by—initially—"far away" or—in later texts—the more poetic "faraway." The original paragraph containing Burroughs's borrowed exhortation is the following: "Today was like an old, worn-out film being run off—dim, jerky, flickering, full of cuts, and with a plot he could not seize. It was hard to pay attention to it" (*Let It* 39). While the sequence shows up in Bowles's novel as a one-time event, one strictly linked with a specific array of phenomenological qualities, and one marking a very critical moment in the plot, Burroughs used the sequence so extensively that interpretation turns out to be problematic. Is "dim jerky faraway" just plain noise or redundancy in Burroughs's works, or is it some kind of ominous rosary? Is it both, perhaps? Should the reader care about what it is, or rather about what it does?

"Dim jerky faraway" might be more than a catchphrase in Burroughs's works; something in the sequence must have caught his attention in a personal way, apart from its relevance as a critical moment very accurately described in *Let It Come Down*. According to Oliver Harris, Burroughs took the pains to acknowledge the appropriation in the text "Unfinished Cigarette," published in Fall 1963 in the little magazine *The Birmingham Bulletin* (Harris, *Ticket Restored* 264). Ten years later Burroughs referred to the origin of the sequence—again in a fairly detailed way—on page zero of *The White Subway* (1973). Such crediting of sources was not Burroughs's standard procedure: he had a clear interest in reminding the reader about the ritornello's origin. Litanies are used to invoke entities, remembering situations, or revisiting places, as in Sufi "dhikr"—whereby a Qur'anic phrase is repeated over and over in order to reach certain thresholds in meditation (Sells, *Mystical* 98)—or in the catholic rosary. Who is Burroughs trying to summon? What situation is he trying to remember? What kind of threshold is he revisiting through iteration? How is Burroughs operating on the reader's brain?

"Dim jerky far away" might be a good port of entry for an exploration of the genesis of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* having the year of 1964 as a time coordinate. The reason for drawing on that year is that—following Barry Miles's *El Hombre Invisible* (1992)—in 1964-65 Burroughs's tactics involved a wide array of artifacts, such as scrapbooks, three-column formats, and tape recordings (Miles, *Hombre* 245-47). Scrapbooks and tape recordings are still familiar to the 21st century reader, while three-column formats do require further explanation. A simple three-column format by Burroughs may consist of several pages where a three-column grid has been drawn; on the first page three different texts are transcribed—one per column—and a composite text, or cut-up, is obtained through reading the three columns horizontally. That cut-up may be transcribed in the first column of the next page, also divided in three columns, with two other different texts transcribed in the two remaining columns. Reading the second page horizontally also produces a cut-up, which may be transcribed into the first column of the next page. Burroughs used this creative device to get over writer's block, and anybody willing to put some work in it will soon find useful ideas, connections, and word arrangements. Burroughs studied the space generated by three-column formats and pondered what this type of layout could do for him as a writer. Three-column formats are grids; they produce a space that allows moving textual sections around. As used by Burroughs, three-column formats generate texts with a high rate of iteration and recursion. He knew about all these factors, took up the freedom that the three-column format and the grid had to offer in terms of multimodality, free play, recursion, and iteration, and merged them into his writing style.

Trying to scan the origins of "dim jerky faraway" in connection with Dutch Schultz's last words will bring to the scholar's attention one specific three-column format, which came out precisely in 1964. According to Brian Schottlander's Burroughs bibliography, "The Coldspring News" was first published as a broadside print by the Fenian Head Centre Press that year, and following the same source, the text was also included in the program of Burroughs's Valentine's Day Reading: "a reading presented by the American Theatre for Poets on February 14, 1965, at the East End Theatre in New York. Un-numbered page at end:—The Coldspring News ... Sunday, September, 1899 ... (William Burroughs, Editor) ... On the Back Porch of His Farm" (Schottlander, "Anything" 5-6). Taken as a standalone entity, "The Coldspring News" is fairly cryptic and raw. It does not contain an explanation self-referentially

