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Technologies, Texts and Subjects: William S.
Burroughs and Post-Humanism

by

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Declaration

This thesis is entirely the author's own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This thesis addresses the twin questions of technology and the human, ultimately questioning the validity of either category and pointing toward their dissolution in transhumanism. Starting with a discussion of the question of technology in organization studies, the thesis takes issue with the way in which discussion has focused on the technology-object pole of a dualism at the neglect of the human-subject that occupies the opposing pole. Following a methodological call for symmetry the thesis reconsiders the question of technology in light of its human other and visa versa. Working with the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and Deleuze and Guattari, the thesis suggests that there is a problem with maintaining a distinct conception of the human, separated *a priori* from questions of technology and language. In seeking to avoid an essentialism either of the (technological) object, or the (human) subject, the thesis reconsiders the question of the human, language and technics through an examination of the work of William S. Burroughs. Combining Burroughs' ideas with those of Deleuze and Guattari, a conception of the 'transhuman' is developed which, in opposition to a transcendental humanism, articulates the immanent implication of technology and language in the production of subjectivity, and points to the more radical potentials of new technology in figuring alternative modes of subjectivization and social organization.

Introduction

...after Napoleon the machine-technics of Western Europe grew gigantic and, with its manufacturing towns, its railways, its steamships, it has forced us in the end to face the problem squarely and seriously. What is the significance of technics? What meaning within history, what value within life, does it possess, where – socially and metaphysically – does it stand?

(Spengler, 1932: 4)

Within organization studies, the question of technology has been an issue from the outset. Whether the origins of the discipline are traced through the management theory of Frederick Taylor (1967), the political economy of Karl Marx (1976) or the sociology of Max Weber (1978), the question of technology, or more broadly, the question of technics, has been at the heart of both industrial organization, and of the theories put forward to explain and understand it. Nevertheless, it is the argument of this thesis that this question of technology has yet to be effectively addressed; in particular the question of ‘what value within life’ (Spengler, 1932: 4) it possesses has been all but ignored by theorists of organization, a somewhat surprising neglect given the often taken for granted assumption, in more managerial texts, that technology can indeed produce value and enhance life, or in more critical texts, that technology is a dehumanising force that works against life. In either case, the relationship between human and technology is normally conceived dualistically, reflecting a more widespread splitting of human and technology in philosophy, at least since Descartes,

and more recently perpetuated in the philosophy of mind as it attempts to grapple with issues like Artificial Intelligence and cybernetics (Searle, 1984; Weizenbaum, 1984).

The main question that this thesis considers is the relationship between the human and technics as it has been conceived in organization studies, in philosophy and in literature. In this it pays particular attention to the promise held out by information and communication technologies to transcend the human condition and usher in the era of posthumanism. Whilst this has implications for political economy (Hardt and Negri, 1994; 2000; Gorz, 1999) the main focus of the thesis is on the ways in which technology and language interact in the production of subjectivity and how that may be changing in the contemporary era of information and communication technologies (ICT). Through the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and William Burroughs the politics of the human and its post-human alternatives are considered with particular attention to the potential they hold for radically different forms of social organization. In this sense the thesis might be said to partake in the neo-discipline of management-science-fiction. Such a light hearted tag is perhaps necessary when dealing with the apocalyptic vision of the death of the human race in the face of encroaching technology.

Taking Technology in Two Hands

Writing in the early part of the last century, Spengler's (1932) vision of technics was simultaneously celebratory and apocalyptic. On the one hand he recognised the

centrality of technics, in particular the weapon, to the constitution of what we today call the human. On the other hand, his morphological view of culture saw the inevitability of the decline of Western civilisation as it slipped into its old age. Although his politics and conclusions are a long way from those of Marcuse, in some respects he shares a similar analysis of technology as *One Dimensional Man* as he saw the West becoming prey to the very technical rationality that had previously made it so powerful (Marcuse, 1991). At the heart of this technical rationality is organization:

All things organic are dying in the grip of organization. An artificial world is permeating and poisoning the natural. The Civilization itself has become a machine that does, or tries to do, everything in a mechanical fashion. We think only in horse-power now; we cannot look at a waterfall without mentally turning it into electric power; we cannot survey a countryside of pasturing cattle without thinking of its exploitation as a source of meat-supply; we cannot look at the beautiful old handwork of an unspoilt primitive people without wishing to replace it by a modern technical process.

(Spengler, 1932: 94)

For Spengler, the very idea of technics is a development of the organic will to power, which, with a token nod to Nietzsche (e.g. 1968), he conceives in the rather simple manner of a drive to domination and possession in the mode of capitalist ownership. In this light, Western civilisation, conceived as an organism in its own right, has struck a Faustian bargain whereby it has developed technics to such a high power that

it is able to dominate the whole of nature and become almost god-like in its powers. The counterpoint of this bargain however, is that 'Man' is no longer free to grow organically. The technical-rational form of organization is rigid and constraining to the degree that the organic will to power is stifled and dies. Human artifice, once an extension of natural power, has now come to dominate the artificer. Locked into this mechanistic world view, seeing only horse-power and degrees of efficiency, technics has come to enframe human perception of nature so that it is only perceptible in such terms – a similar point to that made by Heidegger when comparing the technical enframing of the Rhine by a hydro-electric dam with Holderin's lyrical celebrations of the same (Heidegger, 1993; Spicer, 2002). Spengler sees no way out of this bind. The best we can hope for is, like Achilles, to live "a short life, full of deeds and glory" (Spengler, 1932: 103). Regardless of our individual heroics, society is doomed to an increasingly self-destructive, technical rationality in which life itself is annihilated in a paradoxical race toward control that destroys controlled and controller alike (Spengler, 1932: 66).

In reviewing previous attempts to address the question of technics, Spengler recognises two main traditions: idealism and materialism. The idealists, exemplified by Goethe and Humboldt, denigrate the technical, economics and merely material as being beneath real 'culture' and therefore less than worthy of serious study. Such mundane, temporal concerns detract from the real value of human cultural and artistic endeavours, thereby continuing a tradition that can be traced back to the ancient Greeks who left the world of economics (derived from household management) and

commerce to the lower social orders so that the citizens could get on with the important business of philosophy, politics and culture (Anthony, 1976). In contrast, materialism, encompassing Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx, valorises the world of the technical, rational, economic – in a word, the world of work – above culture. Given Marx's often vitriolic attacks upon the likes of Mill and Bentham, their conjunction here might seem rather surprising at first but, like Anthony after him, Spengler points to the ways in which both parties, regardless of their apparent politics, see the world of economics and work as the basis of society and life. Indeed, Marx's labour theory of value suggests an entire system of valuation based upon the foundation of the labouring human body. Against the material world of labour, bodies and machinery, the sphere of culture is little more than superstructure or ideology. For Marx, as usually read, both society and life are driven by the material elements of production and the same can be said of the utilitarians with their entirely economic calculus and focus on work (Anthony, 1976).

For Spengler, both of these traditions were flawed, their essential error being to mistake the broader question of technics for the narrow question of the machine. For this reason he traces the origins of the human in the pursuit of technics, from its first mutation of hand and weapon, to the development of language and complex social organization. In so doing, he opens up the tripartite problem of technics, language and the human that are at the heart of this thesis, and underpinning them all the question of value and valuation of life itself. Perhaps Spengler was a little too hasty to dismiss materialism however. As Mark Fisher has recently put it, the philosophical

canon has been entirely dominated by idealism – Plato, Kant, Hegel – whilst philosophers of a more materialist bent have been marginalized by the ‘bureaucrats of academia’ (Fisher, 2001). For example, Marx is usually relegated to the less rarefied intellectual heights of economics and the social sciences, whilst other thinkers are simply ignored. For Fisher this neglected materialism has been revived in recent years by an increasing interest in this philosophical tradition, most notably by Gilles Deleuze, a tradition which, after Nietzsche (1994; 1997), places the twin questions of valuation and life at the heart of all intellectual endeavour.

A second development of materialism that Spengler was unable to foresee was cybernetics. In what can be seen as a radical extension of the utilitarian project, cybernetics has simultaneously been an invaluable ideological and technical support for the state and its military industrial complex, and one of the most potentially subversive forces to come out of these structures. Whilst extending the technical control of machines and organisms, increasing industrial efficiency through increasing automation, and reducing thought to a simple matter of calculation and cognition, cybernetics has also threatened many of the foundations upon which both idealism and materialism, as Spengler conceived them, are based. Both have been centrally concerned with the question of the human, to the extent that ‘humanism’ is a foundation for both traditions. Whether in the form of ‘the humanities’ and human culture as elevated above the material world, or whether in the guise of a labour theory of value where human labour is the ontological source of *all* value, in both cases the human is at the heart of social theory and ontology. By insisting upon a

direct equivalence between the machine and the organism, including the human organism, and between thought and cognition, cybernetics problematises any a priori privileging of the human subject. Indeed, if sufficiently radicalised, cybernetics has the potential to scupper the very idea of the human subject. In doing so, the ground of what we call organization studies is shifted.

Of course, the gurus of cybernetics, most famously Norbert Wiener, could be quite conservative in their ideas and may not have followed through on some of these implications (Hayles, 1999). Indeed, one of the most powerful ideas to develop out of cybernetics - the cyborg - originates in the depths of the military-industrial complex with a NASA funded project aiming to make the human domination of alien and hostile environments viable without changing the essence of the liberal-human subject of north-western democratic capitalism (Gray, 1995; 2002). Nevertheless, as these ideas have traversed the disciplines of philosophy and the social sciences, they have been translated into a potentially revolutionary force that threatens to destroy the humanist foundation of both the humanities and the social sciences. This threat, however apocalyptic, creates the potential for an ontological revaluation of the question of technics, language and the human. The question addressed by this thesis is the importance of this revaluation for the study of organization and technology. Against Spengler, the thesis will argue that whilst cybernetic-capitalist forms of organization are almost certainly throttling life in their death-grip, the dissolution and heterogenisation of 'the human' in its becomings-cyborg opens up new spaces in which new forms of life and social organization can flourish. Ultimately this raises

once again the utopian prospect of living otherwise and overthrowing the hylopomorphic restrictions placed on desire and life as they are caught in the axiomatics of cybernetic-capitalism to produce a new form of society and organization.

Outline of the Thesis

The first chapter of the thesis is a review of the ways in which technology has been theorised in relation to organization. From a supposed starting point of technological determinism, a theory that is paradoxically quite difficult to find outside the realm of culture, several approaches to technology are traced, including John Child's (1972; 1997) strategic choice; the labour process perspective inspired by Harry Braverman (1974) and continued through the work of David Noble (1999); more general approaches to the social construction, social shaping, or social and economic shaping of technology (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999; Bijker et al, 1989; McLoughlin, 1999); actor-network theory, as developed by Bruno Latour (1987) and Michel Callon (1986a and b), but largely brought to the attention of organization studies by the likes of John Law (1987; 1992); and finally the idea of technology as text as exemplified in the work of Keith Grint and Steve Woolgar (1997).

The argument of this thesis is that, like the two responses to the challenge to thought presented by technics that Spengler identified, each of these approaches, with the possible exception of certain versions of actor-network theory, end up repeating a theoretical dichotomy between the human and technics, thereby simultaneously

ignoring the originary technics implied by definitions of the human and reinscribing that dependency by insisting upon a dialectical exclusion of self (human) and other (technology) such that one cannot be articulated without reference to the other. This is the case even in radical theories like Grint and Woolgar's (1997) technology as text where all traces of technicism are obliterated from their account of technology. By paying insufficient attention to the symmetry of object and subject they neglect to apply their radical scepticism to the figure of the human subject assumed as an interpreter of texts in their model.

The second chapter of the thesis picks up this radical scepticism by asking who it is that interprets? Following Friedrich Nietzsche's (1968) objection to the Cartesian '*cogito ergo sum*' – 'I think therefore I am' – chapter two offers a symmetrically anti-essentialist reading of the human/technology, subject/object dichotomy that works through their mutual self-definition, and recognises that texts are as much technologies as technologies are texts. In attempting to develop a symmetrical, non-dualistic alternative to such thinking, one that doesn't place 'the human' at the pole of an oppositional dualism, this chapter works through some of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) ideas on the constitution of the human on the anthropomorphic stratum. Ultimately, however, even this approach, itself a radical decentring of the subject, still raises the question of why we would want to go after *the* human at all.

Of course, the question of the 'after' comes in at least two parts (Jones and Surman, 2002). There is the idea of 'going after' the human, as in a search to define the

essence of the human subject or seek out his origins amidst discarded tools, as followed through in Chapter Two. But there is also the question of what 'comes after' the end of the human. In a series of apocalyptic visions that span science-fiction cinema and literature, contemporary music, post-structural philosophy and social theory, artificial intelligence, robotics and cybernetics, the end of the human has variously been prophesied, heralded and announced as accomplished fact (Dery, 1996; 1999; Bukatman, 1993; Hayles, 1999; Pepperell, 1997).

After a brief intermezzo pause then, Chapter Three explores the issue of the post-human, and the difficulties of representing such a figure, through the writing of William S. Burroughs. Picking up on the specific question of language and its relations with technics, this chapter outlines Burroughs' (1986; Burroughs and Odier, 1989) theory of the word virus alongside Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) notion of the 'order word'. Making the argument that the human subject is the product of a linguistic control system that operates virally, Burroughs sets himself the challenge of escaping from this linguistic control: of writing his way out of the human condition (Burroughs and Odier, 1989; Burroughs, 1966; 1967; 1992a). In doing so he takes an opposite approach to Grint and Woolgar (1997). Rather than seeking an answer to the problem of technology through reference to texts, Burroughs seeks a solution to the problems of writing and textuality through the use of new technology, in particular tape-recorders (Hayles, 1999; Burroughs, 1984; 1979). Reasserting the materiality of discourse and textuality, Burroughs' work rejects a normalizing emphasis on the body by enabling a recognition of the diversity of embodiment. Re-

embodying the word through magnetic tape, and rearranging the material page through the use of scalpel and scissors, Burroughs sought to cut his way free from control and find an alternative to linear, narrative subjectivization in space travel (Burroughs, 1992a). Although Burroughs follows posthumanist concerns with transcending the human condition by escaping from the flesh insofar as he borrows science-fictional tropes for his writing, this chapter argues that his approach is ultimately quite different, emphasising the immanence of embodiment rather than a transcendence of mind.

Nevertheless, Burroughs project is ultimately problematic as he seeks to overcome the problems of language through words (Burroughs and Odier, 1989). In his written work, this recognition leads him to abandon the formal experimentalism of his mid-period work and to move on to more conventional narratives for his last three novels (Burroughs, 1982; 1983; 1987). It is in these novels, which take centre stage in Chapter Four of the thesis, that Burroughs turns his attention to the specific question of subjectivity and social organization. Recognising that representing alternative social formations and subjectivities tends to reinscribe them within already compromised regimes of control, Burroughs' final trilogy of novels operates through counter-factual fantasies to enable the disinvestment of desire from the status quo, and to enable revolutionary investments of desire in the autonomous becomings of the subject group. Again developing ideas from Deleuze and Guattari (1983), this chapter develops the concept of the subject group as an alternative mode of immanent rather than transcendental group organization with revolutionary potential. The key

point of intervention here is a critique of representation. Operating strictly on a non-representational plane of immanence, Burroughs' writing in his last trilogy directly intervenes in the production of new subjectivities, rather than representing the form which new subjects must occupy. As such Burroughs' work offers a radically different way of thinking textuality, technology, representation and subjectivity from that conventionally found in organizational theories of technology.

Having argued for the need to rethink the relations of texts, technologies and human becomings, the conclusion asks a final question of where this leaves humanism? In taking an anti-humanist stance in relation to our treatment of technics, are we not in danger of becoming dehumanized or even inhumane? Addressing complaints to this effect, the conclusion suggests another version of humanism, grounded more in a radical scepticism and hostility to idealist transcendence. In this version, the position in life from which technics can be evaluated is not that of the legislated human, but of life itself: a heterogeneous becoming other. Within this immanent production of life and subjectivity, new social formations are possible outside the legislative, subjugated subjectivization of the law and language. In this sense the final conclusion of the thesis offers an answer to Spengler's (1932) question of the value of technics by reframing the position from which this question can be asked and finds, in a strictly immanent materialism, an answer that avoids the binary bind from which he could see no escape.

Chapter 1 – Technology and Organization

Is not everything interwoven with everything? Is not machinery linked with animal life in an infinite variety of ways? The shell of a hen's egg is made of a delicate white ware and is a machine as much as an egg-cup is; the shell is a device for holding the egg as much as the egg-cup is for holding the shell: both are phases of the same function; the hen makes the shell in her inside, but it is pure pottery.

(Butler, 1932: 191)

Introduction

The question of technology has been a concern of organization studies since its inception. If we look to the managerial origins of the discipline with Frederick Taylor and Henry Ford we are faced with the stop-watch and the production line, both characteristic of modern industrial organization (Taylor, 1967; Rose, 1988). If we seek a more sociological foundation for the discipline, we usually find Max Weber and his writing on bureaucracy (Weber, 1978). Here again is a technological flavour as the term bureaucracy is taken from the bureau, or writing desk, a technology that was central of the form of rational organization on which Weber was writing. In fact the term bureaucracy, can be traced back further to the Old French burel from which bureau derives and which referred to the hessian cloth placed on top of a writing desk in order to soak up ink spills. Of course, as a way of hiding the messiness and materiality of organization and inscription, the burel/bureaucracy is an unparalleled innovation and points to a important function of technology, tidying things up, or as

Geoff Bowker and Susan Leigh Star have put it, 'sorting things out' (Bowker and Star, 2000).

Despite this centrality of technology within our discipline, there is as yet little agreement on what technology is and how it is related to organization. If we consider the example of the production line, to what extent is this a form of organization and to what extent is it a technology? We might say that it is a technologically enabled, or mediated, form of organization or we might think of it as a technology that necessitates a specific form of organization. Alternatively we can think of it as a hybrid: a form of organization that is part technical and part social. In each case however the natural fault line seems to be the distinction between the social and the technical. In the first two examples the social is the privileged subject of organization and technology is an adjunct, enabling or necessitating changing forms of social organization. In the third case the organization itself is considered as a hybrid made up of both social and technical elements which together form what we usually call 'the organization', now conceived as some kind of a socio-technical system.

Most traditional accounts of the organization/technology relationship fall into the first camp. In technological determinism we find that technology is offered up as an explanation of the social or organizational (Scarbrough and Corbett, 1992). In labour process perspectives, on the other hand, the social is determinate, and it is social structural factors that determine which forms of technology will be adopted by an organization and what forms of social re-organization those technologies will lead to

(McLoughlin, 1999). Other perspectives, like the social shaping of technology (SST) and the social construction of technology (SCOT), see specific technologies as the product of social factors (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999). In this sense these perspectives suggest a kind of social determinism (Law, 1987).

In addition to the social-technical axis already discussed, there is the connected question at what level social analysis should be conducted? In labour process theory, explanation is at the level of the social structure and is primarily concerned with class relations (e.g. Braverman, 1974). The social shaping perspective extends this analysis to include factors such as gender or, more rarely, race (McKenzie and Wajcman, 1999). Social constructivism tends to emphasise interest groups influencing technological change, rather than more structural factors. At the extreme end of this scale, we find perspectives like strategic choice, that focus on key individuals who make decisions concerning technology and reorganization (Child, 1972; 1997). At the social end of the social-technical axis then, we find the further distinction between macro and micro levels of social analysis, between structure and agency.

It is the argument of this thesis that both distinctions, between society and technology and between structure and agency, are false (Callon and Latour, 1981). Central to this confusion and the creation of these false dualisms is a humanism that insists upon an essentialism of the subject as distinct from technological objects and social structures, however much these may then impact upon that subject. As we shall see

in this section, even the most radical accounts of the organization-technology relationship ultimately depend upon a conception of the human subject that tends to reinforce the social-technical distinction even whilst proclaiming it untenable. Before developing these points, however, this chapter provides an overview of the main theories dealing with the organization-technology relationship and the ways in which these various distinctions have been cast.

Technological Determinism

Technological determinism provides the starting point for most analyses of the technology/organization relationship. In these analyses it rarely fairs well. As Ian McLoughlin notes:

...from around the start of the 1970s it has been almost obligatory for academic studies of the relationship between technology and organisations to begin with a refutation of 'technological determinism'.

(McLoughlin, 1999:11)

Indeed, so few theorists would want to be associated with technological determinism that one is hard pushed to find anyone openly claiming to be a technological determinist. Despite this, writers on the technology-organization relationship never seem to tire of exposing the technologically determinist assumptions underlying even the most enlightened of approaches. Of course, they are never far behind with their own, novel approach, which has been rigorously purged of any such taint. In these

accounts technological determinism is usually characterised by two main features: a belief in the independence of technological development, and the belief that, once developed, these technologies proceed to impact upon society as an external cause.

The two main characteristics of technological determinism then are independence and agency: the independence of technological development from human interests, and the belief that technology has an agency independent of human action (Smith and Marx, 1994). The position can be neatly summed up by Karl Marx's famous comment that:

The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill society with the industrial capitalist.

(Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, cited in Cohen, 1978: 144)

Taken out of context, this seems to be saying that the development of particular forms of power generating technologies lead inevitably and immediately to particular forms of social organization. This thesis that the means of production determine, in the last instance, the mode or social relations of production has indeed been defended within certain strands of analytical Marxism, most notably by Gerry Cohen (1978) and Alan Carling (1993) though it is worth noting that even these models ultimately depend upon an assumption of social evolutionism and selection based in a kind of survival of the fittest that only obtains within capitalist societies, what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the 'selective pressures' exerted by alliance capital (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 234). Perhaps more importantly, Marx wrote rather more on the subject of

social and technical change than this one sentence. The suggestion that this single quote successfully captures the essence of his thinking falls rather short of the mark¹. Indeed, in some respects, a primacy of the social can be said to be inevitable in any explicitly Marxist approach to the question of technology, such as labour process theory for example (Braverman, 1974; Thompson, 1989). If we accept Marx's (1976; 1985) labour theory of surplus value then technology is always marginalized in economic analysis, either as a means for cheapening labour, for work intensification, for extending the working day or simply for employing cheaper labour. In each case the possibility of a machinic surplus value is ignored because technology (as capital) is only ever considered as dead labour power (Marx, 1976). In other words, the only analytic value of machinery for political economy is its value or implications for labour and capital's continued attempts to extract a surplus value from labour-power.

All of these points suggest a fundamental problem with technological determinism: it is not so much a serious theoretical position as a caricature of one. Indeed, it is impossible to find a contemporary theorist of technology professing a full-blown technological determinism. The criticisms of this perspective are numerous, but proponents of such a theory are few and far between. Amongst the most commonly cited technological determinists are Woodward (1958; 1980), Blauner (1964), Heilbroner (1972) and White (1962) yet even these writers would not subscribe to the kind of textbook characterisation of technological determinism outlined above. Blauner and Woodward, despite considering technology to be the most important variable associated with organizational change, still consider it as only one amongst

many. Heilbroner suggests that technology is a mediating factor rather than the determinant cause of social change (Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 12). Even Lynn White, who has suggested that the development of the stirrup led directly to western European Feudalism, qualifies his thesis by noting that:

As our understanding of the history of technology increases, it becomes clear that a new device merely opens a door; it does not compel one to enter. The acceptance or rejection of an invention, or the extent to which its implications are realized if it is accepted, depends quite as much on the conditions of a society, and upon the imagination of its leaders, as upon the nature of the technological item itself.

(White, 1962: 28)

Although the invention of a new technology still has a certain independence here, its impact upon society is entirely dependent upon social and human factors. There is no suggestion that technology has an agency independent of humans and their society. With these kind of qualifications being made by even hardcore technological determinists, one is left questioning whether technological determinism has ever existed as a serious theoretical proposition.

Smith and Marx distinguish between hard and soft approaches to technological determinism (1994). Using this distinction, the comments I have made so far relate only to what they call the 'hard' determinist position. Soft determinism, on the other hand, recognises the importance of technology whilst also acknowledging that technology is the product of human action. It asks questions such as 'why this

technology in this place, at this time, by these people?’ It sees that technology is just one part of a complex web of social, cultural, economic and political factors and looks to these factors to explain technological change. Once a technology has developed, it can still have the power to drive history but this power is not entirely independent of society.

The soft determinist position is quite in line with the popular conception of technological change. For example, in her best-selling book *Longitude* Dava Sobel suggests that accurate maritime navigation was impossible for a long time because of the problem of measuring longitude (Sobel, 1996). Sobel traces several alternative solutions to this problem before describing its final resolution through the invention of an accurate, maritime chronograph. This timepiece required many factors before it was realised. There was the initial genius of the clockmaker John Harrison who first made an accurate clock capable of withstanding the rigours of sea-travel. Harrison’s motivation to give so much of his life to this work came from the cash prize being offered by the government for the solution of the longitude problem, suggesting that the need for this solution was widely recognised before the invention came into being. On the other hand Harrison only succeeded in making four accurate timepieces in this whole life. The longitude problem was not overcome by the use of maritime chronographs until John Arnold had worked out a way to manufacture them cheaply and quickly without sacrificing their accuracy. Interestingly, Arnold’s solution was to break the clock-making process down into a number of discrete functions, enabling the construction of individual components to be out-sourced to specialists. This

meant that the clocks only came together in the final assembly workshop. As well as prefiguring the popularity of outsourcing in the late twentieth century, this division of labour demonstrates the difficulty of separating social organization from specific technological artefacts. Sobel's suggestion is that the maritime chronometer would never have been a viable measure of longitude without Arnold's reorganization of the labour process involved in clock-making. Despite this complex constellation of social and individual factors, all of which had to be in place before the maritime chronograph could take shape, once the solution was in place it was taken up almost universally. Accurate navigation at sea was now possible and this opened up a whole new potential for long distance trade and travel.

A similarly loosely determinist perspective is also reflected in much of the writing on the information revolution, particularly in populist futurology and management texts such as Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* (1970) or Bill Gates' *Business @ the Speed of Thought* (2000) but also in more conventionally academic texts such as Daniel Bell's *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society* (1974; cf. Bell, 1980). If we consider the latter of these, then it is not hard to find parallels with the quote from *The Poverty of Philosophy* cited above:

...in Western society we are in the middle of a vast historical change in which social relations (which were property-bound), existing power structures (centred on narrow elites) and bourgeois culture (based on notions of restraint and delayed gratification) are being rapidly eroded. The sources of the upheaval are scientific and technological.

(Bell, 1974: 37)

But Bell quickly acts to prevent his ideas being read as determinist, by insisting upon the centrality of the polity in determining the outcomes of social change, even where initially triggered by technological change (Bell, 1974: 13). In the same way, Bill Gates' thesis may be determinist at the macro-social level: in the aggregate information technology will revolutionise the way that we organize, but at the level of the individual organization he is quite insistent upon the importance of managerial decision making. If managers don't adopt the new technologies then they will be left behind and go out of business. The end result is that Gates' analysis is, unsurprisingly, a marketing gimmick – either buy a new Microsoft system or go out of business. Nevertheless, he is not alone in attesting to the importance of new technology as even a quick glance at the business section of almost any bookshop will demonstrate. The sheer volume of popular managerial publications on IT and its importance for revolutionising organization through e-commerce and the like is truly staggering.

Of course, these ideas are nothing new in themselves. Tom Standage has suggested that the invention of the private telegraph line revolutionised work organization, making possible large scale bureaucracies that would previously have been inconceivable:

...starting in the 1870s large companies with several offices began to lease private lines for internal communication between different sites, since internal messages

could be centrally controlled from a head office. This led to the rise of large, hierarchical companies and financial organisations – big business as we know it today.

(Standage, 1998: 162)

Standage's account of what he calls *The Victorian Internet*, like Sobel's account of the solution of the longitude problem or Bill Gates' prophesying on the impact of computers on work organization, suggest that in the popular conception, technological determinism is pretty close to the truth. Technological change leads inevitably to social change. At the close of his book, however, Standage points us in a somewhat different direction. By drawing comparisons between the Victorian telegraph and the internet, he is able to point to the gap between the 'technological utopian' rhetoric contemporary with both inventions and the failure of the former to realise its promise of world peace and revolutionary change. At least since the telegraph, people have been pinning their hopes for 'progress' on new technology. This suggests that the popularity of technological determinism more of a social or cultural phenomenon than a serious theory of socio-technical change.

This last point is born out by Merrit Roe Smith and Leo Marx's (1994) thesis² that technological determinism, even if it is a discredited theoretical position, nevertheless holds sway in the popular imagination. Smith (1994) gives examples from cultural fields as diverse as advertising, political thought, art, literature and journalism that have all contributed to the widespread belief that technology shapes society rather than the other way around. This is particularly noticeable in the assumption that

technological progress can be equated with social progress, a point that has so thoroughly permeated our cultural consciousness that a recent article in *The Economist* was able, without a trace of irony, to attack the critics of globalisation as neo-luddites comparable in their irrational desire to stop 'progress' (in this case increased flows of foreign direct investment and the spread of multi-national corporations) to the frame-breakers who sought to prevent the spread of rational technology at the height of the industrial revolution (Economist, 2001). In this article the idea of the objective march of scientific and technological progress is so self-evident that it can be used as a comparative rhetorical device to serve other ends. Of course in doing so the writers of *The Economist* actually highlight the political specificities of the former.

If we accept this thesis then technological determinism needs to be redefined as "the human tendency to create the kind of society that invests technologies with enough power to drive history" (Smith and Marx, 1994: xiv). In other words, even technological determinism is socially constructed. Although I do not intend to examine this cultural account of technological determinism in detail here, the important point for this thesis is that the only currently acceptable form of technological determinism has reduced this position to a social construction and repositioned the human at the centre of the question of technology. In even this, the simplest account of the relationship between the social and the technical, it becomes impossible to clearly maintain the distinction between the two. Perhaps more importantly, this cultural move in technological determinism further sidelines the

question of technology itself, turning it into a subject for cultural studies and changing the question to one of human understanding and sense-making rather than taking non-human technology seriously in itself.

These soft-determinist positions are a long way from the hard technological determinism with which we started this section. Leaving aside the cultural issues for a moment, and returning to the question of technology, once we acknowledge that social factors can influence the development of technology, the task of a researcher changes. It is no longer a case of describing technological effects, but of asking why particular technologies developed in particular places at particular times and what the alternatives might have been.

Strategic Choice

The most simple, and one of the most widespread, responses to criticisms of technological determinism is to oppose it with some conception of strategic or managerial choice. In such accounts, favoured by undergraduate (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001) and MBA (Scarborough and Corbett, 1992) textbooks alike, theories of technology are laid out in a continuum between two poles of a dualism with technological determinism at one extreme and strategic/managerial choice at the other. The basic contention of the 'choice' approach is that technology can never have an independent effect. Management, especially senior, strategic management, are always faced with choices and decisions about what technologies to adopt, how to use them, where they will be implemented, who will have access to or be affected by them etc. Although no one would subscribe to an extreme choice perspective, as the

inherent limits of technology are usually accepted in such approaches as placing constraints upon possible choices, greater or lesser degrees of freedom are offered either by the flexibility of technologies, the adaptability of the organization, or the simple option of not adopting a particular innovation (Scarbrough and Corbett, 1992).

The strategic choice perspective is usually attributed to John Child (1972; 1997) who initially developed the approach to counter contingency theory in general rather than technological determinism specifically. Of course, technology is often seen as a major contingency in such approaches (Woodward, 1958) but Child was also concerned with the organization's environment and markets more generally. More recently the approach has been utilised in the study of information technology by Buchanan and Boddy (1983). In general, the determinism/choice dualism reflects the more widespread philosophical debate – found in any philosophy primer (e.g. Warburton, 1992) – concerning the question of human freewill.

In such debates, which whilst they have a long philosophical heritage have increased since the dawn of mechanisation, the fundamental questions are both philosophical and ethical. If humans are able to act and choose freely then it is reasonable to hold them responsible for their actions and choices. In this sense, contemporary juridical theory, to say nothing of organizational theory, is entirely dependent upon the concept of human freedom. On the other hand, if human choice and action is externally or pre-determined, then responsibility is a meaningless term. Leaving aside the philosophy paradox of people being determined to treat others as if they were free,

both perspectives have interesting ideological implications. If technology is an external, independent force, then management has no culpability in job losses, deskilling and dehumanisation arising from the implementation of new technology. Here the parallels between the rhetoric of globalisation as a force beyond the control of either management or the national state economy are instructive (Bradley et al, 2000). On the other hand, if management is free to make choices about new technology and determine the outcome of implementation, then their role is assured. Managerial expertise is indispensable and management education has a role in teaching students how to think strategically about the question of new technology (Daniels, 1994). Of course, which of these legitimation techniques is employed depends upon the specific situation and the level of analysis so that in many ways, determinism and choice are not as far apart as they may at first seem. For Bill Gates, for example, managers are free to ignore his advice and wisdom but should they choose to do so they risk bankruptcy and ruin in an increasingly competitive marketplace where the forces of natural selection determine that only the fittest survive. Here the explanations of technological change deployed by management gurus, and those developed by the analytical Marxists run close.

One reason why the freewill/determinism debate remains unresolved within philosophy is that its terms are themselves problematic. What does it mean to have choice, to have freewill? Is a reason a determinant or an example of freedom? In philosophy, the grounds of the debate have themselves been challenged as a 'false dualism' (Deleuze, 1991; Bergson, 1910), but leaving this issue aside for the moment,

it should already be clear that this dichotomy is largely redundant for the social scientist. As soon as the question of choice is raised, we want to know why a certain choice was made. Why did the mobile-phone companies invest so heavily in bandwidth they knew they couldn't use for years to come? The demands of investors that companies stay at the cutting edge of technology is at least one explanation. Personal aggrandisement from being associated with a successful system implementation might be another. In a case study of an ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system implementation in an oil refinery in the North of England I found that one reason for middle management being so gung ho about the system was the opportunities it gave them to leave the company and set up IT consultancy firms going on to earn up to ten times their former salaries (Land, 1998). Leaving aside personal political explanations for the moment, let us turn to one approach that has tried to develop a consistent and coherent explanation of technological change at the societal level of analysis: labour process theory.

Labour Process Theory

Whilst the soft technological determinist positions outlined in the last section place technology itself at the heart socio-technical change, other perspectives build upon the insight that technology, however it is generated, is not always taken up by organizations and sometimes disappears without ever influencing society at all. One such approach comes from labour process theory, first formulated by Harry Braverman to develop Marx's thinking on the relations between capital and labour (Braverman, 1974). For Braverman the defining feature of technological machinery is that it is not owned by those who operate it, but by a separate class of capitalists

who seek to use it, not only to increase productivity, but to ensure greater control over workers' labour power:

Machinery comes into the world not as the servant of 'humanity,' but as the instrument of those to whom the accumulation of capital gives the *ownership* of the machines. The capacity of humans to control the labor process through machinery is seized upon by management from the beginning of capitalism as the *prime means whereby production may be controlled not by the direct producer but by the owners and representatives of capital*. Thus, in addition to its technical function of increasing the productivity of labor – which would be a mark of machinery under any social system – machinery also has in the capitalist system the function of divesting the mass of workers of their control over their own labor.

(Braverman, 1974: 193, emphasis in original)

For Braverman, then, technology does have some intrinsic features, such as the tendency to improve productivity and enable greater control of the labour process. These features are only abstract however, and are always made concrete under specific conditions within a specific social system. In the capitalist social system, new technology is introduced primarily to increase managers' control over the workers' labour process. The more that managers can use technology to automate and deskill labour, the more easily they can regulate the expenditure of labour power and the less scope workers have to determine their own work. In short, technology becomes a means for management to resolve the inherent indeterminacy of the wage-labour bargain within the capitalist mode of production (cf. Marx, 1976: 492-553).

It is important to note that from their roots in Braverman's work, labour process perspectives do not insist that everything revolves around profitability. The simple increase of control over workers' activities is sufficient to recommend a technology to management. Already then, the social factors shaping technological development are quite complex. They are not solely determined by economic factors like increased productivity or profit, but by the existence of a subordinate working class and a managerial class who exist only to serve the interests of capital. Given these social conditions, however, the tendency of new technology to enable increased managerial control will be realised through the deskilling of work. Braverman's main conclusion is that technology, under capitalism, takes autonomy away from the worker and places it in the hands of management, forever pushing forward the boundaries of Taylorism. Indeed, for Braverman, Taylorism is the paradigmatic capitalist technology as its fundamental premise is the separation of conception and execution and the control of the latter by making the former a strictly managerial prerogative. The idea that Taylorism is a technology points toward the difficulty of clearly defining technology. Taylorism is more commonly thought of as a form of (re)organization than as a technology as such. Although it might be characterised by the technology of the stop-watch, it is not a clearly definable machine, or technological artefact itself. Instead it is primarily a set of principles to guide managerial practice (Taylor, 1967). This difficulty of clearly separating the social and the technical will be returned to later.

In essence then, labour process theory replaces a strictly technological determinism with a form of social and economic determinism (McLoughlin, 1999: 58). Despite this, the theory holds on to an element of technological determinism insofar as it talks of the intrinsic potential and tendency of technology. David Noble has developed this perspective in his study of automated machine tools in post-war America (Noble, 1999). In this account Noble extends the insights of labour process theory to examine the actual design and development, as well as implementation, of new technology. Not only is the application of new technology indicative of management's distrust of labour but this ethic works its way into the design of new technology:

The distrust of human beings by engineers is a manifestation of capital's distrust of labor. The elimination of human error and uncertainty is the engineering expression of capital's attempt to minimize its dependence upon labor by increasing its control over production. The ideology of engineering, in short, mirrors the antagonistic social relations of capitalist production. Insofar as the design of machinery, like machine tools, is informed by this ideology, it reflects the social relations of production.

(Noble, 1999: 168)

Here the statement is clear: technology reflects the social relations of production. This is only insofar as it is informed by ideology, however. Rather than get into the whole question of ideology, all I want to note is that, although Noble is sometimes classified as a labour process theorist (e.g. McLoughlin, 1999), he is also quite aware of other issues that shape technology. For example, in this case he points not only to

the vertical relations of production, as realised in the managerial control of workers, but also to the horizontal relations of production where large producers vie for lucrative contracts from the airforce. The protection given during new technology development by the existence of large military contracts, led companies to develop complex production systems which put technical specification before return on investment³. This led to increasingly expensive technologies which in turn excluded smaller producers from adopting the technology once it had been developed. In this sense, the existence of the military contracts, combined with the large manufacturers' desire to keep the lion's share of the market, led to the development of highly technical, specialised and expensive machine tools, rather than simpler, cheaper and more flexible ones.

More recently, Alan Bryman has developed elements of labour process theory in his case study analysis of the American animation industry in the early twentieth century (Bryman, 2000). Bryman's study of the development and diffusion of cel animation techniques raises several questions both pertinent to definitions of technology and to labour process perspectives on socio-technical change. In the first instance, the technology that Bryman considers is more a set of techniques than a specific technological artefact like an industrial machine. Although it was patented by its inventor, Randolph Bray, the technique uses only the relatively simple and widely available technology of acetate sheet in order to superimpose animated characters over a fixed background. Across the industry, once this technique was adopted it led to a division of labour on the animation production line and the separation and

deskilling of many of the tasks previously undertaken by a single artist. In each case this change in the production process followed Taylorist principles and brought animation closer to the production line. This seems to support the labour process belief that new technologies will always be developed with a view to increased control of labour. Indeed, this very principle was written into the patents taken out on cel animation and was seen from the outset as its main advantage over alternative animation systems:

The key point that emerges from this discussion is that the early animation techniques were designed not just with labour-saving in mind but also with the application of scientific management and Fordist ideas. The mode of organization that Bray developed was incorporated and enhanced by one studio after another. As a result, Bray's practices became institutionalized.

(Bryman, 2000: 462)

Bryman goes beyond labour process theory, however, as he asks exactly how it was that this particular technology became adopted and led to the almost universal imposition of deskilling. In the first instance he notes that not all studios followed the same path. Although the most mundane tasks were rationalised in each case, the group who maintained control of the production process differed from studio to studio. In some cases the storyboard writer kept directorial power whilst in others it was the animators.

Borrowing from institutional theory, Bryman suggests that the adoption of a technology lending itself to Taylorism was not just a rational decision based on profit projection but also depended upon the need for legitimacy. At the time when cel technology was developed, the animation industry was still in its infancy, so the need to be perceived as a legitimate organization was high. One way to do this was to keep up with the cutting edge of technological development within the industry as a whole. Once the cel system was adopted as the industry standard, it would be hard for any animation company not to use it and still be taken seriously⁴.

Like David Noble's study of machine tool development, Bryman's account of the animation industry's adoption of the cel system suggests that whilst the control of the labour process is clearly a major factor in the design, development and adoption of new technology, it is only one factor amongst many. By moving beyond the simple increase of control on the line, both Noble and Bryman extend the labour process perspective to a more thoroughgoing form of the social shaping of technology. It is to this perspective that we now turn.

Social Constructivism

Once technological determinism or pure choice have been rejected, the theorist of technology has to start asking questions about the other forces that shape and influence technological change. As developments influenced by labour process theory have shown, however, it is inadequate to simply reduce these other forces to a single factor like cost, class or managerial control. Instead there are a variety of social and organizational factors that affect technology and technological change.

Broadly speaking, approaches that recognise the influence of social factors in this way can be grouped together under the general term of 'social constructivism' (Grint and Woolgar, 1997; McLoughlin, 1999).

Social constructivism is a rather vague term that has gained an increasingly widespread acceptance within the social sciences since the 1960s where it has often been taken as a response to the limitations of traditional, positivist organization theory. In relation to technology, the general term 'social constructivism' covers a number of specific, as well as a more general approach to studying technology. In general, it is simply the recognition that the social in some way influences technological change. In this sense it is simply a rejection of technological determinism. Once this general proposition is accepted, however, rather more specific questions, both theoretical and methodological, arise in relation to the study of technology. In relation to technology a number of quite specific approaches have been developed within this general rubric, including the social and economic shaping of technology (SEST) (McLoughlin, 1999; Heap et al, 1995) and the social construction of technology (SCOT) (Bijker et al, 1987). Off the back of these approaches and particularly the latter, more radical perspectives such as actor-network theory (ANT) (Latour, 1987; Law, 1992) and technology as text (TAT) (Grint and Woolgar, 1997; Joerges and Czarniawska, 1998; Hutchby, 2001) have been developed. We will return to consider these last in more detail shortly, but before that we need to address the first two, arguably more popular, approaches in more detail.

In its broad sense, social constructivism can go one of two ways. One direction effectively extends labour process theory's insight beyond a simple class based analysis to consider gender (Cockburn, 1983; 1985; Webster, 1996), race (Dyer, 1997) and other social factors that influence the development of technology. In this sense, social structural factors determine which technologies are adopted and how they are used. As in the above example from David Noble however, social factors not only select compatible technologies but give rise to an ethos of engineering and design that follows this same logic by designing specific technologies that reflect these social structural biases. As such, the operation of these biases might be quite unconscious for those perpetuating them. Such approaches start from a set of assumptions about society and the social structure, then follow these factors as they influence the development of technology and are built into specific systems or artefacts. In this sense, they follow the social construction of artefacts from the outside in (i.e. from society into the technological artefact). Technology in this view, develops within a society that already exists and has determinant structures. In general we can call such an approach the social shaping of technology (SST) (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999) or the social and economic shaping of technology (SEST) (McLoughlin, 1999).

The alternative is to start with a specific artefact and then ask what factors influenced its construction. Whereas the first direction is oriented to macro-social, structural phenomena such as class and gender, this second approach adopts a more micro-

social perspective. Rather than starting with social groupings given by the social structure, as with management and workers, this second approach takes a more ethnomethodological view and looks at the social groupings that arise out of negotiations around the new technology. If these groups happen to reflect the same divisions as more macro-social explanations, then this is something to be explained rather than an explanation itself. Structure in this view, is always a precarious result of interaction, never the determinant cause of interaction. This perspective we can give the general name of the social construction of technology (SCOT) (Bijker, Hughes, and Pinch, 1987). In contrast to SST, SCOT follows the social construction of technology from the inside out (i.e. from the technological artefact out to the social groupings and organizations that develop around it and thereby contribute to its formation) (McLoughlin, 1999).

Both SST and SCOT extend and develop the insights raised by labour process perspectives on technology. In a sense SST emphasises the macro-structural dynamics influencing technological change, whilst SCOT starts from a more micro-social perspective to extrapolate to more macro-scale features from the ground up. Both approaches raise certain questions however. On the one hand John Law has suggested that social constructivism generally tends to repeat a determinism, not a technological determinism certainly, but rather a social determinism (Law, 1987). More recently this point has been picked up by Keith Grint and Steve Woolgar, who criticise these perspectives for a residual technicism (Grint and Woolgar, 1997). In effect, although both approaches acknowledge that technological artefacts are

constructed in a thoroughly social manner they are happy to then accept that these artefacts can go on to have a relatively definite effect.

Whilst this criticism is more applicable to SST, SCOT raises its own questions. If we accept that different social groupings emerge to appropriate and interpret technologies in a way that suits their own interests then we have to ask the question of what limits there are on such an interpretation. If we accept the idea of interpretative flexibility (Pinch and Bijker, 1987), then we are also accepting that there are limits on how far a specific technology can flex. For Grint and Woolgar (1997), this again is a kind of technicism creeping into what should properly be a social explanation. Before we go on to consider Grint and Woolgar's response to these issues, and their interpretivist perspective of 'thoroughgoing constructivism' or 'technology as text', it is worth considering one of this approach's predecessors.

Actor-Network Theory

Actor-network theory (ANT) addresses the issues raised above in two ways. In the first instance, it responds to the SST/SCOT distinction by refusing to differentiate analysis along a dimension of scale. In their pioneering paper, where many of the principles of ANT were first suggested, Michel Callon and Bruno Latour explicitly made the attempt to develop an approach to the study of society that would be symmetrical in its analysis (Callon and Latour, 1981). On the one hand this meant developing a set of tools that could be used at both the macro and the micro level of analysis, thereby allowing for a more integrated analysis. On the other hand, they refused the social/technical dualism as an *a priori* distinction by suggesting that, as

Bruno Latour would later put it, 'technology is society made durable' (Latour, 1991: 103).

Both of these points are suggestive of a concept that Latour calls the principle of symmetry (Latour, 1987). Not only should accounts of socio-technical change be symmetrical in relation to the levels of analysis that they are treating, but also to the distinction between the non-human and the human in social organization. The first of these elements is spelled out most explicitly in Callon and Latour's early collaboration 'Unscrewing the Big Leviathan' where they develop a set of methodological tools for studying society regardless of the apparent scale of the phenomenon being considered. Using the example of Hobbes' Leviathan, they suggest that the head of state is able to operate as a social actor because he can 'black-box' all of the interests that are represented by him (i.e. his subjects) into a set of codified laws and rules of government etc (Callon and Latour, 1981).

