

2015

# "What is Love?" The Sounds of Love from William S. Burroughs

Kathryn Cronin

Western Washington University, [kathryn.cronin@wwu.edu](mailto:kathryn.cronin@wwu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cedar.wwu.edu/orwwu>

 Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), [Biological and Physical Anthropology Commons](#), [Biology Commons](#), [Comparative Politics Commons](#), [Exercise Science Commons](#), [Forest Biology Commons](#), [Macroeconomics Commons](#), and the [Physical Sciences and Mathematics Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Cronin, Kathryn (2015) "'What is Love?' The Sounds of Love from William S. Burroughs," *Occam's Razor*: Vol. 5 , Article 3.  
Available at: <https://cedar.wwu.edu/orwwu/vol5/iss1/3>

This Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Western Student Publications at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Occam's Razor by an authorized editor of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact [westerncedar@wwu.edu](mailto:westerncedar@wwu.edu).

# “WHAT IS LOVE?”

*The  
Sounds of  
Love from William S.  
Burroughs*

BY KATHRYN CRONIN

16

William Burroughs, his life and works, have a set beginning and end, but the biological and spiritual connections he draws between language, sound, and the human body appear to have undefined points of origin. Sound has always been. Language has always been. To exist outside of language and sound is to exist outside of time and space and thus outside the body. Burroughs' theories on language, the word, and their connection to the body are woven through texts filled with structural and narrative convolutions. *The Nova Trilogy*, especially *The Ticket That Exploded*, as well as the early novel *Naked Lunch*, establish a biological link between sex and sound, both musical, in instances of consumptive love. However, in the later trilogy, including books such as *The Western Lands*, love moves away from the body; despite the continued use of music and sound, the concept of love separates and becomes linked to the image of the cat. This shift demonstrates Burroughs' understanding of society's control system, as projected through morals, economy, and the notion of individuality, and suggests how the fight to escape these systems shaped Burroughs' ideas of what love could or might actually be.

Understanding how William Burroughs perceived sex is vital, since sex is where he begins to flesh out the themes of control and love. His notion of sex is clearly not the normative sex espoused by the general public. His novels frequently conjoin sex with violence, time travel, control, and magic, but distance it from “love” and “affection.” Indeed Burroughs’ concept of love is difficult to define, for it changes frequently depending on context and conversation. He originally agreed to an extent with Bockris-Wylie’s definition as “the point where you start to lose power” (*With William* 47) but confessed to having difficulty defining this term. The connection, love and sex to loss of power is prevalent in his early works, but his idea of love shifts in his later works. Burroughs continues in the same conversation to say:

I don't know exactly what falling in love for me is. The concept of romantic love arose in the Middle Ages... [T]his separation of love and sex is a western concept, a Christian concept. As to what falling in love means, I'm uncertain. Love; well, it means simply physical attraction and liking a person at the same time. (59)

The connection between sex and love, especially in the courtly love Christian and the medieval traditions, is understood by Burroughs as a way to control how, with whom, and when men had sex. Women, in this case, especially religious women, were enforcers of sexual control. Examples of women as agents of control occur in many of his works, particularly in *The Ticket That Exploded*, where Burroughs theorizes that this control of sex is “a program of systematic frustration...necessary

## THE CONCEPT OF LOVE FOR BURROUGHS IS DIFFICULT TO DEFINE, AND CHANGES FREQUENTLY DEPENDING ON CONTEXT AND CONVERSATION.

in order to sell this crock of sewage as Immortality, the Garden of Delights [G.O.D.], and love” (*Ticket* 59). Sexual frustration is necessary to decrease the alertness of the subject, thus allowing for easier control and for the acceptance of “love.”

In this context, it is no surprise that the sex acts in Burroughs’ works demonstrate a number of male, animal, or alien sexual partners. Homosexual sex is important to Burroughs’ rejection of the control system, couplings achieve a distance from the normative heterosexual couple. He says, “In homosexual sex you know exactly what the other person is feeling, so you are identifying with the other person completely. In heterosexual sex you have no idea what the other person is feeling” (*With William* 60). Not only does homosexual sex break from a societal norm, it implies a deeper connection and communication with the sexual partner, since one can “identify” with their experience. Since sex is already an act of vulnerability and “provides a point of invasion” (185) the woman as a sexual partner poses more danger than a male one. Sex, as an avenue for invasion, as a force alienating once from one’s body, and as a potential control system for women, is thus one of the deliberate methods used by *society’s* control system. To destroy the control, as he does with word and the cut-up method, one cannot remove themselves from sex. Instead, one must be

**SOUNDS, CANNOT BE  
FORGOTTEN OR TURNED  
OFF AND HAVE A POWER  
OF CONTROL PAST A IS  
ORIGINALLY CONSIDERED.**

alert during the sexual connection so that they are not taken by frustration and sentimentality (Ticket 85). The societal controls prevalent in sex are not the only avenues of control, and it becomes apparent through the body of Burroughs' work that sex is only one part of the larger issue at stake.