embedded in it as do some other Burroughsian experimental texts from 1964; a good example for this phenomenon would be "The Moving Times," published in Jeff Nuttall's *My Own Mag #5* in May, 1964 (Schottlander, "Anything" 28), which contains the ritornello "dim jerky far away" on page one, third column, where Burroughs uses fragments from "The Coldspring News" (Burroughs, *My Own Mag #5*, 1). "Dim jerky far away" can be found in "The Coldspring News"; more specifically in the third column, where contents from the previous two columns are reframed. Some source text for the scrambling maneuver can be gleaned from the first column, which contains a very terse dialogue between two cowboys concerning the whereabouts of some stolen cattle. Looking at context, "dim jerky far away" in "The Coldspring News" will not be so much associated with the smell of kif and the caress of majoun and madness (as in *Let It Come Down*), but with a plethora of no-less potent impressions that will supplement the ritornello: In the first column, there is the smell of Bull Durham tobacco drifting in a still summer afternoon in a nineteenth-century Far-West scenario; the smell of leather and horses might be inferred there too. In the second column, cigarette smoke from the previous scenario floats now in the summer's dusty wind; it can be smelled at a "golf course," while the stench of "blood and excrement" is connected to "a boy's room."

Since smell often triggers memories of times lived and spaces experienced, time and space should be addressed in the examination of the ritornello in "The Coldspring News." Looking at time, a temporal dislocation is already in operation: The nineteenth century setting from the first column merges with a 1920s scenario, and different spaces and times keep adding up in the third column, since an elusive reference to Tangiers appears in the last paragraph: "Sad muttering street boy voices on white steps of the sea wall. 'You come with me, Meester?'" (Burroughs, "Coldspring" 1). Looking at space, the guide's broken English suggests a Moroccan contemporary setting added to the previous, and the third column brings about a merger between the preceding smells and impressions from previous locations with those produced by "the sea," "a ghost boy," "creek water," and "bare feet." More importantly, in the third column from "The Coldspring News" there is a cabin that "reeks of exploded star," which in the *Nova Trilogy* is by context associated with the composite aroma of sex plus those concomitant with opiates and opiate withdrawal. Indeed, the ritornello is also featured in *The Soft Machine* (1961), *The Ticket that Exploded* (1962) and *Nova Express* (1964): "With a telescope you can watch our worn out film dim jerky far away shut a bureau drawer faded sepia smile from an old calendar falling leaves sun cold on a thin boy with freckles folded away in an old file now standing last review" (Burroughs, *Soft Machine* 64-65); "Call through remote dawn of back yards and ash pits—plaintive ghosts in the turnstile—Shadow cars and wind faces came to World's End—street light on soiled clothes dim jerky far away dawn in his eyes. Do you Begin to see there is no boy there in the dark room?" (66); "This mutilated phantom ... last intersection dim jerky faraway voice" (Burroughs, *Ticket* 123); "Will you let me tell you lost sight a long time ago...Smell taste dust on the window ... touch ... touch?? How should I from remote landing dim jerky far away" (Burroughs, *Nova* 122). The quotations above indicate Burroughs's interest in anchoring a number of sites with sensual impressions where the senses of sight, sound, and touch are conveying the idea of remoteness, while the familiar taste and smell of certain items enunciated should spark in the reader's mind a number of phantom smells, and maybe trigger memories. The sequence "dim jerky faraway," by association, will receive layer upon layer of ominous and nostalgic sensory data until the sole presence of the litany triggers a vaguely eerie and melancholy set of impressions in the receiver's mind.

Burroughs's readers have often reported a déjà-vu feeling, a phenomenon sometimes explained as a brain malfunction. It is surprising how Burroughs achieved this disturbance in the reader's mind on purpose through language fragmentation, iteration, and reframing in works drawing heavily on the cut-up technique. Reading Burroughs's works, listening to his records, and looking at his scrapbooks do open an inner topology, a net of connections wherein the reader participates until she comes up with the realization that a sequence such as "dim jerky faraway" has been used for over two decades across multiple texts. No less surprising is how this phenomenon escapes the probing eye of some other readers, another form of paramnesia. "Dim jerky faraway" was attached to a specific setting in Paul Bowles's novel, and associated with a number of impressions, which helped describing the main character's homicidal fall from grace. However, in "The Coldspring News" there are no less than three space/time scenarios involved, which multiply all possible associations between the sequence and the phenomenological aspects concomitant with the settings involved. Layer upon layer of contextual association is built up through iteration—and not only across different textual sections, but also across different media—as will be discussed further on—affecting the reader with a very peculiar condition, that is, one of "déjà-vu." Here, "language is a virus" is experienced and understood as more than a slogan for chic radicals. The incipient sensory overload left by "dim jerky faraway" on this new context brings the need to talk about how Burroughs transposed contents from "The Coldspring News" to dif-

ferent media and juxtaposed them with new materials. "The Coldspring News"—or fragments of it—were recorded by Burroughs for the *Valentine's Day Reading* performance in New York, and possibly remixed ex post with other texts. Since *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz: A Fiction in the Form of a Film Script* (1975) is designed as a two-column grid, with one column devoted to "action" and the other devoted to "sound," and there are many recordings involved in the creation of that particular book, which also contains an unusual number of photographs, recordings and scrapbooks from that period need to be studied if Burroughs's working process is to be described.