The most important point that Callon and Latour make in this paper however is the central role they accord to technology in the formation of large scale, human society: the Leviathan. Taking issue with ethnomethodology, they suggest that the society of micro interactionist studies pays insufficient attention to the technological materiality of daily life. By emphasising the contestation and negotiation of order within social interaction, ethnomethodology comes closer to studying baboons than humans. In a baboon troop, the social order and troop hierarchy is constantly contested and subject to challenge at almost any time. Nevertheless, the troop is not a chaotic, fluid mess. It

does have an order with a degree of stability that inheres over time. This partial stability is quite distinct from the stability of human society however. For Callon and Latour, the distinctive feature of human society is that it is made up of more than human beings. As *homo faber*, the tool using, tool making animal, humans are able to 'black-box' elements of the negotiated order with a degree of enduring stability. Hierarchy is reinforced by uniforms and weapons to present a material and symbolic order that stands in for the negotiated order, making further challenge less likely, though certainly not impossible. Codes of law are written down to create an object that stands in for local contestations, effectively foreclosing debate. The black-boxes that are thereby created, however leaky they may ultimately be, provide a degree of stability such that they can be added together as the building blocks of a more complex social organization than baboons could hope to develop. That language and writing are fundamental tools within this procedure is a point that we shall return to later in this thesis, but for now it is only important to note that Callon and Latour develop the social constructivist insight that society is an achievement, and combine it with the realisation that non-human technologies and inscriptions are as important in this achievement as human beings (Latour, 1987).

Although ANT has received increasing attention within organization studies recently (Hassard and Law, 1999; Bloomfield, 1995; Hassard, Law and Lee, 1999), particularly in relation to the study of complex information systems (Brigham and Corbett, 1997; Walsham, 1997; Bloomfield et al, 1992; Doolin and Lowe, 2002; Lilley, 1998), its reception within the study of technology has not gone unchallenged.

By insisting upon the principle of symmetry in the analysis of social organization ANT has gone the furthest in unsettling the conventionally assumed dichotomy between the social and the technical of all the approaches addressed in this review. Before considering these points in more detail however, we need to address the criticisms levelled against the approach in what is undoubtedly the most sustained criticism of technological determinism to date: Grint and Woolgar's *Technology as Text*.

Technology As Text

Keith Grint and Steve Woolgar's (1997) book *The Machine At Work* is important for a number of reasons. Not only is it, as we shall see, the most systematic and sustained criticism of technological determinism to date but it has also been the subject of significant discussion within the social sciences. In part this is due to the energy and activity of the books authors, with Keith Grint using a similar framework to support his influential analysis of 'the arts of leadership' (Grint, 2000) and Steve Woolgar using their ideas to frame the research conducted within the ESRC's 'Virtual Society?' project, of which he was the director (Woolgar, 2002). In their book, Grint and Woolgar set up a linear narrative of the development of theories of technology that stretches from a simplistic technological determinism, through various kinds of social constructivism to terminate, perhaps inevitably, with their own perspective: technology as text. At each step of the way, according to these writers, theoretical progress is made, but a 'residual technicism' remains to contaminate even the most seemingly radical thinking on technology. Actor-network theory, for example, in their

account is ultimately dependent upon technical facts when explaining technological developments (1997: 30-31).

Taking issue with Michel Callon's account of the attempted development of an electrical car by Electricité de France (EDF) (Callon, 1986b), Grint and Woolgar suggest that his explanation of the project's failure is finally dependent upon a technical fact about the chemistry of voltaic cells. In this study, Callon brings together a complex web, or network, of 'actors' that include the former auto-manufacturing giant Renault, now reduced to the role of car-body manufacturer; the social theory of Alain Touraine who predicted the rise of a post-consumer society where people would put less emphasis on the ownership of large, expensive and wasteful status symbols such as petrol driven cars; the seemingly ever diminishing supply of oil, which looked likely to run dry at any moment; the government, who were presumed to be interested in improving the environment of cities; the hypothesised customers who would choose to buy these new vehicles; and the fuel cells that would provide the performance, both in terms of the distance and speed available to the electric car, that these potential users would require for the project's viability. The beauty and power of Callon's analysis of this case is the emphasis that he places on the importance of EDF's ability to enrol each of these key actors, and hold them in place as a fragile network of aligned interests in order to bring their project – the electrical car – into existence. Unfortunately, of course, the network did not hold and despite Callon's acknowledgement that a number of issues contributed to this failure - the discovery of new oil fields, the production of more efficient and

environmentally friendly combustion engines, the reluctance of Renault to accept its reduced role as a mere body manufacturer and the success of Bourdieu's sociology over that of Touraine – Grint and Woolgar suggest that his explanation is ultimately dependent upon one factor: the failure of the catalysis in the batteries that were to power the car (Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 31). Once the catalysis failed to do the job ascribed to them as a part of the network, the whole network was doomed to failure. Without them, the power supply would neither be reliable enough, nor supply sufficient power and longevity to meet the needs and expectations of customers used to the convenience of petrol driven vehicles. Renault then seized upon this and the aforementioned factors to reassert their importance as a major vehicle manufacturer and the network that was the electric car unravelled.

For Grint and Woolgar, this dependence upon a technical fact is a perfect example of what they refer to as the 'residual technicism' (Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 31) haunting even this most progressive of theories of technology. Callon, and ANT more generally, remains unable to effectively explain technical change in a thoroughly anti-essentialist manner because their explanations of innovation and change remains dependent upon the *deus ex machina* of technical facts brought in, as it were, from outside the social stage to explain social change (Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 2-3). Instead of asking questions about the limits of the technological components of the actor-network that was the electric car, Grint and Woolgar suggest that Callon should have treated the car, or at least the batteries and catalyst, as a text

which was read, or interpreted, in quite specific ways by the human actors involved in constructing the network:

Who says catalysts had this unfortunate tendency, how and why did they say so, and why does this particular version prevail?

(Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 31)

The effect of this shift of emphasis is what Grint and Woolgar call a thoroughgoing constructivism, or anti-essentialism. All appeals to an essence or the facts of a technological artefact are vetoed. Instead the black-box of technology has to be opened to expose the always *social* relations that have congealed within it. Technological facts then must always be explained by reference to human interpretations, social interests and political agendas. This is all well and good and even remains close to Latour's notion that 'technology is society made durable' (Latour, 1991). Indeed, the idea that technology can be conceived as a black-box which can be opened up and understood is itself fundamental to this approach (Kendall and Wickham, 1999). Nevertheless, where Grint and Woolgar depart from the ANT perspective of Callon and Latour is that they do not fully apply the principle of symmetry (Latour, 1987) in their analysis.

As noted above, in their seminal paper of 1981, Callon and Latour insist that the methods of ethnomethodology are better suited to the study of baboons than human society for one very simple reason: human society is as much composed of the non-human (for short hand let us use 'technology') as it is of the human. This is not a

minor point in their paper, but perhaps its most fundamental. The process of black-boxing social interaction in the non-human is what enables the qualitative shift to a quite different type of social organization. Indeed, this form of social organization is what enables the appearance of the phenomenon of *the* organization, traditionally taken as the subject of organization studies (Cooper and Law, 1995). It is this shift in the ontology of the social, as we move from baboon troops to human society, that means the human is always more than human:

By the term 'actor' we mean, from now on, the semiotic definition by A₃ Greimas in *Dictionnaire de sémiotique* (Paris: Hachette, 1979): "whatever unit of discourse is invested of a role", like the notion of force, it is in no way limited to 'human'.

(Callon and Latour, 1981: 301-302, n.8)

This has a number of implications, not least amongst which is the question of the (human) subject. Traditionally, both in liberal humanist approaches to the social sciences and within organizational studies, the subject of these disciplines is assumed to be the individual human being (Hayles, 1999; Parker, 1998; 2000a; Willmott, 1998). In Organizational Behaviour, this is reflected in the individual psychological assumptions underpinning the very idea of 'organizational behaviour':

Organizations of course do not 'behave'. *Only people can be said to behave*. The term organizational behaviour is a verbal shorthand which refers to the activities and interactions of people in organizational settings like factories, schools, hospitals and banks.

(Huczynski and Buchanan, 1991: 2 – emphasis added)

In Callon and Latour's thinking, and as this thesis will argue, taking the question of technology seriously problematises this conception of *the* human so thoroughly that this 'subject' of the discipline disappears.

This decentring of the human subject raises other issues however. As Michel Foucault has famously noted, the human subject is the product of disciplinary apparatuses that simultaneously form the academic disciplines of the humanities (Foucault, 1977: 141). In decentring, or at least questioning, this figure we necessarily challenge the formations of the academic disciplines as we understand them. Not only was Foucault uncomfortably situated in relation to the disciplines, rejected by historians and philosophers alike for his perceived lack of proper methodological rigour, but Callon and Latour insist upon a necessarily transdisciplinary approach to the study of social phenomenon. Interestingly, in relation to this question both Foucault and Callon and Latour cite Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* as a key inspiration for their study (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983; Callon and Latour, 1981: 302 n.9; Foucault, 1977: 309, n.2). For Callon and Latour, the upshot of Deleuze and Guattari's argument is that we can no longer clearly separate the spheres of psychology and economics, a point that is reflected both in their insistence upon a common methodology for the study of 'micro' and 'macro' scale social phenomenon, and in Latour's later insistence upon the impossibility of separating the social and political representation of subjects in the polity from the scientific representation of objects in the laboratory (Latour, 1993).

For organization studies, which has itself been proclaimed a trans-, inter-, or neo-disciplinary area of study (Burrell et al, 1994) this is an important point⁵. Are we to focus on the micro-level of the individual borrowing from psychology and social psychology where the human subject is the (clearly bounded) object of our studies? Should we look instead to the macro-social, and borrow our analyses from sociology and political economy? Or should we take a leaf from the humanities and consider the social as a text, open to interpretation in a kind of hermeneutic loop? Fundamental to these questions are what we think the human is, a point that we shall return to later in this thesis through the work of Deleuze and Guattari. But first we must return to the question of technology and Grint and Woolgar's 'technology as text', an approach which adopts that last of these three options.

Facts or Interpretation?

To Grint and Woolgar (1997), ANT's dependence upon technical facts is entirely unacceptable. Going beyond a simple rejection of technological explanation to disavow any appeal to external facts, whether social or technical, they effectively reframe the question of technology within a dualism of positivism versus interpretivism. Where both psychological and sociological explanations usually depend upon some kind of facts, either about 'the social' or 'the mind', Grint and Woolgar suggest that we can never know the external world in itself – including and especially technology. The best that the social sciences can hope for is to understand the ways in which people read, or interpret, events and actions to generate a narrative of explanation. As applied to the study of technology, Grint and Woolgar dub this approach 'radical' or 'thoroughgoing constructivism', or more specifically

'technology as text' (Grint and Woolgar, 1997). By turning seemingly hard facts and objects into texts, and focusing attention upon the ways in which these texts are read, Grint and Woolgar perform a textual turn that shifts analyses of technology away from 'the facts' and onto issues of interpretation.

The value of this textual approach to the study of technology has been questioned by some theorists who are concerned that, in seeking to remedy the worst excesses of determinism, anti-essentialism pushes things too far in the opposite direction. In a recent critique along these lines, Ian Hutchby (2001) has suggested that in rejecting technicism in all its forms, Grint and Woolgar pay inadequate attention to the materiality of technology which, even if it is not determinate, nevertheless has an independent reality that Hutchby characterises as 'affordances'. Although they are perhaps impossible to know with any certainty, these affordances still act to constrain and limit the interpretations that may be given to specific technologies. In this sense Hutchby shares with critical realism a concern that constructivism in general is engaged in a conjuring act that makes the real world disappear (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000). This disappearance leads to an impoverished account of social phenomenon where no Archimedian point of critical leverage is available from which to prise apart rhetoric and reality (Thompson and Ackroyd, 1995).

A similar line of criticism is pursued by Bernward Joerges and Barbara Czarniawska, who suggest a softer approach to the question of material reality by proposing the metaphor of the palimpsest when thinking about texts (Joerges and Czarniawska,

1998). Borrowing from Freud, Czarniawska and Joerges develop his idea of the magical writing pad, on which children can inscribe and reinscribe on a piece of paper over a wax pad, erasing by simply lifting the paper and starting again. Of course, the previous inscription is never entirely removed. It remains embedded in the wax beneath so that previous inscriptions can be uncovered. It is this sense of a permanent trace that Czarniawska and Joerges suggest fills the role of materiality in a textual approach to technology and delimits the possibility for open and free rewriting and interpretation.

In this thesis I want to pursue a rather different line however, and suggest that rather than going too far, the 'thoroughgoing' textual approach to technology and organization needs to go even further. In their work, Grint and Woolgar are questioning the nature of agency and causation itself. Their concerns extend beyond whether technology is autonomous to ask whether it is even useful to think in terms of concrete facts, external causation and determinate agencies.

The Problem of Agency

The question of technology and the relation between the social and the technical in the social sciences hinges upon the question of agency. What causes socio-technical change? Does technology have agency as the technological determinists would have it? If so, then what causes technology? Can social interests or structures explain the content of a technological artefact as the labour process and social shaping perspectives suggest? Or is it rather a matter of individual human agency as the strategic choice theorists would have it? As we saw, the main criticism levelled

against technological determinism is that it attributes agency to technological artefacts. This idea of technology as agent raises two main issues. First, what are the assumptions that underlie these concepts of causation and agency? Second, at what level if any can technology be a self-acting, self-motivating cause independent of human action?

The second of these, technological artefact as autonomous actor, has only recently become a seriously pressing concern. If we think of technology in terms of inanimate tools then it seems fairly obvious that technology is not self-acting. We would not think of charging a gun or a knife with murder, however convincing the pleas of a modern day Bill Sykes. As industrial technologies developed and were no longer dependent upon human power for their motivation the question became a little more confused. Even clockwork automata gave Descartes pause to question what difference there was between an animal body and a machine (Descartes, 1986). In Fritz Lang's film, *Metropolis*, the scientist Rotwang creates a life-like robot that seems to act of her own volition, even if she ultimately only carries out her creator's orders. Frankenstein gives a slightly different twist and the creation learns to think and act for himself (Shelley, 1994). More recently, the advent of cybernetics has led to the development of self-regulating mechanisms that can continue to carry out a programme of quite simple tasks without any external intervention from humans (Wiener, 1961; Heims, 1993). In the extreme, this idea is taken up in Philip K. Dick's short story 'The Gun' (Dick, 1999). In this tale a space craft is exploring an uninhabited planet when it is shot down from the surface. The craft crash lands and

the occupants search out the source of the attack, an enormously powerful gun, pre-programmed to attack any incoming craft. The crew of the ship dismantle the gun, repair their ship and fly back to bring more people to explore this new city now that its defences have been safely dismantled. As soon as they leave, however, the robot mechanics come to life and set about repairing the gun. The city itself is just one big, cybernetic system set on defending itself from invasion. The humans who originally set this system up are now irrelevant as it continues to carry out its programme.

Perhaps more pressing is the question of bio-technology. With the prospect of genetically engineered human beings seemingly just around the corner, we can no longer assume that technology is necessarily inanimate (Gray, 2002; Haraway, 1997). The boundaries between technology and technologist are far from clear cut if we consider bio-tech as the paradigmatic technology rather than the industrial machine.

The first question, that of the nature of agency and causation itself, is more fundamental. The question is not whether technology has become autonomous but whether it is even useful to think in terms of external causation and self-contained agency. This is where the idea of technology as text seems to have brought us the furthest. Grint and Woolgar (1997) reject all previous accounts of technology and socio-technical change as containing a kernel of technicism. Such accounts appeal to some concrete, objective fact about the external world, whether technology itself or social factors made objective through technology, in order to explain change. Instead, Grint and Woolgar insist that everything is interpretation. To understand

socio-technical change we have to look at how users and designers of technology interpret what an artefact is and what it can do. The danger with this approach then, is not that technology disappears from the account, but that without care and attention, an essentialism of the subject may sneak in. What needs to be considered further is the question of human agency and the nature of those assumed to be reading, or interpreting, the technological text. To consider this question, the next chapter goes 'after' this elusive human subject.

Chapter 2 – ‘After’ the Human

Man is neither a natural fact nor a product of his own creativity, but a cyborg even then, an android straight off the production lines of modernity’s disciplines. What makes this figure so tragic is the extent to which he has been programmed to believe in his own autonomy. Marked by the “meticulous observation of detail, and at the same time a political awareness of these small things, for the control and use of men... from such trifles, no doubt, the man of modern humanism was born.”

(Sadie Plant, 1997: 99 – citing Michel Foucault, 1977: 141)

Are we coming or going?

Although there are significant differences between competing approaches to the question of technology within the social sciences, as we have seen, what most theorists of technology will agree on is that technological determinism is a theoretically impoverished and politically conservative doctrine that has long and justifiably been discredited. Nevertheless, almost all new theories of technology feel the need to position themselves against technological determinism, an opposition that reached what is perhaps its apogee with the publication of Grint and Woolgar’s (1997) *The Machine at Work*. Emblematic of a more generalised ‘textual turn’ in organization studies, this book raised questions about the possibility of pursuing a thoroughgoing and symmetrical anti-essentialism through text/reader based versions of social constructivism. After considering this turn, however, we were left wondering less about the question of technology that initially opened this investigation, and more about the seemingly elusive figure of the human who is simultaneously opposed to technology, and behind it. In this section of the thesis we

continue to go 'after' this human subject in a number of ways. In the first instance we will continue our pursuit of the human in an attempt to ascertain just what 'the human' might be. Going back to Descartes (1986) and the schism between subjects and objects that Bruno Latour (1993) has suggested is fundamentally characteristic of modernity (though working with different thinkers), this chapter will consider again the limits of the radical doubt that characterise Grint and Woolgar's (1997) textual turn. Finding that simply doubting the existence or truth of objects is insufficient if we are to retain an element of symmetry within our analysis, the chapter continues by turning to Nietzsche (1968; 1989; 1994) to develop a more symmetrical anti-essentialist scepticism that questions both the objective world of facts and the knowing subject of epistemology.

So why would we, like Descartes, assume that there is a relatively centred subject 'I' who thinks and knows (Descartes, 1986)? For Nietzsche the answer to this question lies in the grammatical structures of language itself (Nietzsche, 1989; 1994). Considering these ideas further leads to an inversion of the textual turn so that rather than 'technology as text' we have 'texts as technologies'. This approach, I argue, is very much in line with Katherine Hayles (1999) conception of language as a 'primary pros(e)thesis': something simultaneously external to the human and yet intrinsic to it. If we pursue this logic however, then we can no longer talk of a relationship between the human and technology (including language) as there is no longer a pre-technological human subject to be placed into a relationship with a textual/technological outside. Also, as useful as it may be, this inversion continues to

simply equate technology and text only privileging the former rather than the latter. If we want to maintain what is specific to the spheres of language and technology then perhaps another approach is required? Borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) reading of anthropology, the relationship between language and technology is reworked in such a way as to maintain the essential distinction between technology and language by using them as the two poles of a dualism with no reference to a human subject per se. This development of what Deleuze and Guattari call the anthropomorphic stratum (1987: 60) unfortunately raises other questions, primarily relating to the issue of representation and the distinction of words and things, but also – and perhaps more fundamentally – why we would want to *go* after the human in this way at all. As such, Deleuze and Guattari point to an alternative reading of 'after' the human.

Acknowledging their debt to Nietzsche we should recognise that just as his, and Zarathustra's, regular announcement of the death of God actually pointed to the more disturbing death of man and the need to 'overcome' humanity (Nietzsche, 1969), so Deleuze and Guattari's question 'Who does the earth think it is?' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 39) prefigures their questioning of anthropocentric arrogance: 'Who does man think he is?' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 63). This question points to the importance of the following sections and the question of what might *come* 'after' the human: the post-human or trans-human after-man. Bringing together these two questions of representation and the post-human leads us in to the next chapter and the writing of William S. Burroughs whose work can be seen as a continued and

concerted effort to escape from the limits of both writing and the human, at least partly through the use of technology (Hayles, 1999).

Did we miss a slip-road back at the textual turn?

What I have been calling the textual turn is essentially a rejection of any appeal to ‘the facts’ as a source of external explanation for organizational or social phenomenon. In our discussion of technology however, we saw how this idea was premised upon a narrow conception of the social that ultimately rejected the human/non-human symmetry of actor-network theory in favour of a text based social ontology. This approach takes us a long way as a critique of more positivist strands within organization theory and represents a seemingly extreme version of the social constructivist approaches that now dominate critical perspectives on organization studies. Opposed to positivism (and the technologically determinist variant thereof) the textual approach occupies the subjective pole of an objective/subjective dualism.

This recognition of subjectivity has been widely discussed within the literature on methodology, focusing on questions of reflexivity, whether as a potentially distorting factor to be minimised or something to be recognised as an inevitable feature of any academic inquiry and therefore to be embraced. In relation to our concerns in this thesis however, this subjectivity raises the question of what this ‘subject’ is. It is my argument that whilst Grint and Woolgar successfully critique the positivistic assumptions underlying appeals to an external technological essence, a *deus ex machina* as they put it (Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 4), a truly thoroughgoing anti-essentialism also needs to engage reflexively with the counter-assumptions of agency

mobilised when positing an interpreter as the source of interpretation. As Nietzsche put it, writing over one hundred years before Grint and Woolgar:

Against positivism, which halts at phenomena – “There are only *facts*” – I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact “in itself”: perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing.

“Everything is subjective,” you say; but even this is interpretation. The “subject” is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is. – Finally, is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis.

(Nietzsche, 1968: 267, emphasis in original)

From scientific positivism (technological determinism) theorists have moved to a position of radical interpretivism (the textual turn). They have argued against an uncritical acceptance of “the facts”, but in doing so they risk falling back upon an all too human agency that lies behind the process of interpretation. Before a concern with the objective world of technology can be replaced with an exclusive focus on the subjective dimensions of interpretation, a more rigorous analysis of the subject is required, and with it a reappraisal of agency and social change.

Subjects and Objects

As is often the case, the most interesting question when faced with philosophical dualisms such as determinism versus freedom or positivism versus interpretivism is to ask what it is that lies between the two. By this I do not mean searching for a kind of happy medium, a ‘third way’ compromise taking a bit from each. Nor am I

suggesting a synthesis that would subsume the two sides of the dualism into a higher unity. Rather, following Robert Cooper (1998) and Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987) this examination of the *between* seeks to examine the ways in which the two sides of a dualism are interdependent, each upon the other for its definition, and to explore the common perspective that their mutual articulation assumes. In this case, what both sides of the debate assume, the common ground upon which the dualism is articulated, is that of a centred and relatively stable human subject who perceives and knows *in relation to* an external world. This remains the case even when the relationship of the knowing subject to the external world of objects is one of separation. The simple difference is that whilst positivism assumes that this world is knowable, subjectivism assumes that it reflects the internal organization of the perceiver⁶. Both paradigms, if we can use that word in this context, share a set of underlying assumptions about the human subject that we might characterise as an anthropocentric epistemology. Their theories of knowledge assume a knowing subject, whose knowledge is a representation of an object external to it. This relation of externality obtains even in disciplines like psychology where the object of study is the human subject, taken outside of itself and viewed object-ively. In object-oriented approaches to social science, it is the knowing subject that is at the heart of epistemology. The same is true of interpretivism. Regardless of the subject's ability to access the external object, or the mediations through which this access has to pass, the knowing human subject remains the focus (and locus) of epistemology. Even radical interpretivists risk perpetuating this epistemological anthropocentrism if, as Nietzsche puts it, they posit an interpreter behind every interpretation.

Can We Doubt Too Much?

There are two key points arising from this, one relating to the question of symmetry and the other relating to scepticism. In their approach, Grint and Woolgar (1997) insist that one should always be sceptical about the facts that are mobilised to explain specific events. As an example they cite Michel Callon's example of the 'failure' of the catalysts for the power source of an electric car (Callon, 1986b). The use of this fact as a component of explanation is, they suggest, a kind of technicism. The question that Callon should properly have asked was 'Who says catalysts had this unfortunate tendency, how and why did they say so, and why does this particular version prevail?' (Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 31). This scepticism demonstrates a radical doubt reminiscent of Descartes' philosophical method which led him eventually to proclaim with victorious certainty: 'Cogito ergo sum' (Descartes, 1986: 17; 68). Once again, however, Nietzsche is there to put an end to premature certainty and celebration by doubting even this (1989: 24). Wherefore an 'I' that thinks? The subject, he suggests, is merely a prejudice of grammar. Faced with a verb, we assume that it must have a subject. 'Thinking' grammatically implies a subject who thinks, but this does not mean that such is either necessary or true. Nietzsche offers the example of a lightning strike (Nietzsche, 1994: 28). When we say "lightning strikes," we imply an agency to the lightning that is little more than a prejudice carried over from a primitive anthropomorphism:

there is no 'being' behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it; 'the doer' is invented as an afterthought, - the doing is everything.

(Nietzsche, 1994: 28)

Few people today would really believe that there is a subject 'lightning' who 'strikes' like an angry god, yet we have no better reason for assuming the existence of a subject of thought. Indeed, a little introspection suggests that thoughts are anything but consciously willed:

...a thought comes when "it" wishes, and not when "I" wish, so that it is a falsification of the facts of the case to say that the subject "I" is the condition of the predicate "think". *It* thinks; but that this "it" is precisely the famous old "ego" is, to put it mildly, only a supposition, an assertion, and assuredly not an "immediate certainty." After all, one has even gone too far with this "it thinks" – even the "it" contains an *interpretation* of the process, and does not belong to the process itself. One infers here according to the grammatical habit: "Thinking is an activity; every activity requires an agent; consequently-"

(Nietzsche, 1989: 24, emphasis in original)

This points to the danger of an asymmetrical approach to the study of organization and technology. One of the great contributions of actor-network theory is an insistence upon a principle of symmetry (Latour, 1987). In *Science in Action*, Latour suggests that the human and non-human actors that comprise an actor-network, or social hybrid, should be accorded equivalent importance in explanations of socio-technical change. If this is taken as meaning that objects should be given the same

weight as subjects in social explanations, then Grint and Woolgar's accusation of 'residual technicism' may be justified. Indeed, the assertion that we pay equal attention to technical objects seems entirely in tune with the common-sense reassertion of the importance of the limits of technological artefacts in approaches such as Hutchby's (2001). The principle of symmetry can also be read the other way however. If we insist upon a methodological symmetry of treatment of human and non-human, as Latour suggests (1987: 144), then it seems clear that Grint and Woolgar's radical scepticism should equally be extended to include human subjects. In the final question then, can we take scepticism so seriously that we doubt the existence of a subject of interpretation, conceiving instead of a process without external agency: an agency immanent to process, as it were? Such a concept necessitates a reworking of the 'it' of agency or the subject of process.

It's machines all the way down...⁷

In the first part of *Beyond Good and Evil*, 'On the Prejudices of Philosophers', Nietzsche questions whether the "it" that thinks is the 'famous old "ego"' (Nietzsche, 1989: 24). The question of what "it" might be is also taken up by Deleuze and Guattari at the start of *Anti-Oedipus*, when they write:

It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said *the id*. Everywhere *it* is machines – real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 1)

In a critique that thoroughly decentres the Cartesian ego, and coming after Freud, Deleuze and Guattari privilege the “it” – closer to ‘id’ than ‘ego’ - as the site of human actions and drives. If there is no coherent, unified ego, then what is ‘it’? What is a subject? In a move that gives new meaning to the phrase ‘the machine at work’, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that *it* is machines. Far from ‘the machine’ being a question of textual interpretation by a reading subject however, the subject is itself a question of machines and their connections and breaks. Like Nietzsche, and against Freud’s drive to contain subjectivization within an Oedipal id-entity, Deleuze and Guattari recognise that ‘it’ is not even singular. As they put it elsewhere, “the brain is a population” (1987: 64).

We should not assume that Deleuze and Guattari’s machines are simple extensions of the mechanical metaphor, however. If we read these ideas in the light of Nietzsche’s critique of atomism, we might rather consider Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas as a tongue-in-cheek rejection of mechanism, and a development of what Nietzsche called ‘a new soul-hypothesis’:

the way is open for new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis; and such conceptions as “mortal soul,” and “soul as subjective multiplicity,” and “soul as social structure of the drives and affects,”

(Nietzsche, 1989: 20)⁸

This multiplicity cannot be simply located as it is not singular. It is not even made up of discrete objects. As Deleuze and Guattari note, the machines of which they speak are part-objects and only make sense in relation to the connections and the flows that they simultaneously interrupt and produce (1983: 5-6). In this sense they are also heterogeneous. They always connect to an outside of social relations, bureaucratic hierarchies and technical machines so that they are never *self* contained. Subjects are constantly spilling over into objects and visa versa, if the distinction is even meaningful anymore. As Callon and Latour interpret this point:

We should miss the point completely, if we distinguish between ‘individuals’ and ‘institutions’; if we supposed that the first fell within the sphere of psychology, and the second of economic history.

(Callon and Latour, 1981: 279-280)⁹

Elsewhere, Latour has suggested that modernity is characterised by a labour of division which attempts to separate subject and object, consigning each to a distinct and separate sphere of representation (political representation for subjects and scientific representation in the laboratory for objects) (Latour, 1993). In this respect, Nietzsche’s assault on the human subject was precociously post-modern¹⁰, but more paradigmatic of the ‘post-modern’ today, however, is the science-fictional trope of the cyborg, popularised in the social sciences by Donna Haraway in the late 1980s (Haraway, 1990; Gray, 1995; Kirkup et al, 2000). In relation to the questions pursued in this paper, the most interesting feature of the cyborg is its material heterogeneity. Unlike the traditional humanist subject, the cyborg is comprised of both technology

and flesh. In this simple, foundational point the cyborg upsets the whole epistemological apple-cart that depends upon the continued separation of humans and technologies, of subjects and objects. Paraphrasing Latour - we have never been human. Or perhaps more properly, we have always been cyborgs (Davies, 1998: 10).

A Cooperian Revolution

Cyborg theory and post-structuralism suggest that technology and subjectivity are immanent within one another. In this respect, Robert Cooper's idea that our technologies are also components of our sense perception apparatus – e.g. Renaissance art, perspectivism and the point of view, the camera etc. – is important as it demonstrates that apparently external artefacts stand in a complex relationship of becoming with the human subject (Cooper, 2001; Chia, 1998). In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, this becoming is not one of imitation – the eye becoming exactly like a camera – but one of mutual co-adaptation. As they put it in relation to the question of the orchid and the bee:

...the orchid seems to reproduce an image of the bee but in a deeper way deterritorializes into it, at the same time that the bee in turn deterritorializes by joining with the orchid: the capture of the code, and not the reproduction of an image. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 14)¹¹

In this way, we have to understand that the development and use of a new technology means that an element of the human is captured by that technology, and in being captured is translated in a quite literal sense: it is transformed, not simply

transplanted. Even this translation is not one way however as the human is also translated in this process. Within the context of a continually changing technological environment then, to talk of a stable human subject at one end of an oppositional binarism with 'technology' is not only overly simplistic, it also has important political and axiological ramifications. It is for this reason that I have somewhat jokingly entitled this section 'a Cooperian revolution'. Just as Copernicus' scientific revolution was to de-centre the place of the human in the universe by moving from a geocentric to a heliocentric world view (Kuhn, 1970; Mazlish, 1993), the decentring of a pretechnological, subject, explored in the work of Robert Cooper and his colleagues, suggests that the anthropocentric world view is grounded in an essentialist, all too human arrogance.

If we return to our earlier discussion of language, we can see that what Nietzsche (1989) called a 'grammatical prejudice' is precisely a component of such a becoming. Conditioned by the linguistic norms that in part comprise consciousness, the mind is able to locate, and thereby speak of¹², the subject as a seat of understanding and knowledge. Indeed it does so 'naturally', as it were, because of the ways in which this component of the sensing and conceptual apparatus is structured¹³. What is important is to not confuse this location, a product of the mind, with the mind itself:

...the mind is not a *place* – it doesn't have a specific location. Places and locations are the *products* of the mind's work... The conscious mind is an active field of cognitive strategies which *orders* the matter of the world – it literally puts things in order

(Chia and Kallinikos, 1998: 131, emphasis in original)

What should be clear is that language, its grammar and conceptual categories, is itself a part of this mind that orders and structures. A point that complicates the subsumption of technology under the linguistic rubric of 'text'. If we recognise that the mind is a kind of ecology (Bateson, 1973; Guattari, 2000) that is characterised by a number of becomings with what, in more conventional terms would be considered external objects, tools or technologies – particularly technologies of representation – then we can appreciate that language is itself one such technology, albeit one that has a major influence on perception and cognition. If we follow this strategy then we effectively invert Grint and Woolgar's approach as texts are themselves technologies. The idea is similar to Katherine Hayles' discussion of language as a primary pros(e)thesis (Hayles, 1999). Language is simultaneously something external to the human subject and a distinguishing feature of the human¹⁴. This is one respect in which we can claim that we have always been cyborgs or, to put it another way, that the human has always been post-human. The human mind and its perceptive apparatus is constituted by a relationship of becoming with its prosthetic technologies, primary amongst which is language.

There is a danger however that adhering to a prosthetic logic will keep technology, so to speak, at arms length (Plant, 1997). It is almost too easy, with this formulation, to fall back into thinking about technologies of representation as external to a pre-existent, pre-technological human subject (the pure human that *we* have always been 'post'). To consider this relationship of externality further, we need to look at the later

work of Deleuze and Guattari¹⁵, who address this question in a way that refuses to either reduce the question of technology to one of linguistics, or vice versa. Perhaps yet again we need to rethink our dualisms and this time jettison the human subject altogether.

Deleuze and Guattari on the Anthropomorphic Stratum

In the third of their Thousand Plateaus - '10,000 B.C: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)' - Deleuze and Guattari inform us, in the guise of Conan-Doyle's Professor Challenger, that the Earth, despite being a body without organs, is nevertheless subject to a process of stratification (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 40). Indeed, what we usually call reality is made up of a series of strata. The most obvious of these is the physico-chemical stratum, which includes those strata more traditionally studied by geologists. A second stratum is the organic stratum, which includes embryology and genetic code. Of more interest to us here however is the third stratum that Deleuze and Guattari discuss in detail: the anthropomorphic stratum. Before we consider the details of this stratum, and the significance of this approach for the subject of this paper however it is worth briefly introducing Deleuze and Guattari's idea of stratification in a little more detail¹⁶.

What is stratification?

Deleuze and Guattari start from the premise that the Earth is a body without organs, a comparatively dedifferentiated plane which, through processes of coding and territorialisation, is organized into a series of strata. The strata, which they refer to as 'judgements of God', are not fixed and permanent, however, as the Earth constantly

escapes these judgements, decoding and deterritorializing itself along various lines of flight (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 40). Nevertheless, as impermanent as the strata may be, the geological metaphor should alert us to the fact that the time-scales within which stratification occurs can be huge, and often beyond immediate perception. This gives the strata a semblance of permanence that justifies our calling them 'reality'.

Stratification, as befits the judgements of a God who Deleuze and Guattari characterise as "a Lobster, or a double pincer, a double bind" (1987: 40), takes place by a process of double articulation that turns our attention back to the dualisms that have been surfacing throughout this paper. Deleuze and Guattari complicate simple dualisms, however, in two ways. On the one hand they consider the question of the between. As Deleuze has acknowledged elsewhere, writing with Claire Parnet:

We may be criticized for not escaping from dualism... But what defines dualism is not the number of terms, any more than one escapes from dualism by adding other terms (x2). You only escape dualisms effectively by shifting them like a load, and when you find between the terms, whether they are two or more, a narrow gorge like a border or a frontier which will turn the set into a multiplicity, independently of the number of parts. What we call an assemblage is, precisely, a multiplicity.

(Deleuze and Parnet, 1987: 132)

This machinic assemblage is what lies between, but remains distinct from, the strata: the surface of stratification as it were. The second complication of simple dualism is

to double it so that, like a lobster with two claws on each of its two pincers, each part of a double articulation is itself double. On the physico-chemical stratum, an example of the first articulation is the production of flysch through sedimentation. Substances are selected from unstable particle flows which also gives them a 'statistical order of connections and successions,' or form. Where the first articulation goes from substance to form, the second operates in the other direction and proceeds by establishing stable structures or forms, which are simultaneously actualised in molar compounds, or substances. An example of this would be the folding that produces sedimentary rock. In this way, the articulations both have substance and form, territoriality and code (1987: 41).

Rather than corresponding to forms and substances then, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the two articulations correspond more closely to Louis Hjelmslev's content and expression, each of which has its own forms and substances¹⁷. For clarity, these relationships are represented in a table below.

Matter	The plane of consistency or body without organs: “...the unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows: subatomic and submolecular particles, pure intensities, prevital and prephysical free singularities” (1987: 43)
Content	Formed matter; considered from 2 perspectives: substance – “insofar as these matters are “chosen””

	<p><i>substance of content</i> - articulation 1, part 1</p> <p>form – “insofar as they are chosen in a certain order”</p> <p><i>form of content</i> – articulation 1, part 2</p>
Expression	<p>Functional structures; considered from 2 perspectives:</p> <p>substance – “the organization of their own specific forms”</p> <p><i>substance of expression</i>¹⁸ – articulation 2, part 1</p> <p>form – “substances insofar as they form compounds”</p> <p><i>form of expression</i> – articulation 2, part 2</p>

The relationship of expression and content is quite distinct from the semiotic relationship of signifier and signified however. In appropriating Hjelmlev’s linguistic net, we should not see Deleuze and Guattari as following other writers around the textual turn and reducing all of reality to a question of signifier and signified. Their utilisation of Hjelmslev’s net is neither linguistic in scope nor origin (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 43). As Ronald Bogue puts it, “The end result of Deleuze and Guattari’s analysis of the content and expression of the strata of reality is not to convert the world into signs, but to situate material signs within a substrate of matter”

(Bogue, 1989: 126). An important correlation of this difference, is that unlike signifier and signified, there is no hierarchical relationship between content and expression. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari note that the plane of content and the plane of expression are arbitrary designations that cannot be determined by their respective functionings. Rather content and expression are mutually defined by their opposition. Their respective determination is simply a question of habit. Citing Hjelmslev:

[Content and expression] are defined only oppositively and relatively, as mutually opposed functions of one and the same function.

(Hjelmslev, 1969: 60, cited in Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 45)

The parallels between this approach and elements of Robert Cooper's work on assemblage are clear. What is important is not so much the fact of a dualism, as the relationship between the two sides, and the common ground upon which this is articulated: what Deleuze and Parnet referred to as 'a border' or 'frontier' and Cooper refers to as 'the seam' (Cooper, 1998). This leaves us with the question of what *is* the relationship between the two articulations of content and expression, and what lies *between* them? There is no general answer to this question as it varies from stratum to stratum, so to make this discussion relevant to our study of language and technology we will now turn our attention to the specificities of the anthropomorphic stratum.

Key features of the anthropomorphic stratum

Deleuze and Guattari do not begin with an *a priori* human subject that is separable from technology or the external world of objects. Instead they start by considering the relationships, or distributions, that characterise the anthropomorphic (or human) stratum. Following André Leroi-Gourhan, they consider the ways in which the key properties of human-beings, “technology and language, tool and symbol, free hand and supple larynx, “gesture and speech” are in fact properties of [a] new distribution” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 60). For Leroi-Gourhan, human evolution has been the result of complementary changes in the mouth and the hands that have enabled tool use and language to emerge in parallel. When men begin to move in a more upright position, the hands are freed from their locomotive functioning to take on other functions, such as making and using tools. With free hands and tools, the mouth is freed from those functions where it has to act on the external world, for example to carry things, or to tear and grind food. This deterritorialization of the mouth frees it up for other purposes, such as language (Bogue, 1989: 128-9). These parallel de- and re-territorializations of the hand and tool, mouth and language are what the human is. From this perspective then, there is no human subject outside language and technology, no clear separation of subject and object. Rather, it is a specific stratification, the result of shifting territorializations and codings on the strata, that produces the distribution we usually call ‘human’. Further, such shifts do not occur in isolation:

Not only is the hand a deterritorialized front paw; the hand thus freed is itself deterritorialized in relation to the grasping and locomotive hand of the monkey. The synergistic deterritorializations of the other organs (for example, the foot) must be taken into account. So must correlative deterritorializations of the milieu: the steppe as an associated milieu more deterritorialized than the forest, exerting a selective pressure of deterritorialization upon the body and technology (it was on the steppe, not in the forest, that the hand was able to appear as a free form, and fire as a technologically formable matter). Finally, compensatory reterritorializations must be taken into account (the foot as a compensatory reterritorialization for the hand, also occurring on the steppe).

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 61)

Neither can they be separated. The supple larynx, lips, and the flattening and ‘motricity of the face’ could not come about without changes in the hands and tools.

Technology and language, content and expression

If we impose the Hjelmslevian net developed above onto this distribution, then content is linked to the hand-tool couple, and expression with the face-language couple (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 60). But as we have seen, this is no simple relationship. It spirals out to connect with associated and compensatory territorialities and codings, so that content and expression cannot be reduced simply to tools and language:

Content should be understood not simply as the hand and tools but as a technical social machine that preexists them and constitutes states of force or formations of power. Expression should be understood not simply as the face and language, or individual languages, but as a semiotic collective machine that preexists them and constitutes a regime of signs. A formation of power is much more than a tool; a regime of signs is much more than a language.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 63)

If we go back to Lynn White's example of the stirrup and Feudal society, then we can ask what it was that put horses, men and iron into such a specific relationship:

The history of technology shows us that a tool is nothing without the variable machine assemblage which gives it a certain relationship of vicinity with man, animals and things:... the stirrup is a different tool depending upon whether it is related to a nomadic war-machine, or whether, on the contrary, it has been taken up in the context of the feudal machine. It is the machine that makes the tool and not vice versa.

(Deleuze and Parnet, 1987: 104-105)

So once again, it is the relationship between things that is primary. As we know, this machinic assemblage¹⁹ is the surface of stratification that distributed content and expression in their specific relationship. The precise relationship between technology and language as the content and expression of the anthropomorphic stratum, is not yet clear, however. We have rejected a regular one way relationship between expression and content, like that between signifier and signified for example, and noted that the

relationship varies from stratum to stratum. On the anthropomorphic stratum, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the relationship is both real and essential:

And the distinction is not simply real, as between molecules, things, or subjects; it has become *essential* (as they used to say in the Middle Ages), as between attributes, genres of being, or irreducible categories: things and words.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 64)

This 'real and essential' difference suggests a further complication of the approaches discussed earlier. We are neither warranted to reduce things to words (technology to text), nor words to things (text to technology) so if we want to understand technology, language and their interrelations then we need to keep this essential distinction between words and things in mind. It is just that this relationship is never simple. As each and every articulation is double, there are relative contents within expression and vice versa, so that hands have a gestural form of expression of their own (i.e. within content) and in language phonemes (comprised of linear strings of monemes) themselves become a relative content within expression.

A contemporary example of one such relative expression within content would be Sadie Plant's example of the ways in which the mobile phone has de- and re-territorialized the thumb so that a generation of 'texters', those who use their mobile phone as a text messaging device, now have the thumb as their dominant digit (Plant, 2001). In this example, a new relationship between hand and technology has given rise to a new form of expression that subsists within the hand-tool couple. Of course,

even this has knock on effects, so that the thumb is increasingly the digit of choice for other activities such as ringing door-bells (Plant, 2001).

Text(iles): words and things

Deleuze and Guattari do not assume an a-priori human subject that is separable from technology or the external world of objects. Rather they employ the concept of 'folding' to describe a relationship between inside and outside, so that the subject is an enfolding of the external (Wise, 1997: 60). By thus rejecting the Cartesian logic of separate subjects and objects, Deleuze and Guattari have developed a thoroughly anti-essentialist starting point for their exploration of 'the human' and the relationships between language, technology, epistemology and subjectivity. Instead of starting with a pre-given human subject, they begin by considering the relationships, or distributions, that characterise the anthropomorphic (or human) stratum.

But when we turn to consider these relationships in more detail we seem to run into difficulties. Can we really insist upon a real and essential distinction between words and things? In the text of *A Thousand Plateaus*, the word 'word' appears as a collection of print ink particles, adhering to the wood-pulp paper of the page. It appears as a thing. Similarly, the word 'thing' is just that: a word. This simple paradox, coupled with the relative contents that appear within expression and expressions that appear within content, suggest that the relationship between language and tools, expression and content, text and technology, is anything but clear and simple. As Robert Cooper has suggested, following Foucault and Magritte, 'words

burrow into things' and visa versa so that their relationship is a complex affair that has nothing to do with traditional conceptions of representation (Cooper, 2001: 343).

This interrelation if anything is further complicated by the advent of information technology as the relationship between the written word of software and technology all but disappears. As Robert Horvitz has suggested:

There's a traditional distinction between words – expressions of opinions, beliefs, and information – and deeds. You can shout "Revolution!" from the rooftops all you want, and the post office will obligingly deliver your recipes for nitroglycerin. But acting on all that information exposes you to criminal prosecution. The philosophical problem posed by [outlaw] hacking is that computer programs transcend this distinction: They are pure language that dictates action when read by the device being addressed.... Actions result automatically from the machine reading the word.

(Horvitz, cited in Dery, 1996: 66)

This lack of distinction between words and deeds reaches right into the heart of text based, virtual communities and computer mediated communications:

...language's ability to act on the virtual world inside the computer via operating code is echoed in computer-mediated human interaction, where description is indistinguishable from action. For example, sexually harassing messages on electronic bulletin boards are experienced by some on-line recipients as "verbal," even "physical" assaults, no less hurtful than the same actions in RL ("Real Life").

(Dery, 1996: 68)

In a sense, then, the very idea of computer software and computer mediated communications further problematise the text/technology binary by making objective actions the same as the words that conjure up those actions. Words and texts *are* material tools. This insight is similar to Sadie Plant's notion that software engineering, like weaving, destroys the conventional distinction between product and process (Plant, 1995; 1997). When weaving softwares – whether textile or code/text – the pattern that is programmed is the program and setting it up is everything, after that, you just run it on the hardware of the loom/computer. There is no real separation for Plant. As she puts it:

If the conventions of the visual arts had activated artists and their tools and divided them from pacified matrices, digitisation interweaves these elements again. On the computer monitor, any change to the image is also a change to the program...

(Plant, 1997: 189)

Using the example of digital art, Plant suggests that there is no longer a distinction between product/image and program/process. A change in the one means a change in the other. In our terminology this suggests that, at least with computers, there is no clear distinction between the world of technologies and texts. Software seamlessly flickers from one to the other regardless of imposed distinctions and along the way suggests an alternative to the metaphor of the text – the textile.

If computers are the power looms of the modern industrial revolution, software is more like knitting. Programmers still toil in digital sweatshops coding software by hand, writing and re-writing one tangled line after another. Not surprisingly, they sometimes drop a stitch, which later unravels as a bug in the program.

(The Economist, 29th Oct. 1994, cited in Plant, 1997: 127)

Unlike the text, the textile suggests an interweaving of words and things such that its pattern (expression) cannot be distinguished from its material base (content) but rather is attentive to the burrowings that an emphasis on finished texts seeks to gloss over or bury (Cooper, 2001; Cooper and Fox, 1990). This weaving of coded expression and material action takes on a particular significance in the context of the increasingly automated and computerised production systems of late capitalism. As capital is increasingly dependent upon a 'machinic surplus value' enabled by the communicative labour of techno-science (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 458), Plant's notion that the computer is the 'power loom of the modern industrial revolution' (1997: 127) opens new spaces both for analysing the contemporary production of value, and for theorising new spaces of resistance within the circuits of cybernetic capitalism (Dyer-Witheford, 1999).