Word as virus is the constant theme connecting the body of William Burroughs' work. Its association with control, on a biological and social level, make striving for freedom a goal within each novel, whether in the form of the rewrite or demonstrated in the actions of a protagonist. Freedom, from the standards set by society's morality, but carried out in the form of words. The biological control exerted by word is the true cause of any other form of control posed by the word. Word is flesh. Word became flesh. The biological mechanism of the body, especially the subconscious or unconscious function of the brain, allows word to enter and exert its force. Sex, due to its increase of vulnerability, becomes one of the primary ways in which the word parasite can enter and control the body. First, however, there must be a connection, a communication. Sex requires *words* in order to function as a method of control. In *The Ticket That Exploded*, the dangers created by love songs and love confessions become the open wounds that allow the parasite to fully inhabit the body.

Word and image inevitably find themselves joined in creating meaningful language. The mythology of language and word began with image as symbol, and words themselves came into the body, most often through the eyes. However, the origin of words and language do not come from the written page, no matter the imagery Burroughs himself may create. Sound is the origin. Before light has touched the eyes, the ears have been tuned to the sounds of the mother, of the father, to the world outside the womb. As Burroughs and Gysin say, "[T]he sound is in our ears and the image is in our eyes from the very moment of birth and is thus indistinguishable from its contrary silence...and darkness" (Kahn 221). Sound is more invasive than image. One can be inured to the images around them, but it is easy to admit or clue in to optical illusions. One only has to think of the discussion surrounding photo-shopping and auto-tuning. An artist's voice is not as frequently addressed. Consider also Burroughs' statement,

If you are listening to someone, that person's voice is inside your head. It has to some extent invaded and occupied your brain...So voices coming through the right brain that cannot be turned off have a special power. (With William...187)

Image is invasive, but sound is the narrative voice one hears while reading, the persistent presence of lyrics, the shuffle of feet and the tapping of keys. Sound appears to go in one ear and out the other, but as William Burroughs proposes, sound permeates and is inescapably stuck within the body. Sounds, whether the voice of a loved one or the persistent tune of pop culture's romantic love, cannot

be forgotten or turned off, and they have a controlling power greater than what is originally considered.

DJ Spooky, aka The Subliminal Kid, aka Paul Miller, and his book *Rhythm Science* provides a post-Burroughs analysis of sound within today's cultural framework and shows how it shapes the created conscious. The reference to The Subliminal Kid of the Nova Trilogy is not accidental; Paul derives inspiration from Burroughs' work and his cut-up method. Like Burroughs, Paul recognizes the infectiousness of sound for the body. He says:

I don't think we've engaged how much we can hear. We're conditioned to accept the social ramifications of the various technologies as constants in the environment, but they're as open to fluctuation as the societies that generated them. All of which points to the fact that it's not so much new ways of hearing that are needed, but new perceptions of what we can hear. (Miller 17)

This reevaluation of perception is what Burroughs pushes his readership toward with his narrative in *Naked Lunch* and the Nova Trilogy. By using the cut-up method, he forcibly uses the constants in song and culture in ways that throw off conditioning. These constants, originally restricted by societal definition, are then re-imagined in an attempt to identify and resist the control message presented by the language of love. Word is the other that controls instead of being controlled. Thus, sex is violence. Love is consumption. These re-definitions begin with Burroughs' creation of the body and its symbolic sounds.



Douglas Kahn, in the chapter on Meat Voices in his book *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*, expands on the sounds of the Burroughsian universe and their implications for the body. *Naked Lunch* is the focus of his argument, since it was the first book that preceded Burroughs' use of the cut-up method. It is a strange universe to enter into, where the body is no longer an impenetrable force. Kahn tracks sound back to its origin, back to the body itself, and from there demonstrates Burroughs' theories of virus and cancer within the body's sound. He says:

[T]he protoplasmic body and Burroughs's own depicted body, were fused and found a common host in the idea of schlupping bodies, the total osmotic ingestion of fusion of one body by another, first posited imagistically within the sphere of homosexual love – 'to become the other person' – but then quickly pathologized to forms of predation, violence, and destruction. (Kahn 295)

Taking viral and parasitic action to the extreme, the bodies in the Nova Trilogy and in *Naked Lunch* are obsessed with consumption—consumption of junk, of sex, of control. The body, because of this desire, cannot stay within its confines. As this quote indicates, the idea of schlupp did not begin as a violent hunger. Ginsberg

confirms that Burroughs originally considered schlupp as a kind of tender emotional vulnerability towards a lover, connected with the desire to know the person to the fullest extent (298). This desire to know a person, to know them in the most intimate way (as with merging altogether with the partner), becomes the most striking example of parasitic behavior of the word virus and its hosts.