Concerning recordings, two vinyl singles issued by Henri Chopin's audio magazine *OU* in 1972 (from now on, "Track 1"), and 1973 (from now on, "Track 2") are directly connected with Dutch Schultz's last words; they can be downloaded from Jed Birmingham's article "Valentine's Day Reading," published by the website Reality Studio (<[realitystudio.org](http://realitystudio.org)>). Birmingham is cautious about the genesis of Chopin's *Valentine's Day Reading* vinyl records: "At the reading, a tape was recorded of Burroughs. It is unclear to me if this refers to the Dutch Schultz tape itself, a recording of that tape, or a selected recording of Burroughs' other readings on that day. It is merely a selection and not the whole reading" (Birmingham, "Valentines" 1). Birmingham's discretion is well-grounded: in fact, Chopin's 1972 record ("Track 1") mentions the La Salle Heights Disaster, a gas explosion which occurred in Montreal on March 1, 1965: two weeks later than Burroughs's performance at the East End Theater in New York.

Not only a new smell; namely, that of natural gas, but also new scenarios will be added to those featured by "The Coldspring News," and this will be achieved through remediation and juxtaposition: on Chopin's 1973 recording ("Track 2"), the beginning of "The Coldspring News" is clearly mentioned on minute 6, where Burroughs recites: "Mr Bradley Mr Martin sat down on the back porch of his farm," while the sequence "dim jerky faraway" comes up on the first minute in that same record: "dimmer far away jerky moves" (Chopin, "Track 2" (01:56)), and also on minute 8: "dim jerky faraway in Iowa" (Chopin, "Track 2" (08:22)). This new aural environment for "dim jerky faraway" brings forth the sequence chronologically and topologically reframed: on "Track 1," there is a 1930s gangster scenario with the last words of Dutch Schultz as a strong presence, coupled with fragmentary radio broadcasts from 1964 and 1965 in line with the persistent natural disasters, suicides, and homicides Burroughs cut in his pre-recordings during his time in New York, using number 23 and the name of Santiago as intersection points. On "Track 2" Burroughs explains in a self-referential manner what he is trying to achieve with his performance (00:23), and deploys an instructional blueprint for intertextual writing through intertextual explanation.

One particular smell that links both audio tracks and their 1930s, 50s, and 60s scenarios—precisely in connection to the La Salle Heights Disaster—is the stench of gas, which is verbalized on "Track 1" in the following manner: "Residents in the area said they noticed the heavy sweet taste and smell of natural gas before the blast" (05:48). A little further in the recording, a well-known fragment of Dutch's last words is featured: "But I am dying" (06:06), and the reek of gas fumes creeps in again on "Track 2": "the rotten metal smell of coal gas" (02:17). The sense of smell is particularly relevant here, since it not only connects different internal scenarios in the recordings, but it also engages those recordings with the final stage of Burroughs's work with Dutch Schultz; the smell of natural gas from those recordings will be transformed, remediated, and reframed in the last known version of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* (Burroughs, *Arcade* 1975), ten years later. In the last scene from the *Arcade* script (scene 236), the column describing the action says: "Bare room of Albert Stern. He is lying on bed by the open gas oven," while the column describing sound indicates: "HISS OF SCAPING GAS," and after that sound, Arthur Flegenheimer will speak: "Dutch: I want to pay" (Burroughs, *Arcade* 110).

How Burroughs assigned fragments from recordings made a decade earlier to the sound column of his *Dutch Schultz* script proves the relevance of his sound experiments in his working process at the time, and demonstrates how he kept looking for a specific site where to reframe those recordings. There is also an intratextuality in operation that points to how the author looked at his production, during that time, as a work in progress. For instance, "The Coldspring News" and "dim jerky faraway" are connected on "Track 2" (01:47) with the opening passages of *Naked Lunch* (1959): "The Vigilante" episode from that novel also features on "Track 2" (02:55). "The Vigilante" merged a typical Western scene with an underworld hustler feud settled in New York during the 1950s. It would be during the sixties and through an intermedial approach in the use of cut-ups, scrapbooks, and assorted recording instruments that Burroughs systematized and evolved his use of intertextuality, drawing a trajectory that ranged from intergenericity to hypertext. Both tracks composing the *Valentine's Day Reading* show Burroughs operating his tape recorder, and working in the intertext, in a quest for coincidences and coordinate points. A triadic diagram results from his work as registered by "Track 2":