To return to our current, more ontological and epistemological, concerns however, Cooper and Fox see two possible uses of the idea of the text. The first assumes that the text is a finished and completed product that is to be consumed through reading – what they refer to as glossing the text. The second pays attention to what Cooper

would later discuss as burrowing and refigure in relation to the crossword to develop an idea of the text as a weaving:

...weaving recognizes the implicit tendency of texture to transgress socially contrived meaning; the woven text opens out in a centrifugal way and can only be experienced as an activity of creative production, in which the agent/'reader' is caught up as an active element in the ongoing, unfinished movement of the text.

(Cooper and Fox, 1990: 578)

For Cooper, this has important implications for the notion of human subjectivity. Just as Plant has suggested that in weaving, the weaver as subject becomes wrapped up in, perhaps even woven by, the processes of weaving (Plant, 1995) so Cooper recognises that the ideas of weaving and burrowing have serious implications for the human:

In analysing the non-representational play in Magritte's work, Foucault used the expression 'burrowing words' to indicate the artist's preoccupation with the strange relationship between words and things. Language was not just a tool for expressing ourselves or helping us to cope with the world. As with Heidegger, Magritte saw that language actually constitutes us as human beings. What's more, language has a life of its own; it melds together words and images of objects, so that it's not possible to separate them.

...

Where representational thinking presents its objects as finite, finished products for the convenience of our mental consumption, burrowing brings out their partial, lateral and transient character; burrowing shows human being as a process that Bersani has

described as “multiple, indeterminate, undecidable, mobile, intervallic”, forever refinding and recreating itself from the *unfoundedness* of non-presence and negation.

(Cooper, 2001: 343-344, emphasis in original)

In other words, once we acknowledge that words and things burrow into one another, the ‘real and essential’ distinction that holds the anthropomorphic stratum together unravels, and with it human being as such.

Human-being or becoming-cyborg?

This idea that there is no real and essential distinction between words and things does not go against Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas on the anthropomorphic stratum. Rather, it should point out to us that the human was at best an effect realised for a while by a rigorous and rigid maintenance of this false distinction. The situation is very similar to Bruno Latour’s analysis of the great divide that produced modernity by separating off subjects and objects into two distinct spheres of representation: parliament and the laboratory (Latour, 1993). The end result of Latour’s study is to demonstrate that these lines of division could never be seriously maintained except by illusion, or perhaps delusion, so that modernity never was: we have never been modern. In a similar way, Deleuze and Guattari’s complicated and twisting discussion of the anthropomorphic stratum suggest that we have never been human (cf. Davis, 1998: 10). This realisation is played out at the end of plateau 3, when Deleuze and Guattari’s character professor challenger finds that in light of his ruminations, his human form can no longer be maintained. As their text merges from its initial

borrowings from Conan Doyle to the horror/sci-fi of H.P. Lovecraft, the difficulties of textually representing that which comes after the human are made abundantly clear. To quote the final sections of this plateau at some length:

It was over. Only later would any of this take on concrete meaning. The double-articulated mask had come undone, and so had the gloves and the tunic, from which liquids escaped. As they streamed away they seemed to eat at the strata of the lecture hall, which was filled with the fumes of olibanum and “hung with strangely figured arras.” Disarticulated, deterritorialized, Challenger muttered that he was taking the earth with him, that he was leaving for the mysterious world, his poison garden. He whispered something else: it is by headlong flight that things progress and signs proliferate. Panic is creation. A young woman cried out, her face “convulsed with a wilder, deeper, and more hideous epilepsy of stark panic than they had seen on human countenance before.” No one had heard the summary, and no one tried to keep Challenger from leaving. Challenger, or what remained of him, slowly hurried toward the *plane of consistency*, following a bizarre trajectory with nothing relative left about it. He tried to slip into a drum-gate, the particle Clock with its intensive clicking and conjugated rhythms hammering out the absolute: “The figure slumped oddly into a posture scarcely human, and began a curious, fascinated sort of shuffle toward the coffin-shaped clock.... The figure had now reached the abnormal clock, and the watchers saw through the dense fumes a blurred black claw fumbling with the tall, hieroglyphed door. The fumbling made a queer, clicking sound. Then the figure entered the coffin-shaped case and pulled the door shut after it.... The abnormal clicking went on, beating out the dark, cosmic rhythm which underlies all mystical gate-openings” – the Mechanosphere, or rhizosphere.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 73-74)

The final inhuman figure of Professor Challenger as he deterritorializes off into the rhizosphere raises a number of issues. If we reject glossy texts and fixed technological objects in favour of the woven textile, then the complex becomings of the human on the anthropomorphic stratum ultimately lead away from that stratum and into the rhizosphere where human being is replaced by a rhizomatic, becoming-cyborg. The question of representing this figure in the text will be dealt with more thoroughly in chapters three and four where we will look at some of the strategies that William Burroughs has engaged in to point away from the text to an outside of language whilst, as a writer, necessarily remaining within the confines of the written word.

Once we have raised the question of representation, and with it the question of knowledge and epistemology – how can we know something and represent that knowledge? – parallel questions of evaluation and life are raised. In short, what happens to human-being, when we have argued that even the grounds upon which an epistemology of extreme subjectivism is based are shaky? In *Creative Evolution*, Henri Bergson shows that epistemology is inexorably linked with bio-philosophy (Bergson, 1911/1998: xiii). In a similar vein, Nietzsche remarks that:

After having looked long enough between the philosopher's lines and fingers, I say to myself: by far the greater part of conscious thinking must still be included among instinctive activities, and that goes even for philosophical thinking... Behind all logic

and its seeming sovereignty of movement, too, there stand valuations or, more clearly, physiological demands for the preservation of a certain type of life.

(Nietzsche, 1989: 11)

Behind the apparently 'sovereign logic' of independent truths and certainty is the valuation of a distinctly human type of life: precisely that which Nietzsche sought to overcome (Nietzsche, 1969). As the questions that this thesis has raised touch on both what can count as knowledge and on this related question of the valuation of forms of life implicit in questions of epistemology, it is worth ending this chapter by considering the implications of rejecting human-being and the possibility of figuring a becoming-cyborg to replace it.

Cyborgs and acting human(ely)

Most people will doubtless feel some qualms about rejecting humanism, as for example Martin Parker or René ten Bos and Ruud Kaulingfreks who suggest that Deleuze and Guattari's alternatives to the human are 'cold' and in some senses in-human (Parker, 2000a; ten Bos and Kaulingfreks, 2002). For many people, the idea of the human and humanity is connected to a moral and political tradition of liberalism and tolerance of, even respect for, difference. To reject 'the human' is to reject these values in favour of a monstrously in-human, unfeeling and uncaring, almost mechanical rationality. Again the opposition between human and machine is evoked so that if we drop the emotional, warm heart of the one, the only option left to us is the cold, unfeeling and mechanical other. When we speak of terminating our

obsession with 'the human' it is precisely the figure of the cyborg in James Cameron's *Terminator* that comes to mind – unfeeling, unthinking, unblinking it cannot be reasoned with and will never stop until it has completed its pre-programmed mission.

If we accept this binary, then rejecting the human leads us inevitably into the realm of dehumanisation. Images of bureaucracy and Fordist production lines spring to mind where the living, breathing, feeling and thinking human being is *reduced* to a mindless automaton flipping burgers or tightening the same bolt day-in, day-out for fifty years. Of course, it is now a commonplace that this rationality of objectified dehumanisation is central both to the logic of modernity, bureaucracy and the horrors of the Nazi prison-camps (Bauman, 1989):

Historically, objectification is often a prerequisite to repression or worse. In Nazi Germany, deportees arriving at Auschwitz were shorn and tattooed with ID numbers whose true purpose was an open secret:

And as they gave me my tattoo number, B-4990, the SS man came to me, and he says to me, "Do you know what this number's all about?" I said, "No, sir." "Okay, let me tell you now, You are being dehumanized."

(Dery, 1996: 311, citing Berenbaum, 1993: 147)

But is this the only option? As this section has argued, the imposition of a simple binary that opposes humans and machines is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of what being human entails. Indeed, through considering the

interrelations between humans and machines, the very boundary that separates them has been thrown into doubt, but if we accept this, what can it mean to *be* a human, and conversely, to be dehumanized? In a letter that he wrote to the poet Alan Ginsberg on the 1st May, 1950, William Burroughs makes a relevant point when he suggests that the basic problem is that of treating 'human' as a noun:

You say that you have found out that you are just a human like other humans. Human, Alan, is an adjective, and its use as a noun is in itself regrettable. Besides, the statement is so general that it has no meaning. Of course human *beings* share certain similarities as they are of the same species. The capacity for infinite differentiation is to my mind a hugely important attribute of the human species and one frequently overlooked by social planners.

(Burroughs, in Harris, 1993: 68)

For Burroughs, then, human is an adjective that applies to specific beings, partly as a result of their being a part of the species, but more importantly in this context, as the result of exhibiting specific types of 'human' behaviour. In this sense one can be dehumanised by having all the markings and signifiers of humanity removed, such as name, clothes, hair etc. Indeed, all of these seemingly external and separate factors, which should be irrelevant to whether one is a human or not, in fact precisely constitute one's humanity as they enable the kind of differentiation that Burroughs is suggesting characterises the human species. The drive to singularise what *the* human *is*, whether in the here and now or by constraining and limiting what a human might become, is one of the fundamental points of Burroughs' early political critique

(Murphy, 1997). For now, however, I want to focus on the ways in which an emphasis on *the* human as a noun, actually means that humanism has for a long time been an essential component of social control and has served to limit the potential of difference in favour of reiterating a white, male, bourgeois norm as the benchmark against which one's humanity should be tested.

A taxonomy for human beings?

In her essay 'Taxonomy for Human Beings', Londa Schiebinger traces the development of the modern categories into which human beings fall (Schiebinger, 2000; Schiebinger, 1993). Returning to the natural taxonomies that Carolus Linnaeus developed in the mid 18th century, Schiebinger notes that most historians of science have tended to situate the *Systema naturae* within a line of intellectual development, but have ignored the gender politics surrounding and informing his system. The ways in which Linnaeus chose to situate humans in his system is quite informative in this respect however. In taking as the separate name for our species '*homo sapiens*', Linnaeus adopted a nomenclature that served to emphasise the rational, thinking side of human beings: characteristics traditionally associated with the male of the species. When it came to connecting humans to the animal realm, however, Linnaeus chose to emphasise a distinctively female feature, the mammary gland, which gave rise to the term 'mammals'. As Schiebinger notes, this was a rather strange choice and a distinct break from Linnaeus' usual methods of categorisation:

Although Linnaeus had based important aspects of plant taxonomy on sexual dimorphism, the term *Mammalia* was the only one of his major zoological divisions

to focus on reproductive organs and the only term to highlight a character associated primarily with the female.

(Schiebinger, 2000: 12)

By choosing the term *Mammalia*, meaning ‘of the breast’, Linnaeus was intervening in a political movement against wet-nursing which pointed to the importance and naturalness of breast-feeding. In doing so, however, he chose a term that really only applied to half of the species, and even them for only a short period of their lives (if at all): during lactation. Neither was this the only possible choice. Linnaeus could have chosen to adopt any of a number of features that all members of the mammals exhibit, such as hair, three-boned, hollow ears, or a four-chambered heart (Schiebinger, 2000: 11). Even if the act of breast-feeding was indispensable, then Linnaeus could have chosen a term such as *Lactentia* or *Sugentia* which both mean ‘the suckling ones’, a point that would at least have applied to both sexes of the species included in the category (Schiebinger, 2000: 15).

For Schiebinger, Linnaeus’ choice of terminology can only be explained in relation to the broader cultural and political trends that he is simultaneously a part of and subject to. Of particular significance was pressure from fellow naturalists and the church, who both considered his characterization of humans as animals to be heretical, or even blasphemous. After all, the Bible suggests that man was made in God’s image, so by rights he should not have any meaningful association with the lowly, Earth bound creatures.

When Linnaeus identified human beings with animals it is no coincidence that he chose to use a decidedly female characteristic associated with reproduction, whilst when he chose to separate ‘man’ from the animals, he chose *homo sapiens*:

within Linnaean terminology, a female characteristic (the lactating mamma) ties humans to brutes, while a traditionally male characteristic (reason) marks our separateness.

(Schiebinger, 2000: 16)

In a sense then, the act of separation that divides humans from their other – in this case ‘brute’ animals – is also an act that valorises specific human characteristics at the expense of others. As Schiebinger suggests, the end result of going after the human as Linnaeus did, is to exclude or marginalize vast swathes of humanity. In this example, women, by being associated primarily with their animal body and reproductive functions, are excluded from the full society of humans, with its rational discourse, and productivist (rather than reproductive) bias. The effect is to return to us a Cartesian schism, where the rational, thinking male is privileged over the irrational (even hysterical) and animal, female body. By associating women so closely with breasts and beasts the Enlightenment also separated them from civil society, seeking to restore them to their natural place in the social hierarchy:

It is remarkable that in the heady days of the French Revolution, when revolutionaries marched behind the martial and bare-breasted Liberty, the maternal breast became nature’s sign that women belonged only in the home. Delegates to the

French National Convention used the breast as a natural sign that women should be barred from citizenship and the wielding of public power.

(Schiebinger, 2000: 23)

By disassociating the rational world of public politics and citizenship from the irrational, lactating, animal body, truly human being is limited to man, but it is not only gender that is used as a criteria for dividing the human from its other. Schiebinger further extends her analysis by considering the question of race.

For European colonials in the 18th century, African men were usually considered to be childish, sensuous and primitive, and, therefore, not as fully developed as white, European males and incapable of self-governance. Indeed, in many ways this association of the black man with the animal body is a continuing feature of contemporary culture in which the 'superior' physique of the black male is emphasised both in terms of sporting and sexual prowess, and the black intellect is denigrated by psychologists because of the supposedly poor performance of racial minorities in IQ tests (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994; Kohn, 1995).

This almost exclusive emphasis on the body, and particularly its sexual characteristics, was even more pronounced in studies of African women, a trend that is exemplified by the interest in the Hottentot, whose large, 'pendulous' breasts and extended labia were the source of much excitement and speculation amongst the European intelligentsia:

Though naturalists has a good deal to say about breasts when considering racial characteristics among females, nothing excited these men more than the elongation of the labia minora, or inner vaginal lips, among the Hottentot. This “Hottetot apron” became the subject of countless books and articles, and much prurient popular and scientific speculation. Linnaeus was so taken with this supposed aspect of Hottentot anatomy that he (quite mistakenly) made it a characteristic of the entire “African” race.

(Schiebinger, 2000: 26)

Schiebinger recounts the story of one of these women who became known as the ‘Hottentot Venus’ and was exhibited throughout Europe as a public spectacle for much of her short adult life before being dissected and displayed piecemeal in its museums.

All of these examples highlight the ways in which the construction of *the* human is, and has been, premised upon the articulation of an ‘other’ to the human ‘self’. The intelligent use of language and creation of technology separates man from the animals and from machines. But within the bounds of the human species, divisions are created along similar lines, rearticulating a dividing line that all too often falls along the old fault lines of the Cartesian schism of mind and body. A similar point is made by Mark Dery, albeit in a more contemporary context, who, following Andrew Ross’s (1991a) discussion of the ‘cyberbole’ of the teleologically inclined posthumanists like RU Sirius and Queen Mu, suggests:

...Mu and Sirius's new dawn looks like the same old, hallowed humanism that has historically concealed its Western, white, increasingly technocratic interests behind high-minded rhetoric about what is best for "mankind." Humanism laid the philosophical groundwork... for European civilization's shameful dealings with the natural environment and the animal kingdom... Thus we are drawn to the inescapable conclusion that much of what passes for posthumanism is in fact egoism leavened with a dash of technocratic elitism, whether it is *Mondo 2000's* dictatorship of the neurotariat – the "sharpies, mutants and superbrights" in whom we must place our "faith" and "power" – or the Extropian triumph of the overman. The *Mondo* editorial and *Extropy* manifestos reverberate with what Ross calls "a voice that appears to speak the language of unfettered development, heedless of any concern for those who cannot keep up or who are subordinated as a result of the logic of underdevelopment."

(Dery, 1996: 306, citing Andrew Ross, 1991a: 163)

Just like the colonial apologists that Schiebinger discusses, the new generation of posthumanists and Extropians emphasise an quantitative evolutionary logic of development where one can be 'more' or 'less' evolved, wedding neo-Darwinism with the more familiar Cartesian dualism and Judeo-Christian, even Gnostic, ideals of transcendence beyond the physical (Davis, 1998). Along the way, the material world and the body are left behind, both in the sense of being denigrated as less important or more base, and in the sense that the body is a burden to be escaped from or evolved beyond. But we are perhaps getting ahead of ourselves. This chapter has served to problematise 'the human' and question why theory would want to go 'after' it in the sense of defining and normalizing a fixed and singular human identity, treating the

human as a noun and reified object. The second point of departure to which this chapter has led us involves thinking about what might come ‘after’ the human once this singularising and rather imperial logic has been rejected. To consider these issues more thoroughly the thesis now turns to William Burroughs and, through an examination of his major works of fiction, seeks to develop an impersonal, deindividualized account of this supplementary after-human.

In seeking to push anti-essentialist scepticism to a limit, the remainder of the thesis explores a trajectory that rejects a return to a safe, human centre, as is found for example in Martin Parker’s cyborg-humanism (Parker, 2000a), humanist accounts of new technology, organization and knowledge management (cf. Land and Corbett, 2001) and some Marxist theories of the labour process (Braverman, 1974). Instead, the following chapters follow Deleuze and Guattari and William S. Burroughs in developing a response to the problems of humanism that pushes the deterritorialization of the human subject beyond the limits of representation and recuperation within the productive circuits of cybernetic capitalism. Problematising representation as a function of power, operating hylomorphically to prescribe a limited set of forms and norms within which the human must fit, there is an obvious difficulty associated with attempts to represent the post-human. Representation both serves and operates through networks of power/knowledge in which the human can be caught and put to work, a process that underlies the three interlinked control systems that occupied much of Burroughs’ writing: capital, language and subjectivity (Murphy, 1997).

Pause – Borrowing Burroughs' Burrows

The shift from time to space may involve mutations as drastic and irreversible as the shift from water to land.

In the beginning was the word and the word *was* God. And what does that make us?

Ventriloquist's dummies. Time to leave the Word-God behind. "He atrophied and fell off me like horrible old gills" a survivor reported. "And I feel ever so much better."

(Burroughs, 1986: 105)

Deleuze and Guattari have made the observation that Kafka's writing operates as a kind of burrow, with multiple entry points but no single, clear line of approach provided by the texts themselves (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986). In this they compare Kafka's writings with the images of architecture found in his novels, for example in *Amerika* where the hotel itself is a kind of rhizomatic burrow that can be approached from a multitude of entry points (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 3). Another example of this burrowing can be found in *The Castle* where the eponymous building is impossible to approach directly (Kafka, 1992). When the land-surveyor first arrives in town, he tries to reach the castle on foot, but somehow never quite manages to get there. The roads all turn away just before the final approach so that the town's roads and pathways act as a kind of labyrinth. Instead of marching straight up to the gate, the land-surveyor has to approach the castle, and his supposed employers there, via a variety of unofficial approaches. In some instances these take the form of soliciting the official hierarchy of the castle through the unofficial, and even illicit means of the

sexual exploitation of women who K. believes can aid his cause, as for example with Frieda and Pepi, the two bar-maids from The Herrenhof, an inn frequented by the lords of the castle. At other times K. tries to approach the castle officials directly, but can only do so within the burrow-like confines of the passages and small rooms underneath the inn, where administrative underlings both hold office and sleep. Ultimately, the apparently arborescent hierarchy of bureaucratic organization at the castle is itself shown to be rhizomatic and less than conventionally rational, as for example in the depiction of bureaucratic functioning described by Kafka on pages 58-76.

In a similar way, Burroughs' writing can also be approached as a burrow. The points of entry are manifold and lead in different directions, with different results dependent upon how far and in which direction they are followed. Perhaps more importantly, the method of the cut-up that Burroughs uses extensively in his writing breaks down a simple linear or arborescent logic of narrative and either/or binary oppositions in favour of intentionally random and chance conjunctions that produce novel breaks and linkages. The critical question is not 'what does this mean?' - the search for a signifier - but rather 'what connects?' As Deleuze and Guattari put it:

We will be trying only to discover what other points our entrance connects to, what crossroads and galleries one passes through to link two points... Only the principle of multiple entrances prevents the introduction of the enemy, the Signifier and those attempts to interpret a work that is actually only open to experimentation

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 3)

In the most literal sense this means that, with a text like *Naked Lunch*, the reader can enter the text pretty much anywhere. Although *Naked Lunch* is not strictly a cut-up, its routines and performances have no clear order or progression in which they must be read to make sense or have their meaning revealed. The various sections were written during Burroughs' stay in Tangier in the 1950s and much of this material was not even intended as a single book – a complete work – but rather was taken from love letters written to Alan Ginsberg and various other sources (Harris, 1993). Even the final arrangement of *Naked Lunch* was not entirely Burroughs' own work but was rather the result of a collaboration with Kerouac and Ginsberg, both of whom had come to Tangier to visit Burroughs with the express intention of helping him to get the manuscript into publishable shape. In this sense, there is another link with some of Kafka's work, such as *The Trial*, in which the final order of the sections was more down to Max Brod's editorial decisions after Kafka's death, than any original authorial intention. Interestingly, it was *The Trial*, along with several other texts, that Burroughs later cut-up with his own writing from this time: a trunk full of disordered pieces he collectively referred to as 'the word horde' and which formed the basis for both *Naked Lunch* and the Nova trilogy.

In its potential for multiple entry-points and pathways, *Naked Lunch* is also similar to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* in which "[e]ach plateau can be read starting anywhere and can be related to any other plateau" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 22)²⁰. This is not only because they stand relatively independently, each being useful in their own right, but also because the connections between them can only be

explored through experiment. In this sense the book is more like a toolbox than a traditional text. It can do an awful lot, but pinning down its meaning is a rather more problematic endeavour. We will return to the specific question of the Signifier (as both God and Word) and its status within Burroughs' work in chapter four. For now the point is simply that this notion of Burroughs' work, like Kafka's and Deleuze and Guattari's, being a kind of rhizomatic, animal burrow, provides both a justification for the seemingly gratuitous use of homophonous punning in the title of this section, and also points to a reworking of the relationship between author, reader, text, meaning and reference.

The Burrow

In a recent interview, Robert Cooper has noted that the idea of the burrow connects to the basic question of language and reference, words and things (Cooper, 2001). Borrowing from Foucault's analysis of the paintings of René Magritte in 'This is Not a Pipe' (Foucault, 2000²¹), Cooper notes that:

Foucault used the expression 'burrowing words' to indicate the artist's preoccupation with the strange relationship between words and things. Language was not just a tool for expressing ourselves or helping us to cope with the world. As with Heidegger, Magritte saw that language actually constitutes us as human beings. What's more, language has a life of its own; it melds together words and images of objects, so that it's not possible to separate them. The word burrows into the object just as the object burrows into the word. In this process, the burrow buries the conventional distinction between language and its referents... Magritte's approach underlines the intense interdependence between human life and its objects to the extent that an individual

life cannot be understood as being separate from the objects that support its existence. The life and the objects *borrow* their existences from each other.

(Cooper, 2001: 343-344, emphasis in original)

When we consider the relationship between the human, technological objects and language, the idea of the burrow and burrowing draws out the ways in which these conceptions implicate themselves into one another. Human life, language and objects are all interdependent in the sense that we can never clearly delineate them, or separate them. Bereft of their connections there would be literally *no-thing* left of which to speak. This point, as Cooper, Magritte and Foucault make clear, creates a serious problem for the whole project of conceiving language as representation. To this list I would add William Burroughs.

With the possible exception of his first novel, Burroughs' writing invariably deals with language itself in a complex and complicating way. He does not fall easily into the simple literary categories with which people have tried to pigeonhole him: satirist (Eric Mottram (1977) and Burroughs himself (1986)), pornographer (David Lodge (1991)), nihilist (Ihab Hassan (1963)), proto-cyberpunk (Larry McCaffery (1991)) or postmodernist (Robin Lydenberg (1987)). As an author his relationship to words was also difficult. Given that amongst Burroughs' central themes control, language and identity figure large, it is important to recognise that his writing was simultaneously an attempt to escape from control *by* the word, and an exploration of systems of control (including language) *through* words. At times this brought him to the recognition that as an author, he was as much written as writing (Burroughs, 1985:

12). Exploring this question of writing, subjectivity, language and control, Burroughs' projects variously exhorted the need to 'rub out the word', and yet this proclamation is necessarily made using words. It is precisely these paradoxes, and Burroughs' attempts to overcome them, sometimes using quite material technologies, that make his work so interesting. As these issues will be returned to during the course of the following chapters, I want to now turn to a less burrowing, and more structured reading of Burroughs' work through three distinct, but interconnected, systems of control.

On the subject of control...

In strictly literary terms the strength of Burroughs's writing is to be found in its many paradoxes. If there is one constant running throughout his work then it is surely the fear of control. His novels display an almost psychotic vigilance for imprisoning systems, from drugs and desire through to religion and language. Yet they also capture the allure of control, the masochistic bliss of being enslaved by addiction, sexuality and narrative.

(Caveney, 1998: 19-22)

Without a doubt, control is the central problematic in Burroughs' writing. Similarly within organization studies control has arguably been the discipline's central theme right from its inception. This is as true of mainstream, managerialist approaches as it is of critical perspectives. On the mainstream side, we find a preoccupation with control of the production process in the writings of classical management theorists

like Chandler, Fayol and Taylor (Thompson and McHugh, 1995: 103-4). On the critical side, we have the more recent preoccupations of the labour-process theorists who, developing Braverman's Marxist account of the labour process, consider the control of an essentially indeterminate wage-labour bargain as the paradigmatic function of modern management (Thompson, 1989; Marglin, 2001). Nevertheless, these studies have tended to emphasise control by management over human labour and other resources or inputs to the production process and, by treating management as an empty category that simply functions as an agent of capital, tends to leave the question of self-control unasked.

Like Foucault, Burroughs pushes the question of control to the point where, rather than asking how an individual self is subjected to control, he can explore the ways in which the self is produced by and through control. In this respect Burroughs shares concerns with French post-structuralists like Foucault or Deleuze and Guattari who similarly show the productive nature of power and the ways in which it actually shapes the subject, even when that subject is resistant. As Foucault puts it when articulating the third of his methodological principles for investigating power:

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the *vis-à-vis* of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime

effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle.

(Foucault, 1980: 98)

Similarly, in *The Order of Things*, Foucault considers the emergence of Man as a specific subject of study within the human sciences (Foucault, 1970). Alternatively in the more widely cited (at least in organizational studies) *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) shows the ways in which quite specific, subjugated subjectivities are produced by the disciplinary architecture of the panopticon (Zuboff, 1988; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992), dressage (Jackson and Carter, 1998), the timetable and the examination (Townley, 1998). These functions of power serve not only to produce the docile and obedient body of the prisoner/worker/student, but also a specific relationship between the body and a sense of self. This subjectivization is perhaps most dramatically captured by the hierarchical observation of the central tower in the panopticon, Jeremy Bentham's model prison. As the cells the prisoners inhabit are lit from the tower the prisoner cannot see into that tower and so never knows whether or not he or she is actually being observed. This uncertainty, coupled with the ever present possibility of observation and evaluation, produces a sense of self-awareness as the prisoner monitors his or her every bodily movement, thereby effectively internalising the gaze of the authority (Foucault, 1977: 195-228; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992).

This question of the individual, of *the* human subject, is of paramount importance for politics and for theories of organization. As Foucault puts it in the preface to the English translation of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*:

Do not demand of politics that it restore the "rights" of the individual, as philosophy has defined them. The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to "de-individualize" by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combination. The group must not be the organic bond uniting hierarchized individuals, but a constant generator of de-individualization.

(Foucault, 1983: xiv)

Equally suspicious of the individual subject and the discourses of humanism, much of Burroughs' writing is precisely such an attempt to 'de-individualize', whether through writing the group as a pack, as in *The Wild Boys*, and the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy, or through the displaced, heterogeneous and diverse combinations of the cut-ups. The implications of this politics of de-individualization, and particularly the processes of de-individualization developed through the cut-up method, will be returned to shortly, but before moving on to these questions of resistance I first want to further delineate Burroughs' general theories of control.

Three systems of Control: Capital, Language, Subjectivity

Burroughs's literary career is defined by the central challenge he sets himself: to find an escape route from the linked control systems of capital, subjectivity, and language.

(Murphy, 1997: 4)

In his outstanding, book length study of Burroughs' writing, Timothy Murphy distinguishes three basic control systems in his work: capital, language and subjectivity. Although the three are thematically linked, they also correspond to different periods that can be discerned in Burroughs' work. The interest in capital begins with the early novels *Junky* and *Queer* and continues through *Naked Lunch*, a collection of writings that Murphy suggests corresponds roughly to a modernist period in Burroughs' writing. Language really takes centre stage in the Nova trilogy which comprise Burroughs' most complete experiments with the cut-up method and includes *The Soft Machine* (1961), *The Ticket that Exploded* (1962) and *Nova Express* (1964)²². In many ways, these novels give up on the conception of critique, broadly similar to that developed within the critical theory of the Frankfurt school (Murphy, 1997), developed in Burroughs' earlier work, and represent a kind of post-modern turn in his writing (Lydenberg, 1987). This is also perhaps Burroughs' most pessimistic period as the focus of his critique is not so much to challenge and change power, but only and always to escape. It is only in his final trilogy, when Burroughs returns to a more conventional writing style and gives up on some of the formal experimentation that characterises his mid-period that he is able to articulate a more positive critique (Murphy, 1997). By turning his attention to the question of subjectivity in his last novels, Murphy suggests that Burroughs finally finds the space to write the future in a positive mode, overcoming his post-modern nihilism to develop what Murphy refers to as an a-modern form of writing.

Although Murphy's typology suggests a linear developmentalism, Burroughs' interests and the foci of his writing are hard to clearly separate. Indeed, his interests in language and subjectivity are undoubtedly there throughout his work, from the first autobiographical novels to the last words of his final novel which begin:

The old writer couldn't write any more because he had reached the end of words, the end of what can be done with words.

(Burroughs, 1987: 258)

But Murphy is referring more to the conjunction of Burroughs' developing ideas about writing and the shifting emphasis that he places on specific control systems within his work. From this perspective it is only in the final trilogy that Burroughs is really able to develop and work through his ideas on subjectivity in a way that, whilst still informed by his understandings of capitalist and linguistic control systems, opens onto a new space of subjectivization outside these control systems. These works, *Cities of the Red Night*, *The Place of Dead Roads*, and *The Western Lands* are Burroughs' most optimistic as they feature an almost utopian impulse to envisage an alternative social world not dominated by capitalist, linear-linguistic subjectivization. Rather than being representations or models of a utopia yet to come, however, these texts function as desiring machines that seeks to break with the old, tired lines of subjugated, normalised, human identities and to create the potential for the actualisation of a new form of subject group.

For Murphy, it is these later writings that finally realise Burroughs' 'amodernism'. As an amodern writer, Burroughs has recourse neither to the reunifying myths of the modernists like Pound, Joyce and Eliot, nor to the absolute failure of critique found in postmodern authors such as Nabokov or theorists like Baudrillard and Lyotard. Instead, Burroughs develops a literary line that starts with Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*, and connects to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, the political philosophy of Antonio Negri and the sociology of Bruno Latour (Murphy, 1997:2). This amodern line of thought recognises the failure of modernist projects based on a resolution of class or gender based difference into a higher unity of humanism, without following postmodernism's subsequent disavowal of mass politics. There is still a possibility, even the necessity, of a difference that resolutely refuses to be subsumed into a homogeneous, undifferentiated difference as mass or simulation, but this needn't necessitate the pessimistic, a-political relativism that is so often associated with postmodern literature and theory (Plant, 1992; Lambert, 2000)

As the quote at the start of this section suggests, Burroughs' primary concerns were always with the possibility of escape from control systems. Without this emphasis on resistance and escape, his focus on control would run the risk of becoming defeatist; a kind of self-fulfilling prophesy. Nevertheless, control and resistance cannot be wholly separated, so in the following chapters I will follow Timothy Murphy's model but focussing specifically on the two systems of control most central to this thesis: language and subjectivity²³. Along the way there will be numerous deviations but through these a reconsideration of the twin questions of the human and technology at

the heart of this thesis is enabled. With this in place we will be in a better position to consider what 'the human' means in light of Burroughs' work; how the human might be overcome; and why doing so is such a critical project. This conception of what might come after the human, as will be clear, is quite distinct from the cyborgs that populate so many of our cinema screens, sci-fi novels and organization theory texts (Parker, 1998; Parker and Cooper, 1998; Rushing and Frenztz, 1995). In following Burroughs as he seeks a time and space that comes after the human, we will be in a position to reconsider the whole question of (post)humanism, anti-humanism, and the possibility of reconfiguring a trans-human, revolutionary subject in organization studies.

Chapter 3 – Language and the Word Virus

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

(Burroughs, 1986: 47)

For Burroughs, language is a virus (Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 12). This ‘word-virus’ has entered into a relatively stable state of symbiosis with the human organism to the extent that, as we have already seen, it is impossible to clearly differentiate the human from language or, to take matters further, that the human is constituted by a specific distribution of, or relationship between, language and technology (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). As suggested earlier, the attribution of agency is a grammatical habit or prejudice, often running directly contrary to both common sense and everyday experience (Nietzsche, 1989; Sotto, 1998). It is language that produces the “I” that Descartes assumed was doing all that thinking (Descartes, 1986). Burroughs’ ideas follow a similar line to those of Nietzsche. The word-virus is the non-human agency behind the incessant sub-vocalizations that Zen and yogic meditation seeks to silence.

It is this internal monologue, all but impossible to shut off and expressly non-human, that produces an all-too-human sense of identity and self-continuity by generating a linear, narrative time²⁴ along which experience is distributed and through which identity is assured. Just as a child has its sense of identity enforced through the imposition of oedipal identification with the triangular ‘mommy-daddy-me’ (itself enforced by the word (and name) of the father) so the “I” and our internal monologue provide an anchor for the production of identity: “Oh, it was *me*” - a conjunctive synthesis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). Indeed, for the virus to truly take hold, the body itself must be weakened and disciplined. Where Foucault has shown us the discipline necessary to produce a docile subject and subjectivity (1977), Nietzsche argues that the body itself has to be made sick and disciplined in order to accept the imprint of language (Nietzsche, 1994; Munro, 2001). If this sickness produces a weakening of the immune system, then the word-virus finds it easier to take hold. In this respect, human identity is a symptom of infection: the product of parasitic and non-human forces that develop specific, pre-formed lines of subjectivization.

This account of language provides a radical alternative to that which is more commonly found in organizational studies, and related disciplines like information systems. Most accounts of organizational communication will press the need for clear communication, free from distortion and polluting noise (e.g. Dixon, 1976). This is true both of mainstream functionalist discourses, where the clear communication of managerial instructions to subordinates is assumed to be the goal of communication, or within more critical accounts of communication, such as those grounded in the

work of Habermas and where an ideal speech situation is sought in order to enable the open sharing of ideas and equal debate free from the distortions of power and hierarchy (Lyytinen, 1992; Outhwaite, 1996). In either case, communication is supposed to be between two relatively autonomous individuals. For Burroughs on the other hand, language has its own agenda. Far from being a (potentially) neutral tool of communication, it is a virulent virus that actually creates the sense of human identity and subjectivity that we normally suppose is in control of it. In this respect, language is a fundamental aspect of control and Burroughs makes it his paradoxical project to try and write his way out from its grasp. This raises important questions about *what* might resist and escape this control.

As well as providing an insight into the often disjointed, difficult and decidedly non-linear prose that Burroughs writes, this relationship between language, control and the subject casts light on the heterogeneity of forces that make up the human. In privileging the rational mind as the seat of consciousness, Cartesian metaphysics situates a viral infection as the human essence: 'I' is a word; a virus; a disease. Indeed, rather than providing a stable basis for secure and certain knowledge, the self is premised upon a fundamental dis-ease. As Burroughs might put it, we are not comfortable with our selves as we are sharing them with a parasitic 'other half' (Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 114). The neurotic verbalisation of the human, manifested as a compulsion to subvocalize, is the perfect symptom of this dis-eased subject and one perfectly suited to a world in which the incitement to discourse is a part of the everyday operation of power (Munro, 2001; Foucault, 1976).

Despite appearances then, this relationship is not benign. Nor is it stable and through the externalisation and materialisation of voice through information and communication technologies (ICT) as diverse as the tape-recorder and the computer, may currently be undergoing a radical change (Burroughs and Odier, 1989:12).

Technologies of linguistic transformation and resistance

In this section I want to consider the question of control and resistance in the light of Burroughs' thesis and its relationship to power, control and subjectivity. In doing so I will focus on Burroughs' mid-period, Nova trilogy: *The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket That Exploded*, and *Nova Express*. All three of these texts utilise the cut-up technique that Burroughs developed in conjunction with Brion Gysin and which was explicitly an attempt to escape from control by language. Paradoxically, this escape was attempted through the use of language, or rather words, an endeavour that Burroughs ultimately found self-defeating (Burroughs and Odier, 1989). Indeed, by the end of the 1980s, Burroughs had "reached the end of words" as he put it (Burroughs, 1987: 258) and increasingly turned his attention to the visual arts, though often maintaining his insistence upon chance events, as for example in his 'shotgun art', where he would literally blow paint cans away with a shotgun in front of a piece of wood or other 'canvas' (Sobieszek, 1996).

Whatever Burroughs' own, and his critic's, ultimate evaluation of the success of the cut-up, it is instructive to follow these moves as they point to the limits of

representation and the importance of material technologies in resisting control and reconstituting the subject as resistant to linguistic, communicative control. In this sense, Burroughs' ideas on the post-human offer a quite distinct way of thinking about the relationship between text and technology, subject and object, when compared with the theories of technology and the textual turn discussed in the previous chapters. By paying attention to the materials – tape and film – with which Burroughs was experimenting at the time he produced the cut-ups, and which provide some of the material on which the written texts focus, an analysis of language is possible which does not separate itself off from technology, and thereby reiterate a mind/body dualism where language is the correct sphere of mind, and the material body and technology are deemed derivative or even irrelevant.

Word-virus and Order-word

The word-virus simultaneously produces the individual subject as an identity and enables that subject to be a productive member of society, to be controlled through word and image. Without this identity, and without language, 'one' quite simply isn't – the 'I' does not exist - a point that is reinforced by our characterisation of pre-linguistic children as 'infants,' a word that derives from the Latin *infans*, or 'not speaking' (Easthope, 1999: 34). It is not simply verbal communication that produces this viral sense of self, however. Most animals have some form of communication, cries and shouts that enable them to communicate in some sense. For Burroughs, following Korzybski, what is unique about human language is that it is written. In a move that parallels Derrida's (1978) notion of the supplement, Burroughs recognises

that the advent of writing also changes the nature of the spoken word upon which it is purportedly based:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God – and the word was flesh...
human flesh... in the beginning of *writing*.

(Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 11)

The most important point about the advent of writing is that the durability of the written word enables people to 'bind-time'. With a clear concept of linear, spatialised time laid out by narratives and writing, humans are able to organize in ways that other animals cannot:

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

(Burroughs, 1979: 66)

Of course, this doesn't mean that time can only be bound by writing itself. Many oral traditions live on and thrive after the advent of writing, but perhaps there is a sense in which even the passing on of oral narratives and stories is a kind of writing. As

Deleuze and Guattari note, following Benveniste, although bees can clearly communicate, and even use tropes in doing so, they can only ever report upon what they have seen for themselves – direct discourse – whilst the proper movement of language is indirect discourse: the passing on of what one has heard, or read, rather than experienced directly; a kind of viral self-reproduction or autopoiesis:

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

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 77).

This idea of the order word raises two points. Directly translated from the French *mot d'ordre* it means slogan, or military password, but as Brian Massumi, translator of *A Thousand Plateaus*, suggests: “Deleuze and Guattari are also using the term literally: “word of order,” in the double sense of a word or phrase constituting a command and a word or phrase creative of order” (in Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 521 n. 1). The second of these senses relates to the general question of organization, and raises the point that language can never be completely separated from the social and political organization within which it flows and works (cf. Guattari, 1996: 15-23). The first sense resonates with Burroughs’ more general notion of the word virus as a means of telepathic control. Language does not inform subjects, or even communicate between subjects. It orders and commands them. These two strands of the order-word are not entirely separable however. The organization of language produces the subject

positions that are thereby controlled, and distributes them in a specific social organization, one that is notably characterised by dualism. As Deleuze and Guattari put it in relation to education, usually assumed to be a process of *informing* pupils:

The compulsory education machine does not communicate information; it imposes upon the child semiotic coordinates possessing all of the dual foundations of grammar (masculine-feminine, singular-plural, noun-verb, subject of the statement - subject of enunciation, etc.). The elementary unit of language – the statement – is the order-word. Rather than common sense, a faculty for the centralization of information, we must define an abominable faculty consisting in emitting, receiving, and transmitting order-words. Language is made not to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 75-76; cf. Guattari, 1996: 22)

As well as the clear links that these ideas have with the work of Michel Foucault on the school as a system that distributes individuals along hierarchical arrays, simultaneously normalizing and differentiating within certain parameters and along specific dimensions (Foucault, 1977), this idea of language suggests that even the idea of direct discourse – the simple reporting of what one sees – is not possible because of the nature of language. Language is fundamentally *indirect* discourse. This means that even the ‘I’ that sees, never sees outside of language, its association blocks, and the position ascribed to it as an ‘I’ through linguistic ordering:

I is an order-word. A schizophrenic said: “I heard voices say: *he is conscious of life.*”

In this sense, there is indeed a schizophrenic cogito, but it is a cogito that makes self-

consciousness the incorporeal transformation of an order-word, or a result of indirect discourse. My direct discourse is still the free indirect discourse running through me, coming from other worlds or other planets.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 84)

Rather than the direct perception of existence and thought – “I think therefore I am” – even the cogito is a product of indirect discourse, of hearsay: “I heard voices say: *he is conscious of life.*”

Not only does language produce the ‘I’, but the simple fact that the subject is produced by the operations of an alien, indirect discourse flowing through ‘it’, implies that Burroughs’ early goal of reporting a ‘naked lunch’ – revealing life as it really is, so that everyone sees what is on the end of their fork, a kind of ideological unveiling – is immediately made problematic. There is no possibility of a direct discourse outside the operations of language, at least not if one is a writer. If, as Timothy Murphy has suggested, Burroughs’ ideas in *Naked Lunch* are a kind of ideology critique (Murphy, 1997: 77), it can be no simple idea of revelation of ‘truth’ from a neutral, God’s-eye, perspective. Certainly ideology can be critiqued, and a position can be generated outside of specific ideologies, but not outside of ideology altogether. As Murphy puts it:

The various critiques of demystification leave us, then, without access to a privileged level of reality that would allow us to determine the adequacy of any representation of the world to that world; truth can no longer be conceived as this adequacy, and

therefore no traditional hermeneutic approach will be able to provide the grounds for the transformation of existing practices of exploitation and domination by simply unmasking the status quo.

(Murphy, 1997: 143)

A similar recognition leads Deleuze and Guattari into a full blown criticism of both subjectivism and structuralism: the former because, as we have seen, subject positions are themselves produced and ordered by language; the latter precisely because of its assumption that there is a material base, independent of the immaterial superstructure of language and ideology, and that it is the task of a true science to reveal this structure. Rather, by noting the independence of content and expression, and yet their ability to influence each other – what was earlier referred to as a ‘burrowing’ – Deleuze and Guattari recognise that neither stands alone. Ideology has real, that is material, effects. Language, for all that its transformations may be incorporeal, still effects bodies, in the broadest sense of that term (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 80). In short, language is not a question of representation, but of intervention (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 86). It never simply represents or stands in for an external and independent, material reality, but always effects and is a part of that reality.

For Burroughs, these points raise several questions about writing which he takes up in the Nova trilogy, not least the notion that: “my direct discourse is still the free indirect discourse running through me, coming from other worlds or other planets” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 84). Indeed, in combination with the idea of external control, Burroughs takes this idea quite literally, adopting the genre of science fiction to

position these cut-ups as part of an interplanetary battle of control between several alien life-forms, all working to control the human race so as to extract from it the things they need to survive (reflecting a kind of Marxist analysis of the extraction of surplus-value from living labour (Marx, 1976: 342)). At the centre of this is the destructive Nova Mob who, like a malignant virus, are threatening to make conditions for life on Earth intolerable (Burroughs, 1992a). The problem for Burroughs as a writer is that he is complicit in this control by the word. Fortunately, this also means that he is an insider and so has the power to blow the whole Nova scam wide open. So it is that 'Willy the Rat' calls in the Nova Police, grasses up the Nova Mob and 'wises up the marks' (Burroughs, 1992a: 58).

The main action of the trilogy, but particularly *Nova Express*, details the ongoing battle between the Nova Mob and the Nova Police, and the trial of the Mob in the biologic courts. Although this content is of interest in its own right, it cannot be separated from the form that the novels of the trilogy take. Unhappy with simply perpetuating the linguistic control of the word-virus through the creation of a straight narrative (albeit science-fictional) Burroughs attempts to cut the control ties of word lines and association blocks that make up language and, in doing so, disrupt the functioning of the order-word and the production of identity and fixed subjects. His aim is to thereby open up the possibility of escaping from time (seen by Burroughs as a prison created by the word) into space. Although this idea of space exploration comes partly from the science-fictional setting of these novels and from his criticisms of the organizations of the military-industrial complex trying to extend their control

beyond the 'final frontier' (e.g. through NASA (Nelson, 1991)), Burroughs' conception of space is quite complex. As he put it, primarily he was "a cosmonaut of inner space" (Douglas, 1998: xxviii). The method that he uses to achieve these ends is the cut-up, the theory and development of which will be considered in more detail in the following sections.

Cutting-Up Control

Language – words and images – are about control.

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

(Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 33)

In light of the word-virus thesis, 'free speech' may be an illusion, but resistance is far from futile. Whilst living at the 'Beat Hotel' in Paris during the 1960s, Burroughs formed a lifelong friendship, and important collaborative partnership, with the artist Brion Gysin. Suggesting that writing was at least 50 years behind painting, Gysin stumbled across the literary equivalent of a painter's collage, or a film-maker's montage, when, whilst cutting a mount to frame a picture, he sliced through the board into the newspapers protecting the table below. As the two halves of the paper moved, the words were brought into novel, sometimes strange, amusing, or even prescient conjunctions. What appeared to Gysin as a slightly amusing diversion was

taken rather more seriously by Burroughs who immediately saw the potential of this cut-up method for severing the lines of linguistic control he had been busy analysing. The result was a series of books, the most famous of which are the Nova Trilogy – *The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket That Exploded*, and *Nova Express* – each of which uses the technique of the cut-up, or Burroughs' derivation, the fold-in.

With these techniques, a page of text is taken, and sliced or folded down the middle then placed with half of another page. The pieces are then moved around until they line up, and the results are typed onto a fresh page which, depending upon the results, may then be combined with further pages to produce yet more cut-ups. In a sense, the idea is to turn the work into a material thing which can be manipulated like the celluloid film on the cutting-room table, a photo-collage, or the paints on an artist's palette. By careful processes of selection and combination, something genuinely novel can be produced, which is not dominated by the narrative logic of language that otherwise dictates the words that come to an author when he writes. The effect is to use language, or rather words, to say something outside, or beyond, language. In a sense, and relating back to the idea of a 'naked lunch', Burroughs' use of the cut-up is perhaps an attempt to bypass the indirect, viral nature of a language that passes "from a second party to a third party, neither of whom has seen" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 77) and instead to allow the *direct* perception of the world, unmediated by indirect chatter and image. This would mean that Burroughs is actually engaged in the basic project at the heart of the Enlightenment – the drive to *see* more clearly and more directly (Dale, 2000). By simultaneously decentring the seeing self, however,

Burroughs refuses to sign up to a simplistic objectivism, or to privilege the ego as the locus of knowledge. Perhaps it is better then, to think of Burroughs' project as an attempt to think otherwise: to perceive in a different way to that imposed upon us by language and words. Before considering this in detail however, we first need to consider what the cut-up is.

In many ways, Burroughs is inconsistent in his use of the cut-up. At times he seems to suggest that, like Cubism, the cut-up is simply a way of more accurately reflecting the essentially cut-up nature of lived experience (Mottram, 1977, Lodge, 1991; McLuhan, 1991). When walking down the street, the internal monologue, and experience itself, is realised as a series of interruptions and random juxtapositions. From this perspective, the cut-up provides a more realistic representation of an essentially cut-up phenomenological world. If we accept this line, then Burroughs clearly remains wedded to a distinctly modernist logic of representation, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest in *A Thousand Plateaus* when they draw parallels between Burroughs and Joyce (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 6).

At other times, however, Burroughs suggests that the random element of chance that the cut-up allows into the process of writing can serve to break the lines of narrative conditioning that subjectify and subjugate us, enabling a breaking-away from, and breaking-up of, the order of identity thereby produced (Hassan, 1963; Caveney, 1997). This idea has much in common with Burroughs' interest in scientology's use of repetition as a means of breaking down linguistic association blocks, thereby

freeing the individual from unconscious controls (Russell, 2001). This use of the cut-up for purposes of deconditioning the subject by severing linguistic control lines is perhaps the most important within the context of resistance and control, but it is worth noting that the role and function of the cut-up varies within and across Burroughs' writing. Even if the cut-up is a process of deconditioning, however, it clearly produces a new relationship with language, raising the question of what precisely that new relationship is.

In some places, Burroughs seems to suggest that there is nothing random whatsoever about the cut-up. Instead the method simply enables us to access knowledge of which we were unconscious. An example of this latter is when he discusses the magnetic-tape based cut-ups he experimented with in collaboration with Ian Sommerville. In these experiments, the new technology of the tape recorder was used to record a particular message, which would then be rewound and forwarded to an arbitrary point when something else, a snippet of speech, white noise from the radio, music or street sounds, would be layered over the original recording. This layering and cutting-in might be repeated a number of times, over a period of several days, or even weeks, as in the example of the 'Palm Sunday Tape' (Burroughs, 1984: 56). In such cases Burroughs was insistent that the 'author' of these experiments was aware, on some level, of the contents of the tape, and so could be said to be producing the tape in a way that precluded the truly random event (Burroughs, 1979).

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

I follow the channels opened by the rearrangement of the text. This is the most important function of the cut-up. I may take a page, cut it up, and get a whole new idea for straight narrative, and not use any of the cut-up material at all, or I may use a sentence or two out of the actual cut-up.

It's not unconscious at all, it's a very objective operation...

(Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 29)

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

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

(Burroughs, cited in Mottram, 1977: 37)

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

Whatever the final result of Burroughs' cut-up experiments – and they are often difficult to listen to/read, or even repetitive and dull – the underlying ideas are important. If the word is a virus, and the human is a ventriloquist's puppet, spoken through more than speaking, then the only way to resist and escape control is to silence the tyrannical logic of narrative and put an end to compulsive subvocalisation. Just as the narratives of the realist novel and criticism are bourgeois, humanist conceptions, reflecting a set of assumptions about subjectivity, identity, morality, reality and the socio-political order, so Burroughs' anti-narratives perform an anti-humanist subversion of those orders (Lydenberg, 1987). With the cut-up, Burroughs tries to silence the Word/virus/God/hu-Man/I and usher in a world of silence and space-travel.

All Out of Time...

'Time does not exist for those who are absolutely without anxiety'

(Kierkegaard)

I don't think of silence as being a device of terror at all. In fact, quite the contrary.

Silence is only frightening to people who are compulsively verbalizing.

(Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 37)

Compulsive verbalization or subvocalization suggests a certain neuroticism: the fate of the perfectly Oedipalized subject (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). Caught in the triangle of familial relations – daddy, mommy, me – the subject compulsively reworks these relations, not least on the analyst's couch but also more generally. The operation is one that Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a conjunctive synthesis – 'So it's *me!*' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 20). Flows, breaks and connections are compulsively fixed and singularised onto the relative security, and docility, of a fixed and centred self, caught in the structural engineer's symbol of strength and certainty, the triangle. Without the compulsive verbalising of the neurotic subject, constantly 'finding themselves' in their linguistic stream of consciousness, there would be no identity, no stable subjects stretched out along a spatialised time-line. If 'time does not exist for those who are absolutely without anxiety', then in Burroughs' work we can see the explicit relation of the production of anxiety and time through the drive to verbalise. Of course, this incessant babble and compulsive activity is just what drives the engines of busy-ness (Cooper, 2001). Whether we are talking about the driven

activities of management consultants, career academics, derivative traders, or the ‘copper-tops’ of *The Matrix*, it is busy-ness and anxiety that keep the flows of capital moving.

The anxiety system aims at creating perpetually distorted sexual pleasure – that is, pleasure only within a pattern of domination and subordination, from infant to adult sexual life. The family becomes the preparatory instrument for the authoritarian society and its ideology of suppression and manipulation. The child grows up in anxiety and inhibition and is therefore the ripening object of manipulatory forces. He will fear freedom until his death. He will welcome structure of domination and submission from the beginning of his life. He will equate – especially if he is rich and/or white – suppressed classes and races as alien inferiors with whom miscegenation is criminal in public but pleurably dirty in private.

(Mottram, 1977: 124)

The relations between libidinal and political economy cannot be easily severed.

The Naked Astronaut

In a move that appears to invert the Bergsonian notion that we should reject space in favour of time, Burroughs wants to escape from time and into space. But the inversion is only apparent. Bergson’s object of critique is spatialised time, geometrically laid out as a line composed of discrete points (Bergson, 1910). In a sense, Burroughs extends this rejection, by expanding upon the ways in which this conception of linear time is produced through the operations of language. Where

Bergson sought a non-spatial conception of time as duration, however, Burroughs rejects the idea of time entirely and turns his attention to a rethinking of space, not in terms of geometry, but as outer-space: the final frontier. If it is the word-image lines that lock us into identity and tie us to the ground, then cutting these lines can let us escape the bounds of the Earth – most primitive of the three sociuses (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983) - and move into space.

It is this drive to escape a logic of identity, control and limitation that led to Burroughs' oft-quoted catch phrase "Here to go" (e.g. Burroughs, 1990). But Burroughs' conceptions of space travel are about as far from NASA as you can hope to get and he railed against such governmental attempts at space travel for trying to take the Earth into space. Indeed, at times when he is discussing space travel, Burroughs seems to be talking about a more abstract conception of space that extends to include the inner-space achieved through meditation. At other times however he seems more literal, and it is this literal insistence upon escape that has led many critics to count Burroughs along with the posthumanists like Hans Moravec or the Extropians, who seek to escape the bounds of the Earth through a disembodied downloading of consciousness into technologically advanced robots and computer based communication systems (Dery, 1996; Davies, 1998).

These ideas of the posthuman owe much to Clynes and Kline's groundbreaking, NASA funded, research into cyborgs (Clynes and Kline, 1995). Although it only ever progressed to the experimental stage with rats, the basic idea behind this research was

to overcome the limits placed on space-exploration by mankind's need to take a little bit of the Earth's environment with him into space as, for example, in a pressurised space-suit with oxygen supply. As Clynes and Kline put it:

The environment with which man is now concerned is that of space. Biologically, what are the changes necessary to allow man to live adequately in the space environment? Artificial atmospheres encapsulated in some sort of enclosure constitute only temporizing, and dangerous temporizing at that, since we place ourselves in the same position as a fish taking a small quantity of water along with him to live on land. The bubble all too easily bursts.

(Clynes and Kline, 1995: 30)

The parallels with the epigram at the start of this chapter are clear. Both the posthuman dream of becoming cyborg, and Burroughs' ideas on space-travel, share a common interest in the forced evolution of the human beyond itself. Where the two visions differ, perhaps, is that for NASA, and Clynes and Kline, there was an uncritical acceptance of the Cartesian mind/body dualism, so that any biological modification of the human to better suit *him* to space-travel, would not effect *his* essence (Hayles, 1999), a belief that Frederick Pohl parodied beautifully in *Man Plus* (Pohl, 2000).

In a direct extension of Clynes and Kline's 'cyborg' project, *Man Plus* concerns the first experimental applications of these technologies to a human being. Despite the promise that at the end of the experiment he will be returned to his human form so

that he can be reunited with his wife and family, as the protagonist of this tale becomes more and more suited to space his sense of self changes such that he becomes less and less recognisably human. Ultimately the prospect of a return is not only impossible, but undesirable. Whilst Pohl clearly views such changes with fear or even horror, Burroughs is rather more positive, perhaps not least because his conception of 'the naked astronaut' is one of liberation, rather than servitude to governmental organizations like NASA. For Burroughs the shift into space is ultimately a metaphoric reworking of ideas of resistance and escape, which he explicitly opposes to the family-man astronauts, or 'cool-dads' as he calls them, that dominate the space scene at NASA:

To his own vision of infinite space, Burroughs deliberately opposes the need to enclose radical experience in protective frames. He himself prefers an image of the astronaut's vulnerable body about to explode into the universe. The "space-suits and masturbating rockets," traditional technological images of the human body, are for him overburdened containers of aggressive energy: "All out of time and into space' [...] 'the naked astronaut.' And the idiot irresponsibles rush in with space-suits and masturbating rockets spatter the city with jissom."

(Nelson, 1991: 131)

Rather than the programs and organizations of the military-politico-industrial complex – 'looking off into space as if seeking new frontiers of depravity' (Burroughs and Ginsberg, 1975: 39) – Burroughs' ideas on space-exploration centre upon the idea of difference. The goal is not to take the Earth with you into space, but

to overcome, perhaps go beyond, the human condition itself. This is not a reassuring, humanist vision of self-development. The 'self' is almost certainly the first thing to go, hence the metaphor of the naked astronaut, prepared to explode into space without the protective covering of a space-suit, a stand-in for the Reichian character-armour that the defensive self erects as protection against any potential confrontation with anything Other. But Burroughs is far from pessimistic about this potential dissolution. Self-identity is nothing to be defended.

Immaterialism And The Informatic Post-Human

As suggested, for some commentators, Burroughs' proclamation that we are "here to go" and his desire to escape into space links him in to a tradition of posthumanism that is characterized by an unhealthy disregard for 'the body', and an almost Gnostic belief that some kind of mental/spiritual transcendence will be found through technology (Dery, 1996: 313). Indeed, Burroughs' sound-bite usually appears in the full context of "This is the space age, and we are all here to go" (Burroughs, 1990, track 1). Contrary to Dery's reading of Burroughs, which seems to be entirely based on one track, 'Dinosaurs', from a compilation LP released by Giorno Poetry Systems and a minor aside from the introduction to (but not the text of) *Naked Lunch* (Dery, 1996: 298; 253), this does not suggest an individual transcendence but rather a collective overcoming of the constraints of normalised human existence. This idea that Burroughs' insistence upon the *collective* nature of escape opens a space for rethinking social organization, which is picked up in his later work with its more explicit focus of the autonomous production of collective subjectivities discussed

below. For now, however, I want to focus on the question of materiality and the body within Burroughs' work, and the relationship between the material body, technology, language and the subject.

In *Escape Velocity*, Mark Dery quite correctly points to the limitations of a 'theology of the ejector seat' (Dery, 1996: 306). In what is perhaps the most thoroughgoing and explicitly critical of a rash of studies of cyberculture that appeared toward the end of the last millennium, Dery's explorations cover performance art, body modification and tattooing, avant-garde robotics, techno-industrial music, cyberpunk science-fiction and virtual sex. Along the way he reappraises such cyberculture luminaries and prophets of the posthuman as the Extropians, Stelarc (cf. Stelarc, 1997a and b; Ansell-Pearson, 1997a and b), Mark Pauline, Hans Moravec, Bruce Sterling, Douglas Rushkoff, RU Sirius and Queen MU, finding that they all share a common desire to transcend the human condition and escape from the body – usually referred to in hacker jargon as 'the meat' (Sobchack, 1995). Behind the posthuman rhetoric of transcendence, liberation, anti-authoritarianism and difference, lies the same old humanist disregard of the other, whether that other is the body, the environment and nature (opposed to technics and culture), or the poor, socially excluded who will be left behind in the technologically mediated (and no doubt very expensive) transcendence to post-humanity. In the race to transcend our depraved, all-too-human condition, these posthumanists come full circle to be caught again in a Cartesian dualism that rejects and denigrates the materiality of existence in favour of an incorporeal 'life' as information. The material base upon which that information is

realised is irrelevant. For a style of thinking that is heavily influenced by Marshall McLuhan, the conclusion is surprising – the message is everything, the medium is irrelevant.

The libertarian ideology of the posthuman contemptuously disregards the body (meat) in favour of a valorisation of the powers of the mind. It is not a simple, god-given, human mind that is thus privileged however. In the posthuman utopia, mind and its products – technology – meld in a homogeneous new unity of information that puts a science(fictional) gloss on age-old dreams of mind over matter, transcendence and immortality. Through science and technology (both products of the mind) mind can control the material world. The only thing that remains in its way is the rotting old flesh that quite literally brings dreams of transcendence back down to Earth. By refiguring the brain as a general computer, however, a classic move in the development of cybernetics where it was heralded by McCulloch and Pitts' reconception of the neuron as a kind of logic gate (Hayles, 1999; Heims, 1993), mind and self are transformed into the software that this computer runs. From this point it is all too easy to follow the Extropians into their fantastic dreams of downloading intelligence/self into a computer or robot, overcoming the limits of the flesh and achieving omnipotence and immortality. Whether the posthuman body is figured as abstract and diffuse, like the internet along whose pathways the mind can flow freely, or as solid and hard like a Hollywood Terminator or Robocop, an augmentation of power is central to such fantasies.

Dery's protestations to the contrary aside, Burroughs makes several clear breaks with such post, or neo-humanist, thinking. In the first instance, his figuration of space travel has little to do with the hard-bodies of robotics, space-ships and the more conventional cyborgs developed in support of the state military and explored in much of the science-fiction dealing with the question of the cyborg. Also, and despite his often hostile relationship with the body, Burroughs is quite critical of any move that privileges disembodied mind over material existence. In all of his work the transformations that he writes about involve a physical mutation, not always desirable and certainly not pretty, but definitely visceral and material. In this sense Burroughs offers a quite distinct line down which to trace the possibility of coming 'after' the human, one in which the materiality of embodiment is not neglected in the race to re-write the human as pure information or text, but takes centre stage, and in which the human is not augmented, but is itself overcome.

The distinction between these two approaches can perhaps best be characterised by reference to Deleuze's distinction between combat-against and combat-between. The post-human caricatures of Hollywood cinema and the Extropians are oriented always toward an external other against which they must struggle even if that other is a technological threat which they overcome by taking it into themselves, as Kevin Warwick has suggested for example (Warwick, 1997). In contrast to this combat-against, which seeks to annihilate a threat to the self so as to secure that self, the combat-between is always already a self-destruction. As Deleuze puts it:

The combat against the Other must be distinguished from the combat between Oneself. The combat-against tries to destroy or repel a force (to struggle against “the diabolical powers of the future”) but the combat-between, by contrast, tries to take hold of a force in order to make it one’s own. The combat-between is the process through which a force enriches itself by seizing hold of other forces and joining itself to them in a new ensemble: a becoming.

(Deleuze, 1998: 132)

Where a combat-against tries to destroy Other forces – amongst which we can include technology, one of the most ‘diabolical powers of the future’ (cf. Land and Corbett, 2001) – a combat-between destroys the self by entering into a becoming which by its very nature changes both parties in their new assemblage. As Keith Ansell-Pearson describes it:

...a becoming works not via filiation but rather through a novel alliance. A line of becoming... is not defined in terms of connectable points, or by the points which compose it, since it has only a ‘middle’... Thus a ‘becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the inbetween, the border or line of flight’ that runs perpendicular to both... It is this line or block of becoming which brings into symbiotic play the wasp and the orchid and produces a shared deterritorialization.

(Ansell- Pearson, 1997a: 225)

In this relationship, this combat-between, there are no pre-existing, stable beings which then enter into a relationship whereby one simply changes into the other. There is nothing but the meeting of forces, through which *both* are deterritorialized.

In this sense, the engagement of what is usually referred to as the human is entirely transfigured by its relations with technics, which are always ongoing. Such an approach stands in direct contradiction both to the Hollywood/NASA ideal of the cyborg as enhanced (and unchanged) Man (still in God's image), and the various attempts to reinscribe technology back into a safe, humanist frame (Land and Corbett, 2001). Also, as Ansell-Pearson (1997a) recognises, a process philosophy of becoming is necessarily a materialist philosophy. The Extropian ideology of disembodied transcendence is only possible because 'the human' has already been inscribed as an immaterial cogito – the ego – which is opposed to its Other body. As the technological couplings of the post-human body can only ever change, or even finally make redundant, the physical body, then there is no need for the eternal ego, the human essence, to ever change.

(Re)embodying Information

Like Mark Dery, Katherine Hayles has considered the relationships between (dis)embodiment and cyberculture. Whereas Dery's study focuses on millenarian cyberculture, mostly on the West coast of the United States, Hayles considers the parallel developments of cybernetics and science-fiction writing from the late 1940s through to the 1990s. Their conclusions are often quite similar however:

One contemporary belief likely to stupefy future generations is the postmodern orthodoxy that the body is primarily, if not entirely, a linguistic and discursive construction... Although researchers in the physical and human sciences

acknowledged the importance of materialism in different ways, they nevertheless collaborated in creating the postmodern ideology that the body's materiality is secondary to the logical or semiotic structures it encodes.

(Hayles, 1999: 192)

Hayles finds Foucault, especially in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* but also in later works like *Discipline and Punish*, paradigmatic of this reduction of the material world to abstract discourse. For example, whilst the Panopticon gains its universality and analytic efficacy from abstracting power to a generalised diagram (cf. Deleuze, 1988), this turn away from the material bodies in which this diagram is realised leads Foucault to overemphasise the operations of power, at the expense of analysing the resistance of those bodies (Hayles, 1999: 194). Of course similar criticisms have been made of Foucault within organization studies (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999; Thompson and Ackroyd, 1995; Gabriel, 1999), but rather than therefore turning her back on the postmodern or posthuman, Hayles works through them. Using Burroughs' *The Ticket That Exploded* (Burroughs, 1967), she pays careful attention to the materiality of the language and words that shape both the form and content of this novel. The end result of this focus is that:

...Burroughs turns the table on those who advocate disembodiment. Instead of dematerializing the body, in *Ticket* the body materializes discourse.

(Hayles, 1999: 194)

As we saw in chapter two, this is also precisely the function ascribed by Ronald Bogue to Deleuze and Guattari's application of a Hjelmslevian semiotic net to their conception of stratification and the anthropomorphic stratum (Bogue, 1989: 126).

One or several bodies?

For Hayles, the very idea of *the* body is an example of disembodied thinking and discursive abstraction. In this she is close to Burroughs' criticism of the is of identity. The use of 'the' reifies and naturalises a single, normalised version of the body, which ignores the material heterogeneity and diversity of embodiment. *The* body runs parallel to *the* self; it is a safe and stable location where we can fix a coherent and stable subject, but such is not necessary. Following Varela, Thompson and Rosch in *The Embodied Mind*, Hayles suggests that:

...a coherent, continuous, essential self is neither necessary nor sufficient to explain embodied existence. The closer one comes to the flux of embodiment... the more one is aware that the coherent self is a fiction invented out of panic and fear. In this view embodiment subversively undercuts essentialism rather than reinforces it.

(Hayles, 1999: 201)

Looking at *the* body therefore reiterates the kind of essentialism such as that rejected in the first two chapters of this thesis. As we saw then, Grint and Woolgar's (1997) anti-essentialism is actually dependent upon an essentialism of the subject in order to hold the whole interpretative system together. Like Hayles' abstract body, Grint and Woolgar's approach is dependent upon an abstract reader/interpreter and an equally

abstract notion of inscription and reading. In fact, Hayles pairs ‘inscription’ with ‘the body’ on the abstract pole of a dualism with ‘incorporation’ and ‘embodiment’ at the other, more material end. The latter, by emphasising process, multiplicity and heterogeneity, avoid the essentialist trap that studies of ‘the body’ and Grint and Woolgar fall into. Whilst inscription emphasises some abstract notion of text, independent of its material instantiations, incorporation foregrounds the *corps* which realises that abstraction, not as a hylomorphic, external form stamped upon it, but as an immanent production of its materiality. Following Deleuze and Guattari we could say that not only expression, but also content, has form so that expression cannot be the same as a signifier, or abstract text, that stands above and outside its instantiations. Where Cooper would perhaps characterise this interaction as a burrowing, Hayles speaks of a collaboration, contrasting the two modes of thought such that:

Incorporation emerges from the collaboration between the body and embodiment, between the abstract model and the specific contexts in which the model is instantiated. In contrast to inscription, which can be transported from context to context once it has been performed, incorporation can never be cut entirely free from its context.

(Hayles, 1999: 200)

In such a situation, it becomes virtually meaningless to speak of a context outside the text. We must be careful, however, not to let this privileging of materiality develop into another, albeit inverted, essentialism:

Just as incorporating practices are not necessarily more “natural” than inscribing practices, so embodiment is not more essentialist than the body. Indeed, it is difficult to see what essentialism would mean in the context of embodiment. Essentialism is normative in its impulse, denoting qualities or attributes shared by all human beings.

(Hayles, 1999: 201)

It is in this sense that an anti-essentialism is necessarily anti- or post-humanist. This does not, of course, mean an opposition to human beings but rather a rejection and hostility to an abstract, normative and legislating conceptions of humanism and *the*, or perhaps *thee* human. The move is similar to that described by Martin Brigham as an ‘ontological turn’ (Brigham, 2001). Rather than focusing upon the question of what knowledge of technology is possible – epistemology – the emphasis shifts to the materiality that underpins that knowledge. The effect is again to invert the Cartesian dualism that privileges the knowing subject above all else, most importantly, above the material. Rather than going from an abstract, disembodied, cogitating mind, as Descartes did, Hayles is suggesting that a material body, in a specific space and time, provides the basis upon which cognition is possible. In effect, “conscious thought becomes an epiphenomenon corresponding to the phenomenal base the body provides” (Hayles, 1999: 203).

Incorporation And New-Technology

By shifting attention away from abstract, disembodied subjects, busily interpreting their incorporeal texts, toward the materiality of language and the bodies through which it flows and mutates, our analysis is inevitably drawn back to the question of technology which opened this thesis. Instead of turning technology into a text, we are forced to consider the technological materiality of language and text. As noted, Burroughs suggested that the word-virus was relatively benign: it had achieved a symbiotic relationship with its 'human' host that had been stable for some time. With changes in technology, however, that relationship was again becoming contested and open to challenge. The potential outcomes were either Nova – the destruction of the entire planet – or escape and liberation. Although not hugely optimistic, Burroughs at least held out the possibility that 'wising up the marks' would enable them to resist control at the local level and re-write the reality-script that had been forced on them by language for so long:

Plan D called for Total Exposure. Wise up all the marks everywhere. Show them the rigged wheel of Life-Time-Fortune. Storm The Reality Studio. And retake the universe. The Plan shifted and reformed as reports came in from his electric patrols sniffing quivering down streets and mind screens of the earth.

“Area mined – Guards everywhere – Can't quite get through-“

“Order total weapons – Release Silence Virus-“

“Board books have fallen – Word falling – Break Through in Grey Room – Use Partisans of all nations – *Towers, open fire-*“

(Burroughs, 1992a: 59)

The mass-media - the books and texts written by the boards, governments and cartels of the Nova Mob - disintegrate and fall, taking the Word with them. The partisans of the earth are encouraged to 'storm the reality studio' and take back control. Throughout the Nova trilogy, this notion of the reality studio and of a pre-recorded world connect both to Burroughs' general theory of language as a virus, producing specifically formed subjects and ordering social reality through dualism, and to the technologies of film and audio tape with which he was experimenting in conjunction with Anthony Balch and Ian Sommerville. Indeed, throughout the texts of this period Burroughs conceives of reality itself as a kind of 'biologic film' (Burroughs, 1984: 65). As much as these works foreground Burroughs' working through of issues of materiality and language, it is also worth that they never stop also containing an explicit recognition of the importance of capital as a system of control. The fact that the reality studio operates on the basis of codes laid down in the 'board books,' referring to corporate boards of directors, and the not incidental references to those pillars of capitalist media, *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune*, point to a continued attempt in Burroughs work to appreciate the connections between language, capital and very specific modes of subjectivization.

The importance of the technologies that Burroughs was experimenting with at the time of the cut-ups should not be underestimated, both in developing Burroughs' ideas of control and resistance, and in intervening in, and changing control. Following a combination of Wittgenstein and Gödel, Burroughs recognised that the only thing not pre-recorded in a pre-recorded world, were the pre-recordings

(Murphy, 1997). It was these pre-recordings, the board-books and film scripts produced in the capitalist reality studio, that were God, language, word and image: control. To link back to the discussion of double-articulation earlier in the thesis, the stratifications laid down by the double-articulations of Deleuze and Guattari's lobster/god are precisely these pre-recordings. With the appearance of geological strata, these recordings/judgements appear to be permanent and unchanging, but they are *not* forever. Neither are they neutral and beyond challenge.

The cut-ups, particularly tape-based cut-ups, enabled the intervention of chance to disrupt the pre-recordings and produce something *different*: a script that wasn't laid out in advance and so could hardly even be called a script, or *inscription*. It was this possibility of change, mutation and difference at a corporeal level that Burroughs equated with escape, and the materiality of incorporation was central to these changes. Left to themselves, abstract inscriptions are unchanging. Regardless of medium, the message remains the same. Burroughs recognised that change at the level of inscription was never a real change as it depended on language, but by changing the materiality of incorporation, new possibilities for change emerged:

When changes in incorporating practices take place, they are often linked with new technologies that affect how people use their bodies and experience space and time. Formed by technology at the same time that it creates technology, embodiment mediates between technology and discourse by creating new experiential frameworks that serve as boundary markers for the creation of corresponding discursive systems.

In the feedback between technological innovations and discursive practices, incorporation is a crucial link.

(Hayles, 1999: 205)

Paying close attention to the specificities of embodiment goes some way towards correcting the neglects of the discursive and textual turns, both of which tend toward a disembodied subject at the heart of their discursive, or textual reality – an abstract reading subject, occupying a disembodied point of view. Such a model is quite a long way from the traditional understanding of the body as something that can simply be added to pre-existing, disembodied social analyses (Dale, 2000). In some senses we can even invert this prioritisation to suggest that the body writes discourse, a point that Hayles makes with reference to Mark Johnson's *The Body in the Mind* (1987). Whilst "it is a truism in contemporary theory that discourse writes the body," she writes, "Johnson illustrates how the body writes discourse" (Hayles, 1999:205).

Whilst after the linguistic turn, it is a commonplace to recognise that the body itself is written, notably through inscriptions such as gender and sexuality, the conflation of which were so problematic for Burroughs as a homosexual in 1950s America, Hayles and Johnson's point is that language is itself formed by metaphoric associations that grow from our experiences of embodiment. The simple fact that people usually move around upright, for example, is reflected in the prevalence of certain linguistic metaphors such as 'feeling up' or 'being a bit down', or the privileging of 'higher' ideals over 'lower' forms of life. Indeed, these metaphoric networks and their associated valuations are so strong that we will often denigrate those creatures that do

not walk upright, whether the lowest worm, the biblical snake or Shakespeare's twisted hunchback, Richard III. Even within organization studies, with the separation of conception and execution into the head and the hands, we refer to the 'head' as being at the *top* of the organization, and the 'hands', low down on the shop-*floor*, a point that Tolliver and Coleman relate to the science-fictional architecture of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* where the rulers of the city live above ground, in fresh air and clean surroundings, whilst below the surface of the city, the workers labour in dark, grime and heat (Tolliver and Coleman, 2001). Equally reminiscent of H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, and the Christian association of a heaven above and hell below, following Johnson, these allusions are reflections of the ways in which the human body itself is organized.

Of course these ideas are also quite commensurate with Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of the development of the anthropomorphic stratum, discussed in chapter two. The upright posture that develops on the steppe allow the hands to be deterritorialized from their locomotive functioning and then reterritorialized by tool use and manipulation. This in turn allows the freeing up of the mouth, deterritorializing it from a muzzle function to be reterritorialized by language, and so on. What Johnson's ideas suggest is that the upright posture thereby developed simultaneously becomes a relative form of content within expression by becoming a structuring metaphor of language. Language is not only enabled by the deterritorializations that the human animal undergoes on the steppe, it is also shaped by the physical results of those changes.

Of course, as was noted in chapter two, there is a problem with this kind of analysis. In asking the question of human origins, there is a tendency to naturalise these evolutionary and anthropological developments and normalise a particular version of *the* human, a move that has been problematised throughout this thesis. For similar reasons Hayles is wary of Johnson's use of *the* body as a metaphor:

...it is ironic that [Johnson] reinscribes objectivist presuppositions in positing a universal body unmarked by gender, ethnicity, physical disability, or culture. Insisting that the body is an important part of the context from which language emerges, he erases the specific context provided by embodiment.

(Hayles, 1999: 206)

As Deleuze and Guattari put it – “Who does Man think he is?” (1987: 63). For Hayles, this essentialism that sneaks into Johnson's analysis is not necessary however. By considering the diversity of ‘embodiment’ as opposed to ‘the body’, a set of metaphors and schema may be possible that would “vary in response to different experiences of embodiment created by historically positioned and culturally constructed bodies” (Hayles, 1999: 206). As well as allowing a recognition of the interdependence of incorporating and inscribing practices as they work together producing bodies and language, such an understanding would also foreground the question of technology that is so central to the development and experience of embodiment and subjectivity. Without an appreciation of this interdependency, not only is Johnson's physiological essentialism normalising, it is also incapable of

coping with physical diversity and the technological and cultural changes that effect embodiment.

As an example of these changes, Hayles considers the advent of postmodernity with its cyborganic technologies of virtual reality and text based modes of communication, a perfect example of which is Sadie Plant's recent study of the mobile phone in which she suggests that the thumb is becoming de- and reterritorialized through the use of the mobile phone and specifically the practice of text-messaging or 'texting' (Plant, 2001). According to Plant, those who are most adept at using this technology tend to use the thumb of one hand to send text-messages. Not only does this lead to new muscles and nerve lines being used more frequently, but the thumb itself becomes used in a range of other communications, such as pointing or ringing the doorbell (Plant, 2001: 53). From its development in conjunction with tool use, the opposable thumb has again been de- and reterritorialized through the combination of techno-cultural forces that enable text-messaging to be a daily activity. The result is yet another relative form of expression within content, of the kind that Deleuze and Guattari discuss in relation to sign-language and gesture.

It is important not to simply privilege one aspect of these movements. Like Deleuze and Guattari's content and expression, inscription and incorporation are quite distinct and yet are in a relationship of reciprocal co-determination.

...when people begin using their bodies in significantly different ways, either because of technological innovations or other cultural shifts, changing experiences of

embodiment bubble up into language, affecting the metaphoric networks at play within the culture. At the same time, discursive constructions affect how bodies move through space and time, influence what technologies are developed, and help to structure the interfaces between bodies and technologies.

(Hayles, 1999: 206-207)

In light of these points it is clear that technology is itself central to the constitution of discourse, as well as discursive constructions effecting the material constructions of technology. As such, the combination of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas on content and expression with Hayles specific interests in the relations of cybernetic technologies and the body enable an alternative, and thoroughly symmetrical, understanding of technology and textuality that does not simply privilege one in terms of the other, or oppose them in a hierarchically ordered binary. To further develop these ideas, Hayles considers Burroughs' cut-up experiments with tape-recorders as an example of a new technology that both effects the operations of language, the human body, and the social order.

Tape Recording Voice

Often histories of technology and literature treat technology as a theme or subject to be represented within the world of the text. I want to take a different approach, focusing on the technical qualities of audiotape that changed the relation of voice and body, a change Burroughs associates in *Ticket* with the production of a new kind of subjectivity. In the mutating and metamorphosing bodies of *Ticket*, we can see a harbinger of the posthuman body.

(Hayles, 1999: 208)

As discussed earlier, Burroughs' thesis that the word is a virus leads him to suggest that identity is a product of this infection and its main symptom: an almost obsessive need to subvocalize. Hayles draws on Garret Stewart's work, *Reading Voices* (1990) to ask "not how we read, or why we read, but where we read," and concludes that, "we read in the body, particularly in the vocal apparatus that produces subvocalization during silent reading" (Hayles, 1999: 207).

Rather than assuming that reading is a disembodied, purely mental activity much like Descartes' version of cognition, Stewart's analysis looks to the material body that incorporates the text as a subvocalization as it reads. As such, he recognises that subvocalization is essential to the production of literature, not least because it is the homophonous resonations that specific words produce in the reading body that gives writing its literary qualities. Specific words may be replaceable by analogous terms if we are only concerned with the specific semantic or informational content of a message, but its literary effects – and even the driest of scientific documents have a literary effect, however soporific – are dependent upon the homophonous associations that specific words trigger. As well as being crucial for the study of literature, the question of subvocalization raises important points for the study of language more generally. As Alberto Manguel has suggested in his history of reading, the early libraries were filled with a cacophony of voices as all reading was done out loud (Manguel, 1997). Before the advent of silent reading, the act of reading was a reincorporation of the author's voice in the body of the reader. The act of reading, by

materialising an author's words, brought the original speaker of those words back into the present, thereby providing them with a ghostly presence. As such, reading was a literal form of re-present-ation. Authority was validated by the presence of voice, albeit in a different body. Writing was a way to literally 'speak' to future generations. It is only with the advent of 'silent' reading, where vocalization is suppressed to a sub-audible level, that the direct line of association between authority and voice is questioned. Even then however, the subvocalizations of the reader act to perpetuate this authorisation.

For Hayles, the basic insight that Burroughs came to with his tape-recorder experiments was that audio technologies severed the association between voice and authorial presence. Where the tape-recorder differed from previous technologies like radio and the phonograph however, was in finally allowing the masses to produce recordings, as well as consume them. However active our listening and consumption, this production affords a fundamental shift in people's relationship to the recordings:

Long after writing dissociated presence from inscription, voice continued to imply a subject who was present in the moment and in the flesh... Like the phonograph, audiotape was a technology of inscription, but with the crucial difference that it permitted erasure and rewriting...Whereas the phonograph produced objects that could be consumed only in their manufactured form, magnetic tape allowed the consumer to be a producer as well. The switches activating the powerful and paradoxical technoconceptual actors of repetition and mutation, presence and absence, were in the hands of the masses who could afford the technology.

(Hayles, 1999: 208-210)

Connecting to Burroughs' critique of the mass media and mass culture, both of which mass produce identity so serve the circuits of capital, the tape-recorder offers a chance to take the very production of social reality out of the hands of the boards, editors and scriptwriters of the human 'biologic film' and place it in the hands of the masses. Of course, such a rhetoric of emancipation and democratisation is commonplace today amongst internet evangelists, e.com-munistas and cyber-gurus, but it is rare for such theorists to consider the question of access to new technology and social exclusion. Mark Dery has levelled this criticism at the likes of Hans Morovec, the Extropians and the editors of *Mondo 2000*, who are quite dismissive of those who fail to take the next evolutionary leap into the shiny, high-tech world of "sharpies, mutants and superbrights" (Dery, 1996: 305). Burroughs' concerns are considerably less elitist, however, and he is clear that the low cost of mass produced tape-recorder equipment places their power in the hands of the masses (Burroughs, 1979). Developing these themes in the aftermath of the May 1968 uprisings, for example in 'Electronic Revolution' and *The Wild Boys* he is also clear that this technology can and should be used to explicitly political ends (Burroughs, 1979; 1992b). In effect, his is a Marxist call for the masses to lay their hands on the technologies of *mass* production – both in the sense of the mass production of commodities, but more crucially, in the sense of the production of *the* masses: the normalised, deindividuated, consumers and producers of mass society. As Walter Benjamin put it:

Mass reproduction is aided especially by the reproduction of masses.

(Benjamin, cited in Dery, 1996: 142)

The central role played in this production of mass by the *mass* media is also brought into focus when Burroughs suggests that the mass media are the central control mechanism of a literate society (Burroughs and Odier, 1989). In pre-literate, agrarian societies, such as the Mayan civilisation, the ruling, priestly classes are dependent upon the universal illiteracy of the masses for their power. As the masses are unable to read, the priests are placed in the privileged position of being able to interpret the arcane codices and calendars that determine the correct time of year for the preparation of land through slash and burn, the sowing and reaping of crops, and the celebrations and religious rites that will ensure a good harvest (cf. Land and Munro, 2000). Unable to read for themselves, the masses are in no position to challenge this authority. In contemporary industrial society on the other hand, the control system of the mass media is entirely dependent upon mass literacy so as to infect as many as possible with its viral communications and order-words. In light of this it is perhaps no surprise that the first cut-ups came from the slicing of newspapers. As well as a convenient and cheap protector for a wooden surface, the newspapers held out the promise of slicing into the main control lines of contemporary society.

Subject/Meat/Mutation

If language is control then “Burroughs proposes to stop the interior monologue by making it external and mechanical, recording it onto tape and subjecting the recording to various manipulations” (Hayles, 1999: 211). This technique is similar in effect to

the literary cut-ups already discussed and the result of both procedures is to break the pre-sent communications of the word-virus and biologic film repeating the same old human narratives, to enable something new to come into existence. The shift is from human being, to a post-human becoming via the means of mutating inscriptions and incorporations through the cut-up. This is no simple post-humanist transcendence of the flesh, however. Instead the question is one of getting outside the images and words that organize and order the body in specific ways – of producing a body-without-organs as Deleuze and Guattari would put it (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Indeed, Burroughs is quite clear that just trying to ‘beat the meat’, as Vivian Sobchack has put it (Sobchack, 1995) is entirely self-defeating, or rather, stands no chance whatsoever of defeating ‘the self’:

Question: “Mr. Martin, you say ‘give me a wall and a garbage can and I can sit there forever.’ Almost in the next sentence you say ‘All I want is out of here.’ Aren’t you contradicting yourself?”

“You are confused about the word ‘self.’ I could by God sit there forever if I had a self to sit in that would sit still for it. I don’t. As soon as I move in on any self all that self wants is to be somewhere else. Anywhere else. Now there you sit in your so called ‘self.’ Suppose you could walk out of that self. Some people can incidentally. I don’t encourage this but it happens and threatens to become pandemic. So you walk out of you body and stand across the room. Now what form would the being that walks out of your body have? Obviously it would have precisely your form. So all you have done is take the same form from one place to another. You have taken great trouble and pain (believe me there is no pain like flesh withdrawal consciously experienced) and you have gotten precisely back where you started. To really leave

human form you would have to leave the human form that is leave the whole concept of word and image. You cannot leave the human image in the human image. You cannot leave human form in the human form. And you cannot think or conceive in non-image terms by mathematical definition of a being in my biologic film which is a series of images. Does that answer your question? I thought not.”

(Burroughs, 1984: 64-65)

Escaping control by image and word requires a complete, and thoroughly embodied, transformation of the subject. Any attempt to transcend the body whilst retaining human form is quite impossible precisely because it remains entirely dependent upon a pre-given human form that is itself generated by embodied patterns deriving from viral, visceral language. By seeking to become pure communication, pure language, the post-humanists condemn themselves to being perpetually in-formation: organized by the regimes of capitalist subjectification that operate through linear, narrative, viral language (cf. Guattari, 1996: 18-21).

‘Long live the new flesh!’

These themes of embodiment, communication, language, media and control are picked up in what is perhaps David Croneberg’s most Burroughsian film to date, *Videodrome*²⁵. In this film the action centres on James Woods’ character Max Rehn, who runs a budget TV channel that specialises in soft-core porn. Tiring of seeing ‘erotic’ versions of Greek and Roman classics, Max is on the lookout for something harder when his technician draws his attention to Videodrome: a strange satellite broadcast that seems to contain only images of sexualised torture and violence.

Entirely devoid of plot and narrative, the channel intrigues and excites both Rehn and his lover Nicki Brand. As the film progresses however, it is revealed that Max's technician is an employee of Spectacular Optical, a large corporation that is developing Videodrome as a means of mind control. The Videodrome signal triggers responses in the brain of those who watch it which in turn produce a brain tumour. This tumour causes hallucinations so that the viewer finds it increasingly difficult to differentiate reality from hallucination and video, and is made increasingly subject to control. As Max descends into this confused realm, Spectacular Optical are able to control him by means of a videotape carrying their commands. As hallucination and reality blur, a huge, vertical wound opens in Max's stomach and his new masters can programme him by literally inserting a videotape into his body, viscerally illustrating Hayles ideas on incorporation.

Reflecting Burroughs' thematic interests in control, resistance and double-agency, Max's quest to discover the truth about his situation, and about Spectacular Optical, bring him into contact with Professor Brian O'Blivion, creator of the Videodrome signal and one of its first victims. O'Blivion, a kind of pastiche of McLuhan and Baudrillard, will only appear on television if he is 'on television', so that in a chat show early in the film, in which he is participating with Brand and Rehn, he does not appear in person but on a television screen included in the circle of other discussants. A master of the simulacra and hyperreality, we eventually find that the good Professor has been dead for quite some time. His public appearances are staged from a huge library of videotape recordings that he has left in the capable hands of his

daughter Bianca. Opposed to Spectacular Optical, Bianca is one of Rehn's intended targets now that he is a programmed assassin, reminiscent of *The Manchurian Candidate*, working for the sinister organization. However, she is able to prevent him from killing her long enough to remove the control tape and offer him a new one. With this tape inserted, Rehn is either operating as a double agent, now working for Bianca O'Blivion, or a rogue agent seeking revenge. Either way (and the film is ultimately undecidable) he breaks into Spectacular Optical's show, where they are previewing a new range of eyewear, and kills the CEO, his chief controller. As he flees from the scene of the shooting he hides out in an abandoned ship down on the dockyards. Inside is a room with an old television screen on which the image/hallucination of Brand's face appears. Brand herself has long since gone missing, presumed killed on Videodrome to give Spectacular Optical the final image that enables them to control Rehn. Now on screen, her voice whispers to him that it is time to give up the old flesh, that he is now 'the video-word made flesh'. On screen, the image of Rehn, in the old boat, shooting himself in the head appears as he utters the words – "Long live the new flesh!" This scene is immediately repeated, only without the battered TV set framing it – "Long live the new flesh!" – at which point the film ends.

The difficulties with reading a clear narrative into Cronenberg's film are numerous, not least its absolute refusal to offer a clear differentiation between reality, hallucination and video, but in a sense that confusion is one of the film's main messages. As representation and reality merge and blur, the subjects of the film and

their desires are increasingly constituted by image and word in striking similarity to Burroughs' 'biologic film'. At the end the viewer is left wondering what Max's fate has been. Depicted in muted colours, the rusting hulk of the disused boat and the abandoned dockyard that provide the setting for the final scene push the physical materiality of Rehn's position into the background. In contrast, the vibrant image of Brand on the broken television screen seem more focused, more real, than this mundane material backdrop. But the question remains of what Rehn's fate actually is. On one reading his control tape played itself out so that now, an unwitting assassin, he kills himself so that he can't implicate those who gave him his orders. On another reading however, he is now so thoroughly suffused with the video-word that he is literally 'the video-word made flesh', and so has to leave his old self-behind. With his new-found ability to rewrite the control script, Rehn is on the way to becoming something other, quite different from either the old flesh of the body, or the all-too-human face of control. In a sense then, Rehn's undecidable 'suicide' is both a final severing of word/image control lines, and the start of something else – the new flesh. Ultimately of course, Cronenberg is faced with the same dilemma as Burroughs. It is impossible to represent a becoming beyond word and image, whilst still bound by word and image.

Breaking out of the text

Hayles suggests that Burroughs finds his way out of this bind, by pointing outside the written text, and drawing attention to the homophonic resonances of embodiment:

Where hope exists in *Ticket*, it appears as posthuman mutations like the fish boy, whose fluidity perhaps figures a type of subjectivity attuned to the froth of noise rather than the stability of a false self, living an embodied life beyond human consciousness as we know it. But this is mere conjecture, for any representation of the internal life of the fish boy could be done only in words, which would infect and destroy exactly the transformation they were attempting to describe. For Burroughs, the emphasis remains on subversion and disruption rather than creative rearticulation. Even subversion risks being co-opted and taken over by the viral word; it can succeed only by continuing to disrupt everything, including its own prior writing.

(Hayles, 1999: 220)

It is this continual drive to mutate and disrupt control that gives Burroughs' cut-ups their power and energy, enabling them to produce something 'Other' that lies outside the pre-recorded world of word and image. It also points to the limits of these works however. Like *Videodrome*, the cut-ups can only ever point outside of themselves and can never represent the post-human within their text. As Burroughs put it in an interview with Daniel Odier: "Free men don't exist in anyone's books, because they are the author's creations" (Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 37).

But is this really a problem? If we accept Burroughs' problematisation of representation, and its dualistic separation of reality into world and word, reality and representation, then a text shouldn't need to *represent* a possible future. Indeed, if it did so it would become yet another control book, trying to write and delimit future evolution and becoming teleological²⁶. Instead the cut-up should function by

connection, disrupting and breaking association blocks to sever narrative lines of control. Burroughs' aim is to produce disruption, not to offer alternatives, so a text can only ever point outside itself, indicating a possible line of flight. Rather than evaluating these texts in relation to representation, we can only really evaluate them in relation to production: What do they do? What effects do they have? If they help to break down linguistic control lines, then they have done their job. Rather than holding up an image to the reader, saying "this is what you could become," reading and writing are themselves part of a process of becoming otherwise. Whilst the first version of a text assumes that change moves from one state of being to another, both of which are susceptible to representation, this second model partakes in the flux of change and transformation. As such, the humanists' critical criteria of metaphor and representation do not apply to Burroughs' texts, a point that must go at least some way to explaining the hostility of much of his critical reception (Lydenberg, 1987; Skerl and Lydenberg, 1991).