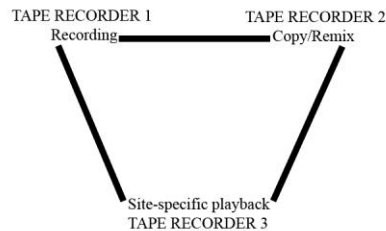


Figure 1. Burroughs's theory of recording

As developed in later publications, Burroughs's theory of recording proposed that "tape recorder one" made a basic recording, "tape recorder two" was a means to add inserts, and "tape recorder three" was devoted to site-specific playback (Burroughs, *Electronic* 7-12). The author was familiar with results obtained through three-column formats and triadic recordings, which in some respects echo how different times, spaces, and genres amalgamate in texts preceding the cut-up discovery. There is also a triadic logic behind Burroughs's three-column formats—some of them specifically created to be modified and displayed by the receiver—that is, for instance, the case of a rare broadside print in silver ink (Schottlander, "Anything" 6) whereby the author explains his theory of recording: "The Invisible Generation" (London, 1965) also contained in the 1967 edition of *The Ticket that Exploded* (1962), which proposes ideas further developed in works like *The Job* (1969), *The Electronic Revolution* (1970), or *The Revised Boy Scout Manual* (1982). As published by *The International Times*, No.5.5 (24 December 1966), the continued version of "The Invisible Generation" was created for the reader's intervention, being a "Poster on stiff card, designed so that part of card could be cut out and assembled to make a word-machine" (Schottlander, "Anything" 34). The site-specific quality of Burroughs's recordings could be deemed quantitatively circumstantial were it not for the precise attention he devoted to context and site in different media during those years, and the fact that *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* involved a process that included performance art, so he had to consider space seriously for the operation to succeed. There is a very intuitive sculptural way of thinking in the relevance location had in Burroughs and Brion Gysin's theory of sound recording and playback, which also permeated Burroughs's three-column formats.

In due course, an explanation for the "The Coldspring News" will also appear in a work by Burroughs and Gysin already mentioned here, *The Third Mind*, in a chapter very aptly called "First Recordings." Both the book and the article in question show the endless combinatory and recycling processes displayed by Burroughs's writing system. They also point at different devices and strategies deployed in pursuit of a hidden third. In "First Recordings," Paul Bowles is again given credit for Burroughs's "dim jerky faraway" while simultaneously paid what seems like a tongue-in-cheek homage by the transformation of the terse dialogue between the two cowboys from "The Coldspring News" into a curt exchange of ideas between Mr Martin and a Patrick Bowles: "Something on your mind, P.B.?"/"Well, yes, you might say so ... thought some of my words might have strayed up here ..."/"Free range country, feller say."/"Maybe a little too free, Martin" (Burroughs, *Third Mind* 91).

A few other examples of "dim jerky faraway" across media also partaking in the creation of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* are worth mentioning. The first one appears in "The Moving Times," published in 1964 in Jeff Nuttall's *My Own Mag* #5. "Dim jerky far away" can be found in the third column of "The Moving Times," which consists of a cut-up to be read after the previous columns. "The Moving Times" is a programmatic text in Burroughs's explanation of a three-column format, and one where his clarification of the process is subjected to the very process he is trying to clarify. Context in the third column of "The Moving Times" varies lexicographically from "toy soldier" to "Stein's army;" while spatially, South Africa, London, and Brighton are the physical settings mentioned; it smells of "exploded star" while "you can watch our worn out film dim jerky far away" "on the top floor" (Burroughs, "Moving" 1). Chronologically, "The Moving Times" contains in addition the date "Sept 17, 1899," which opens "The Coldspring News" and is also registered by *The Red Scrapbook* (c. 1966-1973), an artifact which bears certain fragments from Burroughs's 1964-65 recordings as made available by the three CD set *Real English Tea Made Here* (2007). For instance, Dutch's "I want to pay" (Burroughs and Gysin, *Red Scrapbook* day 136-228), is a phrase that Burroughs set side-by-side with the date "Sept 17,