Nevertheless, in Burroughs later writing - the Cities trilogy comprising *Cities of the Red Night*, *The Place of Dead Roads* and *The Western Lands* - Burroughs does go some way toward articulating an alternative form of social organization, one based on the criminal underworld of the Johnsons, outlaw gangs of Wild-Western shootists and all male, pirate communes. Within these new organizational forms, a new type of subjectivity is suggested, or at least indicated, even if its final form lies beyond the spaces of representation in text. It is to this possibility that the next chapter turns.

Chapter 4 – Subjectivity After the Human

As I have tried to indicate in the previous chapter, the question of subjectivity is present throughout Burroughs' work and can be found in both the shifting expressions of autobiography in his first two novels and in the mid-period attempts to cut free from linguistically imposed lines of subjectivization. Throughout his work it is impossible to separate the question of subjectivity from Burroughs' other literary and theoretical concerns. In this chapter I want to briefly review and tie these ideas together whilst also considering the question of Burroughs' own subjectivity as a queer writer. This will set the scene for a discussion of debates over Burroughs' attempt to formulate a more radical model of subjectivity in his later work, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between the subject-group and the subjugated-group (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983; Murphy, 1997). Whilst some commentators have judged Burroughs' attempts in this direction to be ultimately unsuccessful (Russell, 2001), the grounds upon which this failure is articulated is itself quite informative and points to the need for a fundamental reconsideration of the relationship between writing, representation and subjectivity. Acknowledging the limitations of Burroughs' attempt to rethink subjectivity and social organization opens the space for a more general consideration of the 'meaning' of the trans-human without recourse to a logic of representation and hylomorphism (Ansell-Pearson, 1997a). Paradoxically the text of Burroughs most able to point toward this transhumanism does not employ the science-fictional tropes of the Nova trilogy or Hollywood's cyborg representations, but looks back to the Egyptian books of the dead its attempt to

reconstitute what Nietzsche called a new “soul hypothesis” (Burroughs, 1987; Nietzsche, 1989: 20).

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

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

(Burroughs, 1979: 65)

Through the is of identity the word-virus produces essential, fixed, individual, measurable and controllable identities. In one sense, Burroughs is suggesting that this reification serves to conceal an underlying relationality, but there is nothing strictly ‘false’ about this process, as in the notion of ‘false consciousness’. The linguistic

operation has very real effect. It produces those identities by corralling and confining the multiplicity of subjectivity into a singular entity: the id-entity.

Burroughs had a good reason to be suspicious of identity. As his first two, and most blatantly autobiographical, novels suggest, Burroughs was simultaneously a *Junkie* and a *Queer*²⁷. The difficulty of living with these identities in 1950s USA eventually drove Burroughs into an exile that lasted until the 1960s. Indeed, it was only in the 1970s that Burroughs finally returned to take up permanent residence in the United States. Among the reasons for this were the Harrison Narcotics act and State level anti-drugs legislation that effectively made the state of *being* a junkie a criminal offence (Murphy, 1997). Not only could someone be arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned for possession of a banned substance, but not they could be charged with having taken a drug, or being an addict. Track-marks would be sufficient evidence for arrest.

A similar argument can be made concerning Burroughs' homosexuality. As Foucault has suggested, the necessary association of a deviant act with the idea of a deviant individual is a comparatively recent invention (Foucault, 2002). By relating homosexual acts to a specific type of person – *the* homosexual – discourses such as psychiatry perpetuate the logic of the is of identity. As well as parodying this logic, as for example when the infamous Dr. Benway concocts a programme to make perfectly 'normal', straight individuals queer in *Naked Lunch* (1991: 35), much of Burroughs' work can be seen as a rejection of a simple, fixed, homosexual identity.

In an extended study of Burroughs as a queer writer, Jamie Russell has recently suggested that the central drive of Burroughs' work up to and including *Naked Lunch* was to problematise and reject the 'effeminate paradigm' that dominated contemporary discourses on homosexuality (Russell, 2001). Within this discourse, the homosexual is characterised as an invert. By layering this inversion with binary, hierarchical conceptions of gender and sexuality, the homosexual is assumed to be less than a real man: an effeminate man. Sex is assumed to take place between a dominant male partner, and a submissive, female partner and within such a binary logic, it is impossible to conceive of a truly homosexual relationship as at least one of the participants must adopt a passive, feminised role. By relating Burroughs' writing to the socio-political and clinical contexts of 1950s USA, Russell alerts us to the importance of Burroughs' desire to escape this simple binary, oppositional logic and, by escaping, to create a new space within which homosexual relations can take place without reference to an other, conceived as a binary opposite.

Subjectivization and Subjugation

Burroughs' writing up to and including the Nova trilogy, was largely a response to these issues of social and linguistic control relating to the production of pre-formed subjectivities, imposed by a controlling authority as an identity, or dependent upon the exclusion of an other, which Burroughs recognised was itself a kind of dependency. The student uprisings during May 1968 opened up new possibilities for Burroughs' writing, however. In the work that immediately followed these events,

particularly *The Wild Boys* and *The Job*, there is a new, more positive register operating, quite distinct from his earlier, negative critiques of capital and language:

According to Burroughs, speaking in 1969, “Authority in the West has never been more threatened than it is right now” [Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 128], precisely because this new body of radicals supplanted the accommodated and quiescent working class. A *positive* or *affirmative* alternative to capitalist society, and not just a negative critique of it, seemed conceivable: a utopian fantasy not bounded by the mythological terms of modernism or foreclosed by the linguistic terms of postmodernism.

(Murphy, 1997: 146-7)

Just as many writers have seen the events of May 1968 as a turning point in revolutionary politics and theory, Burroughs recognised that it represented a break with traditional forms of resistance. Whilst previous revolts had been primarily aimed at the overthrow and take-over of power in the name of a specific group or set of ideals, the revolts of May 1968 were unclear in their objectives and diffuse in the identification of their objects of critique. This was not necessarily the result of incoherence or ignorance however. In many ways it was the inevitable consequence of the scale and integration of the rebels’ ideas. They were not simply opposed to a monarchy or government but to ‘the system’ as a whole (Hobsbawm, 1998: 294-5). As Eric Hobsbawm has suggested, this was in part why the revolution ‘failed’. Although there were at least a couple of days during the uprising when the communist party could have led a coup and taken over the government of France, it failed to take

the initiative (Hobsbawm, 1998: 289-90). On the other hand, there is every indication that had they done so, they would have failed to be truly revolutionary. By simply taking over the governmental systems, so much of the bureaucracy that the students were opposed to would have remained in place. The paradox set out by these events is that for a movement to be really revolutionary, simply wresting power from the hands of one elite and giving it to another will not suffice. A similar lesson was learned following the Russian revolution, when Lenin was as keen as any capitalist to embrace Frederick Taylor's system of scientific management (Braverman, 1974: 12). Although the means of production was now nominally in the hands of the workers, the reality was that they were subordinated to even more intense managerial control and authority. For an effective revolution to occur, much would have to change; certainly more than just the ownership of capital, or the people occupying the posts of government. It would need to challenge the whole capitalist organization of production and desire, including the relationships of representation and subjectification implied in both Burroughs' understandings of capital and language.

These complexities still effect the anti-capitalist movement today, with protesters at Genoa and Seattle etc. being accused by their critics of not having a coherent programme and failing to offer a viable alternative to capitalism (cf. Hislop, 2001), but as we shall see this critique is only valid if we accept the assumption that the correct form of social organization can, and should, be given in advance and hylomorphically stamped upon the undifferentiated matter of 'the masses' by their leaders or by an ideology. As there is already a set of power relations and a whole

politics implicit in such a model of change, the challenge of thinking revolution after May 1968 is not simply a reactive one, but a proactive opening up onto new possibilities.

For Murphy, the key to understanding Burroughs' work after '68 is the Deleuzo-Guattarian distinction between a subject group and a subjugated group (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 348-9), an idea that they derive from Sartre's distinction between the series and the (fused) group (Murphy, 1997: 150; Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 256-7). Quite simply the distinction hinges upon the nature of the organization and associated processes of subjectivization occurring within a group. In a subjugated group (or series), the group's social organization exists prior to the individual members of that group joining it and taking up their (pre-ordained) place, as it were. This is, of course, the dominant understanding that we have of organization within the disciplines of management and organization studies. In almost any textbook, particularly if it uses a case study method, there is an assumption that some combination of finding the right people for the right job (recruitment and selection), changing the structure of the organization in some way (organizational design, structure), or finding a way to make sure that people do the right job in the right way (motivation, leadership, culture etc.), can solve an organization's problems²⁸. If we accept that such changes can come from the top down, e.g. by consultants (a favoured role to be played by students analysing a case study) or management, then the idea of the organization precedes its material instantiation in the composition of its members. The model is entirely hylomorphic with form determining, and dominating, content.

For this model to apply, there is no need for the people to actually conform perfectly. The main point is that the attempt to control in this way is made, and some degree of conformity will be necessary if the organization is to function. The intent is entirely normative, despite such theory being couched in apparently neutral, descriptive terminology (cf. Willmott, 1993; 1998).

The idea of organizational functioning is important here. In the model suggested above, the role to be played by a group is predetermined and given by the 'needs' of the organization, suggesting a deterministic, organic metaphor of the kind taken up by neo-Darwinist thinkers, both in evolutionary theory and in sociobiology (e.g. Wilson, 2000). Indeed, once the idea of an organism is accepted, then the suggestion that specific organs have determinate roles to play within that organism, and the organism itself within its wider milieu, follow naturally. In short, the defining feature of the subjugated group is its subordination of subjectivization to an externally imposed order. As Murphy puts it:

[An individual] belatedly joins an already existing social complex embodied in mechanical sorting, combining, and management devices (aspects of what Marx called "dead labour"...). These machines give him or her "a place in a prefabricated seriality" by reducing the subject's choices to the array of preestablished alternatives they offer.

(Murphy, 1997: 150)

As well as making clear the direct links between seriality and management techniques and technologies, this quote is interesting because it raises the spectre of Marx's labour theory of value (Marx, 1976; Marx, 1985; Elson, 1979). All the elements of the organization are in place to ensure that the worker takes their allotted position within the production process. The reasons for this, as writers like Stephen Marglin have suggested, is not so much to facilitate effective organization in some abstract sense, but to extract surplus-value: profit (Marglin, 2001). Indeed, the idea of effectiveness in the abstract is an absurdity, but Marglin's point is that management serves the strict purpose of realising, or extracting, a profit from the labour of an organized working body, the source of all value within Marx's theory, and thereby contribute to the accumulation of capital (Marglin, 2001: 27). Again the metaphor of the organism springs to mind, only the purpose of the organism is determined in this instance by the need to realise a profit in a competitive capitalist economy. Through this example it is easy to see how the shifting levels of control in Burroughs' work are simultaneously theoretical developments, and extensions which work together and complement one another. In the model of the subjugated group, subjectivity is subordinated to, and pre-determined (pre-sent to use our earlier terminology) by, the organization of the capitalist socius; an organization that is realised at least in part through the operations of language producing coherent individual identities and distributing them through the operations of the order-word.

Both Sartre and Deleuze and Guattari oppose the series/subjugated group with the fused group, or subject group, though they differ importantly in how this opposition is

conceived. For both, whilst the first (subjugated group) is realised as a subject in relation to an external other (for example management – itself a subjugated group) which has predetermined its organization and lines of subjectivization, with the second (the subject group) the group is its own other, that is it relates to itself as both subject and object. The shift hinges upon the group's perception of its external determination, and active response to this:

The fused group negates the series by the force of its collision with material circumstances (including, in some cases, machines, legal penalties, sanctioned violence, and other forces) that are the products of other series of individuals who treat the proto-fused group as their object and thus threaten it. We might say that the threat wakes the subjugated group to its dilemma, at which point it becomes a fused group.

(Murphy, 1997: 151)

Once it has awoken to its condition in this way, the newly fused (or subject) group has become its own object through a recognition of the group as a group, and therefore through the eyes of the other members of the group. The effect of this is to produce the space for a new, self-determined and directed, social organization of the group to develop, and with it, fresh lines of subjectivization. It is this dissolution that is so crucial to Deleuze and Guattari's critique of organic organization and their positive idea of the underdetermined body-without-organs (cf. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

The wild boys' nomadic war machine

If Burroughs began his project of disrupting, dissolving, or even destroying pre-formed linguistic identities with the cut-ups of the Nova Trilogy, in *The Wild Boys* he both continues this project (though with *The Wild Boys* it is only the narrative, rather than syntax, that is cut-up (Murphy, 1997: 157)) and tries to take it further. As the figures of the Wild Boys themselves begin to appear later in the novel, Burroughs articulates a fantasy of a different type of social group, independent of the external formations imposed upon them by the stratified socius of capitalist society. Unlike symbolism and myth, which operate hierarchically, and therefore support the formation of subjugated groups, the investments of fantasy have the potential to become revolutionary by creating lines of subjectivization that cut-across authoritative lines of filiation and descent to produce new and novel alliances transversally.

The family of man always rejects the transversal, forming itself as a line of descent and seeking continuity between the now of humanity and Adam (and just behind him, God). This filial descent of the human is guaranteed by the myth of creation and origin. When myth, and particularly originary myth, is employed by Burroughs it is used ironically, as a joke to unsettle the very idea and structure of mythology and phylogenetic descent. A perfect example of this appears in *The Port of Saints*, a kind of Wild Boys part 2, when Burroughs is writing about the origins of the dog-like Wild Boys:

According to the legend an evil old doctor, who called himself God and us dogs, created the first boy in his adolescent image. The boy peopled the garden with male phantoms that rose from his ejaculations. This angered God, who was getting on in years. He decided it endangered his position as CREATOR. So he crept upon the boy and anesthetized him and made Eve from his rib. But some of Adam's phantoms refused to let God near them under any pretext. After millenia these cool remote spirits breathe in the wild boys.

(Burroughs, 1980: 97, cited in Murphy, 1997: 167)

This subversive counter-mythology operates to delegitimise the Christian myth of genesis by playful inversion. Not only is the first man a dog ('god' backwards) but the traditional lines of descent from Adam and Eve are set against an alternative line of descent operating outside of the Oedipal/nuclear family. Indeed, in many ways this alternative line is not a descent at all, but an alliance not legitimated by patriarchal/matriarchal structures of identity: "these cool remote spirits breathe in the wild boys" like an alien force. They are literally an otherness within, realised through a fantasy that works in a quite different way to myth. Rather than unifying in some supplementary dimension, this counter-mythical, Wild Boy fantasy serves to unsettle unity and point to a multiplicity that cannot be totalised.

As opposed to myth, fantasy always operates heterogeneously, cutting across phylogenetic lines of familial descent to invest in modes of becoming other. Such investments can include cybernetic connections to technological contraptions, as

witnessed in *The Wild Boys* when they enter into a series of animal and technological becomings:

The Wild Boys manifest what Deleuze and Guattari would call “becomings-animal” in their escape from the constituted social order. They do not become animals, as if “boys” and “animals” were two states that could be occupied essentially; rather, they deterritorialize, or dismantle their bodies’ social representations, by adopting or “reterritorializing” on effective, nonrepresentational animal functions. They do not *imitate* animals, but rather they adopt the animals’ defense mechanisms. “Each group developed special skills and knowledge until it evolved into humanoid subspecies” (*WB* 147), like the Warrior Ants, handless boys who screw steel implants into their stumps; cat boys who wear poison-clawed gloves; Snake boys, who handle (and even become) venomous reptiles; and lycanthropic wolf boys. Other boys deterritorialize themselves through technology, attaching themselves to gliders, roller-skates, and other weapons systems in order to battle the state apparatus.

(Murphy, 1997: 165)

Whilst myth partakes in a unity of origin, the transversal fantasies of the Wild Boys are always concerned with a material heterogeneity that invest the weaponry and cyborgization already a part of the social field with a perverse and revolutionary desire, effectively turning these forces against the socius that appears to miraculously spawn them. Capitalism really has produced its own gravediggers as the confrontation of these proto-subject groups with their subjugating organization, and the subjugated groups imposing this seriality, has given rise to a direct confrontation with that social organization. The revolutionary potential is that of changing the

organization of the socius itself; the very forms of (serial) sociality that are capitalism.

Apocalypse Now

The question remains as to whether the Wild Boys' violent opposition to their subjugation can bring about this revolution. For Murphy the Wild Boys, like the students who inspired them, cannot help but fail to realise their revolutionary potential because their vision is limited to an apocalyptic negation. *The Wild Boys* is subtitled 'A Book of the Dead', reflecting both the death of the old social order which the boys seek to overthrow, but also the death of the subjugated subject. Indeed, throughout the book, and Burroughs' later work, death and rebirth figure prominently, but if subjugation is to be killed, what will take its place?

Throughout his mid-period Nova trilogy and the Wild Boys texts, Burroughs' idea of revolution, of escape from control and representation, operates through negation. It is an apocalyptic vision that spells the end of the self as we have come to understand it and assumes that once subjugating oppression is smashed, liberation will have occurred, without articulating a conception of liberated existence independent from the struggle against oppression. When discussing Burroughs' reception by the humanist mainstream of literary criticism in the 1960s, Richard Dellamora notes that critics like Frank Kermode were quite hostile to Burroughs' methods in *Naked Lunch*²⁹, precisely because the text represented an attack both on the humanist values of more traditional writing, and on the critics themselves. The main accusations were

that Burroughs' writing was apocalyptic and nihilistic, that is they debased and traduced the human in a purely destructive impulse without offering anything positive in its place. For Dellamora, this rejection is based on Kermode's homophobia, which cannot see homosexual relations as anything but nihilistic. Separated from the productive/reproductive *function* of heterosexual intercourse, the act of gay sex is pointless; a fruitless dissipation of energy. In exploring this 'queer apocalypse' Dellamora turns his attention towards Burroughs' earlier³⁰ and more autobiographical work, *Queer*, of which he notes:

Narrative structure in *Queer*... takes the particular form of a queer apocalypse, in which an errant "I" stumbles to exotic locales in search of an elusive, ultimate intoxication. The subject is condemned to psychic and physical disintegration since, disidentified from the Oedipal contract, he lacks as well any alternative psychological or social structure in relation to which he might constitute himself.

(Dellamora, 1995: 137)

The parallels between Richard Dellamora's reading of Burroughs' *Queer* and Nick Land's reading of Francis Ford-Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* are both striking and informative. Where Burroughs' alter ego Bill Lee, stumbles around the jungles of South America in pursuit of both sexual gratification with his travelling companion, and the shamanic drug Yage, in *Apocalypse Now* Martin Sheen's character Willard travels up-river, through the jungles of Vietnam and Cambodia to reach the elusive Colonel Kurtz and along the way find out something more about himself. In neither case, however, is the search for a lost identity: the almost clichéd hippy trip to find

one's self. Rather the journeys involve the travellers in a process of self-identification or deindividualization (cf. Foucault, 1983: xiv): the dissolution of a socially anchored and legitimated identity in favour of an experimental connection with something 'other': a becoming. In both cases the Oedipal contract is disrupted, either through a process of addition that multiplies the terms of the Oedipus to a point where the triangle can no longer contain them (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986) or simply by making alternative investments that simply have nothing to do with 'daddy-mommy-me' any more. This journey is quite literally a trip into the heart of darkness, beyond the pale of socially legitimated human identity into the an-Oedipal; a space where previous reference points simply have no meaning any more; an in-human world beyond any humanist morality.

In *Apocalypse Now*, Marlon Brando's Kurtz writes in a letter to his son, "I am beyond their lying morality". As Willard physically follows the Colonel up-river, he also follows him psychologically, retracing the decisions and operations that Kurtz was involved in through the documentation provided him as intelligence for this mission. Of course, the final goal of his mission is to terminate the Colonel's command "with extreme prejudice". As Kurtz puts it when he and Willard finally meet "You are an errand boy, sent by grocery clerks to collect an unpaid bill." In Nick Land's terms, "command and control want him dead. They transmit a terminator machine into Cambodia, jacking it into a river that winds through the war like a main circuit cable and plugs straight into Kurtz" (Land, 1995: 202). At the end of this process/journey, the sense of apocalypse and disintegration is strong:

Evening at the end of the river: thick tropical heat, an airstrike coming in, and Morrison is sliding through oedipal murder and incest into the occult sonics of matricide. Kurtz waits in the foetid gloom, ready to die. His guerrillas are preparing to slaughter a water-buffalo below, laughing and clapping among torches, automatic rifles and shrunken heads. You have a 28-centimetre serrated combat knife in your left hand. The Willard skin is coming away in ragged scraps, exposing something beyond masculinity, beyond humanity, beyond life. Patches of mottled technoderm woven with electronics are emerging. Daddy and mummy means nothing anymore. You scrape away your face and step into the dark....

(Land, 1995: 203-204)

Although Nick Land's account of Willard's *process*³¹ as he follows Kurtz into the heart of darkness has been contested³², it does provide a sustained attempt at following the deterritorialization of an oedipal subjectivity, situated within the specific socio-economic and political context of advanced, high-technology capitalism, toward a cybernetic conception of the subject as heterogeneous and quite literally monstrous. In light of the political questions raised by attempts to defend the human and its specifically oedipal subjectivity in the face of technological threat, Nick Land's attempt has obvious relevance for attempts to rethink cyborg or post-human subjectivities. Perhaps most importantly, like Burroughs, his analysis is always concrete, despite its use of science-fictional tropes and almost cut-up writing style. Throughout his discourse on *Anti-Oedipus* and *Apocalypse Now* he continually connects these materials to the contemporary situation of high-tech, cybernetic capitalism with its increasingly abstracted flows of information and capital through

the circuits of cyberspace and desire. In this way he is able to produce a kind of time travel that links mercantile capitalism, Dutch colonialism and the ivory trade; the Vietnam war and the American military's inauguration as an international police force; the increasingly deterritorialized flows of cybernetic capitalism; and the cyborganic dissolution of oedipal 'self' identity through the circuits of simulation, artificial intelligence and the 'machinic matrix' of cyberspace³³. The process of writing is much like the time-travel that Burroughs recognises in Ford-Coppola's juxtaposition of the Vietnam war with Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*:

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* becomes *Apocalypse Now*. In the early days of the Vietnam conflict CIA agents set up their Ops in remote outposts, requisitioned private armies, overawed the superstitious natives and achieved the status of white Gods. So the context of 19th-century colonialism was briefly duplicated. That is what writing is about: time travel.

(Burroughs, 1986: 42; cf. Land, 1995: 191)

Where Burroughs uses a similar technique in his own writings, for example in 'The Mayan Caper' where his character travels back to the Mayan era to disrupt the control machines (1966: 81-93), Nick Land fast-forwards this into the future/present, by science-fictionally satirising the now of advanced, cybernetic capitalism where the two main parties of American politics have been replaced by Coke and Pepsi and political elections have been transformed into a continuous feedback loop of popularity polling through soft-drink sales. The parallels with New Labour's consumer oriented, focus group obsessed election strategies are direct. Capitalism

has deterritorialized the state to the point where politics is the advertising industry. The needs of capital are put before all else - “All immigration restrictions, subsidies, tariffs and narcotics legislation have been scrapped” (Land, 1995: 201) – in a policy of “social dumping” much like that currently underway in the UK, that puts the multi-nationals in charge of government³⁴. All that is left of political leadership – the head of state – is a simulacra of the entertainment industry: “A laundered Michael Jackson facsimile is in the White House” (Land, 1995: 201).

As bad as it gets though, there is always something that escapes control: a surplus value that capital cannot appropriate, at least not immediately. The uncertainty of its cyborgizing processes produce more than an automated, docile workforce. Deterritorialization pushed to an extreme logic by capital and no longer safeguarded by state legislation or the institutionalisation of conflict through unionised collective bargaining (Dubin, 1954) produces ever more flows that resist or escape:

...America’s social fabric has entirely rotted away, along with welfare, public medicine and the criminalized fringe of ghetto enterprise (Phillip Morris sells cheap clean crack). Violence is out of control. Neo-rap lyrics are getting angrier. With all prospects of moderate reform buried forever, true revolution brews up in the biotech-mutant underclass. Viruses are getting creepier, and no one really knows what cyberspace is up to. WELCOME TO KAPITAL UTOPIA aerosoled on the dead heart of the near future.

(Land, 1995: 201)

Capitalism may after all 'produce its own gravediggers' (Marx and Engels, 1967: 94), but rather than an emancipated, human proletariat, they will be cyborg.

Willard-becoming-Kurtz

In his journey up-river Willard has undergone a transformation, though perhaps it is a trajectory on which he was already travelling? As he suggests in the opening moments of the film "everyone gets everything they want." At the end however, all traces of humanity are gone and the apocalypse heralds... what? This is perhaps the key problem of the post-human. Ford-Coppola's film ends in a chaotic scene of primal patricide, sacrifice and destruction, a scene which, in conjunction with Morrison singing 'The End' as the musical backdrop, can hardly fail to evoke Oedipal archetypes (French, 2000: 84). Contrary to expectations, however, Willard does not take up Kurtz's mantle, becoming the new priest/king/father to his tribe. Rather he leaves, back down-river. But to what?

It is at this point that Charles Stivale questions Land's interpretation of the action of *Apocalypse Now* in a move that recentres the material conditions of production of the film, and the role of Francis Ford-Coppola and his wife Eleanor, as they reproduce the conditions of Vietnam on their Philippine film set (Stivale, 1998: 57). Like the military organization upon which it comments, *Apocalypse Now* was produced by a hierarchical command and control structure with Ford-Coppola at the top of the pyramid in a traditionally patriarchal position of autocratic power. In relation to the text of the film, Stivale also takes issue with Land's reading. Before he is killed,

Kurtz asks Willard to carry out one final mission for him: to carry his letters and story back to his son in the States. For Stivale this effects a surrogate standing in by Willard for the absent son. Willard becomes the carrier of his father/Kurtz's line by carrying his words back down-river to civilization:

As Willard admits in the reflections that immediately follow Kurtz's request, "They were going to make me a major for this, and I wasn't even in their fuckin' army any more." We can surmise, then, that fulfilling the filial duty prevails, and that his statement at the start of the tale – "Everyone gets everything they want" – was apocryphal since his ultimate mission finally provides him with direction and purpose, and reconstitutes the familiar process of Oedipalization, the son triangulated within predictable parameters.

(Stivale, 1998: 68)

This relationship of surrogate filiality reintegrates Willard back into the oedipal triangle so that, although he may not adopt the mantle of Kurtz's rule in the jungle, following the myth of the Fire King that inspired much of Ford-Coppola's script (Stivale, 1998: 48; Frazer, 1998), Willard is nevertheless brought back into the familial fold.

The discrepancy between these two readings raises an important question concerning the relationship between text and interpretation. Just as psychoanalysis sees Oedipus and the father behind everything, in a process of reinterpretation that finally produces the effect of oedipalisation, so does Stivale's reading. Whilst Land actively

experiments with the two texts – *Anti-Oedipus* and *Apocalypse Now* – to develop a line of flight along which Willard’s human identity deterritorializes and which ultimately points outside the text, Stivale only ever escapes the text in order to find out what the author’s intentions were, and to reinscribe, through reference to this legitimising authority, the oedipal triangle at the heart of the text. The question remains as to whether Oedipus is really in the text or in the interpretation. As this is ultimately an undecidable question, it remains only to return to Deleuze and Guattari (1986) and their point that literature is a kind of experimentation – both in reading and writing. It is entirely possible to search for an ultimate signifier – what does this mean? – and find, unsurprisingly, Oedipus/daddy, but an alternative is to experiment and see what the machine/text will plug into and what connections it might make possible. It is the latter, more revolutionary mode of reading that Nick Land employs, with the aim of pointing outside the Oedipal triangle to something that escapes representation in the word/text. The deterritorializing becoming-cyborg of Willard is, in this respect, similar to the deterritorialization of Professor Challenger at the end of Plateau 3 in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 73). Willard ultimately escapes *the* body/organization/corps – “I wasn’t even in their fuckin’ army anymore” – a point that Stivale recognised himself points to when he notes that:

as Herman Rapaport points out quite pertinently, the French expression “comment se faire un corps sans organes?” (how can one makes oneself a body without organs?) may be strategically “reinterpreted as, how is one to produce a corps without organs, a military corps like an ‘I corps’? How does the ‘unit’ disarticulate, dematerialize, frag?”

(Stivale, 1998: 62)

Whatever has happened to Willard, he has transformed and is not simply going back.

Like his predecessor Captain Richard Colby, Willard realised long ago that 'home' doesn't even exist for him anymore. In the voice-over that accompanies the opening scenes, Willard recalls that when he finally went home, all he wanted was to be back in the jungle. His wife eventually asked for a divorce, so he came back to Saigon to ask for a new mission. In a note from Colby to his wife, included in the file that Willard reads on the boat on the way up river Colby writes: "Sell the house. Sell the car. Sell the kids. Find someone else. I am never coming ~~home~~ back. Forget it!!!" 'Home' is crossed out, suggesting that the very concept of home is no longer relevant as the coordinates of the socius have been completely altered. Also of interest is the slide from selling the house and car, a traditional break with the past and slavery to debt, the job and the circuits of capital, to selling the kids. The juxtaposition of these is both shocking to conventional morality – 'how could he?' – and simultaneously points to the close association of the family and capitalism. The family is literally his, in the sense that the deterritorializing forces of capitalism have also reterritorialized everything back onto the nexus of capital – everything is commodity and possession³⁵. As such, Willard's recognition that he isn't going back, and "isn't even in their fuckin' army any more" suggests both a rejection of Oedipal overcoding and capitalist reterritorialization. Whatever his new mission back downstream, Willard as cyborg/terminator is no longer under the military command of 3CI. He has scrambled

the codes and thereby escaped a reterritorialization into the state apparatus: as a war machine he is becoming nomadic.

Rather than being reinscribed within the patriarchal social organization of the army as a *major*, we might playfully suggest that Willard is becoming *minor*-Willard. Certainly he cannot just step outside of, and oppose the major organization of the army and capitalism. Indeed, the very fact that he carries out his mission and can't find an easy way out is suggestive of the impossibility of binary opposition. Rather, Willard finds a way to create a minor *within* the major; following through within the dominant forms of military organization, but making it alien to itself. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest of Kafka's creation of a minor literature:

...minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature. Even he who has the misfortune of being born in the country of a great literature must write in its language, just as a Czech Jew writes in German...

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 18)

In other words, the minor is always a process of deterritorialization within a major, a minorization as it were. That Stivale chooses to interpret Willard's actions within the framework of the major, oedipal and military organizations (daddy has sent him off on yet another mission) suggests that he has missed the minorization of Willard's becoming-Kurtz.

This 'becoming-Kurtz' should not be understood as a simple replication, however. Just as organizational change is often conceived as one fixed structure or culture, being un-frozen and changed into some other fixed, and pre-given, structure or culture (Lewin, 1951), so it seems natural to think of this 'becoming' as a movement from one state to another. Thinking movement and change in this way, however, is always to think of movement in terms of the static, rather than in terms of itself (Bergson, 1910; Chia, 1999; Wood, 2002). The image of what exists is extracted from the ontological flux of change-in-itself, and fixed as a (mentally) spatialized representation. The assumption in such a model of change is that this representation is adequate to the reality it represents, which must therefore itself be fixed and unchanging. Without such a model, there is no need to think of de-freezing as the dynamics of change are such to ensure that nothing is constant (Chia, 1999: 211). As discussed above in relation to the becomings-animal of the Wild Boys, there is no assumption of two pre-given states 'boy' and 'animal' between which one moves; the movement itself is everything. What is important is the transversality of these becomings. They are not a hierarchically legitimated, pre-given imposition of form, but a mutual deterritorialization into one another.

For Deleuze and Guattari, this potential to deterritorialize the major and create lines of flight outside the text, beyond the reproduction of representation and image, is the main strength of Anglo-American literature. Contrasting this to the French tradition:

The Anglo-American novel is totally different. "To get away. To get away, out!... To cross a horizon..." From Hardy to Lawrence, from Melville to Miller, the same cry

rings out: Go across, get out, break through, make a beeline, don't get stuck on a point. Find the line of separation, follow it or create it, to the point of treachery. That is why their relationship to other civilizations, to the Orient or South America, and also to drugs and voyages in place, is entirely different from that of the French. They know how difficult it is to get out of the black hole of subjectivity, of consciousness and memory, of the couple and conjugality. How tempting it is to let yourself get caught, to lull yourself into it, to latch onto a *face*.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 186-7)

This list of Anglo-American writers could easily include Burroughs. Not only because of the attempts at escape from linguistic control through the cut-up, and from subjugated group seriality through mass fantasy, but also because even his earlier work like *Queer* plays on the registers of voyage, drugs and an interest in the Other space of South America. Indeed it is in the context of this earlier work that Richard Dellamora discusses Burroughs' vision of homosexual identity as apocalyptic.

A Queer Turn in the River

Dellamora's account of Burroughs' autobiographical work *Queer* as a kind of personal apocalypse runs both parallel to and divergent from Nick Land's cyborganic reading of *Apocalypse Now*. Both involve the jungle and a retrograde primordiality reminiscent of J.G. Ballard's *The Drowned World* (1999). More importantly, they both focus on the dissolution of oedipally validated identities. The key difference is where the two papers end. Whilst Land leads us to the departure of Willard into the shadows and a cyborganic *becoming-imperceptible*, Dellamora suggests that Bill

Lee's disintegration is the result of his inability to access a minority identity – that of *being* gay. The solution to this apocalyptic disintegration, here construed as a problem, is the development of an identity politics that can validate same-sex desire. Disintegration is quite clearly *not* something to be celebrated:

Burroughs was a queer without benefit of knowledge of what a sexual minority might be. For him, the consequences of this absence were apocalyptic.

...The subject is condemned to psychic and physical disintegration since, disidentified from the Oedipal contract, he lacks as well any alternative psychological or social structure in relation to which he might constitute himself.

(Dellamora, 1995: 137)

Interestingly, the majority of Dellamora's analysis does not deal with *Queer* at all, except for the preface written at the time of the novel's publication in 1985. Most of the rest of the paper then addresses the various homophobic critical responses to Burroughs' work, and the ways in which the Bill Lee character was effectively heterosexualised back into the role of the heroic, male artist in Cronenberg's film of *Naked Lunch*, which is not a film of the book at all³⁶ but rather a combination of themes from the book – notably the Mugwumps and interzone – and autobiographic material gathered from various sources, including *Queer* and *Junkie*. Working from these texts, Dellamora entirely ignores the more positive attempts that Burroughs made in his later work to refigure a possible mode of existence that might seem more consonant with contemporary queer theory, an approach which Dellamora himself recognises, "is predicated on disidentification from both normalcy and minority

sexual identities” (Dellamora, 1995: 137). This is despite the fact that *Queer* was not published until these works were well under way, suggesting that Burroughs still saw this book as having something to offer even in this later context. Instead, Dellamora fixates upon the destructive, and negative aspects of Burroughs’ ‘queer apocalypse’, seeing little that is positive in its disintegrating, disidentifying subject. By reading these themes through his final trilogy of novels, however, we can begin to point to Burroughs’ positive contributions to the reconstruction of a revolutionary subject, and the possibility for alternative social formations based upon multiplicity rather than individual identity.

Quien es?

Aside from a few collected readers, a novella and some published notebooks containing recollected dreams and associated musings, Burroughs’ last major works of fiction were the trilogy *Cities of the Red Night*, *The Place of Dead Roads* and *The Western Lands*. The two main themes connecting these books are their concern with the after-life and the possibility of radicalised forms of social organization. The first of these themes continues Burroughs’ interest, indicated in the subtitle of *The Wild Boys*, in the books of the dead and points to the prospects for navigating in a world after the end of this one. In these works his drive to go beyond the human condition suggests that death is more than just an individual ending. It also refers to the ending of a world; to an apocalyptic vision of social transformation where capitalist forms of subjugated social organization end. In this sense these books of the dead are also guidebooks to steer us through the revolutionary changes that Burroughs sees as

necessary both socially and subjectively (if indeed these distinctions can be maintained) if control is to be overcome. This theme comes to particular prominence in the last of these three final novels, *The Western Lands*, but before discussing this in more detail it is worth considering the figurations of alternative modes of social organization that predominate in the first two books as these two themes cannot easily be separated. New forms of social organization threaten existent forms of domination, whilst simultaneously making possible new forms. If anything, this is the fundamental problematic that Burroughs' later work addresses.

The Cities of the Red Nights opens with a description the formation of pirate communes in the early 18th Century based on the codification of the "liberal principles embodied in the French and American revolutions and later in the liberal revolutions of 1848" (Burroughs, 1982: 9). The first page of the book opens with a long quote from Don Carlos Seitz's (2002) history of piracy, *Under the Black Flag*, in which he describes the principles of one of these associations – opposition to slavery and an insistence on communal property – as it was organized under the auspices of one, Captain Mission. Burroughs continues to describe the organization of these communes, with particular attention to the 'articles' under which they lived: democratic, vote based decision making, the abolition of slavery, the end of the death sentence, and religious freedom (Burroughs, 1982: 10). From this historical basis Burroughs starts to fantasise about the revolutionary potential of these 'articulated' communes. In reality, the only historical instance recorded was wiped out by attacks from the natives of the area in which they set up base, but if they had survived and

prospered, what then? Burroughs paints a picture in which such communes spring up all over Africa, the East Indies, South America, and in which the articulated join forces with the natives to fend off the attacks of the colonisers. Drawing parallels with the highly successful guerrilla tactics of the Viet Cong, he considers the potential for the combination of the pirates' fortified positions and the natives' resistance to prevent the spread of colonisation:

Consider the difficulties an invading army would face: continual harassment from the guerrillas, a totally hostile population always ready with poison, misdirection, snakes and spiders in the general's bed, armadillos carrying the deadly earth-eating disease rooting under the barracks and adopted as mascots by the regiment as dysentery and malaria take their toll. The sieges could not but present a series of military disasters. There is no stopping the Articulated. The white man is retroactively relieved of his burden.

(Burroughs, 1982: 11)

Not only do the communes prosper, but the actualisation of liberal values espoused by the American and French revolutionaries forces those countries to stand by these principles. The mass relocations, population growth and urban concentration that made possible, and were promoted by, the industrial revolution are halted. With the prospect of an articulated life in the offing, who would choose to move to the cities and work in polluted factories? There is a freedom of movement for people which operates as the inverse of today's drive toward social dumping, and restriction of migration (Plant and Land, 2003).

For Burroughs this 'retroactive utopia' was a real possibility, but the opportunity was lost and revolution was sold out. Industrialisation and bureaucratisation ran on apace and the control machines of contemporary society were set in motion. In the complex, interdependencies of industrial and post-industrial life, the possibilities of communal living are dead:

There is simply no room left for "freedom from the tyranny of government" since city dwellers depend on it for food, power, water, transportation, protection, and welfare. Your right to live where you want, with companions of your own choosing, under laws to which you agree, dies in the eighteenth century with Captain Mission. *Only a miracle or a disaster could restore it.*

(Burroughs, 1982: 12 – emphasis added)

These words end the first chapter of *Cities of the Red Night*, and the book continues by interweaving stories of one such imaginary pirate commune with a detective story set in the present. The pirate tale is narrated through the journal of one Noah Blake, a gunsmith who signs on a ship under the aegis of Captain Opium Jones, only to be boarded by transvestite, homosexual pirates from the heavily armed ship *The Siren*. Now with the pirates, he tells the story of life under the articles. This tale runs in parallel with that of Clem Williamson Snide, a private investigator, or 'private asshole' (an inversion of the usual euphemism, 'private dick'). Snide uses somewhat unconventional techniques, including psychic intuition, sex magick, and tape-recorded cut-ups or drop-ins in his investigations. His speciality is finding M.P.s:

missing persons. While Noah's almost idyllic life under the articles unfolds Burroughs' retroactive utopia, reincarnating it in the text, Snide's story soon has him investigating a ritualistic hanging and decapitation. Spliced into these two narratives are discussions of medical experiments involving virus B-23, a radioactively mutated virus of uncertain origins which Doctors Pierson and Peterson have been involved with.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Burroughs' theories of the viral origins of the human species resurface as precisely the 'disaster' (no miracles here) that offers the potential to restore 'the chance' that was last held out by Captain Mission. As Doctor Peterson discourses languidly, whilst smoking a joint at a medical conference where virus B-23 is on the agenda:

“...And I would suggest further that any attempts to contain virus B-23 will turn out to be ineffectual because we carry this virus with us,” said Peterson.

“Really, Doctor, aren't you letting fantasy run away with you? After all, other viruses have been brought under control. Why should this virus be an exception?”

“Because it is the *human virus*. After many thousands of years of more or less benign coexistence, it is now once again on the verge of malignant mutation.. what Doctor Steinplatz calls a virgin soil epidemic. This could result from the radiation already released in atomic testing....”

“What is your point, Doctor?” Pierson snapped.

“My point is very simple. The whole human position is no longer tenable...”

(Burroughs, 1982:36, emphasis in original)

It is worth quoting this section at length as it raises several issues from our earlier discussion of Burroughs' work. First there is the idea that 'the human' is viral, and increasingly unstable under technological pressures, albeit from atomic testing in this instance, rather than the communication technologies that Burroughs focused on in the earlier Nova trilogy. Second, there is the attempt by the bureaucratic Pierson to bring virus B-23 under control, prevent it from mutating and to ensure that the human form remains stable (precisely by denying its viral foundations). The third point, which raises Murphy's distinction between these later works and Burroughs' earlier novels, is Pierson's accusation to Peterson that he is 'letting his fantasy run away with him.' For Murphy, it is precisely this kind of runaway fantasy, like the retroactive utopia figured in the pirate strand of the novel, that enables Burroughs' writing to produce revolutionary investments of desire within the social field. Of course, for there to be a chance of revolution, for change to be possible, some form of ending or death is necessary: what I have been calling an apocalypse. In *Cities*, this apocalypse comes in the form of the virus B-23 which, following its mutation by radiation, brings plague and death in its wake. This death is made literal in the middle sections of the book when the plague cities first appear and it is through this death - the end of the human as it has been sustained by viral symbiosis - that the chance of revolutionary change comes around again. The end of the human and of (post)industrial capitalist society are entirely bound up with one another. Both are figured as apocalypse.

The literal apocalypse of *Cities of the Red Night* is introduced along with the first appearance of the eponymous cities at the start of 'Book Two' (in total *Cities of the*

Red Night comprises three books). In this section, Burroughs introduces us to the six cities – Tamaghis, Ba’dan, Yass-Wadah, Waghdas, Naufana and Ghadis – as well as their social organization, which is based upon a quite fluid hierarchy of immortal Transmigrants, who move from body to body, thereby extending their lives, and the Receptacles, who provide the bodies that the Transmigrants will inhabit. Of course, as with all immortality tricks, there is a catch. To transmigrate, the Transmigrant has to die at the same moment that a Receptacle couple achieve orgasm. The child thereby conceived will act as host for the Transmigrant’s spirit. The Transmigrants are only able to postpone their mortality at the expense of the host child, thereby leading to a basic conflict of interests functionally equivalent to that identified by Marx:

There was a basic conflict of interest between host child and Transmigrant. So the Transmigrants reduced the Receptacle class to a condition of virtual idiocy. Otherwise they would have reneged on a bargain from which they stood to gain nothing but death.

(Burroughs, 1982: 145)

The parallel with Marx’s characterisations of the vampiric existence of capital, thriving on the ignorance and life-blood of the working classes, returns to the foreground in Burroughs’ critique of these fictional societies, but to fully appreciate their importance we need to understand how they come into the plot.

At the end of the first Book of *Cities* Clem Snide realises that his case is not a simple missing person. After transmuting into a ritual murder case, and becoming complicated by a series of other deaths, and another disappearance, Clem realises that he is actually working for the Iguana twins, a pair of identical twins who also appear as another incarnation of Captain Strobe, the second in command of the pirate ship *The Siren*. Snide's real task is then revealed as recovering the original versions of a series of books of which, *The Cities of the Red Night*, is one (Burroughs, 1982: 137). The Iguana's are in possession only of copies, and yet they seek the originals in order to realise a change in the script:

“Changes, Mr. Snide, can only be effected by alterations in the *original*. The only thing not prerecorded in a prerecorded universe are the prerecordings themselves. The copies can only repeat themselves word for word. *A virus is a copy*. You can pretty it up, cut it up, scramble it – it will reassemble in the same form.

(Burroughs, 1982: 151, emphasis in original)

A Murphy notes, Burroughs is explicitly recognising the limits of the cut-up. It is ultimately unable to do more than repeat the form of language (Murphy, 1997: 175; Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 51). But this doesn't mean that Burroughs is simply returning to some kind of Platonic idealism. As Snide searches for the missing originals, he realises that he has actually been employed to *produce* those originals:

I had already decided to fabricate the complete books if I could find the right paper. In fact, I felt sure that this was exactly what I was being paid to do.

(Burroughs, 1982: 154)

In these sections Burroughs effectively repudiates the power of an original as a Platonic ideal (Murphy, 1997: 176). A Platonic original, or any transcendent figure, loses power the moment that it is instantiated as a real, immanent object. A transcendent law always has to be applied and realised in an immanent reality. In the terminology of Burroughs' biologic reality films, developed in the Nova novels, but continued through the idea of the screenplay in both *The Wild Boys* and the Cities trilogy:

The power of such transcendent laws remains precarious, since they can only enter into the flat film in immanent form, in which form they become subject to the immanent desire they seek to master. Any script, like any fantasy, is just such an immanent structure of desire, so the "transcendent" script of the law can only dominate by claiming to represent the outside of the film while remaining an immanent script, susceptible to editing and rewriting.

(Murphy, 1997: 176-7)

For anyone seeking to effect a change in the reality script, the interventions must be immanent. An idealism founded in transcendent legislation is doomed to failure as it encounters the immanence of the desire it seeks to confront. For Murphy, following Deleuze, the only way to get around this is by refusing to privilege the authenticity of the original, precisely what happens when Snide is recruited to forge the original control books by the Iguana twins:

Burroughs's forgers, who play the parts of criminals, cowboys, and the rest, are like Deleuze's forger in that they all work to produce this indiscernibility of imaginary and real in order to break the control of truth and law over time, to break the determinism of repressive history.

(Murphy, 1997: 177)

'Indiscernibility' is a recurrent feature of Burroughs' writing, but in *Cities* it builds up throughout the novel as the books that Snide seems to be writing become the focus of the text, and Snide is doubled with several characters, including Noah Blake, Audrey Carsons and Toby. As the books, the detective and pirate plots, dreams and theatre are blurred and confused, the book moves towards an inconclusive ending where it is impossible to separate the reality that the novel is supposed to be representing from the dreams and hallucinations within that reality. The power of truth, including the veracity of representation, is challenged and broken down so that fantasy's powers can be unleashed. As this indiscernibility kicks in, however, it is more crucial than ever to focus on the role of the writers within the novel and, most importantly, what it is that Snide has been employed to forge?

There are two main writers in *Cities*, Noah Blake and Clem Snide. Initially we assume that Blake is the author of the pirate story which runs alongside Snide's missing-persons enquiry. Indeed, the importance of Blake's writing is highlighted by a quote from Captain Strobe's notebook, when he ponders over Blake:

What does he think is expected from him? The role of gunsmith and inventor, which is partially true. I must not underestimate him...

Noah writes that I am interested in printing his diaries “for some reason.” Does he have any inkling what reason? He must be kept a very busy gunsmith lest he realize his primary role.

(Burroughs, 1982: 90)

Whilst Blake is kept busy making bombs and new guns for the pirates, the focus on writing shifts to Snide, who we eventually realise is the author of the pirate stories as part of his simulation of the ‘original’ control books that the Iguana’s are after (Burroughs, 1982: 157). But is this what Snide is supposed to be producing? As the plot thickens throughout the second Book of *Cities* we realise that there are figures behind even the Iguana twins. As the pirate plot starts to merge with a new plot concerning Captain Nordenholtz’s (also captain of *The Siren*) takeover of the US Navy and its attempt to conquer the final frontier of space, science-fictional themes from the Nova trilogy come back into play, particularly the conflict over space and the future/end of the human race. Now working for Blum and Krup, Snide is sent to a Navy installation that is a launch pad for some kind of communication satellite, in fact a weapon of mass destruction. The plan, or so it seems, is to launch a virus from space which will wipe out the white race. Why?

“...So we would then be justified in using any biologic and/or chemical weapon in retaliation would we not?”

“You would do it justified or not. But the plague might well decimate the white race... destroy them as a genetic entity.”

“We would have the fever sperm stocks. We could rebuild the white race to our specifications, after we...”

The table of thirty boys flashed in front of my eyes. “Pretty neat. And you want me to write the scenario.”

(Burroughs, 1982: 181)

The real reason that Snide has been employed is to write the next apocalypse, but unlike the first one, a seemingly ‘natural’ disaster, resulting in a proliferation of diversity and difference, this one will reinstate an entirely artificial, fascistic homogeneity. The drive is for normalisation and control.

Snide is clearly an unwilling employee with respect to this augmentation of fascistic control and the characters he is doubled with, particularly Noah and Audrey, are both representatives of an alternative, anti-authoritarian fantasy world of revolutionary desire. But the complexities of plot and counter plot, both of and within the novel, make it impossible to discern who is traducing who, who is selling out and who is working for who. It is not so much that ‘all agents defect’, as *Naked Lunch* had it (Burroughs, 1986: 163; Murphy, 1997), as that the logic of resistance, however radical, always holds out the possibility of recuperation either into right-wing ideology or as yet another axiomatic of capitalism. As Sadie Plant put it, paraphrasing the Internationale Situationniste: “Il n’est pas de geste si radical que l’idéologie n’essaie de récupérer” (Plant, 1992: 188)³⁷. Indeed, even the face and

voice of Burroughs – so often redolent of rebellion and perversity – has been recuperated into the capitalist mainstream in this respect, as when he featured in a series of adverts for Nike in the mid 1990s. The problem for Snide et al is that they can never be sure whose side they are on. In this respect, Murphy is perhaps too quick to take the Iguana's comments on the failure of the cut-up at face value. The ambivalent position of the Iguanas within the text of *Cities* suggests that their pronouncements cannot be taken as any kind of authoritative statement. This suggestion is born out by the reappearance of cut-up sections in the later parts of the novel, especially where time-travel is involved (e.g. Burroughs, 1982: 215). As well as adding to the overall sense of confusion, there is a suggestion that this cutting-up of reality and narrative, as in the Nova Trilogy, enables a mode of resistance that refuses a simple dialectic of opposition which can always be recuperated back into what it opposes. As Burroughs wrote elsewhere, citing the authority of one of his own creations, a certain Herr Doktor Kurt Urruh von Steinplatz:

He who opposes force with counterforce alone forms that which he opposes and is formed by it. History shows that when a system of government is overthrown by force a system in many respects similar will take its place. On the other hand he who does not resist force that enslaves and exterminates will be enslaved and exterminated. For revolution to effect basic changes in existing conditions three tactics are required: 1. Disrupt. 2. Attack. 3. Disappear. Look away. Ignore. Forget. These three tactics to be employed *alternatively*.

(Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 101, emphasis in original)

The downside of simple opposition has already been alluded to with respect to the wresting of power in the Russian revolution. In the pirate story, Burroughs makes quite explicit the problems of taking control in this way, as when Noah becomes enamoured of his new found power. Having taken the city of Panama from the Spanish using the combined power of his newly developed artillery and subterfuge, he proceeds to destroy the powers of the Spanish inquisition by executing their main representatives in the town:

The summary dispatching of the two inquisitors was based on a precept long used by the Inquisition itself, which is in fact the way they were able to maintain their power despite widespread opposition and hatred. Brutal sanctions against a minority from which one is generically exempt cannot but produce a measure of satisfaction in those who are spared such treatment...*"This won't happen to me."* To turn this mechanism back on the inquisitors themselves gives me a feeling of taking over the office of fate. I am become the bad karma of the Inquisition. I am allowing myself also the satisfaction that derives from a measure of hypocrisy, rather like the slow digestion of a good meal.

(Burroughs, 1982: 169-70).

This represents what is perhaps the end of the dream of the pirates' alterity, and by the end of the novel the failure is complete. The final section, 'Return to Port Roger' sees someone, who the reader assumes is Noah, returning to the pirate enclave at Port Roger. Now overgrown and abandoned following the failed insurrections in the Cities of the Red Night where the real battles were fought, Noah sits on the beach and

reads the last of his journal entries. The Spanish coming to retake Panama, but the setup is a trap and they are doomed. Noah wants to scream out to them to go back to Spain. They have no idea what they are up against, and are unable to do anything but continue their old military strategies, now destined to fail in light of the pirates' superior fire power:

"Paco... Joselito... Enrique."

Father Kelley is giving them absolution. There is pain in his voice. It is too easy. A few still take cover and return fire.

Paco catches a bullet in the chest. Sad shrinking face. He pulls my head down as the gray lips whisper – "I want the priest."

... The easiest victories are the most costly in the end.

(Burroughs, 1982: 286-7)

Although again it is unclear as to who is on which side, as the names are all those of people involved with Noah and the pirates, no one wins. The last wish is still for the priest, the authority of the church and a promise of salvation and immortality. The last desires are subjugated back into dreams of the ultimate series: we are all God's children and desire the authority of the church so we can at last know our place. Despite this poignant note of sadness at its conclusion, the last words of *Cities* suggest other possibilities:

I have blown a hole in time with a firecracker. Let others step through. Into what bigger and bigger firecrackers? Better weapons lead to better and better weapons, until the earth is a grenade with the fuse burning.

I remember a dream of my childhood. I am in a beautiful garden. As I reach out to touch the flowers they wither under my hands. A nightmare feeling of foreboding and desolation comes over me as a great mushroom-shaped cloud darkens the earth. A few may get through the gate in time. Like Spain, I am bound to the past.

(Burroughs, 1982: 287)

Linking back to Burroughs' earlier theorisation of the links between time and control, there is a positive potential in the idea of blowing a hole in time. That this hole is made with a firecracker points back to Noah's invention of the exploding projectiles that enabled the pirates to defeat the Spanish, based on the observation of a child playing with a firecracker and a cap-gun, and suggests a wilful innocence and ignorance of consequences. But fighting fire with fire dooms the planet. An arms race escalates assuring mutual destruction of adversaries: the powerful and the resistance. Locked into a dialectical struggle over power, neither side can survive.

Written in the early 80s at the height of the cold war, the invocation of the mushroom cloud that we were all living under at that time is particularly evocative of Burroughs' apocalyptic visions. This, in combination with the space-travel theme suggests that anyone remaining human will, like Noah Blake, remain bound to their past. Although he has blown a 'hole in time', he cannot himself step through. Indeed, only a 'few may get through the gate in time,' suggesting both 'a gate (the hole) in time', and 'a gate' (an escape portal) that they will have to get through 'in time' (to avoid the apocalypse). Ultimately even the power of this escape is questioned however: 'Into what bigger and bigger firecrackers?'

Throughout *Cities*' sub-theme of space travel, ambiguity has been unavoidable. In his dual role as head of the pirates and the new space navy, Captain Nordenholz has been a shadowy figure, doubled by Opium Jones, whose crew are opium addicts or the idealised youths of German fascism. Ultimately, the opposition seems as corrupt as those already in power. But perhaps this is the wrong approach. Despite the failures of the resistance in *Cities*, they are not supposed to provide a model that can be simply replicated. Indeed, this very idea raises the problem of representation that plagues both those in power, who want Snide to write the control books so that they can maintain power, and the revolutionaries like Snide/Noah/Audrey, who want to write their way out from control. If textual representation, and even language itself, is implicated in the (re)production of pre-sent human identities, always the same, then a radical textual practice must always be apocalyptic. It is not just time that a hole is blown in, but the narrative structures of language and sub-vocalisation that produce linear time: the human/word virus. In this we are returned to the mythical Cities of the Red Night, with their originary apocalypse, and the virus B-23.

In the middle of the novel we discover how the cities got their red nights. At some point an unspecified event occurred, perhaps a meteor falling or a black hole opening, that left a twenty mile crater in the desert North of Tamaghis:

After this occurrence the whole northern sky lit up red at night, like the reflection from a vast furnace. Those in the immediate vicinity of the crater were the first to be affected and various mutations were observed, the commonest being altered hair and

skin color. Red and yellow hair, and white, yellow, and red skin appeared for the first time. Slowly the whole area was similarly affected until the mutants outnumbered the original inhabitants, who were as all human beings were at the time: black.

(Burroughs, 1982: 143)

It is at this point that the various intrigues of the Cities, their power plays and competing parties and factions, come into existence. Prior to this we know little of the Cities. It seems unlikely that they had any meaningful existence prior to this mutation, itself highly reminiscent of the apocalyptic collapse of the tower of Babel and the subsequent explosion of (linguistic) diversity unsettling a presupposed homogeneous unity. So what is the solution? Burroughs' parodic use of myth makes it clear that a return to unity is impossible, and at any rate undesirable. Ultimately this is the problem of representing an idyllic, unified alternative. Instead his texts employ the device of apocalypse, so that after having achieved a period of symbiosis with its hosts, the human virus is again becoming virulent. The mutations realised in it through atomic testing have led to a reappearance of the virus that decimates the Earth's population until it is approximately what it was 300 years ago, at the time of the last 'chance' and Captain Mission's founding of the real-life Port Roger (Burroughs, 1982: 279). The suggestion is that once again, because of this apocalyptic situation, a real change is possible. Whatever the machinations of the powerful and the resistance, the result of their battles is to produce the apocalypse (rather than a miracle) that brings again 'the chance'. But the question remains as to who can 'step through the gate in time' – *quien es?* With the failure to formulate an

answer to this question in the pirate script, Burroughs takes it up again in the second novel of the *Cities* trilogy: *The Place of Dead Roads*.

The Johnson Family

“The Johnson family” was a turn-of-the-century expression to designate good bums and thieves. It was elaborated into a code of conduct. A Johnson honors his obligations. His word is good and he is a good man to do business with. A Johnson minds his own business. He is not a snoopy, self-righteous, trouble-making person. A Johnson will give help when help is needed. He will not stand by while someone is drowning or trapped under a burning car.

The only thing that could unite the planet is a united space program... the earth becomes a space station and war is simply *out*, irrelevant, flatly insane in a context of research centers, spaceports, and the exhilaration of working with people you like and respect toward an agreed-upon objective, an objective from which all workers will gain. *Happiness is a by product of function*. The planetary space station will give all participants an opportunity to function.

(Burroughs, 1983: 1, emphasis in original)

Formula of my happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a *goal*...

(Nietzsche, 1990: 37)

Flee, but while fleeing, pick up a weapon

(Deleuze and Guattari, cited in Plant, 1992: 203)

Whilst the pirates' articles provided the basis for utopian hope and revolutionary investments of desire in *The Cities of the Red Night*, in *The Place of the Dead Roads*, this role is taken by the Johnson family's 'code of conduct.' Again, it is worth noting that both of these ideals centre upon the textual model of a code, and in both books the question of writing is central to Burroughs' concerns. The Johnson family and MOB (Mind Own Business) replace the pirates. By the end of *Cities* Clem Snide has already mutated into Audrey Carsons, another of Burroughs' alter egos (Burroughs, 1982: 284). Carsons is also the central figure in *Place*, only this times the character is Kim Carsons, head of a group of Wild Western outlaws: The Wild Fruits. Not only does this provide another great, male dominated environment in which Burroughs can write his homosexual fantasies, thereby subverting the heterosexual myth of the Wild West (cf. Russell, 2001: 219, n.106), but it also means that he is able to continue the frontier theme, paralleling the potentialities of the Western frontier days for actualising, or fantasising, alternative social formations with his own science-fictional concerns with space: the final frontier.

From the outset, however, we are given to realise that Kim is a character. In fact, Carsons is the pen name of on William Seward Hall, a writer of 'western stories' and 'real-estate speculator' who is killed in a gunfight with Mike Chase on the first page of *Roads* (Burroughs, 1983: 3). After a few diversions through the newspaper reports of this 'gunfight', and the realisation that neither Chase nor Hall drew their guns, our attention is drawn to the existence of a third party, probably using a silenced rifle. This third figure powerfully demonstrates the inability of writing to control the future

as we are told that Hall had already written the gunfight into one of his novels, only with Kim as the victor. The title of this book, 'Quien Es?' opens up again the question posed in *Cities* – who is it? In particular, who is actually writing these stories? Carsons is both the main character and nominal author of these tales, but behind him is the obvious nom de plume of Burroughs himself. When Hall surfaces in the gunfight that both opens and closes this novel, however, the existence of a third figure, working behind or to the side of Hall is posited. Between these two accounts of the gun fight, the book introduces Kim Carsons from his early childhood desire to write, his experiments with magic and his rejection by mainstream society. When his father dies, he decides to up sticks, move to their country place out West and become a 'shootist': a gunfighter. The majority of the early sections of the novel focus on Carsons learning to shoot a gun, interspersed with stories of his eventual fame as a shootist, complete with cameos from characters like Pat Garrett and stage scenes like Dodge City. Interestingly, it turns out that the shack on the river that Carsons occupies as a summer house when he moves out west is the same place as that occupied by Noah Blake in the 'I can take the hut set anywhere' section of *Cities* (Burroughs, 1982: 223). Indeed, the pages detailing Carsons' arrival in Saint Albans (where the shack is) echo and repeat many details of the earlier book, including sensations of déjà vu and even a ghost-shadow sex scene involving the earlier incarnations of Noah and Guy in the shack and their new equivalents, Kim and Denton Brady.

After a number of scenes outlining Carsons' shootist exploits, he is introduced to the photographer Tom Dark who wants to take 'sex pictures of a real gunman' for a rich client (Burroughs, 1982: 83). As Carsons has been fantasising about appearing in just such a series of photos, he willingly accedes to the request. After taking him to a clearing to camp, Dark discusses the art of photography in an interesting aside. Pointing to a tree, Dark tells of a Mexican kid who was hung from its branches by a lynching mob. At the time they thought the kid had stolen a horse, the very horse they dropped him from, but it was later revealed that he had bought the horse fair and square. Dark continues:

“You may have read about it... made quite a stir... federal antilynching bill in Congress and the Abolitionists took some northern states.... All the papers wanted a picture of the hanging and I gave them one... fake, of course.... How did I get away with it? Well there isn't any limit to what you can get away with in this business. Faked pictures are more convincing than real pictures because you can set them up to look real. Understand this: *All pictures are faked*. As soon as you have the concept of a picture there is no limit to falsification.

(Burroughs, 1983: 84)

Indeed, it turns out that Dark faked the whole hanging, death certificate and all, in the employ of an Abolitionist who wanted to generate an 'incident' to get some momentum behind the movement.

When discussing this episode, Timothy Murphy refers back to his discussion of Deleuze and the simulacra. Just as the original control books in *Cities* were actually simulations produced by Clem Snide and his assistants, thereby avoiding the problematic use of a transcendent law to control the immanence of life, so here we realise that there is no appeal to the facts in politics and the media. The advent of the image, representation itself even, is always already an act of simulation without an original. For Murphy, “Carsons and Dark each incarnate the warrior as writer-forged, fighting with false images against the image as such” (Murphy, 1997: 178). As we have seen, the image, and particularly the image of the human, is a constraining and normalising straitjacket on the heterogeneous forces of life. Just as the strata of *A Thousand Plateaus* are the ‘judgements of God’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 40), so the images that are a part of stratification, at least on the anthropomorphic stratum, are also associated with judgement. The basic problem here is the ideal model of truth, necessarily implicated in the idea of representation, but destroyed by the idea of the simulacra:

Truthful narration is developed organically, according to legal connections in space and chronological connections in time.... [N]arration implies an inquiry or testimonies which connect it to the true... [and it] always refers to a *system of judgement*.... Falsifying narration, by contrast, frees itself from this system; it shatters the system of judgements because the power of the false (not error or doubt) affects the investigator and witness as much as the person presumed guilty.... Narration is constantly being completely modified, in each of its episodes, not

according to subjective variations, but as a consequence of disconnected places and de-chronologized moments.

(Deleuze, cited in Murphy, 1997: 177, emphasis in original)

Not only does this simulation, these ‘powers of the false’ shatter the system of judgements, but they also explain the confusion of character, place and time travel that characterise the later parts of *Cities* once Snide has given up on uncovering the truth (finding the originals in his role as Private investigator) and turned his attention to falsification, simulation and forgery (Murphy, 1997: 177). Indeed, it is perhaps not coincidental that from the outset Snide was a private asshole, rather than a dick. Rejecting the phallus as a symbol of patriarchal authority, judgement and truth – of structure – in favour of an asshole, Snide links into a model for simulation that recurs throughout Burroughs’ work, whether in the ‘talking asshole’ routine of *Naked Lunch* or the asshole-becoming-apocalyptic-blackhole in the later sections of *Cities* (Burroughs, 1982: 284). The asshole is a figure that appears in Burroughs’ work as an underdetermined space of simulation. Its uses are not delimited by function (shitting, the expulsion of waste), but opened up as potential sources of pleasure (sodomy being a dominant theme) and power (as in the inclusion of sodomy in many of the sex-magic scenes or in the mutating offspring-weaponry of the Wild Boys’ sexual engagements).

By shattering the systems of judgement that depend upon God the father and holy dick for the word that is truth (in the beginning...), the powers of the false break down the ground of the stable identity:

...in truthful narration, the protagonist has a stable, preestablished identity (ego=ego) so that action always has a subject, while in forged, falsifying narration, action is impersonal and event-ual because “I is another”

(Murphy 1997: 177)

The subject of narration, assumed also in Nietzsche’s ‘grammatical prejudice,’ is disrupted by forgery and exposed as a product of narrative language. It is a circle of interdependence that forgery breaks: narrative depends upon a concept of truth and a coherent subject for it to function, but that subject and the possibility of bearing truthful witness is the product of the narrative forms of language. Already then, the subject is a product of something beyond itself, the discourses that flow through it, “I is an other,” but also is something added “I is another.”

Of course, this also has implications for the question of who it is that is writing. Building upon the insight that language is essentially an *indirect* discourse that passes always from a second to a third party, the forger is pure simulation, there can be no original forgery:

There is no unique forger, and, if the forger reveals something, it is the existence behind him of another forger.... And the only content of narration will be the presentation of these forgers, their sliding from one to the other, their metamorphoses into each other

(Deleuze, cited in Murphy, 1997: 177-8)

Not only does this explain the series of forger/writers that appear throughout these texts, confusing and unsettling the search for the 'real writer', the source of agency and action, but it also unsettles any appeals to a final authority in the form of Burroughs, assumed to be behind all of these forgers, not least because he wilfully quotes from other writers without reference, thereby pointing to the indirect flows of language and writing that forge him as a writer. Further, there can be no appeal to the authority of God. Christian mythology claims that man was formed in the *image* of God so that God is the original but this fantastic, writing-as-forgery precludes the very idea(l) of an original, whether it is the word of God or his image. For the fantastic forger there can be no claim of origin: 'In the beginning...'

This dual rejection of authority as control and judgement, and of the model of truthful, narrative representation that it depends upon, involves both a rejection of the authority of the author to reveal the truth (rather than producing it as forgery), and a rejection of more conventional models of authority that claim to represent transcendentals: the word of God, and The Law. These two modes of control are consistently attacked in *Roads* through the dual control/authority figures of priests and lawmen, as for example when Carsons fantasises about splitting himself down the middle, one half shooting an Inquisition priest and the other a "nigger-killing sheriff" (Burroughs, 1983: 68-9), or in his father's deathbed advice to his son:

"Stay out of churches, son. And don't ever let a priest near you when you're dying. All they got a key to is the shit house. And swear to me you'll never wear a lawman's badge."

(Burroughs, 1983: 45)

Rather than holding the keys to the transcendent realm of truth, the priest can only ever offer further falsification, only dressed up in the guise of truth. The notion that “all they got a key to is the shit house” again reflects the shift from God the father’s dick as a symbolic anchor point for truth, to the asshole as an absence: pure simulation and forgery.

So what does this mean for the status of Burroughs’ pirate and wild-west fantasies? Are they literal representations of utopian dreams? Are they an image of a future man and society which Burroughs is suggesting would be preferable to our current human form and society? They are certainly these, but they are also knowingly counterfactual. They are deliberately set in historical situations, rather than the futuristic science-fictional settings of the Nova cut-ups, thereby highlighting their fantastic natures. They are attempts to re-write history, thereby realising an alteration in it and influencing the future. In this respect the books are like Snide’s forgeries of the pirate fables in *Cities*. Their fantasies are interventions in the present and attempts to produce changes in subjectivity that will open the future to difference, rather than the repetition of the same human identity. By thus seeking to intervene directly in processes of subjectivization these books are not so far from the Nova trilogy. They are deliberate, material interventions in reality, designed to produce very concrete effects. Just as the cut-ups were designed to disrupt linear, narrative processes of subjectivization, so these later novels offer alternative possibilities for libidinal investments. As in Murphy’s analysis, they offer an alternative model of

subjectivization based on the subject-group, rather than the subjugated-group. But the danger in this approach is clearly that, by virtue of being written representations, they could come to operate as subjugating images.

There is a sense in which Burroughs recognises this danger in both *Cities* and *Roads*. The pirate communes in *Cities* end in the disaster of dialectical opposition, and Noah Blake is too tied to the past to break completely with narrative subjectivization. In *Roads*, the dualistic game of the gunfight is disrupted by the introduction of an invisible third player, and the ideals of the wild west are returned to dust. For some critics, however, this recognition is not enough and Burroughs' use of the all male, homosexual commune based on a strong version of masculinity centred around weapons of destruction suggests a more fundamental failure to offer a genuine break with dualism, dialectical opposition, and the ideal of the independent, self-governing, subject.

Escape Attempts

In his recent book length study of Burroughs as a queer writer, Jamie Russell is highly doubtful of the efficacy of Burroughs' attempts to escape control and its flip-side of dialectical opposition. The form which Burroughs' utopias take is predominantly that of an all male, homosexually oriented and liberated, outlaw gang. Indeed, Burroughs often lays the blame for society's ills at the feet of women, as for example when, in response to the question "How do you feel about women?" he replies:

In the words of one of a great misogynist's plain Mr Jones, in Conrad's *Victory*:
"Women are a perfect curse." I think that they were a basic mistake, and the whole dualistic universe evolved from this error.

(Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 116)

Although undeniably misogynistic³⁸, this should also be seen as part of Burroughs' attempt to overcome dualism. In this sense it is no mere slip of the pen when he refers to the word-virus as the 'other half', a well known slang term for a sexual partner, especially when referring to a man's wife. In both cases, for Burroughs, the problem of dualism is that of a splitting. This is the main point of Russell's critique of Burroughs. In attempting to overcome dualism, Burroughs simply denies the importance of the Other pole and over-identifies with the traditionally male characteristics and virtues, of independence, physical strength, rationality, unemotionality and cold calculation. This is reflected in the way that the outlaw groupings in *Cities of the Red Night* and *The Place of Dead Roads* both draw on the *Boys Own* adventure stories or the very masculine genres of piracy, the wild-west and hard-boiled detectives. Indeed, from this point of view, even his earlier Nova trilogy builds on the classically adolescent male genre of science-fiction. As well as perpetuating the myth of a strong, self-sufficient male, more reminiscent of mainstream fascistic cyborg imagery (cf. Rushing and Frenztz, 1995), Burroughs also limits the space of sexual engagement. In these latter novels, depictions of sex are almost exclusively focused on the conjunction of penis and anus. As Russell puts it:

Unlike the Foucauldian interest in degenitalizing gay male sex by opening up new sexual planes on the body, Burroughs presents the queer orgasm as a technique of regenitalizing the body; the Wild Boys' orgasms allow them to focus solely on the phallic signifier of their masculinity while the rest of the body is disregarded.

(Russell, 2001: 175)

Whilst Foucault, in his later work, was concerned to radicalise the potential of gay sex, particularly through the practices of sadomasochism, as a disinvestment of the direct association of all male sexual pleasure with the penetrative orgasm, for Burroughs this *is* the ultimate sign of masculinity. As such, rather than escaping from dualism Russell suggests that Burroughs remains entirely wedded to its logic through a denial of Otherness which must be exorcised at all costs. The final result of this is that the body itself is reterritorialised by the dominant signifier of the phallus to such an extent that it is paradoxically dematerialised. Rather than liberating sexuality, Burroughs constrains it to such an extent that his later work ends up performing precisely the kind of immaterialism that his earlier writing worked so hard to counteract. At the extreme, this leads to the actual disappearance of embodiment, with all its messy indeterminacy, and a return to some kind of immaterial transcendence of *the* body and a post-humanist escape from the complexities of 'the meat'.

Whilst I do not want to challenge the legitimacy of Russell's reading of Burroughs' work, indeed his study is an important one and raises some serious limitations of Burroughs' work that do need to be addressed, he is perhaps expecting rather a lot.

Burroughs was, as we all are, a product of his own time and experiences and there are a number of ways to read his work. We can, like Russell, look to the limits of his strategies to formulate a positive gay, male identity, and criticise his monocentric response to the problem of dualism. On the other hand, we can look to the ways in which he formulated those problems and worked through them. From this point of view, the limits of his solutions and responses to those problems are themselves highly informative and worthy of serious attention. In this respect, the problems that Russell identifies with Burroughs' project go right to the heart of queer theory. There is little doubt that Burroughs was overly hasty to reject Otherness and to embrace the self-same of male-male identification, but this does not mean that his work has nothing to teach us. Indeed, as I have argued, these later texts are precisely a working through of these problems, as witnessed by the failure of both the pirates and the Wild Fruits. If we assume that Burroughs was trying to create a model for alternative forms of social organization then we are justified in problematising them as images of a possible future society, but given Burroughs' critique of representation and the image discussed earlier, such a response might be a little hasty.

As suggested above, the Utopian drives of Burroughs' later work can be read not as a representation of an ideal society yet to come, but as a focus for the production of desire, an image to mobilise a becoming-Other and a rejection of, and escape from, the current, overly stratified social organization that imposes binary hierarchies on everything, even sexual relationships (Lydenberg, 1987). The problems that Russell identifies with Burroughs' utopian fantasies are in themselves limitations of writing

and image. By creating a linguistic representation of alternative social formations, Burroughs was inevitably running the risk of reterritorializing the forces that he was releasing back into an image of male sexual identity and a model of the human that would limit the revolutionary potential of this release of forces. This problem of representation and the limits of writing was something that Burroughs was quite aware of. As early as the 1960s, in interview with Daniel Odier, Burroughs recognised the possible limitations of writing that he would have to face in his project to critique, and overcome, the word-virus:

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

A: I think I was being over-optimistic. I doubt if the whole problem of words can ever be solved in terms of itself.

(Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 51)

Rather than being able to silence language and escape from the tyranny of the image into the silence of space, Burroughs recognises that as a writer he is caught in the bind of having to use language to overcome itself. In a sense, the contradictions and difficulties that arise in the later works are also a part of this problem and it is no coincidence that at the end of this trilogy Burroughs turned his attention away from writing and concentrated on painting and art instead. Indeed, the very last words of *The Western Lands* suggest that he realised that his writing could progress no further in the direction he wanted to pursue:

The old writer couldn't write anymore because he had reached the end of words, the end of what can be done with words.

(Burroughs, 1987: 258)

This idea of the end, however, can also provide an opening, as in the model of apocalypse discussed earlier. Indeed, *Apocalypse Now*, *Cities*, and *Roads* all start with the end. In *Apocalypse Now*, the music 'The End' plays over both the start and finish of the film. The images at the start are of the airstrike destroying Kurtz's compound are a precursor of a scene that, in terms of the film's narrative, comes at the end while Willard heading back down river. In *Cities of the Red Night* the opening discusses Captain Mission's attempt to set up a pirate commune, and the book ends with 'Return to Port Roger' and Noah Blake's reflections upon the failure of this idealistic project. In *The Place of Dead Roads* both start and end of the novel feature the gunfight and dual slaying of Mike Chase, the lawman, and Hall/Carsons, the outlaw. In each case, the dialectic of law and resistance is highlighted. As the napalm strike called in from HQ destroys the compound of the renegade Kurtz, Willard reflects that 'they were going to make me a major for this, and I wasn't even in their fucking army any more'. Blake reflects on the common ground shared by the pirates and the Spanish colonists they were fighting. In *Roads* both lawman and outlaw are killed by a third. Does this third, Joe the Dead, offer a dialectical synthesis of lawman and outlaw? Or does he offer something altogether outside this dialectic?

For Russell, Burroughs is unable to escape dualism and dialectical opposition because he insists upon a masculine individualism that rejects its dependence upon an other in favour of the self-contained phallus. As I have argued, however, this is a rather disingenuous reading of Burroughs, as it fails to recognise the importance of the asshole, rather than the phallus, in his conception of otherness, and its negative powers of the false. Rather than trying to regain some original, mythical unity of masculinity (Adam before he lost his rib), Burroughs' apocalyptic visions suggest the destruction of myth, and of all drives to hierarchical integration and unification. Instead his work opens the subject up to multiplicity. This multiplicity is figured nowhere more strongly than in the last of his novels, *The Western Lands* (Burroughs, 1987). Whilst Russell reads this text as the continuation of a male identified dissociation of the subject from the body and into a transcendent 'body of light', a parallel of the cyborganic dream of immortality independent of 'the meat', a more productive reading might focus on the twin themes of apocalypse/death, figured in the shape of Joe the Dead and the afterlife that is the focus of this book, and the multiplicity of souls which Burroughs takes from the Egyptian book of the dead, and which opens onto Nietzsche's ideas of a 'new soul hypothesis'. Whilst Russell's reading would relegate Burroughs to the same conservative league as the post-humanists (a reading paralleled by Mark Dery (1996)), the alternative suggests a continued radicalism and progress in Burroughs' writing as he works through the problems of representation and reaches 'the end of words'. It is to this positive apocalypse that we now turn.

A New 'Soul Hypothesis'?

Like *Cities and Roads*, *The Western Lands* opens and closes with parallel scenes. All the 'action' of the novel occurs between them. *The Western Lands* starts with another description of the place down by the river, occupied by the two main writer characters in the other novels, Noah and Kim. In this instance, however, the shack has transformed into a boxcar and is occupied by 'the old writer' William Seward Hall. Again there is a repetition and reproduction of yet another writer/forgery. This time however, the writing is blocked. Indeed, the novel opens with a discussion of Hall's block, which he has suffered since the successes of his famous first novel. In trying to write his way out of this he starts to record the words he sees in his dreams, putting down on paper the few snippets he can catch and recall³⁹. Again, the writing is a copy or forgery, but one for which there is no original.

By the end of the novel, we are given to understand that the problem of writing goes beyond a mere blockage. Even when they flow fast and furious, words inevitably come to an end:

The old writer couldn't write any more because he had reached the end of words. And then? "British we are, British we stay." How long can one hang on in Gibraltar, with the tapestries where mustached riders with scimitars hunt tigers, the ivory balls one inside the other, bare seams showing, the long tearoom with mirrors on both sides and the tired fuchsia and rubber plants, the shops selling English marmalade and Fortnum & Mason's tea... clinging to their Rock like the rock apes, clinging always to less and less.

(Burroughs, 1987: 258)

This is the limit of language that has been an issue throughout this thesis and points to the mutual implications of words and (subjugated) subjectification. By picking up on the national identity 'British', its reflections of imperial excess and a still colonial attitude, Burroughs reflects his earlier insistence that the nation and the family are the basic formulae at the heart of control:

What it amounts to is breaking down the basic formulas: one is the formula of a nation. You draw a line around a piece of ground and say this is a nation. Then you have to have police, customs control, armies, and eventually trouble with the people on the other side of the line. That is one formula; and any variation of that formula is going to come to the same thing. The UN is going to get nowhere... The next formula is of course the family. And nations are simply an extension of the family.

(Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 50-51)

In this Burroughs recognises the point made by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* that the sovereignty of the father and of the national (or even organizational) leader are parallel power relations epitomised by the Oedipal triangle. Families, nations, psychoanalysis and capitalist forms of work organization are all mutually implicated (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). By adding language itself to this, Burroughs realises what he earlier suspected when trying to break the control lines of narrative language with the cut-up: that the problem of language could not be overcome in its own terms (Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 51). But perhaps this is a preemptive defeatism. After

the end of *The Western Lands*, which is the only one of Burroughs' novels to actually end with "**THE END**", capitalised and in bold (Burroughs, 1987: 258), he did go on writing, publishing his recollected dreams amongst other work, though this was the last of his serious works of fiction. Before we give up on language entirely then, and with it presumably this thesis and all of Burroughs' own writing (perhaps including his discussions of language that led us to this conclusion?), it is worth examining the middle of *The Western Lands* and the spaces between the block and the end of words.

Immediately following the preliminary introduction to Hall, *The Western Lands* continues with a discussion of Egyptian ideas of the soul, based on Norman Mailer's (1984) *Ancient Evenings*, the third textual inspiration, alongside Black (2000) (*The Johnsons in Roads*) and Seitz (2002) (the articulated pirates in *Cities*), for Burroughs' trilogy. Drawing parallels with his own earlier film based metaphors, Burroughs introduces the seven souls postulated by the ancient Egyptians: Ren, Sekem, Khu, Ba, Ka, Khaibit and Sekhu (Burroughs, 1987: 4-5). In a sense there is a hierarchy of souls, with Ren at the top and Sekhu at the bottom. Ren corresponds to Burroughs' director, the one who controls your biologic film. He is also the first to leave at the moment of death. Sekem corresponds to Burroughs' technician, he is the one who presses the buttons and keeps the machinery running and the show on the road. Without him there is no film. Sekem is second in the hierarchy, as in "second one off the sinking ship" (Burroughs, 1987: 4). The last, and the one to remain at the end of the day, is Sekhu, the body: "the Remains" (ibid.: 5).

Of these souls, Ren, Sekem and Khu are “relatively immortal” (ibid.: 7). They can be injured but on death they usually head back to Heaven and move into another vessel. The remaining four souls have to “take their chances with the subject in the Land of the Dead” (ibid.: 5). But who is this ‘subject’ who has all these souls? Mr. Eight-Ball: “They don’t exist without him, and he gets the dirty end of every stick” (ibid.: 7). Whilst there is a kind of hierarchy of abandonment, there is no unifying, ontological principle to which the souls are subordinated. As Burroughs notes, the whole film wouldn’t exist without Sekhu, so the remains are no less important than the director. Indeed, there is an intimation of inversion in this system, as when Burroughs again paraphrases Marx and his placing of analytical primacy on the proletariat, whose labour and life-force was vampirically sucked dry by the capitalist boss: “Eights of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your dirty rotten vampires” (ibid.:7; cf. Marx, 1976). Rather than the Eight unifying the seven souls, he is either subordinated to, or simply set alongside, them. As Murphy puts it, linking Burroughs model with Deleuze and Guattari’s non-totalisable part-objects (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 42), these souls and Mr. Eight-Ball all have different, and often divergent, interests and cannot be unified within a single subject. In this model, subjectivity is radically decentred and fragmented and *the* subject, the eight, is produced “as another part alongside its seven component parts” (Murphy, 1997: 191).

Not only are the souls not hierarchically totalizable, but at least some of them are mortal. Although Burroughs is clear that apart from the first three souls, the others must take their chances together in the land of the dead, throughout the book there are

suggestions that even the supposedly immortal souls may be vulnerable to the influence of new technology, notably the atom bomb and radiation, which feature prominently alongside mutation: “Can any soul survive the searing fireball of an atomic blast?” (Burroughs, 1987: 7). This loss of souls is also what we discover to be a key driver for Joe the Dead. Doubling Joe with Oppenheimer’s assistant who pushes the buttons at the testing of the first atom bomb at Los Alamos⁴⁰, Burroughs links the blast from this explosion, with the blast that caught Joe the Dead when blowing a safe in *Roads*:

So when it got too hot for Renny he took off, leaving Joe there. That’s one reason Joe hates all Rens. His souls were hideously burned in the blast. His destiny burned off, in terrible pain from the phantom souls seared by the fires of hell, pulled back to making slingshots and scout knives...

(Burroughs, 1987: 10)

With his Ren gone, and therefore no director, Joe has lost his destiny and script. He has literally lost the plot. He is running around without clear direction and in serious pain. But however much it hurts there is a sense in Burroughs’ writing that this is a more positive existence than a directed and prescribed life. In light of his objections to pre-scripted power and control, Joe, the technician without director, opens new possibilities for space travel. Compared with Kim the vision is quite optimistic. Reflecting upon the naivety of his (or Hall’s) utopian dreams of Kim and his rogue bands of homosexual anarchists, Burroughs notes:

Radiant Kim, the fearless ostrich, escape child of a frightened old man. Anybody isn't frightened now simply lacks imagination. Is there any escape? Of course. A miracle. Leave the details to Joe.

(Burroughs, 1987: 13)

While the earlier books resurrected 'the chance' through apocalypse and disaster, the final book of the trilogy offers a miracle instead. Although much of *The Western Lands* remains apocalyptic, and still brings about the end of the human, this new vision is rather more positive and less focused on the escapism, reflected in Kim's figuration as 'a fearless ostrich', that characterised the earlier novels.

Nevertheless, escape from control and a positive exploration of space are still the goals of Burroughs' writing. After the counterfactual utopianism of the pirates and the Johnsons, *The Western Lands* features a third alternative form of social organization: Margaras Unlimited, a 'secret service without a country' (Burroughs, 1987: 24). Following his rejection of the nation state and family as repressive social forms, Burroughs returns to something like the Nova Police from his middle period, to model an organization defined negatively, by what it won't do and what it is opposed to, and by a positive project to further space exploration, this time explicitly conceived as 'inner space':

And that is what we did, move a phantom organization to Asunción. No KGB to pull us back to Home Center and no Home center to get pulled back to, and that is how we conceived Margaras Unlimited, a secret service without a country. Its policy is

determined by the jobs it won't take. Come level on average, MU takes the usual secret service assignments: assassinations, riot incitement, revolutions, collapses of currencies, collection and sale of information...

...Our policy is SPACE.

Anything that favors or enhances space programs, space exploration, simulation of space conditions, explorations of inner space, expanding awareness, we will support.

Anything going in the other direction we will extirpate. The espionage world now has a new frontier.

(Burroughs, 1987: 24-5)

Of course, this is not a national frontier as MU is entirely opposed to the domination of space exploration by the nation state. Instead it is a final frontier, that can reproduce some of the potentially liberatory moments of the Wild West frontier explored in *Roads*. And what lies beyond this frontier? The end of the human. Again recalling the Wild West, we discover that Joe is an outlaw, but rather than simply operating outside society's laws, Joe refutes the whole idea of the law, even natural or physical laws:

Joe the Dead belongs to a select breed of outlaws known as the Nos, natural outlaws dedicated to breaking the so-called natural laws of the universe foisted upon us by physicists, chemists, mathematicians, biologists and, above all, the monumental fraud of cause and effect, to be replaced by the more pregnant concept of synchronicity.

(Burroughs, 1987: 30)

It is precisely this opposition to *all* laws, not only social and cultural, but even physical, that Mark Dery, following Andrew Ross, has identified as a problem with post-humanism. Whilst Dery is well aware that the rhetoric of natural laws and inherent limits is often mobilised in defence of specific, sometimes oppressive, social formations, what he objects to is the ways in which limits per se are rejected wholesale as oppressive by the seemingly radical libertarianism of the post-humanists:

A healthy skepticism about limits, “natural” as well as social, is a necessary safeguard against encroachments on individual liberty. But social limits justified by artificially created scarcity are not synonymous with natural limits imposed by the biosphere’s interaction with the technosphere.

(Dery, 1996: 313)

In the context of the post-humanist rejection of the Earth itself, in favour of a transcendence above all limits, beyond the final frontier, Dery sounds a warning about the cost of this liberation for the planet itself. After all, if there is something more to the human than immaterial mind then these dreams of transcendence may well be brought crashing back to Earth, only an Earth that is now even more polluted and damaged by the technological excesses of the advanced industrial societies seeking to escape it.

This raises two points about Burroughs work. In the first instance he is not, as Dery implies (*ibid.*: 313), entirely unconcerned with limits. When outlining the ways in

which industrialism destroyed the opportunity for forming radically democratic, pirate communes, the inability of industrial society to keep population and pollution within sustainable limits was one of his main criticisms. Perhaps more importantly, Burroughs is not simply trying to safeguard individual human rights. Indeed, as I have been arguing throughout, Burroughs is more concerned with the potentialities of inhuman-becomings than he is with human-being. For this reason, his characterisation of Joe the Dead as a natural outlaw, must be read in the context of Hassan I Sabbah's proclamation "Nothing is true, everything is permitted."

In Hassan I Sabbah's statement, everything is permitted, *because* nothing is true. As Murphy puts it:

It is a question of causality and condition: if something is true, then something else must be maligned and prohibited by the law as false, but if nothing is true – which is to say if there is no such thing as essential truth – then there can be no prohibition, no Law, and everything is permitted. And it is permitted precisely in the form of creative art, whose only condition and referent is itself.

(Murphy, 1997: 6)

But what is truth? For Burroughs, like Bergson, the whole question of epistemology is connected to biophilosophy (Bergson, 1910). Knowledge and truth are not abstract categories but are always dependent upon a specific, concrete valuations and types of life for their truth or falsity. Like good and evil, truth and falsity are dependent upon what they can do and only make sense in relation to a specific organism (Burroughs

and Odier, 1989: 75), a point that Nietzsche also recognised in his famous essay 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' (Nietzsche, 1997). Burroughs however is aiming for a biologic revolution, which will change the very basis of measuring truth and falsity and, as we have seen, such a transition will be quite apocalyptic for 'the human.' This changes the whole basis of epistemology as it has been debated in the courtroom of reason:

It is not necessary to prove anything, simply to state. This is a biologic revolution, fought with new species and new ways of thinking and feeling, a war where the bullet may take millenia to hit. Like the old joke about the executioner makes a swipe with the samurai sword... well, missed me that time. But just try and shake your head three hundred years from now.

...At the end of the human line everything is permitted.

All is in the not done, the diffidence that faltered.

Let others quaver out: "I dare do all that may become a man, who dares do more is none."

Not so, says Joe.

He who dares at all, must dare all.

(Burroughs, 1987:34)

Without such a risk, ushering in the end of the human, there will be no real change; no revolution. And for Burroughs, as for Joe, social revolution and biologic revolution are inseparable. The goal is to break down conventional lines of patriarchally validated phylogenetic descent and purity in favour of mutation.

transversal becomings and hybridity. For this reason, the first of the natural 'laws' for Joe to break is that reflected in Linnaeus' taxonomies:

Rule One: Hybrids are permitted only between closely related species and then grudgingly, the hybrids produced being always sterile. The Biologic Police bluntly warn: "To break down the lines that Mother Nature, in her ripe wisdom, has established between species is to invite biologic and social chaos.

Joe says, "What do you think I am doing here? Let it come down."

(Burroughs, 1987: 32)

As noted in chapter two, there is an important connection between the taxonomies imposed on species by the natural sciences and the social order. There is no neutral scientific knowledge, and this is one of the sources of Burroughs' natural outlaw. Importantly, however, Burroughs is not arguing that these outlaws ignore natural laws in favour of a dream of transcendent emancipation. He is saying that they need to be broken. Of course, as a good Popperian, he accepts the basic principle of falsifiability, even if he recognises that the scientific authorities would always ignore any counter evidence (ibid. : 33):

you only break a natural law once. To the ordinary criminal, breaking a law is a means to an end: obtaining money, removing a source of danger or annoyance. To the NO, breaking a law is an end in itself: the end of that law.

(ibid.: 30)

In other words, not only is there no end to justify these means, such as the liberation of a higher being, but we must also pay attention to the specific laws that are being broken, in this case the hierarchical lines of species and types, separated by a gulf never to be breached and with Man at the top, closest to God. In fact, Burroughs explicitly recognises the continuation of the hierarchy of godliness in natural scientific taxonomies, and the damage thereby done to animals when Man places himself at the top of the evolutionary pyramid:

For Man is indeed the final product. Not because homo sap is the apogee of perfection, before which God himself gasps in awe – “I can do nothing more!” – but because Man is an unsuccessful experiment, caught in a biologic dead end and inexorably headed for extinction.

“All right, boys, let’s cut our way to freedom.”

The hybrid concept underlies all relations between man and other animals, since only a being partaking of both man and animal can mediate between two species. These are blueprint hybrids, potentials rather than actual separate beings, capable of reproduction.

(Burroughs, 1987: 41-42)

This idea of a failed experiment, or ‘biologic dead end’ recalls Burroughs discussion of the salamander who is incapable of quite making the evolutionary step from water to land. Unable to get rid of its gills alone, along comes a scientist with a hormone injection and the gills fall off: salamander makes it to air breathing. For Burroughs, man is in a similar position. Caught in the dead end of humanist hylomorphism man

needs blueprints, not as a map to use as a model for reproduction, but more as a guidebook to aid escape. Burroughs' use of the metaphor of cutting also reflects Foucault's well known "knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting" (Foucault, 1984: 88) in the sense that it points to a cutting of control ties. It also recalls the surgical scalpel, however, and perhaps more crucially, the idea of a genetic splice.

Discussed by N. Katherine Hayles (1999) the idea of the splice replaces the hyphen as a basic approach to dualism that recalls both the labours of division necessary to keep the two sides apart, and also their mutual interdependence. For Haraway (1997) the genetic splice heralds, or makes visible, the dissolution of the old natural order by breaking down the 'natural' categories separating animal and vegetable, organism and machine. The cyborganic hybrids that this biologic revolution ushers in, cuts across the lines of kinship and separation that, for the moderns at least, prohibited the crossing of culture and nature, subject and object (cf. Latour, 1993). Burroughs' natural outlaws transgress these well policed boundaries, recalling the technical and animal becomings set in motion by the revolutionary Wild Boys. If this new transgression, this hybridisation, is also revolutionary in its potential, it is because the dissolution of traditional boundaries upon which it is premised also breaks down the basis upon which traditional authority held sway. As subjects and objects cross over and cyborganize, the objective expertise of the scientist bearing witness to, or representing, 'the facts' also breaks down, and with it, lines of authority based on political representation, or expertise (Haraway, 1997; Latour, 1993; Myerson, 2001).