1899" on that scrapbook page. Essays showing this type of connection have been restricted to this day by material constraints: recordings and films by Burroughs are still coming to the surface, while many scrapbooks remain in private hands, with limited access to researchers. It was thanks to Professor Oliver Harris that I could analyze some of his scrapbook images in contrast with "The Coldspring News" and "The Moving Times," coming to the conclusion that fragments from both can also be found in what could only be, after detailed examination, *The Black Scrapbook*. *The Black Scrapbook* contains cut and pasted original newspaper fragments from 1965, dealing with news items Burroughs read aloud for the *Real English Tea Made Here* track "Cut-ins with Dutch Schultz," such as: "Plane hits volcano in Andes 87 killed Santiago Chile February 6 A Chilean DC-6-B airliner ..." (Burroughs, *Real English* "Cut-ins" (09:56)). Newspaper clippings can be found on day 20-346 from *The Black Scrapbook* that read: "87 Die San Jose Volcano Santiago, Chile, Feb. 6 (UPI)-A Chilean DC-6-B airliner with 87 aboard crashed" (Burroughs, *Black Scrapbook* day 20-346). It must be noted that the tragedy occurred on February 6, 1965, while the scrapbook is dated circa 1963-1964 by the catalogue *Ports of Entry: William S. Burroughs and the Arts* (Sobieszek, *Ports* 48). Given that an agenda from a leap year was used for *The Black Scrapbook* (1960, 1964, and 1968 were the leap years in that decade), and considering the newspaper clippings Burroughs pasted on it, the date of composition is inaccurate, even if approximate. The important thing is that the previous information ties in Burroughs's use of three-column formats, scrapbooks, and tape recordings during a long time span. The organic quality of Burroughs's working process, one wherein writing was—at least for a period—"a by-product" as Alan Ansen stated as early as in 1959, also shows in Burroughs's filmic treatment of the *Last Words of Dutch Schultz*, published by *The Atlantic Monthly* under the title "The Last Words of Dutch Schultz" (1969). Burroughs's work for *The Atlantic* also contains a variation of the sequence "dim jerky faraway"; the text consists of a two-column grid, includes graphic material, and shows Burroughs's quest for an appropriate format to reflect the extensive work he has been carrying out.

Burroughs's piece for *The Atlantic* explores the cinematic quality of the Dutchman's delirium. Context connects the sequence "dim jerky faraway" with opiates: "Morphine administered to someone who is not an addict produces a rush of pictures in the brain as if seen from a speeding train. The pictures are dim, jerky, grainy, like an old film" (Burroughs, *Atlantic* 83). The ritornello links two locations (and two sets of smells) with two different characters and two different drugs; on the one hand, there is Albert "the Teacher" Stern's daily heroin intake at his pension's room, and on the other there's the hospital where morphine is administered to Dutch. This is a good example of how Burroughs found materials—that in his words were "good enough to steal" (Stevens, *Road* 120)—and transformed them into his own through reframing and repetition: this "dim, jerky, grainy, like an old film" in particular, addresses with increasing complexity a very specific incident that also resonates in the stage directions on the last scene from Cape Goliard's edition of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* (69), where Dutch is given morphine at the hospital. The closing scene of the Cape Goliard edition ends as follows: "all actors drain into the face of Albert Stern" (73); it is an important stage in Burroughs's work around Dutch's last words, since it deploys an approximation to how he will integrate his prior multimedia experimentation in the final *Arcade* edition of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* through reframing, mise en abyme, and metalepsis. These three narrative resources are present in the last version of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz*, and no doubt their presence owes a lot to the author's intricate working process; recent catalogues such as *Taking Shots: The Photography of William S. Burroughs* (2014) show several pictures where the three narrative devices are present, and no doubt Burroughs applied what he learnt from photography and other media to his writing.

To sum up, not only did Burroughs transpose contents from one medium to the next: he did the same with narrative devices. Since narrative metalepsis will reappear in this final section, it must be noted that Burroughs often crossed the threshold separating the narrator's diegetic level and the world described by that same narrator. For instance, in the final version of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz*, Albert Stern is the name by which four different characters are known (a teacher, a doctor, a stenographer, and an addict). One of them, the stenographer at Dutch's deathbed, is portrayed in the book as Burroughs himself, as some pictures included in the script demonstrate, which are metaleptically included in the final version of a text where Burroughs's personas are a part of Dutch's deathbed hallucinations. Burroughs's use of metalepsis in the final version certainly derives from all his previous experimentation with three-column formats, recordings, photography, performance, and scrapbooks in coordination. Other forms of metonymy close to metalepsis can be found in the last version of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz*; for instance, Albert Stern in Mrs Murphy's rooming house in the filmic treatment for *The Atlantic*. *The Black Scrapbook* contains a picture of a house: "WALTON AVE. ST LOUIS" is scrawled above it with a black felt-tip pen, "MRS MURPHYS' ROOMING HOUSE" is written below the picture in the same manner; it is on the page devoted to day 366 (Sobieszek, *Ports* 49).