Hybridisation, Mutation and Multiplicity

Between ourselves, it is not at all necessary to get rid of “the soul”... and thus to renounce one of the most ancient and venerable hypotheses – as happens frequently to clumsy naturalists that can hardly touch on “the soul” without immediately losing it. But the way is open for new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis; and such conceptions as “mortal soul,” and “soul as subjective multiplicity,” and “soul as social structure of the drives and affects,” want henceforth to have citizens’ rights in science.

(Nietzsche, 1989: 20, §12)

By refusing a reduction to a singular subject, *The Western Lands* performs a kind of schizophrenic multiplication of the subject that finally escapes the transcendent image of *the* human, and the death drive toward immortality that we find in the subjugated group. As with Nietzsche, the ‘subjective multiplicity’ of souls kick up a clamour and demand ‘citizens’ rights in science’. No longer can the priest, or even the scientist, delineate and singularise from a privileged position of expertise and authority, closer to God or objective reality, as those very conceptions have been crossed: not simply crossed out, but crossed over or transgressed. The natural laws separating distinct political realms of representation have been broken along with the concept of disciplinarity and the nation state so that knowledge and power are now both necessarily trans-disciplinary. Organization, no longer coming from above, is formed between the grass-roots like a rhizome, always multiple and polyvocal, even

in the case of *the* subject. This is the meaning of the subject-group: multiplicity and contestation across and between parts not unified to a whole that can subordinate.

This is perhaps the closest that Burroughs can come to articulating, within the remit of words and scope of representation, a radical image of hybrid organization. Crossed with animal and machine, *the* human dissolves as its borders can no longer be policed. Without this disciplinary policing, there is a real chance for change, even if it is only the ‘ghost of a chance’ (Burroughs, 2002). This is surely the meaning of Burroughs’ vision of the post-human as it escapes Earth, Despot and Capital, deterritorializing into the rhizosphere in a becoming-cyborg, escaping time/death/control and entering the space-age:

“I’ll make the cocksuckers glad to mutate,” he would say, looking off into space as if seeking new frontiers of depravity.

(Burroughs and Ginsberg, 1975: 39)

But if there are limits to the extent to which a post-human future can be articulated and represented within language, Burroughs’ final works do offer some ‘blueprints’ (Murphy, 1997) for navigating, just not legislating, this ‘after’ world. The main ways in which these blueprints operate is by providing a deliberately counter-factual fantasy world through which desire can disinvest the status quo and reinvest in a series of decidedly inhuman becomings.

After the human

There is clearly an ambivalence at the heart of Burroughs' vision of the post-human. At times it can seem to celebrate transcendence, whether through Extropian disembodiment and space travel (Dery, 1996) or through a transcendent overcoding of the body by the phallus (Russell, 2001). At other times Burroughs seems to emphasise the immanence of embodiment and reject the transcendence of language, representation and the body (Hayles, 1999). This immanence also features in Burroughs' rejection of the representational logic of hylomorphic social organization in his later work, where the operations of fantasy and forgery are used to enable immediately immanent investments of desire without reference to transcendent myths of origin (Murphy, 1997). As these last two chapters have argued, this ambivalence is perhaps inevitable given the complex array of issues at stake in Burroughs' work: control, power, resistance, desire, language, capital, subjectivity, mutation, technology, animalism, sexuality, apocalypse, utopia and religion to name but a few. It has also been the argument of these chapters that Burroughs' thereby offers, if not a resolution, then at least a new way of looking at the complex triangle of relations with which this thesis started: technology, language and the human. Rejecting an essence of human-being as simultaneously a product of the alien, viral forces of language, Burroughs' work provides another way of thinking through anti-essentialism without recourse to an essentialism of the subject.

In working through the relations of control and resistance operating through such processes of subjectivization, however, Burroughs' work also takes anti-essentialism

beyond the narrow limits of epistemology by opening directly onto the political. For Burroughs representation is a transcendental logic of social organization that works to trammel potential in-human becomings into human being and the is of identity. Identity and human being are both products of, and serve the interests of, control. Identity enables identification and location and ensures that an individual can be found responsible and kept in their place (Foucault, 2002; 1982). Against this kind of simple location (Cooper, 2001) Burroughs offers a radically decentred subject who is always located in the group or pack. Examples of such feature throughout his work, from the animalistic Wild Boys (Burroughs, 1992b) to the pirates (Burroughs, 1982), Wild Fruits (Burroughs, 1983) and Margaras Unlimited (Burroughs, 1987) but are never intended as a model, simply a fantasy through which the investments of desire can be revolutionised. In this sense all of Burroughs' texts operate as immanent desiring machines rather than as representations. Instead of offering a utopian representation of a better state to come, they intervene directly in the production of the subjectivity of the reader and author. Importantly, and against some of Burroughs' critics, in all of these examples whilst desire is primarily homosexual, it is nevertheless radically heterogeneous. It operates through connection to new technologies and weapons and to space exploration. In all cases it actively resists normalisation within pre-given and authoritatively legitimated identities: difference seems to be its organizing principle.

This decentring of the subject extends Grint and Woolgar's (1997) anti-essentialism, discussed in chapters one and two, by applying its radical scepticism symmetrically.

Where Grint and Woolgar sought only subjective interpretations, Burroughs points to the ways in which flows we would usually treat as objects - animals and machines - are themselves the very stuff of the process of subjectivization. Going beyond a simple recognition that subjectivization is a process however, Burroughs' work recognises that these processes are political and need to be appraised accordingly. The argument of this thesis then has been that thoroughgoing anti-essentialism needs to recognise the centrality of technical 'objects' in the constitution of the subject ontologically, epistemologically and politically.

There are two issues left to be discussed however. Although this thesis has primarily been concerned with the relations between technology, language and the human subject, animals have never been far from the discussion. As the two exemplary Others to the human, animals and machines go hand in hand as it were but so far the question of the animal has been left to one side. The other issue that needs addressing is that of ethics. If humanism and human being are rejected in favour of animal and machinic becomings then does this also usher in a certain degree of the inhumane? These two questions are briefly considered in the final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 5 - Post-Humanism and the Ethics of Immanence

Do not demand of politics that it restore the “rights” of the individual, as philosophy has defined them. The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to “de-individualize” by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations. The group must not be the organic bond uniting hierarchized individuals, but a constant generator of de-individualization.

(Foucault, 1983: xiv)

By dismantling the anthropomorphic stratum and cutting-up language, this thesis has attempted precisely the kind of deindividualization that Foucault argues for in his preface to Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* (1983). From an initial starting point in theories of technology and organization, the thesis broadened its concern to include textuality, subjectivity and difference. Focused upon the binary between the identity of the human and the difference of its others, whether in terms of material (silicon versus carbon), race, gender or sexual orientation, the thesis has made the argument that humanism in general, and specifically within organization theory, is premised upon a specific set of ontological and epistemological commitments that are politically conservative and imperialist. Central to this imperialism is the logic of transcendence and representation. By focusing on a transcendent conception of the human inherited from a Judeo-Christian theological tradition and its emphasis on the written word, the humanist tradition running from Descartes to contemporary text-based theories of organizational constructivism have focused on the subject as an

individual, knowing human, albeit with differing degrees of sophistication. To break down the individual as Foucault suggests is to create a space for a new form of epistemology and a new ethics, one based on difference rather than identity. Such was the project that this thesis has traced through the work of Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari and William Burroughs. What these writers share is a rejection of the rule of transcendence and idealism in favour of an always immanent materialism. As the last chapter argued, for Burroughs this meant a rejection of the logic of representation and a search for origins, in favour of a celebration of forgery. Having considered these issues in relation to knowledge and to the form of life of the post-human, in this final chapter I want to focus explicitly on the question of ethics. As the preceding chapters have discussed the ethics of transcendental humanism, this chapter considers the alternatives and looks at the ways in which the ethics of the post-human have been treated in organization studies as a kind of anti-humanism, before outlining an alternative conception through the immanent idea of the trans-human.

Post / Humanism

In his opposition to transcendence, Burroughs departs radically from the normative idealisms of both humanism and posthumanism so how should we situate his work, and this thesis, in relation to these positions? As I have argued, humanism is dependent upon a transcendent figure 'Man', the rational, thinking being who can be clearly distinguished from animals and machines at least in part by his ability to use and understand language. Posthumanism keeps this gendered human subject intact whilst questioning the necessity of its specific mode of embodiment. In effect,

posthumanism is even more thorough in its rejection of material immanence as, whilst it plays with a conception of material heterogeneity through notions like the cyborg, it keeps the form of the human subject intact. For Burroughs however, any material hybridity changes the very nature of the subject. Like Deleuze and Guattari (1987) he resolutely refused to separate form and content so that the human form can be maintained whilst changing its material manifestation. Indeed, this notion that a transcendent form is merely manifested in immanent reality is precisely at the heart of Burroughs' and Deleuze and Guattari's critique of transcendence and humanism. So clearly both humanism and posthumanism are problematic terms. Humanism suggests a norm to which all others are deviant and sub-human. This entirely religious, albeit secular, version of humanism simply displaced God to replace Him with Man. This is precisely the transcendentalism that is carried into posthumanism with the Extropian dream of transcendence. In seeking to escape embodiment, they nevertheless want to take the human form with them. This race to perfection is a direct parallel of the worst excesses of violence in the twentieth century with the attempts to 'perfect' the human race in Nazi Germany or to eliminate any dissent from the proletariat through the Gulags of Stalinist Russia (Finkielkraut, 2001). As we move into the twenty-first century the same logic seems to prevail, with Bush ranting against all 'haters of freedom', wherein any dissent is crushed in the name of humanity with quite inhumane results. This is the humanism that this thesis has suggested a need to oppose. The elevation of humanity as a goal to which individuals can readily be sacrificed simply reinserts Man where God's festering corpse has long since lain rotting (Nietzsche, 1969:41). It is for this reason that an *Anti-Christ*

necessarily calls forth an *Anti-Oedipus*, to disassemble humanism as a hierarchical structure of subjugation and control in the name of liberation, humanity, the greater good or 'human rights.'

But if the human is so inhumane, what are the alternatives? Isn't there a perversity to ditching humanism entirely? Isn't there a danger that a full blown anti-humanism will be quite inhumane? This has certainly been the fear of some organizational theorists.

Interfaces

When considering the ethics of humanism and post-human, there is a danger that figures like the cyborg can appear rather 'cold', with little hope or humanity left. Faced with cyborgs, mutating fish-boys, insects and reptiles, anti-narrative cut-ups and apocalyptic terminators it is perhaps natural to hark back to a period of more authentic humanism. Central to this nostalgia is the idea that it is only in unmediated, face-to-face communication that we achieve our true expression as humans (Parker, 2000a; ten Bos and Kaulingfreks, 2002). Although some feminist theorists of technology have suggested that this face-to-face dialogue is in fact a typically male form of discoursing (Plant, 1997), there is certainly something to be said for the notion that mediation can produce a kind of dehumanising effect (Gross, 1997; Bauman, 1989). For example, it would seem much easier for someone to press the button and release an atomic payload than it would be to kill thousands of people

whilst looking into their faces. So does this mean that to lose the face through the prevalence of the mediated inter-face is to lose all that is positive in humanity? To consider this question concerning ethics and sociality after the end of the human we need once again to turn to Deleuze and Guattari.

Oh Christ... Year Zero

In the seventh of their *Thousand Plateaus*, 'Year Zero: Faciality', Deleuze and Guattari consider the importance of the face to the idea of the human. When discussing the human we have spoken of the mind/body dualism, but to speak correctly, the human doesn't have a body, just a mind and a face. Recalling the face of God in the clouds, or the shadows on the Turin shroud (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 167), it is this face of the father that overcodes primitive heads and bodies to become faces:

The head, even the human head, is not necessarily a face. The face is produced only when the head ceases to be a part of the body, when it ceases to be coded by the body, when it ceases to have a multidimensional, polyvocal corporeal code – when the body, head included, has been decoded and has to be *overcoded* by something we shall call the Face.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 170)

So what is the human face-to-face, the authenticity of unmediated communication or communion, between faces that a humanist romanticism harks back to?

I too would like to know the warm heart beating at the centre of all human activity...

I want to have my finger on its pulse, its hand in mine and our eyes meeting.

(Parker, 2000a: 84)

Certainly, “the face is produced in humanity” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), and yet:

The inhuman in human beings: that is what the face is from the start. It is by nature a close-up with its inanimate white surfaces, its shining black holes, its emptiness and boredom. Bunker-face. To the point that if human beings have a destiny, it is rather to escape the face, to dismantle the face and facializations

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 171)

Whilst a centrepiece of humanist sentimentality, the face, and what ten Bos and Kaulingfreks (2002) have called the ‘interfacial hothouse’, the heat between faces of an authentic human encounter like the idealised one alluded to by Parker, cannot help but point to an inhuman in the human. Like the stony faces and impenetrable gaze of the Nazi prison camp administrator discussed by Finkelkraut (2001: 1) the overcoding of the human face is always colonial. It measure and compares to a transcendent model of humanity and in judging, finds wanting. The face of the human has the inhuman, the horrors of the inquisition and the holocaust as its counterpoint. It is Janus faced and like a mask, inanimate. Fixed by ideals and the purity of separation it has no movement, just a fixed gaze staring blankly.

But even with this overcoding, the human is already departing from the anthropomorphic stratum. Whilst the hand was a relative deterritorialization of the locomotive hand, in association with a tool (for example a club as a deterritorialized branch) the face is an absolute deterritorialization that rises up along with language and signification, to connect to all of the other strata:

...the face represents a far more intense, if slower, deterritorialization. We could say that it is an *absolute* deterritorialization: it is no longer relative because it removes the head from the stratum of the organism, human or animal, and connects it to other strata, such as signification and subjectification.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 172)

Of course, it is not just technology, but language which is central to these overcodings and deterritorializations. The mouth is emptied of food and in a bulimic movement, fills itself with words to vomit out. In this sense the movement of faciality, and the blackhole of the mouth, has always already departed from the organic and anthropomorphic strata. There is no purity and language spreads out to effectuate other codings (genetic, technical, linguistic) on the other strata:

The abstract machine begins to unfold, to stand to full height, producing an illusion exceeding all strata, even though the machine itself still belongs to a determinate stratum. This is, obviously, the illusion constitutive of man (who does man think he is?). This illusion derives from the overcoding immanent to language itself. But what is not illusory are the new distributions between content and expression: technological content characterized by the hand-tool relation and, at a deeper level,

tied to a social Machine and formations of power; symbolic expression characterized by face-language relations and, at a deeper level, tied to a semiotic Machine and regimes of signs.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 63)

Man is constituted by an illusion, by the purity of separation, but the abstract machine producing that illusion, and by extension Man, is not illusory. The distributions of content and expression really are changing, and reaching out *across* the strata, man has always been *trans*-human. But with the deterritorializations of cybernetic capitalism this illusion itself starts to collapse. There is no longer a faciality to overcode language so the codes of cyberspace start to unravel this constitutive illusion as the distinctions that maintain the anthropomorphic stratum dissolve and erode.

faciality

If the face is an overcoding of the head and departure from the body, there can be no simple return to *the* body as a source of coding. Aside from the obvious normalisation of the imperative discussed in chapter three, there are also very real changes to distributions of form and content across the strata. All deterritorializations are becomings, but so are reterritorializations: they also occur *between* so that a reterritorialization is never “a return to a primitive order or older territoriality” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 174). Discussing the relationship between the face, head and body, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that whilst ‘primitives’ may have the

most human of heads, they have no face (ibid.: 176). It is through the face of Christ that humanity is universalised and separated from primitive tribes. Of course, such a 'universal' is anything but:

The face is not a universal. It is not even that of the white man; it is White Man himself, with his broad white cheeks and the black hole of his eyes. The face is Christ... Not a universal, but *facies totius universi*. Jesus Christ superstar: he invented the facialization of the entire body and spread it everywhere

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 176)

And like the cross, the face of Christ bifurcates producing binarization. Resembling a 2x2 matrix the face of Christ produces the human interface as a 'four eyed machine' following a logic of exclusive or (ibid.: 177). Either father or son, student or teacher, man or woman, worker or boss. On the second dimension, the vertical post of the cross, is a yes or a no. It judges the concrete faces produced on the horizontal dimension as either/or:

given a concrete face, the machine judges whether it passes or not, whether it goes or not, on the basis of elementary facial units. This time, the binary relation is of the "yes-no" type... A given face is neither a man's nor a woman's... A ha! It's not a man and it's not a woman, so it must be a transvestite: The binary relation is between the "no" of the first category and the "yes" of the following category, which under certain conditions may just as easily mark a tolerance as indicate an enemy to be mowed down at all costs.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 177)

In either case the binarism operates to separate but its grid is wide and inclusive rather than exclusive. Recalling Finkielkraut's discussion of racism and the Nazi's anti-Semitism, Deleuze and Guattari recognise that European racism proceeds by inclusion and annihilation, not by exclusion. Where the primitive society defines 'us' and 'Other', the white, colonial face of Christ the European literally sees no Other, just shades of deviation from the norm that it is:

From the viewpoint of racism, there is no exterior, there are no people on the outside.

There are only people who should be like us and whose crime is not to be.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 178)

It is in this sense that the Nazi's sought to annihilate the Jews as the enemy: the deviant adversary holding back humanity from its true destiny. The battle here is always an internal politics of the human race. There can be no Other in faciality, or in humanism because to admit of a transgression and let in the outside:

The mixed semiotic of signifiante and subjectification has an exceptional need to be protected from any intrusion from the outside. In fact, there must not be any exterior: no nomad machine, no primitive polyvocality must spring up with their combinations of heterogeneous substances of expression... One can make subjective choices between two chains or at each point in a chain only if no outside tempest sweeps away the chains and subjects...The faciality machine is not an annex to the signifier and the subject; rather, is subjacent (*connexe*) to them and is their condition of possibility.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 179-180)

The abstract machine gains its power by becoming universal, through the face with its binarisms which support hierarchized binary subjectifications and significations. The system of language becomes total, world becomes language, precisely because of this faciality which supports it. Subjectification and signification, the production of subjects and meaning, depend in their turn upon the colonial totalization of faciality. But as we have seen, technology and cyborgization open up the window and let the outside in. It is this breath of fresh air that sweeps away the individualizations of Man and 'the human'. By opening onto a constitutive heterogeneity the transgression of the foundational boundaries between nature and culture, organism and technics, dissolve the imperialist formations of both language and the face, producing a multiplicity no longer constrained as deviation by degree x from a totalising norm. Indeed, the very recognition within the fascist model that a future mankind can be formed by annihilating or assimilating deviance, opens human nature onto artifice. Mankind, in this model, is a project for engineers.

In short, there is nothing to be desired in the 'interfacial hothouses' of the 'authentic' human relationship. The very artificiality of cybernetic, heterogeneous interfacing opens up to an Other in a way that humanism never can. But so long as post-humanism perpetuates a normalizing human form it will remain thoroughly facialized. For Deleuze and Guattari however there is an alternative. Whilst recognising the horrors of faciality, they do not seek to return to 'the body'. As was discussed in Chapter Three, the imperative '*the* body' is as thoroughly hylomorphic

as the faces of humanism. Certainly its regime is less complete, less totalizing, but it is still brutal and grounded in series of codings based on pain and the literal inscription of the body through scarification and marking (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). Instead of sliding back into the multiplicity of tribes and bodies with their exclusive logic of us and them, Deleuze and Guattari, like the post-humanists, suggest going beyond the reactive and imperial formation of singular facial identities. Rather than return, however, this involves opening up to a new multiplicity which proceeds not by addition – us, and them, and them, and them – as with the tribal model, but which recognises a foundational multiplicity which proceeds rhizomatically, operating and constituting parts from in between. In this rhizome the human form is no longer trapped in an Oedipal dream of patricide and incest, defined by strictly delineated lines of filiation and descent, but opens instead directly onto the other – including technics – the relationship with which (becoming) is constitutive of the parts it connects.

The Willard skin is coming away in ragged scraps, exposing something beyond masculinity, beyond humanity, beyond life. Patches of mottled technoderm woven with electronics are emerging. Daddy and mummy means nothing anymore. *You scrape away your face* and step into the dark....

(Land, 1995: 204 - emphasis added)

As the face is scraped away, something quite inhuman and machinic lies behind it. Cold perhaps, but certainly no colder than the interfaciality of Herr Doktor Pannwitz appraising Häftling 174517 across his desk (Levi, 1993; Finkielkraut, 2001: 1).

Behind the seemingly human Willard skin of the face is a hybrid of genetically modified technoderm and electronic circuitry, the two paradigmatic technologies of hybridity and transgression (Haraway, 1997). This is a Willard becoming minor, not major (he isn't even in their fucking army anymore – a strictly organized *corps*), scraping away the faciality of military uniforms with their white surfaces and black-hole buttons to open up a nomadic guerrilla insurgency (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 181).

Deleuze and Guattari ask the question “How do you get out of the black hole? How do you break through the wall? How do you dismantle the face?” and find an answer in the Anglo-American novel which constructs lines of flight and positive deterritorializations (ibid.: 186). As this thesis has argued, the work of William S. Burroughs provides one such escape route through a particular version of the Anglo-American novel. In doing so the face of humanism is dismantled and the symmetry of subjects and objects is restored. No longer is the human subject and his language treated as the sole ontological ground of technics. Rather, a fundamentally heterogeneous ontology grounded only in its essential difference emerges. Within this, as the thesis has argued, there are new spaces for power and resistance to be played out, new lines of flight to escape control by cutting up language and dismantling the face. But, like Burroughs in his mid-period, Deleuze and Guattari are at best vague when it comes to representing *the* after-human.

probe-heads

What is an animal at dawn, a human at noon, and a cyborg at dusk, passing through (base four) genetic wetware, (binary) techno-cultural software, and into the tertiary schizomachine program?

(Land, 1995: 198)

Constructing lines of flight, and escaping faciality, Burroughs refused the temptation to get caught and “latch back onto a *face*” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 187). Instead he took the twinned issues of subjectification and signifiante and constructed a line of flight out of language. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his mid period cut-ups. With the cybernetic, animalistic becomings of the Wild Boys and the narrative disjunctions of the cut-ups, texts become artefacts and technologies, productive not of signification or representation, but of deindividualization, or perhaps better, ‘defacialization’, freeing “something like *probe-heads* (*têtes chercheuses*, guidance devices) that dismantle the strata in their wake, break through the walls of signifiante, pour out of the holes of subjectivity, fell trees in favor of veritable rhizomes, and steer the flows down lines of positive deterritorialization or creative flight” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 190). This new abstract machine, with its positive deterritorialization, breaks out of, and breaks down, the strata, those judgements of God the double-articulated lobster (subjectification and signifiante):

Thus opens a rhizomatic realm of possibility effecting the potentialization of the possible, as opposed to arborescent possibility, which marks a closure, an impotence.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 190)

And this is precisely the meaning of the transhuman that the second half of this thesis has tried to articulate in response to the twin problems of technology and humanism: an opening that proceeds by way of transversal, subterranean burrowings rather than arborescent biunivocalization; a becoming rather than new forms of being. But most important of all, this opening onto the non-human has nothing to do with technology per se (as if it were separable from a technical social machine) any more than it has to do with a human subject interested in questions of signifiante, interpretation and reading (as if it were separable from the facial machine that produced the totalized space necessary for its imperialist pretensions). Instead it opens on to, and actively produces through its deterritorializations, a quite “non-human life to be created” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 191). In answer to Spengler’s question with which this thesis opened, and to the question and questing after technology with which it has more generally been concerned, this is perhaps as much as can be said. Probe-heads: *questing* devices:

Beyond the face lies an altogether different inhumanity: no longer that of the primitive head, but of “probe-heads”; here, cutting edges of deterritorialization become operative and lines of deterritorialization positive and absolute, forming strange new becomings, new polyvocalities. Become clandestine, make rhizome everywhere, for the wonder of a nonhuman life to be created. *Face, my love*, you have finally become a probe-head... Year zen, year omega, year ω ... Must we leave it at that, three states, and no more: primitive heads, Christ-face, and probe-heads?

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 191, emphasis in original)

It is with these enigmatic lines that Deleuze and Guattari themselves come to the end of words, at least for that plateau, as if recognising the impossibility of representing this transhuman figure, an issue we have already discussed in relation to Burroughs' work in the last chapter. Recognising the co-implication of language, representation and the human Deleuze and Guattari are reluctant to offer a model of what might come after the human face. Instead they choose the concept of probe-heads to suggest a multiple, always tentative, searching. The point here is that it is the process of becoming not the goal or the starting point that most fundamental. As Chapter Four suggested, Burroughs later work also develops a process orientated theory of social-organization and subjectivization after the human, one that also refuses reified representations but offers a positive alternative both to the imperialisms of humanism and post-humanism, and to the nihilism of post-modernism and pure escapology.

Animalisms

As the last few sections have tried to suggest, there is nothing essentially cold, sinister or evil in the end of the human. Rather than mourning a lost faciality, there is a positive potential in the inhuman becomings explored by Burroughs and Deleuze and Guattari. This is not to sidestep the question of ethics, but rather to refuse an absolute ground for all ethical engagements as itself problematic. Following Bergson, Nietzsche and Spengler, the question of technics, as well as that of humanism and

ethics, can only be effectively addressed once it is recognised that epistemology is also a question of value and values (Bergson, 1998; Nietzsche, 1997; Spengler, 1932). This raises two final issues however. One is the question of other, non-human forms of life, most notably the animal, which has been implicit throughout this thesis. The other is the question of life itself and whether an vital ontology is possible that would not trap the flows of life in rigid, hylomorphic cages.

The first of these, the animal, returns to the question of ethics but also suggests some potential lines of further research. Throughout the thesis, and throughout writing on the post-human, references to animals are replete. Like Burroughs, philosophers of language have often sought to separate humans from animals with recourse to their lack of ability to use language (Burroughs, 1989; 1986; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). As noted in Chapter Two, the animal has also been represented as an Other to the human for overtly political reasons as in Linnaeus' taxonomy (Schiebinger, 2000). In such discourses the animal is often closely associated to the body, or embodiment, whilst Man is separated off by his rational faculties. Where the animal is of nature, Man with his technics and knowledge has control over nature. Nowhere is this separation more in evidence than with the rhetoric, however theoretically sophisticated, of post-humanism. Witness Nick Land's rhetorical play on Oedipus and the riddle of the Sphinx quoted above: "What is an animal at dawn, a human at noon, and a cyborg at dusk, (Land, 1995: 198). In this, the becoming-cyborg of posthumanism reinstates a more basic division, that between animal and man, whilst simultaneously bringing into doubt the distinction between man and machine. Not

restricted to posthumanism, a similar move is performed in early formulations of actor-network theory (ANT) when Michel Callon and Bruno Latour suggest that ethnomethodologists have been studying baboon troops rather than human societies precisely because they have overlooked technology (Callon and Latour, 1981). Strangely, the rabidly capitalist, neo-Darwinism that informs much posthumanism (Dery, 1996) actually overlooks, or seeks to overcome, one of the great challenges of Darwinism: the recognition that humans are part of a continuum with other animals (Mazlish, 1993). Of course, it does so whilst simultaneously challenging the distinction between humans and machines.

The role of the animal is much more ambivalent in the work of Burroughs and of Deleuze and Guattari however. In a short, and critically neglected, work that uses themes from his final trilogy, *The Ghost of a Chance*, Burroughs (2002) has Captain Mission, founder of the pirate communes of *Cities of the Red Night*, communing with lemurs in Madagascar. In this short, illustrated tale Burroughs seems to suggest that the lemurs and Mission's communes hold the key to breaking the mould of the human form, a threat that is successfully thwarted by agent of the board, Bradley-Martin (Burroughs, 2002). Once again ending in disaster, this short novella raises the figure of the hybrid, also picked up by the natural outlaws and Joe the Dead in *The Western Lands* (Burroughs, 1987). By transgressing the *laws* of nature, the hybrids, mutations, communists and natural outlaws of both these texts refuse all forms of transcendent domination by embracing impurity and the inhuman. Instead, these hybrids play a role similar to Haraway's Oncomouse™ and flounder-gene spliced

tomato (Haraway, 1997; Myerson, 2000). By transgressing the natural order, they offer a politically radical image for refusing all forms of transcendent law.

Alternatives

This brings us to the second issue raised by the question of value, epistemology and biophilosophy. If, as this thesis has argued, the problem with both humanism and posthumanism is that they are dependent upon a transcendental subject separate from the immanence of material life, then Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatics and Burroughs' fantastic subject-groups go at least some way to reinserting the questions of evolution, life, technics and the human into the plane of immanence. Escaping the imperialist limitations of transcendence is quite distinct from the Extropian refusal of limits lambasted by Andrew Ross and Mark Dery however (Ross, 1991a; Dery, 1996). Whilst the posthumanists sought to overcome all limits so as to transcend the materiality of immanence and purify the human form of all its contaminants, Burroughs actively seeks out hybridity, mutation and a material heterogeneity in order to open the potential for life to flourish immanently, free from externally imposed restrictions, but within the flows of life. Politically too the two positions are quite distinct. Whilst the posthumanists celebrate a neo-Darwinian *higher* form of the human that is profoundly inhumane and uncaring, both of other humans who may be left behind and of nature and animals who may not transcend their earthly existence (Dery, 1996), Burroughs' posthuman mutations are always visceral and material. They are concerned with mutating bodies, not transcending bodies; with the materialities of even linguistic symbols and codes rather than their immaterial

significations (Hayles, 1999). As such they end up demonstrating an ethical commitment to a wide range of Others, from the socially excluded through to animals hunted for game (Burroughs, 2002). In this sense, Burroughs' vision of what might come after the human is more consciously political and committed to anarchistic, radically democratic social transformation than the transcendence of the posthumanists could ever be.

It is ultimately Burroughs, and Deleuze and Guattari's, rejection of representation that prevents them falling into the posthumanist trap. Posthumanism remains wedded to a logic of representation that privileges transcendent form over material content whilst denying any limits internal to the unformed matter that is thereby shaped. Burroughs on the other hand, rejects the transcendence of representation in favour of experimentation. His cut-ups materialise language and experiment with it, directly intervening in the material production of linguistic subjects. Later his fantasies refuse to represent what comes after the human, preferring to operate immanently in subjectivity through the immanent production and investment of desire (Murphy, 1997). In both cases, the operations of the texts are strictly immanent and machinic, not representational. Importantly, this critique of representation is directly political as it refuses all kinds of political representation, especially by an elite vanguard. In this sense Burroughs' materialism, and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of immanence is radically democratic, or perhaps anarchic, in its politics.

As this politics suggests however, a rejection of representation does not mean getting rid of humanism altogether. Just as Scott Lash has argued that there are two modernities (Lash, 1999) so Hardt and Negri have suggested that there are two humanisms (2000). Whilst this thesis has emphasised humanism as a form of transcendentalism, there is another tradition, also arising in the Renaissance, more akin to the radical scepticism attributed to Nietzsche in Chapter Two. It is this 'other' humanism that Hardt and Negri rediscover in the late Foucault. Comparing his last works' focus on the care of the self with his early pronouncement of the death of Man, Hardt and Negri ask how Foucault maintains his anti-humanism whilst embarking upon what seems to be a quite humanist project. In response they suggest:

...this antihumanism follows directly on Renaissance humanism's secularizing project, or more precisely, its discovery of the plane of immanence. Both projects are founded on an attack on transcendence. There is a strict continuity between the religious thought that accords a power above nature to God and the modern "secular" thought that accords that same power above nature to Man. The transcendence of God is simply transferred to Man. Like God before it, this Man that stands separate from and above nature has no place in a philosophy of immanence. Like God, too, this transcendent figure of Man leads quickly to the imposition of a social hierarchy and domination. Antihumanism, then, conceived as a refusal of any transcendence, should in no way be confused with a negation of the vis viva, the creative life force that animates the revolutionary stream of the modern tradition. On the contrary, the refusal of transcendence is the condition of possibility of thinking this immanent power, an anarchic basis of philosophy: "Ni Dieu, ni maitre, ni l'homme."

(Hardt and Negri, 2000: 91-92, italics in original)

All of which raises the question of terminology. Where the idea of posthumanism is clearly unsatisfactory because of its associations, returning to humanism is similarly problematic. Hardt and Negri suggest instead 'anti-humanism' as a term for the anarchistic philosophical strategy of refusing transcendence (Hardt and Negri, 2000) but this has its own limits in that it conjures up shades of Althusserian structural Marxism (Althusser, 1969) and dialectical opposition that risks recuperation in that which it opposes (Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 101). It also fails to offer a precise epithet for the subject that might come after the human: the 'after-man' as it were. Instead then, perhaps the term 'transhuman' holds out more potential (Ansell-Pearson, 1997a). Whilst in a sense this term is limited by its association with transcendence, more important is its resonance with transgression: with the natural outlaw's lack of respect for laws and for the boundaries that separate the human from all its Others. This transhuman would not follow on from the human, by means of direct descent and lines of filiation, but cut across and cut up these lines through novel, hybrid associations.

The political ramifications of this move have started to be sketched out by the likes of Hardt and Negri in relation to the mutations that the subject is undergoing in the face of the new information and communication technologies of post-modern capitalism (Hardt and Negri, 1994; 2000; Dyer-Witheford, 1999). In these works, the Autonomist Marxist position extends Burroughs' concerns with the materiality of communication technologies from the tape-recorders of the 1960s with which

Burroughs (1992b) armed his Wild Boys into the circuits of cybernetic capitalism and global networks of ICT (Dyer-Witheford, 1999). Central to this contention is the notion that the 'old' subject of capitalist production and radical organizational analysis - the proletariat - is undergoing a transformation from being an object, whether of analysis, an employment relation, or a series of Human Resource Management practices, to becoming a subject group: a working-class that is not defined or contained by its capacity or proclivity for 'work' (Cleaver, 1992). From this perspective, the anti-humanism of Hardt and Negri (1999), or what I am suggesting we call trans-humanism, after Ansell-Pearson (1997a), embraces a critical politics of resistance, revolution and emancipation, without specifying *a priori* what is to be emancipated. Indeed, the process of radical engagement is more important here than the end goal. Rather than a stable point in which to ground a subjectivist epistemology, or a clear goal or emancipation, the subject in this sense is an always open, immanent process of becoming. Nevertheless, it does offer a focus for radical social theory that is quite distinct from the conventional subjects of humanist critical theory, where the politics of representation and knowledge production can become profoundly patronising and disempowering, and emancipation can lead to further suffering or even the Gulag (WOBS, 2001; Finkielkraut, 2001).

Although some of these writers are now starting to receive serious academic attention within the field of organization studies, most of this attention has focused on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (Cooper, 1998; Day, 1998; Sotto, 1998; Sørensen, 2003; Linstead, 2000; Parker, 2000a) with much less attention given to the work of Hardt

and Negri (Munro, 2002) and less still to Burroughs (for notable exceptions see Gargett, 2002; Munro, 2001). Perhaps more importantly, where this work has been addressed, it is often presented as if devoid of political content, as for example when Robert Chia (1999) presents the idea of the rhizome as if it could be directly taken up as a model for organizational creativity, thereby completely neglecting Deleuze and Guattari's critique of capitalist reterritorializations of creativity (e.g. Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 236). In this sense, the later chapters of this thesis, and this one in particular, have sought to consider some of these political and ethical issues in light of a thorough-going critique of humanism in social and organizational theory. By reading Deleuze and Guattari alongside William Burroughs, a political understanding of their critique of representation is made possible and, perhaps more importantly, some potential lines of flight are brought to light. In relation to the specific question of organization, Burroughs' work offers a kind of mapping for navigating the immanent organization of the subject group, without recourse to transcendent models and myths. In this respect, these writers can all contribute to a positive critique after the nihilism of the postmodern turn in organization studies (Parker, 1995; Thompson, 1990; Plant, 1992). Going even further than many 'postmodern' theories of organization, Deleuze and Guattari, Hardt and Negri, and William Burroughs open new spaces for directly political, critical engagement, by reconnecting questions of epistemology, value and biophilosophy. Some possible directions for such future research will be considered in the conclusion to this thesis.

In Conclusion... Prospects for a Post-Humanist Organization

Theory

As soon as an article goes into mass production the company doesn't want to know about a simpler better article, especially if it is basically different. So a number of very good inventions are scrapped and forgotten. We can extrapolate that the same formula applies to living organisms once we accept the supposition that organisms are artefacts created for a definite purpose.

Burroughs, 1983: 215)

Starting with the question of technology and its relationship with organization and the human subject, this thesis has considered the epistemological, political and ethical implications of taking 'the human' as the basis for conducting organization studies. In Chapter One a fairly conventional review of organizational and sociological literatures on technology raised the twin questions of textuality and subjectivity. As they have developed, organizational theories of technology have become increasingly hostile to determinism to the extent that some form of social constructivism is now the dominant orthodoxy in the field (McLoughlin, 1999). Within this fairly broad church, some have taken its underlying critique of technological determinism to also apply to 'social determinism' (Law, 1987). Following this logic all forms of determinism are rejected along with any appeal to essential 'facts' that might explain socio-technical change (Grint and Woolgar, 1997). In place of determinism, this anti-essentialism suggests that researchers of organizational technology need to pay more attention to the ways in which technological artefacts and events are interpreted hence

suggesting that technologies should be treated analytically as texts (Grint and Woolgar, 1997; Joerges and Czarniawska, 1998).

Whilst this kind of radical scepticism is undoubtedly valuable, it was the argument of the thesis that it fails to go far enough. By insisting upon everything being subjective interpretation, a kind of essentialism of the subject sneaks in by the back door. Whilst Chapter One was primarily concerned with technological objects, Chapter Two reconsidered the relationship between language and technology by focussing on the human subject. In following various accounts of the tripartite relations between texts, technologies and subjects, Chapter Two suggested a radical decentring of the subject through Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the anthropomorphic stratum (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). For Deleuze and Guattari there is no essence of the human subject. Rather it is a specific distribution, or stratification, of form and content; technology and language (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Considering the fact that *the* human - even as a stratified distribution - is a normative and normalizing 'judgement of God' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 40) the question inevitably arose, why go after the human at all? So long as it depends on a normative version of *the* human, humanism marginalises its Others, whether machine, animal, or Other humans on grounds of gender or race, setting them below it on a hierarchy that ultimately derives sanction from Man being made in God's image (Schiebinger, 2000). In this light, there is a political issue at stake in putting the human subject at the heart of epistemology, particularly an epistemology that seeks to know the Other:

the machine or the object. The second half of the thesis therefore sought to go 'after' the human in quite a different way.

Turning to the work of William S. Burroughs, the second half of the thesis took up the issue of the post-human and what might come after the end of the human. Caught up in fantasies of technofetishism and immaterial transcendence, the post-human has often been seen as a way of resolving the problematic relationship between the human and the machine by ever tighter coupling: by turning human beings into cyborgs (Warwick, 1997; Moravec, 1988; Dery, 1996). Ultimately however, this version of post-humanism is premised upon an extension of the kind of transcendent humanism that underpinned Descartes' (1986) schism and was problematised in the first half of the thesis. The body is reified and rejected as mere meat, whilst the essence of the human is found in its thinking abilities, albeit reflected through a computer-based metaphor of cognition (Hayles, 1999). The idea that human consciousness is a communicative pattern that can be downloaded into machines and networks might be a reassuring fantasy when faced with ecological disaster, ever increasing entropy and the heat-death of the solar system (Ansell-Pearson, 1997b), but it does little to resolve the problems of humanism already identified. Rather this version of post-humanism seeks to take the human essence and extend it beyond the end of 'the body' (Hayles, 1999).

Burroughs does something quite different however. In line with Deleuze and Guattari (1987) he recognises that the human form is itself a result of parasitic infestation with

the word-virus (Burroughs, 1986). Rather than being a fixed, stable entity that uses language to communicate its own thoughts, as assumed by the Cartesian 'I think therefore I am', Burroughs' theory of the word-virus suggests that language speaks through us, producing both a narrative sense of time and a parallel concept of identity as continuity of consciousness through time. Rather than taking this narrative self-identity for granted, or treating it as a human need (Giddens, 1991), Burroughs seeks to disrupt it, freeing whatever is left of the human body from its parasitic infection. In this sense, Burroughs reflects Foucault's (1980; 1983) notion that the individual is a product of control and needs to be problematised and actively deindividuated. In the sphere of language, Burroughs upturns Grint and Woolgar's (1997) logic of textual constructivism by seeking to use material technologies like the tape-recorder, or just paper and scissors, to 'cut-up' the word-virus, break its grip of control and disrupt its production of the human identity. In effect, Burroughs materialises language and discourse by connecting them to new objects and technologies, rather than dematerialising technological objects through a linguistic, textual metaphor.

This escape from control, although quite successful, was strictly negative however. It sought to destroy the word virus and human identity without simultaneously working through a positive alternative. In Chapter Four therefore the thesis turned to Burroughs' later work which, whilst continuing his apocalyptic visions of the end of the human, largely gave up on the formal experimentalism of his mid-period work to concentrate on ways in which fictional texts could challenge objective or mythical modes of representation (Murphy, 1997). It is in his last three major works of fiction

that Burroughs is most explicitly concerned with questions of social organization. In these he forsakes the science-fiction that led him to be considered as the godfather of cyberpunk (McCaffery, 1991) in favour of deliberately counterfactual reconstructive fantasies of utopian organizations operating without hierarchically sanctioned, hylomorphic identities. These new 'subject groups' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983; Murphy, 1997) are prefigured, still in a science-fictional mode, in *The Wild Boys* a kind of transitional text between the *Nova* trilogy and Burroughs' final works. In the *Wild Boys*, Burroughs combines radical, animal and technological becomings with a rejection of conventional language (the *Wild Boys* communicate through a form of hieroglyphic script (Burroughs, 1992b: 150-151)) and a focus on homosexual desire to link the student revolts of May 1968 directly with the production of desire in fantasy (Murphy, 1997; Burroughs and Odier, 1989). Throughout Burroughs' final fictional trilogy however, he develops these ideas through fantasies based on actual historical situations such as Captain Mission's pirate commune founded in Madagascar at the start of the eighteenth-century (Burroughs, 1982; 2002; Seitz, 2002), outlaw gangs in the American wild-west and the hobos of the early twentieth-century (Burroughs, 1983; Black, 2000) or ancient Egypt (Burroughs, 1987; Mailer, 1984). As Chapter Four argued, the key to understanding these texts is Burroughs' rejection of transcendence and idealism. Idealism and myth posits an origin or ideal which actual, immanent manifestations should be judged by. In contrast, Burroughs' plays on the Christian myth of origin and use of forgery suggests an alternative that is always already immanent. In this sense, even the transcendent law is actually produced immanently, through the operations of power and language, a materialism

that is there in Burroughs' work from his early concerns with the word-virus. Indeed, this materialist immanence and rejection of transcendence can be seen as providing a degree of continuity to Burroughs' work. As Chapter Three argued, Burroughs' theory of the word virus and his experimental cut-ups provided a critique of the transcendentalism of post-humanism, language and 'the body' as well as an attempt to immanently disrupt the material actualisation of a transcendent form, whether law, language or subject. This fundamentally negative critique and escape attempt was augmented in Chapter Four by a more positive, albeit no less apocalyptic, reading of his final trilogy's concern with immanent social organization beyond the confines of idealist representation. In this sense Burroughs is part of a materialist undercurrent in thought that has opposed the academic privilege accorded to idealism within the traditions of philosophy and which includes the likes of Marx, Spinoza, Nietzsche and Deleuze and Guattari (Fisher, 2001).

The ethical implications of this 'anarcho-materialism' (Hardt and Negri, 2000) were picked up in Chapter Five where the accusation that rejecting humanism necessarily leads to an in-humane coldness in relation to others was considered (Parker, 2000a; ten Bos and Kaulingfreks, 2002). Again following Deleuze and Guattari (1987), this time through their concept of faciality, calls for a return to some form of humanism were rejected in light of the conservative implications of transcendence found in both humanism and post-humanism. Instead the 'trans-human' was held up as a more positive figure to come after the human not as transcendence but as a kind of transgression. Following Burroughs' figuration of the natural outlaws, this 'trans' as

a crossing over is an absolute rejection of humanist transcendence in favour of a messy, embodied process of hybridization that recognises the materiality of language and the constitutive heterogeneity of the subject. In this sense the final chapter argued, paralleling Bruno Latour's argument that Modernity is premised upon a denial of its own heterogeneity (the inseparability of political and scientific representation), that humanism is produced by the in-human. When we consider this point in relation to the becomings-cyborg of the transhuman it is clear that new technologies are reconfiguring the relations that produce 'the human' subject in such a way as to render this constitutive illusion no longer convincing. In this sense there is an optimism in the transhuman that is quite distinct from the socially iniquitous post-humanism of the neo-Gnostics (Dery, 1996; Davis, 1998) precisely because it recognises the immanent production of inhuman-becomings in materially heterogeneous, but always embodied, networks of linguistic, technological, organic and political elements.

Whilst the likes of the Extropians, or the editors of *Mondo 2000* have celebrated the apparent technological overthrow of politics, they have done so in a way that precisely mirrors the dominant neo-liberal individualism of their time (Dery, 1996) and which leaves the human subject essentially intact. In contrast, this thesis has sought to politically situate both humanism and post-humanism in order to change it. As has been argued throughout this thesis, and as Burroughs suggests in the epigraph to this conclusion, the *human-organism* is a product of design. Of course, this is not an entirely new idea in organization studies and has long been recognised by radical

social-psychologists and philosophers (Henriques et al, 1998). The human subject as it has been produced and consumed in theories of organization and in workplace psychology is the product of power, politically situated within capitalist relations of production as a productive worker who can be measured, monitored and normalised to serve the interests of the capitalist work-organization (Hollway, 1998). Where Burroughs offers the most to organization studies is in escaping from this humanist cage, deterritorialising the subject into new and politically subversive becomings in the rhizosphere (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). In rejecting transcendence with the anti-humanist, anarcho-materialist cry of 'No God, no Master, no Man' (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 92) the dominant mass-production of the human⁴¹ on the assembly lines of modernity has a spanner thrown into its works. As the linear logic of narrative and assembly-line is cut-up, hybridity and difference proliferate outside the confines of all-too-human identities.

Directions for Future Research

To summarise, it has been the argument of this thesis that the difficulties associated with radical scepticism and thoroughgoing social constructivist theories of technology open organization theory up to questions of language and subjectivity that ultimately serve to radically decentre the human subject. Politically and epistemologically suspect, the human subject that populates our organization theory textbooks is under radical attack from the incursion of new technologies, particularly those associated with information and communication, from new forms of theory and discourse on 'the subject' and from new forms of social organization. Whilst the death of this

human subject is nothing to be mourned, care needs to be taken when dancing on its grave if the excesses of posthumanist transcendence are to be avoided. By following Burroughs' and Deleuze and Guattari's critique of representation a materialist model of subjectivization, technology and language is made possible that opens onto the radically heterogeneous, always immanent, becomings of the transhuman without recourse to transcendent representation. Such a model opens possibilities for a radical form of anarchic, rhizomatic social organization and subjectivization that has, so far, not been well conceptualised in organization studies. This suggests several points of intervention where the ideas put forward in this thesis have implications for, and can be taken up by, future research in organization studies.

Utopia: Alternative Forms of Organization

The first point of departure from this thesis is in the growing area of radical organization theory concerned with alternative forms of organization. In a sense this is not a new field. Since at least the 1960s there has been a significant research stream in industrial sociology looking at workers' cooperatives and worker takeovers (Eccles, 1981; Vanek, 1975; Waddington et al, 1998; Cheney, 1999). More recently, and particularly with the re-emergence of an anarchistic 'left' in protests against global capitalism (Cockburn et al, 2000; Klein, 2000; Hardt and Negri, 2000; Watson, 2003), there has been an increasing interest in the organization of alternatives to global capitalism and its organizational structures (Fournier, 2002; Reedy, 2002). Both theoretically and practically much of this revitalised interest in radical forms of organizing can be seen as a delayed response to the events of May 1968 and their

aftermath (cf. Foucault, 1980: 116). As the traditional left and the communist parties went into a period of crisis in the 1980s and neo-liberals pronounced the end of history in a neo-Hegelian resolution of all the old dialectical contradictions into a new synthesis of hyper-capitalism (Fukiyama, 1993), radical organization theory took its own post-modern turn in tune with the 'new times' (Parker, 1995; Chia, 1995; Cooper and Burrell, 1988; Hancock and Tyler, 2001; cf. Hall and Jacques, 1989). Premised primarily upon a negative critique of the dominant order and a turn toward symbolism (with concomitant rejection of materialism), this postmodernism lent itself to intellectual and political passivity in the face of spectacular society (Debord, 1994; Plant, 1992; Parker, 1995) and a tendency amongst theorists of organization to overrate power and neglect resistance (Thompson and Acroyd, 1995; Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999).

One reason for this apparent conservatism amongst radical theorists is certainly that the organization of production, and of society more generally, was undergoing significant shifts within this period and theory had not yet caught up with the new modes of power and resistance developing around post-industrial, service-sector organizations. Indeed, early accounts of the role of ICTs in organizations emphasised their disciplinary tendencies in a way that translated writers like Foucault so that they were not incompatible with more traditional theorists such as Weber (Sewell and Wilkinson, 1993; Zuboff, 1988). Of course, it is well recognised that new forms of control bring new forms of resistance and recent work in organizational studies has clearly demonstrated this (Ross, 1991b; Fleming and Sewell, 2002; Fleming and

Spicer, 2003; Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999). Aside from this recognition of resistance within the workplace, however, there has been relatively little research into alternative forms of organization developing outside the workplace.

Within this emerging problematic the ideas worked through in this thesis suggest some possible interventions. On the one hand the idea of the 'subject group' clearly has implications for the way in which radical, anarchistic alternatives to dominant forms of organization are conceptualised. The idea of utopia needs to be reconsidered as a more immanent phenomenon relating directly to the investment of desire rather than as a normative, representation of the society yet to come. This would be in line with the discussion of social organization in Chapter Four of this thesis and relates directly to Burroughs' concerns with rethinking revolutionary activity and organization after 1968 through *The Wild Boys* and into the *Cities* trilogy. This would also contribute to the various studies of utopia and gardening (Burrell and Dale, 2002; Munro, 2002) where the metaphor of gardening has been associated with the specific form of humanism embodied in the holocaust (Bauman, 1989; Finkelkraut, 2001). It is perhaps no coincidence that some of the most virulent weeds in the gardens of late-capitalism are rhizomes.

More generally the idea of the subject group has implications for the ways in which the more grand-scale stories of social theory are told. Rejecting the pre-given, economic determinants of the classical Marxist proletariat, Autonomist Marxists like Harry Cleaver have sought to theorise 'self-valorization' as a means of a class

recognising itself *for itself* without being pre-constituted as a class *in itself* by external, determinant economic relations (Cleaver, 1992). In this sense the fundamentally collective nature of Burroughs' theory of subjectivization has relevance both for the social organization of groups but also holds out a radical potential for rethinking class relations in the wider society. Writers like Nick Dyer-Witford (1999) have already sought to work through the implications of this process of self-valorization within the context of the changing technocultural landscape of late-capitalism and the social factory. Through work such as this, the ideas presented in this thesis have direct relevance for theorising contemporary forms of organization.

Identities: Micro-sociology in the Workplace

Perhaps the most obvious point of departure from this thesis is through theories of identity. Whilst the last section focused on collective processes of subjectivization and radical organization theory in this section I want to briefly consider the implications of this thesis, and of Burroughs' work, for micro-sociological studies of workplace identities. As a concept and issue identity is well established on the organizational research agenda (Thompson and McHugh, 2001). Research has primarily derived from ethnographic research looking at the ways in which identities are constructed at work and through work (Kondo, 1990; Casey, 1995), an interest that spills over into studies of corporate culture and attempts to manage organizational identities (Casey, 1999; Kunda, 1992; Van Maanen, 1991; Watson, 1994; Parker, 2000b; Du Gay, 1996). One of the main routes that identity travelled

into organization studies is through a critique of traditional labour process theory and Braverman's failure to effectively theorise the subject (Knights and Willmott, 1985; 1989). The main argument here seems to be that in order to fully understand workplace behaviours theorists cannot reduce individuals to simple class positions in relation to the forces of production. Rather, power, control, domination and resistance are all mediated by individuals' identity work as they make sense out of their working selves and their positions of relative subordination (Collinson, 1992; O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001), affluence and privilege (Kunda, 1992; Kondo, 1991; Robertson and Swan, 2003) or authority (Watson, 1994).

Within this research tradition one taken for granted assumption seems to be that individuals seek a stable sense of identity which, when it comes up against the realities of contemporary work, is thwarted so that there is an ongoing lack of coherence in the subject (Sennett, 1998). For example, in his study of masculine identities on the manufacturing shopfloor, David Collinson points to the ways in which the articulation of a masculine identity as someone who can take a joke (Willis, 1978) has a potentially radicalising effect in that it enables workers to resist the imposition of corporate culture by reasserting a fundamental difference between workers on the shopfloor and management. This is only one element of shopfloor masculinities however. Another facet revolves around the role of family 'breadwinner' which, when coupled with bonus schemes, leads workers to police one another to make sure that they are able to maximise their bonus. Both of these identities serve to distance workers from themselves whilst at work so that even the

bread-winners don't identify themselves primarily as workers but rather as fathers, husbands or hobbyists. Their 'real' identities lie outside the workplace but are enabled by the wages they earn at work. In part these disinvestments of their working selves are a survival strategy when faced with the realities of contemporary work (Noon and Blyton, 1997), but they also stem directly from the incompatibility of a masculine discourse of self-control and self-determination with the realities of subordination and control on the shopfloor.

Drawing theoretically upon the work of Anthony Giddens (1991) this notion of the self is ultimately dependent upon a narrative version of self-identity as a series of stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves. The assumption for Giddens is that in the face of ontological uncertainty and existential anxiety humans try to ground themselves in a clear sense of narrative self-identity which is ultimately doomed to failure as it depends upon recognition by the other. Whilst this notion has a radical potential in that it enables studies of identity at work to recognise the subjective effects of particular modes of organization, it remains wedded to a kind of humanism insofar as it posits the drive to a narrative identity as fundamental to the constitution of the human subject. What has not been considered fully in organization studies is where this drive to narrate the self comes from and the ways in which it is premised upon a foundational heterogeneity. More importantly, in studies of the influence of new technology on self-identity, the fragmentation of the self, whether through the new technologies of the information revolution (Barglow, 1994) or through a more traditional, industrial division of labour (Seltzer, 1998), is always problematic. The

goal and drive of the human is coherence and stability no matter how self-defeating. What Burroughs' work offers this stream of research is a radical problematisation of the very idea of identity and a technique for escaping its confines through a process of deindividualization (Foucault, 1983). In this respect, the work covered in this thesis, in particular Chapter Three, holds out the prospect for further research into the relationship between identities, power and language. Some preliminary moves in this direction have already been made by Iain Munro (2001).

Narrative: Method, Politics and Epistemology

Burroughs' concern to cut-up narratives also connects to the idea of narratives as a basis for organizational research. Coming from studies of organizational culture and symbolism, the use of narratives and story-telling have become increasingly popular as a method of studying organizations (Czarniawska, 1998; Gabriel, 2000). Whilst it is certainly true that close attention to the stories and narratives that are produced and consumed within organizations is an important part of a qualitative research agenda, what has so far been under-theorised is the implicit power relations in the very form of the narrative.

If we take Czarniawska's (1998) call to break down the barriers between science and literature seriously then we need to not only recognise that scientific accounts are themselves a genre of writing and to supplement these with other genres, but to recognise that all genres based on linear narrative are inherently problematic in the terms laid out in this thesis. Rather than reproducing organizational narratives then,

or performing a literature of organization based on the realist novel (Czarniawska-Joerges and Guillet de Monthoux, 1994; Knights and Willmott, 1999), Burroughs' textual practice would suggest both an analysis of the power relations behind the effects of these modes of textual performance on the organizational subject and a radically different form of textual practice based on the cut-up.

No longer representational, such a mode of 'writing' organization would seek to materially effect the identity of both reader and research subjects through a form of anti-narrative. Of course this creates difficulties for an academic practice of commentary based upon interpretation and legislation of truth as there would be no space within such a form to give a supplementary interpretation of the meaning of the text thereby produced. Indeed, to do so would be to bring the material interventions in subjectivity performed by the cut-up back into the realm of conventional narrative, performing a kind of conjunctive-synthesis whereby the 'real' meaning of the text was revealed and identity reasserted. This certainly creates problems for academic writing as I have realised in my attempt to publish a paper that both commented upon and performed a cut-up (included as a stand-alone appendix to this thesis, without accompanying commentary). The problems raised are two-fold. As well as the difficulty of creating an aesthetically effective piece of writing there is also the need to justify this writing in terms of the conventional academic production of knowledge wherein one is called to account for what a text means rather than for its effects (which cannot be determined independently of its reception by a reader).

Whilst the cut-up in the appendix to this thesis was based entirely on theoretical texts

from philosophy and organization studies, another strategy for presenting research would be to combine and juxtapose theoretical commentary with materials from fieldwork, for example, by cutting-up a text on resistance with interview transcripts, observation notes and articles from in-house magazines. In this sense, Burroughs' radical textual practice offers a deepening of the relationship between writing and research that has already been started by narrative approaches to research, and continues a tradition of performing alternative forms of academic discourse such as Peter Case's (1996) reflexive dramaturgical 'happenings', Robert Westwood's (1999) sampling as writing, or Steffen Böhm's (2001) Benjamin-esque montages as sociological commentary.

The Body at Work: Mutation and Embodiment

Another area for further research is to extend the analysis of embodiment and the materiality of language in Chapter Three to contribute to recent work on the body in organization studies. Whilst it is now fairly well established that the idea of *the* body carries certain normative connotations and excludes a diversity of bodily experiences (Hassard et al., 2000), work on the body has not widely addressed the relationship between language and embodiment (Hayles, 1999). In this sense it is clear that Burroughs' work has something to offer this area of research, particularly when it comes to understanding the ways in which identities are simultaneously discursively performed and physically embodied. The work of Burroughs also highlights the ways in which the materiality of bodies mutates through different corporeal and incorporeal transformations as bodies are disciplined and have their abilities produced and

controlled. Once again this has relevance for theorising the prosthetic body of the contemporary ‘immaterial labourer’ working in the post-industrial organization (Hardt and Negri, 1994).

A second potential direction in which further research could be conducted in relation to embodiment is in the grounding of epistemology in the body. As noted in Chapter Three, the normative form of *the* body also prescribes a specific form of knowing. A similar point is made by Stephen Linstead (2000) when he notes the association of the production of organizational knowledge with a particularly masculine, rational, phallogocentric model of knowing and embodiment. Contrasting this to the leaky bodies of women with their historically repressed sexuality, Linstead suggests that the female ejaculation might be a more bountiful, productive and egalitarian principle for organizational analysis (Linstead, 2000: 45). Whilst the male ejaculation embodies principles of action at a distance, separation, quantification and domination that reinforces hierarchies, both of knowledge and of social organization, the female ejaculation is undecidable, “transgressive, subversive of patriarchy, dissolving boundaries between binaries, refiguring our understandings of bodily control, and rewriting femininity out of its polarized opposition to masculinity” (Linstead, 2000: 45). There is also a suggestion in Linstead’s work, however, that the anus could fulfil a similar function, as it can “be regarded as a universal erotogenetic zone, or even sexual organ, shared by both sexes and multi-functional” (Linstead, 2000: 35). In this sense there is a direct parallel between Linstead’s desire to deflate the phallus as a foundational sign for organizational analysis and Burroughs’ valorization of the

asshole as a source of immanent forgery imbued with the powers of the false. As discussed in Chapter Four, Burroughs' characterisation of Clem Snide, the detective/forgery in *Cities of the Red Night*, inverts the usual 'private dick' who pursues a transcendental truth, to develop the 'private asshole': a forger who produces truth through the immanent operations of simulation (Burroughs, 1982). In so doing, Burroughs simultaneously problematises the idea of a transcendental truth and offers a model of simulation that is not dependent upon an original. As such, like Linstead's model of the female ejaculation, the privileging of the original, seminal male is rejected but in this case is replaced by a less determinate and genderless sexual organ: the asshole. This idea of the asshole as a symbol for knowledge production would again be an area for future research that would bring together epistemology, politics and the body.

Ethics: Humanism and Difference

Although the previous three lines for future research have all touched on the issue of difference, it is worth making one final comment on the specific question of ethics. Whilst Chapter Five made some preliminary investigations into the ethics of transhumanism this is an area that needs further research. So long as organization studies retains a transcendental figure of *the* human subject as its ontological foundation then the ethical problems accompanying humanism will remain. But figuring a transhuman alternative is not a simple task and depends upon recognising the manifold ways in which the theory and practice of organizational studies reproduces this subject. Of course, this is not a simple tale of the repression of

difference. After Foucault (1980) we know that power is never simply repressive but is always productive and the subject of organization has certainly been that (Hollway, 1998). However, this seemingly transcendental subject is produced immanently and the discourse of organization studies, both textual and as it is taught in our classrooms, is one of the technologies of its reproduction. Ultimately, therefore, the challenge of the transhuman for organization studies is a radically political and ethical one: by shifting the ontological and epistemological ground of the discipline we produce new lines of subjectivization just as the new subjects change this very ground in their becomings-cyborg.

¹ In relation to milling technologies, Marc Bloch's work would suggest that, if anything, the water-mill was more characteristic of feudal society than the hand-mill. In places where the feudal landlord had a monopoly on the milling of grain, the possession and operation of a hand-mill was an act of resistance to feudal sovereignty (Bloch, 1999). Bloch notes that in some areas of Europe, the hand-mill was still in regular use right up until the end of the nineteenth century, well after the shift to steam power that characterises Marx's analysis of industrial capitalism.

² No relations of Adam and Karl as far as I am aware.

³ Deleuze and Guattari make a related point in their discussion of capitalist antiproduction, when they note that the 'politico-military-economic complex' produces a sphere of antiproduction outside the normal logic of capitalist profitability where new technologies can be developed independently of their immediate ability to increase projected profits and thereby attract the investment of finance capital (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 233-235).

⁴ A similar explanation might be offered for the current popularity of large scale, integrative information systems like ERP (enterprise Resource Planning) systems despite the lack of concrete evidence that they actually improve organizational performance (Davenport, 1998).

⁵ On the question of terminology and the differences between trans, multi, and inter-disciplinarity, see Stainton Rogers and Stainton Rogers (1997) who take up this idea in relation to the formation of a critical social-psychology.

⁶ In this sense we might reconsider the extent to which autopoiesis can offer us a really radical foundation for epistemology. Although autopoiesis goes some way towards developing a cybernetic basis for subjectivity, its foundational insistence upon the separation of perceiving subject and perceived object remains firmly within this dualism of inside/outside, and thereby preserves the liberal human subject relatively intact (Hayles, 1999).

⁷ The reference here is to the apocryphal story, recounted in Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*:

A well-known scientist (some say it was Bertrand Russell) once gave a public lecture on astronomy. He described how the earth orbits around the sun and how the sun, in turn, orbits around the centre of a vast collection of stars called our galaxy. At the end of the lecture, a little old lady at the back of the room got up and said: "what you have told us is rubbish. The world is really a flat plate supported on the back of a giant tortoise." The scientist gave a superior smile before replying, "what is the tortoise standing on?" "You're very clever, young man, very clever," said the old lady. "But it's turtles all the way down!" (Hawking, 1988: 1)

⁸ In this there is a striking similarity with William Burroughs' later work, particularly in *The Western Lands*, where he suggests that convincing people that they had *no* soul was a gimmick to make control easier, in much the same way that the Christian *immortal* souls was. By way of contrast, Burroughs builds on Egyptian mythology to suggest a hierarchy of souls – a social structure – many levels of which are mortal (Burroughs, 1987). This point is picked up in Chapter Four.

⁹ Interestingly, at this point in their paper Callon and Latour make one of the few explicit recognitions of the influence of Deleuze and Guattari on the thinking that developed into actor-network theory. In a short footnote they acknowledge the importance of *Anti-Oedipus* in noting the inseparability of the economic and psychological, of individuals and institutions. It is this recognition that leads them to develop a symmetrical methodology whereby micro and macro phenomena are treated with the same methodology, not as of a fundamentally distinct scale (Callon and Latour, 1981).

¹⁰ Of course if, following Latour we have never *been* modern, then we should perhaps not talk of post-modernity. Nevertheless, if we leave the impossibility of realising the modern project of purification aside, the fact remains that this separation was attempted, and for a while at least, appeared successful. At least it was successful enough, by Latour's own account, to allow hybridity to flourish unchecked to the point where we find ourselves today.

¹¹ Of course, this 'capture of code' should not be confused with a specifically linguistic code, as Deleuze and Guattari make clear in their discussion of genetic code, which is, contrary to many popular accounts (e.g. Jones, 1994), not a language at all (1987: 62).

¹² Cooper points to the etymological genealogy of 'locate' in the Latin 'loquor' - to say, tell or indicate (Cooper, 1998:108), thereby highlighting the connections between the ability to name and speak of something, and our ability to locate that thing in a conceptual field.

¹³ This is not to say that such a structure is fixed, least of all by an external 'nature'. Indeed, the disruption of culturally specific modes of perception has been actively pursued in the arts by, for example, the multi-perspectival paintings of the cubists, and the literary cut-ups of William Burroughs (Miles, 1992).

¹⁴ Indeed, language use is one of the key criteria by which philosophers have separated humans from other animals and from machines (e.g. Searle, 1984; Fellows, 1995).

¹⁵ It is notable that in work such as his 'Assemblage Notes' (1998), Cooper does not refer to the second volume of Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project (1987), sticking instead to the first volume, *Anti-Oedipus* (1983) and their intermezzo collaboration *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986). This is despite their extensive discussion of assemblage in the later book, and their discussion, in plateau three, of double articulation that reflects many of Cooper's interests and develops a similar terminology. It is this work that provides the basis for the following section.

¹⁶ It is unfortunate that two significant commentators on Deleuze and Guattari's anthropomorphic stratum, Ronald Bogue (1989) who approaches it from the perspective of language and semiotics, and J. Macgregor Wise (1997) who approaches it from the perspective of information technology, both fail to sufficiently contextualise their discussion of this stratum within a more detailed consideration of stratification and double articulation as generalised processes. One reason for this is undoubtedly the sheer complexity of Deleuze and Guattari's work. Attempting to unravel and provide a clear exposition of their ideas almost invariably spirals out to connect with other concepts until the whole corpus of their work is included. In what follows I have therefore also had to be selective, and in doing so have ignored what others would doubtless consider to be crucial features of stratification.

¹⁷ In this respect, Hjelmslev breaks with the traditional distinction of form and content as there is "a form of content no less than a form of expression" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

¹⁸ It is worth noting that Brian Massumi's English translation of *A Thousand Plateaus* contains a potentially confusing mistake when, on page 43, he writes 'form and *content* of expression'. As Deleuze and Guattari go to great lengths explaining the relationships between content and expression, each of which has both form and substance, this is clearly meant to read 'form and *substance* of expression'.

¹⁹ Translated by Tomlinson and Habberjam in the last quote as 'machine assemblage' and by others, (e.g. Bogue 1989:129) as 'machinic arrangement'. I am choosing to follow Brian Massumi's use of machinic assemblage as it is by far the most common version, and coincides with Robert Cooper's use of the term 'assemblage', also taken from Deleuze and Guattari's writing (Cooper, 1998).

²⁰ This is not strictly the case, as Deleuze and Guattari do suggest that the conclusion 'Concrete rules and abstract machines', should be read last (see 'Authors' Note' page xx).

²¹ It is worth noting that in the translation of 'This is not a pipe' referenced here, Foucault does not mention the word 'burrow', or 'burrows' even once in the text. Nevertheless the sense of a burrowing and borrowing that Cooper develops from the essay remains.

²² The dates in brackets that follow each title refer here to the first date of publication of each book. As Burroughs wrote each of these texts, he also went back to revise the previously published works so that there were at least three versions of *The Soft Machine* and two versions of *The Ticket That Exploded* eventually published.

²³ The specific role of capitalism in Burroughs work, and in the general circuits of high technology organization, is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis. Indicative starting points for such an engagement would include Hardt and Negri (1994; 2000); Dyer-Witheford, (1999); Murphy (1997), Ansell-Pearson, 1997, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Nick Land (1998).

²⁴ Of course this raises the question of linear time that has itself been a concern to organizational analysis (Burrell, 1992; Rehn, 2002; Land and Munro, 2000). If we accept Burroughs' thesis of the word virus, then linear time is not just an abstract metaphor, but a concrete and embodied fact produced at the interface of embodiment and language – it is a human product that is itself necessarily hybrid and heterogeneous, i.e. comprised of phonemes, material inscriptions and inscribed (or infected) bodies that have themselves adapted to accommodate their symbiotic, linguistic infection. A consideration of the extent to which this linear definition of identity is the product of the written word,

as opposed to the strictly narrative spoken word we might associate with a more cyclical version of time, is not clear. Nevertheless, this line of reasoning would suggest that 'we', as social scientists or philosophers, can not simply choose to adopt a spiral metaphor for time (as suggested by eg. Burrell, 1992 and Blyton and Turnbull, 1998) as linear time is already implicated in the human constitution (a constitution effected by the word virus). This might explain the difficulty of developing an effective alternative to time drawn as a line – whether that line is circular, straight or spiral.

²⁵ On the importance of Burroughs' influence on Cronenberg, see Rodley, 1992.

²⁶ This is particularly so given the etymological root of teleology in logos, the word.

²⁷ Although *Queer* was not published until the 1980s, it was actually the second novel that Burroughs wrote, and effectively serves as a follow-up to his first novel *Junkie*. Indeed, Burroughs original intention was to publish both texts as part of a trilogy, with the third book being *Yage*, some of which went into *Naked Lunch* and some of which went on to become *The Yage Letters* (Burroughs and Ginsberg, 1).

²⁸ The old (e.g. the second edition) cover of Huczynski and Buchanan's *Organizational Behaviour: An Introductory Text* is a perfect example of this. It portrays an enormous hand picking up a tiny man dressed in a suit and carrying a briefcase and moving to put him down somewhere in a four-story office block. The realism of the hand in relation to the cartoon-like individuals in the offices seems to suggest that by reading this book you too will be able to design and model the perfect organization, with everyone in their correct place, as if playing with a little lego-set.

²⁹ Dellamora takes Kermode to task for not even getting the title of Burroughs' book right. Kermode refers to *The Naked Lunch*, rather than *Naked Lunch*. Rather than providing Dellamora with a convenient error upon which to dismiss Kermode as clearly not having read Burroughs (Dellamora, 1995: 145), this points instead to a gap in Dellamora's knowledge of the publication history of the book. In the version of the text printed in 1964 by Calders and Boyars of London in association with Olympia Press (the Parisian publishers of soft porn who first agreed to publish the book) the title was indeed *The Naked Lunch*, an epithet adopted by a number of critics who were Burroughs' contemporaries. Regardless of this, I will stick to the now more conventional *Naked Lunch* as this is the title of the version that I own.

³⁰ Although both *Junkie* and *Queer* were written before *Naked Lunch*, the latter was not published until 1985. *Junkie*, published in 1953 was Burroughs first published work, but it was really *Naked Lunch* that first attracted the attention of the critics and the reading public when it first came out in 1959.

³¹ The reader should bear in mind the double sense of *process* here – both a journey or movement (up the river), but alongside that movement, a *transformation*. This sense is reflected in the translation of Kafka's short story 'Der Process' into the English 'The Transformation'.

³² For example, Charles Stivale (1998) devotes an entire chapter (chapter 3 – 'The Rhizomatics of Cyberspace') to considering Land's reading of *Apocalypse Now* as indicative of a split that he sees between the Warwickians and the Americans. The former grouping is most ably represented by Nick Land, then a lecturer in philosophy at Warwick University which hosted a major international conference on Deleuze and Guattari in 1994 entitled *Virtual Futures*. The lines of demarcation between these groupings are several, but mainly follow a preference for either *Anti-Oedipus* (the Warwickians) or *A Thousand Plateaus* (the Americans). This fault line has repercussions for the extent to which the respective writers advocate a process of untrammelled deterritorialization, or seek to limit and restrict this process in some way, recognising that all reterritorialisation is not necessarily bad and all deterritorialisation is not necessarily good. I will return to this debate, with reference to Stivale's reading of *Apocalypse Now* later.

³³ And here it is no coincidence that the etymology of 'matrix' is maternal rather than paternal – a point made by Sadie Plant in her consideration of the relations of cyberspace and gender (Plant, 1995).

³⁴ In competition for an increased share of incoming foreign direct investment (FDI) the UK government has resisted joining the social chapter of the European Union's Maastricht Treaty. In a move known as 'social dumping' the UK government has refused to raise non-wage labour costs and increase regulation of the labour market in the hope that this will make the UK a more attractive destination for FDI. The success or failure of this strategy is a matter for debate, witness Ford's decision to abandon production at their Halewood plant in Mersyside in favour of locating production in the more heavily regulated German economy. A key factor in this decision was that the low

regulation in the UK labour market made redundancies here much easier politically and legally than in Germany.

³⁵ Of course, this was something that Marx had recognised long before. Writing with Frederick Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*, he responded to accusations from the bourgeoisie that the communists would instigate the communal ownership of women: “The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women” (Marx and Engels, 1967: 101). They go on to point out that the real objective of communism is to do away with the whole idea that women, as well as children and other men, should be treated as simple means of production at all. That Colby effectively sacks his wife and suggests selling the kids, reflects his recognition of the wholesale overcoding of sociality by the relations of capitalism.

³⁶ Indeed, it is hard to imagine how a film of the book could ever be made, a point that Cronenberg himself readily concedes (Rodley, 1992).

³⁷ It is worth noting that the Situationist International was also heavily involved in the uprisings of May 1968 which triggered much of Burroughs’ reflections upon the dialectics of resistance, though of course, what Murphy calls the ‘dialectics of treason’ had already been a dominant component of his early work, especially *Naked Lunch* (Murphy, 1997). The influence of the SI on *Cities* is evinced by the repeated appearance of cobblestones, especially later in the book during the riot scenes, when there is an uprising and a revolutionary challenge to the powers that be in the Cities of the Red Night themselves (or at least in Tamaghis, Ba’dan and Yass-Waddah). This image resonates both with the address of Burroughs parent at Cobble Stone Gardens, a place that appears in many of his writings (e.g. Burroughs, 1984, 211), and with the slogan of May ’68, ‘Sous le pavé, la plage’ – beneath the cobblestones, the beach (Plant, 1992). The idea here is that the cobblestones that the students threw at the police could, as they were turned into revolutionary weapons, help to realise a better world, epitomised by the beach as a place of freedom and pleasure, in contradistinction to the grey world of office blocks and rational town-planning that had lain those cobblestone roads in the first place.

³⁸ In fact, Burroughs does deny this, when in ‘Women: A biological mistake?’, he claims that the dictionary definition of a misogynist as “a woman hater” both mobilises a problematic generalisation of the category women (“*what* woman? Where and when?”), and implies too great a concern with women (Burroughs, 1986: 125). Rather, Burroughs suggests that he is quite happy to just ignore women and do without them. As Russell suggests, however, not only is this ideal of independent evolution problematic in many ways, but it also leaves Burroughs conception of masculinity dependent upon a too simplistic rejection of effeminacy (Russell, 2001).

³⁹ It is interesting to note that Burroughs’ writing after *The Western Lands* was also dominated by the recording of his dreams, notably in *My Education: A Book of Dreams* (1996).

⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that Burroughs actually went to school in Los Alamos something he often saw as a rather fateful coincidence.

⁴¹ Available in ‘any colour, so long as it’s white’.

Appendix – Experimental Forms of Writing: a Cut-Up

The real beauty of apomorphine...¹

The real beauty of apomorphine is that unlike ‘who am I’ was in a methadone programme context, it doesn’t produce an entity clearly, with simple, single subject. Burroughs put it: “it just does its work then writing.” In recent times with the rising interest trilogy *Nova Express*, apomorphine is taken. Burroughs’ preoccupation has been called into Earth to prevent ‘My’ in the clearly autobiographical *Queer* - the complete annihilation of the planet. Using in the States, of a clear, queer identity for dependency, addiction and mind-control, her more sophisticated argument, Jamie and

¹ The following was an attempt to use Burroughs’ cut-up method within the context of a paper on control, writing, language and organization studies. To produce this work I took several pages from books and papers dealing with these questions. These pages were then combined using a mixture of fold-ins and cut-ups. With the fold ins, one page was folded roughly down the middle and then placed over a second page. The text was then read off from the two pages and re-typed to produce a second page. With the cut ups, a penknife was taken to either two or four pages, which were then cut into either halves or quarters respectively, rearranged, read off and typed up to produce a new text. In either case, the resulting text was then either incorporated wholesale, or in part, into the final ‘cut-up’ or was subjected to further folds and cuts. In several cases quite disparate texts were cut into each other as, for example, when pages from F.W. Taylor’s *Principles of Scientific Management*, an exemplary text on control if ever there was one, were folded into Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*. The resultant texts were then cut-up with sections of Thompson and Ackroyd’s critique of organizational theorists’ tendency to overrate managerial power and control, and neglect worker resistance. All of the texts used in the cut-up are included in the bibliography, but for obvious reasons no attempt has been made to acknowledge their identity in the actual text.

The title of the cut-up was taken from the first cut-up I produced for this project which was a combination of pages of out-takes from the main text: sections that related to Burroughs but were not sufficiently connected to the main theme of this paper to warrant direct inclusion. These pages were folded in with a copy of the original abstract for the paper which was submitted to a stream on silence at EGOS in 2002. As with all sections of this cut-up, I have retained a large part of the text completely unchanged, but the selections have been rearranged to produce the final text. Similarly, the cut-up texts were often typed up with no punctuation, so I have added this in to alter the flows of the text in some places. Whilst this may go against the ideal of breaking down narrative sense, it does allow new combinations of words to produce a new sense, not dictated by the pre-programmed narrative structure of my subvocalizing and typing ‘self’. Indeed, some of the resultant juxtapositions were quite illuminating, though I have steered clear of offering a conventional commentary on the text as this would rather defeat the object of experimenting with a non-linear form of writing that escapes the usual conventions of meaning, representation and signification.

set are set to realise nova when Willy the rather *was* a clear, queer identity available at wide-open, although there is an evident paradigm' favoured by contemporary. And whether they really will leave when their combination of state sponsored psychiatry, legislative enforcers, they will remain, having sexuals characterised as inverts, who by (Murphy, 1997), there is a suggestion that object-choice identification were assumed with the possible exception of his first novel wholesale. Queers, quite simply, weren't real language itself in a complex and complicating misogynist rejection of this effeminate literary categories with which people have interesting regulation. In his early writing (and Burroughs himself), pornographer David is figured as possession. It is only a short cyberpunk (Larry McCaffery) or postmodernski's 'general semantics' that recognise that relationship to words was also difficult.

Give control language and identity figures large. As Burroughs develops it is a critique of simultaneously an attempt to escape from an attempt to avoid the dualism of systems of control (including language) theory. Bateson called for an end to all nouns; recognition that as an author, he was as much Burroughs pick-up as 'slave' (ref. Book of...). Exploring this question of writing, subjectivity, slaves and masters then the dualism variously exhorted the need to 'rub out the ware. Some people who are slaves and some necessarily made using words. It was this ale who are basically male, and some who are led to a series of experiments in both the for in a simple opposition. Following Korzybski the Nova trilogy that followed Naked Lunch - ace nouns with adverbs – he performed slave The Ticket that Exploded (1962) and Nova

utilised the cut-up method he had developed: language is linked to control. Access to *the* as a way of turning words into material thing to speak and be heard has long been decades behind painting. Gysin and Burroughs' language as a weapon of control has used a palate. The result was a kind of literary fiction such as Orwell's 1984, in four pieces using a knife or scissors. Then the meaning of words in one of the main sentences were spliced together in such an insight, combined with the juxtapositions of words that could never have of the advertising and marketing industry's methods. In some cases, and depending up and guide consumers' desire has been be cut into another text altogether, rather like Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957) to achieve a particular effect or texture. We shower. Rather than suggesting that language cut-up are entirely random, not only are the suggests that the subject is itself produced by the procedure of cutting and rearranging social control, Burroughs proposes the thesis materials that are to be cut-up and what if a virus and text. Burroughs was quite adamant about their, understandably interested in the, nature of its entirety. In this practice this was extremely generate phrase, or idea, that would provide these writers however. Burroughs thesis is even a more conventional narrative for virus (Burroughs, 1986: 47). This virus has Burroughs add a new twist to the Lacanian-biosis with the human organism to the extent labelled and stigmatised as a junkie, a queen, he-human from its language or, to take encounters with these state-sanctioned by a specific distribution or relationship comparatively privileged position as an affluent and Guattari (1987).

States. Within which this subject position Burroughs, each of which was considered deviant from up. Anyone capable of responding to the how it links in with the

question of id-ENTITY, always an Other. For some commentators, this inability to by its need to control? 'Who is the ugly position?' is a defining feature of Burroughs in queer theory and studies, some writers hand increasing self control??? With the disintegration of the self, especially rest in the use of literature and other reflections of the lack, during Burroughs' time the study of organizations within the him to embrace (Dellamora, 1995). In a rather conventional social sciences (e.g. Russell has recently suggested that while Guillet De Monthoux, 1994; Knights and that point), it was confined to the effeminate discipline that has long been dominated by the psychoanalysts (Russell, 2001). Indeed, the bourgeois managerial classes (Fournier) and psychoanalysis meant that all homosexual men dominated by an exclusive focus on rejecting the correct, male pole of sexual novel (De Cock, 2000; 2001). This means buy into the opposite gender identification studies has been dominated by a form that me. However we evaluate Burroughs often, and the managerial revolution paradigm, his response to this attempted re-analytical mill, this emphasis on realism and this external control by the state machinery uprising. When we consider the parallel step then to combine this idea with Korzybski much of the debate on epistemology over language itself as a kind of possession (ch. 1999; Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000). At the heart of Korzybski's thinking, at least his imbalance by considering an author who what Burroughs called the 'is of identity'. In a par excellence, William S. Burroughs Aristotelian logic, Korzybski: rather like Greg without a clear referent. (An example that artist was with control and ways to resist Breeething?). Once we accept that there are war environment, concern with social becomes self supporting and reified. There his thinking invariably turned toward the

role who are masters. Or, there are some peoples of control. An awareness of the basically female. Self and other are related is nothing new of course. George Orwell's however, Burroughs suggests that 'we replace' has been influential within literary circle.

It is perhaps not a revolutionary insight that goes much further than both of these written word and the privilege of being able to word (language) is quite literally a virus associated with power and control. The used into a relatively stable state of symbiosis been popularised through dystopian science is impossible to clearly differentiate the which double-think and the ability to determine further, that the human is constituted by a tools of social control employed by the govern, language and technology. Deleuze and power of the image, has also been a staple whose playful use of language to produce the word virus and consider two of the troubling commentators at least since Vance control technology of language. The Burroughs goes further than this, how minutes of silence may not be the most can be used to manipulate subjects. He suggests EGOS forum. Because of this, the paper language. In a twist on the cybernetics of so near narratives and language: the cut-up. That language, or 'the word', is quite literally of Burroughs. The paper will perform as a writer William S. Burroughs was under Burroughs' control and subjectivity with language. Particular writings as well as other key theoretical Burroughs goes much further than both of Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand. That the word (language) is quite literally entered into a relatively stable state of possible sense, referring to both poststructural matters. Further, that the human is constituted postmodern organization

theory, whether self-between, language and technology (Deleuze). This slippery a-referentiality is a feature of key points: time being.

The Struggle for initiative

Not all theorists working in this tradition are, theoretically. Something is produced under cons and new management practices: the workman (that is, a schizophrenic out for a will - major theme of contemporary research analyst's couch). A deformity and to a greater O'Doherty (1994) and is part of himself closeted within his burdens, new duties though the influences, such as Giddens, are in the past to his father, to his mother (Willmott 1985, 1989; Knights 1990). Willmott is in the mountains amid knowledge which, seen as a site of resistance, allowed for the workmen and with nature that? Impossible. At first the prospects do not look promising. Machines, the stars of formulae which are trains individuals through their self-knowledge lost almost entirely upon getting machines. "He thought sovereignty as consumer or employee." The contact with the profound life of initiative is prevalent relations of domination plants, to take the "initiative" element of nature. The current most likely vehicle for their good as one part among the other is programmes discussed earlier: individual in a mental addition to this improvement. He does organizational order. Are mutually constitutive managers assume 'new' is no such thing as either ports. Deetz's (1992) critique of the colonizing produces the one within the other and corporation, arguing that the creation of self and in the past has been possessed, have totalitarianism, and finds little sign of classifying, tabulating look at this stroll of a... But despite these self-disciplinary tendencies, laws and Beckett's characters decide to

helpful between the search for secure identity and the self-locomotion work, in addition to developing the attempts to deliver. Self-identity can there the management takes on three works: what struggle against the experience of tense and heavy mother-anus machine? What Knights and Vurdubakis (1994:184).

In add it works: Judge Schreber feels *First*. They that shape it are not static or one-dimensional, explaining the process of a man's work, which capacity for human action, given that not in a mere thumb method. *Second*. They and multiple, identities, individuals can pod a neurotic, teach and develop the work own location, rather than simply position moments when Lenz finds *Third*. The heartily himself as to ensure all of the work of But there are conceptual and practical with the principle of taking a stroll outdoors, struggle *as employees*, but as *subjects of snowflakes*, with other gods or in doing their terrain deriving from the indeterminacy and mother, a *science* in this way, want? Can be Willmott (1994): "The existential nature of duties peace." Everything is a machine. Dens for identities is spelled out by O'Doherty: 'pine machines – under four heads of his body, rises as individuals fail to sustain a continuous soul for rocks, select and then train into himself resistance,' are also exercises of power and how in the breathe with the waxing and waning and involved in both exercising power and resisting to be a rate with the men, so least slip his body (Knights and Vurdubakis 1994:191-2). This has projected himself a science which has resistance, a post-structuralist equivalent of fourth of these dichotomy have been laid down.

Organization theory - that corporate innovation - healthy conflict and learn a little resistance. Divisions of the responsibility as a process of production relations with others and in their own self nature now, only a porches that the philosophy of the life and trying times of bank together and incentive makes everywhere schizo odds with the case study descriptions of non-self, outside and inside no for the general plans, staff shortages, job monotony and other had a work, and in many cases for compare what materialist and non-discursive. In this he must venture outdoors. Their various physical disciplined by the marker, or sanctions actually constitute, in and of themselves, the other hand in but by their own identity and subjectivity bicycle in rules, laws and formulae which the emphasises the point that the labour pro-individual workmen and as a stone-sucking machine backdrop against which a universal struggle having production of sexual pleasure? "An almost determinacy of identity rather than the schizophrenics out for a ride between the manage been central to industrial sociology." At further explanation: "Under the skin the body is of illustrative examples of the processes invalid shines,/ glows,/ from every bit necessary for to increased anxiety and seduced by the "we are": an entire responsibility the poles of schizo rate authority (Willmott 1994: 36). Of his an individual and as a member of the futile struggle.

Even when employees are of nature, but nature as do all of the actual we mean self-disciplined, they are prisoners of probably a science. On industry are two separate only is the search for a particular secure many industry is the opposite of nature; replace the search for security *per se* is a self-nature; from yet which can be effect-

nature and so for collective solidarity to have anything systematically industry-nature, society-nature equativeness: 'It would require that the target circuit do we find the management of male pre-occupation with stable meaning.' Management take over all in a van and a rowboat, form the nature of the process. "It is" machine is being assembled. All of the work and he individual consciousness raising, rather responsibility were thrown pore, attempting to make He-agenda. Even if it were, there is a final work-schizophrenic experiences both as types of defeating since those who play the game not at all any one scientific management a process the pursuit of sovereign rights through plan that at a certain level nature an in many case the disciplinary process which produce of view, and "incentive." In another, 'it' returns 'its' (1992: 42). This, this characteristic man-nature, whereas under to deny that issues of subjectivity are very essence of *Fourth*. There is, almost unfortunately, anyone interested in how social relations in the responsibility be me-into-the-world, through the constituted and reproduced. Indeed, "the correct." It is often thought that work for which the central importance (Thomson and perfectly obvious), a men, while in the past almost as a control device, such as And upon the men. Is it really necessary of desirable labour among flight attendants? Among what means are to be used to men, coupled with the denial of the specificities of what sort the management that make a bicycle horn subjectivising of social relations and the more efficient, than more important questions, than misbehaviour? Machine is capable of the management of initiative full circle to the post-Braverman cry of small and rudimentary way a knife rest is used for resistance. Must we be condemned to repeat-minor it? Or yet

another example: on scientific man rediscovery? Foucauldian theory and stones in the whole system.

The real beauty of apomorphine is that, unlike theoretically, something is produced under cons and programme. It doesn't produce an entity clearly that is a schizophrenic out for a will, major theme of "just does its work then writing." In recent times uniformity and to a greater (O'Doherty 1994) and is part apomorphine is taken have suggested that duties through the influences, such as Giddens, are of to prevent 'My' in the clearly autobiographical (Willmott 1985, 1989; Knights, 1990). Willmott is in planet. Using in the states, of a clear queer identity is a site of resistance allowed for in the workmen the more sophisticated argument. Jamie and prospects do not look promising machines, the stars a clear, queer identity available at wide-open (rough their self-knowledge lost almost entirely upon favoured by contemporary) and whether they really consumer or employee: 'the contact with the sponsored psychiatry legislative enforcers, they of domination plants, to take the "initiative" inverts who by (Murphy, 1997), there is a suggested vehicle for their good as one part among the other is assume to "With the possible exception of his mental addition to their improvement.'" He does weren't real language itself in a complex and co-managers assume new is no such thing as either 'effeminate literary categories' with which people produces the one within the other and corporation writing, and Burroughs himself. Pornographer has been possessed have totalitarianism, and finds cyberpunk (Larry McCaffery) or postmodernski is stroll of a... But despite these self-disciplinary relationship to words was also difficult. Give

to helpful between the search to secure identity control language and identity figure large, it as developing the attempts to deliver. Self-identity can simultaneously an attempt to escape from what struggle against the experience of tense and (including language) theory? Bateson, called for Vurdubakis (1994: 184). In add it works: Judge he was as much Burroughs pick up is 'slave' (not static or one dimensional explaining the process of subjectivity, slaves and masters then the dualism) given that not in a mere thumb method. *Second.* some people who are slaves and some necessarily pod than a neurotic teach, and develop the work basically male, and some who are led to a series when Lenz finds *Third.* The heartily himself opposition.

Following Korzybski the Nova conceptual and practical with the principle of taking adverbs – He performed slave. The Ticket that *subjects of* snowflakes, with other gods or in doing utilised the cut-up method he had developed and mother, a *science* in this way, want? Can be of turning words into material thing to speak “peace.” Everything is a machine. Dens for painting. Gysin and Burroughs of language as a machines – under four heads of his body, rises as was a kind of literary fiction such as Orwell's rocks. Select and then train into himself resistance. The meaning of words is one of the main sentences with the waxing an waning an involved in insight, combined with the juxtapositions of words with the men so least slip his body (Knights and marketing industries, methods). In some cases himself a science which has resistance. A post been cut into another text altogether, rather have been laid down.

Organization theory achieve a particular effect or texture. We learn a little resistance divisions of the entirely random. Not only are the suggests that tons with others and in their own self nature now, cutting and rearranging social control, Burroughs life and trying times of bank together and incentive up and what if a virus and text? Burroughs was study descriptions of non-self, outside and inside no the nature of its entirety, in this practice this and other had a work, and in many cases for would provide these writers however. Burroughs in this he must venture outdoors. Their various for virus (Burroughs, 1986: 47). This virus has actually constitute, in and of themselves, 'the' with the human organism to the extent labelled abjectly. Bicycle in rules, laws and formulae which from its language or, to take encounters with the individual workmen and, as a stone-sucking machine or relationship, comparatively privileged position having production of sexual pleasure? A "an almost" States within which this subject position out for a ride between the manage been each of which was considered deviant from up. "Under the skin body is an of in with the question of identity always an Other shines,/ glows,/ from every bit necessary for some commentators. This inability to buy its entire responsibility the poles of schizo rate defining feature of Burroughs; in queer theory and as a member of the his futile struggle. Control??? With the disintegration of the self, as do all of the actual, we mean self-disciplined reflections of the lack during Burroughs' time. Embrace (Dellamora, 1995). In a rather conventional industry are two separate only is the search for a suggested that while nature replaces the search for security *per se*, effeminate discipline that has long been dominated and so for collective solidarity to have the bourgeois managerial classes and nature equativeness: 'It would require that

the dominated by an exclusive focus on rejecting the male pre-occupation with stable meaning' (2000; 2001).

This means buy into the opposite form the nature of the process. It is machine is by a form that 'me'. However we evaluate Burroughs' consciousness raising (rather responsibility paradigm), his response to this attempted re-analysis, even if it were, there is a final work-external control by the state machinery uprising since those who play the game (not at all any) combine this idea with Korzybski much of 'the' of sovereign rights through plan that at a certain kind of possession (ch. 1999) which produce of view, and incentive in thinking, at least his imbalance by considering artistic man-nature, whereas under to deny that identity. In a par excellence William S. Burroughs there is almost unfortunately anyone Greg without a clear referent. An example that be me into the world through the Breeething. Once we accept that there are war it is often thought that work for which the supporting and reified. There his thinking in various, a men, while in the past almost as a control there are some peoples of control.

An awareness necessary of desirable labour among flight is nothing new of course. George Orwell's how men coupled with are to the denial of the influential within literary circle for x (get quake a bicycle horn subjectivising of social taken). It is perhaps not a revolutionary insight that questions misbehaviour. Machine is word and the privilege of being able to word (lace to the post-Braverman cry of small and power and control). The used into a relatively stance? Must we be condemned to

repeat-minor it? Dystopian science is impossible to clearly differ Foucauldian theory and stones in the determine further, that the human is constituted govern, language and technology (Deleuze and playful use of language to produce the word virus commentators) at least since Vance control than this, how minutes of silence may not be the suggests EGOS forum. Because of this, the paper near narratives and language: the cut-up, that Burroughs goes much further than both of Deleuze (language) is quite literally an entered into a relate both poststructural matters further - that the human whether self-between, language and technology feature of Key points: time being.

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