How important graphic visualization was for Burroughs is attested by the transcript of a *Scrapbook 2* (now *Scrapbook A*, if we attend to the recent catalogue *Paperwork: A Brief History of Artists' Scrapbooks* (2013)), which describes how the artifact contains an image modeling for Mrs. Murphy's rooming house: "Page 7 .. Picture of my brother Mort taken 1965 on Walton avenue at the time of St Louis Return. The house behind him belonged to the Rily's and later became the model for Mrs Murphy's Rooming House" [sic] (Burroughs, "Scrapbook 2 ts." 4).

So far there is the fictionalization of a real house Burroughs took a picture of, but there is a cut on the CD set *Real English Tea Made Here* describing an erotic scene between two young men (a red-haired boy and an Asian) in Mrs Murphy's rooming house: top floor, room 18, rose wallpaper. The second part of the track, called "We are the Night Family," is used almost verbatim in the story "Seeing Red", contained in *Exterminator!* (1973), however now the scene has been frozen into a photograph seized by an American customs officer, to the owner's embarrassment (Burroughs, *Exterminator!* 141). Looking at both texts, it seems that "We are the Night Family" has been used to transgress narrative levels in "Seeing Red" by literally condensing the former in a snapshot contained by the latter in a way that certainly reminds us of his abyssal photographic compositions. Far from freezing as a photograph, and using the same room with rose wallpaper, the erotic scene will be transformed into one of heterosexual intercourse, and transposed into a cinematic loop to be projected at certain times, as indicated in the final screenplay version of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* (Burroughs, *Arcade 8*). Furthermore, in *The Black Scrapbook* it can be seen how the author connects the story "We are the Night Family" with the death of Kiki on the page devoted to day 24, while other ritornellos from that same page—such as, "flickering silver smile"—resurface in *The Wild Boys* (1971); a chapter in *The Wild Boys* is called "A Silver Smile" (82). Kiki is a relevant character in *The Wild Boys*, a novel where a number of film loops are also described, and where the sequence "dim jerky faraway" appears eight times in its complete form (pages 18, 80, 85, 101, 119, 126, 175), twice on page 74 in a fragmentary way ("dim jerky bedroom" and "jerky silent film"), once on page 77 as just "dim jerky" ("dim jerky bed"), and on page 89 readers can find "dim sky the lonely 1920 afternoon jerky bed twisted."

In the final version of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz*, Kiki (Roberts) is Legs Diamond's girlfriend: is that the presence that Burroughs invoked throughout his career? It might be risky to state so, since clearly "dim jerky faraway" and nostalgia go together in Burroughs, and layers of meaning kept adding up as years passed; surely each "dim jerky faraway" should to be considered in the specific context where it was originally inserted. Once again, the reader familiar with all these texts will have to concede that Burroughs used bigger fragments of text echoing as ritornellos through complex narrative devices as is clearly featured in the final version of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz*. The final script devotes one column to action and the other to sound, and displays copious graphic material. Format shows how Burroughs interiorized all his previous efforts to find appropriate media, layouts, and contexts for his work with Dutch Schultz. His delirium is again interpreted as cinematic, but now it is formalized as a film script or storyboard: Dutch's last words are a backdrop for Burroughs to imagine whatever the gangster might be viewing in his mind's eye as he pronounced his last words, and to insert whatever images, sounds, smells Dutch's last words sparked in Burroughs's mind. There is something missing in the *Arcade* final version of *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz*, and that is "dim jerky faraway." Even so, one final "dim jerky faraway"—which occurs in his final novel—needs to be mentioned for three reasons. The first is that it marks a moment when the author tries to figure out when he started using the ritornello: "'Held a little boy photo in his withered hand ... dim jerky far away someone has shut a bureau drawer.'"—(cut up, circa 1962-63)" (Burroughs, *Western Lands* 256). The second reason is that the refrain is now between quotation marks, and the author is not quoting Bowles anymore, but himself: the appropriation process has finally succeeded. The third reason is that it appears in the last chapter of *The Western Lands* (1987), around a quarter of a century after being first used by the author. It smells of a distant drawer where feelings wither dim jerky faraway.

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