Many examples of parasitic behavior can be found in Burroughs' first novel, *Naked Lunch*. From the beginning, many characters are controlled by their desire to consume. Not all examples are sexual in nature, though the language would suggest otherwise. Willy, a terribly phallic name for a character, and his "blind, seeking mouth" lose control and eat a door when the police come for him (*Naked Lunch* 8). The blindness of this orifice is horrifying to consider, it will eat anything and everything, but it is an erotic image if one thinks of the forbidden dark abyss present in any sexual orifice. Another example, the talking asshole, becomes erotic through its production of un-D.T. or Undifferentiated Tissue. First the asshole talks, then it grows teeth and begins to eat and demand "equal rights" (111). Worse, it forcibly seals over the other mouth in order to take over the body, using un-D.T. that, according to Kahn, "becomes sexualized and produces multiple and mobile orifices...human parts shaken around and poured out any way they fell" (Kahn 311). This cancerous reproduction of skin over the mouth only becomes possible because of the asshole's ability to use language. Language is the opening through which this cancerous reproduction occurs, over-reproduction if one considers how cancer cells multiply without biological safeguarding.

**THE BODY, BECAUSE OF  
THIS DESIRE, BIOLOGICALLY  
CANNOT STAY WITHIN ITS  
CONFINES.**

## THE ONOMATOPOEIA OF THE LANGUAGE OF CONSUMPTION, OF THIS SEXUAL ACT OF MERGING INTO THE OTHER, IS AT THE HEART OF BURROUGHS NOTIONS OF VIRUS AND CANCER, OF CONTROL OF THE BODY ON A BIOLOGICAL LEVEL.

With its assertion of the self it merges completely with the “host” and takes over control of the body, but this is not the end of the biological reassessment of the human body and its functions.

Schlupp, or schlupping, is an invaluable sound for Douglas Kahn's arguments because it symbolizes the connection of sound to the host, and the host to the parasitic. He says:

The sound of the word schlupp is the word made flesh, the sound of soft organs, a protoplasmic sound, a formlessness spoken with a wet wind that inflates and vitalizes the gelatinous body... Schlupp has a cartoon-like onomatopoeic relationship to sounds of saliva, 'a great big sloppy kiss,' sweat, semen, and other sexual fluids that accompany the ingestion of penises and fingers and tongues, the full stop plosive p being a vacuum created and released by plunging. (300)

Any mention of schlupp in *Naked Lunch* is sexual, the most common example being the ingestion of the District Supervisor by Bradley the Buyer. This vampiric consumption is an absorption of the other, which ultimately revokes the Buyer's “human citizenship” and labels him as “a creature without species” (*Naked Lunch* 17). The lead up to the “schlupp” involves the kissing of the D.S. fingers, inserting them into the Buyer's mouth, the plea saying “I'll wipe your ass, I'll wash your dirty condoms” (16). The onomatopoeia of the language of

consumption, of this sexual act of merging into the other, is at the heart of Burroughs notions of virus and cancer, of control of the body on a biological level.

This consumption and assimilation of the other continues in the novels of the Nova Trilogy, particularly in *The Ticket That Exploded*. Examples include the Green Octopus and her “flesh monopoly” (*Ticket* 9), the experiment with the composite of the marine and his girlfriend (94), the viral infection where the victim is “eaten by his invisible partner” (108), and the numerous jungle sex scenes where characters merge together (103), or are forcibly penetrated by their sexual partner (113). Schlupp, though uniquely connected to the biology of the body, is only the beginning of Burroughs' exploration into this consumptive nature between sex and love.

*The Ticket That Exploded* continues this trend of biological sound, especially in the beginning of the novel. Here is where the language of love is inserted properly into the discussion of biologic control. The sounds of the body become dangerous to the existence of the other. For example, the narrator says:

So that is how we have come to know each other so well that the sound of his voice and his image flickering over the tape recorder are as familiar to me as the movement of my intestines the sound of my breathing the beating of my heart. Not that we love or like each other. In fact murder is never out of my eyes when I look at him. And murder is never out of his eyes when he looks at me. (1)



The merging encouraged by schlupp seems to have occurred with the two characters mentioned by the narrator. One is familiar to him as the other; he is as familiar as the narrator's own body, but not just the body, the sounds of the body. A biologic convergence of the two selves, explained later as the looping of sound tracks of voice and body together, makes these lines all the more important to the novel's explanation and critique of love. The narrator continues, "[M]y body is convinced that my breathing and heart will stop if his voice stops" (3). It is not the narrator's consciousness that feels as if it would stop; it is the body. Despite the lack of "love" in either scene, the language is clearly romantic. Looking into the other's eyes, he is familiar to me as my own body, my heart would stop if his voice stopped. All these phrases have been heard and said before in the context of romantic affection or love. Burroughs satires the language and pits the two characters against each other, both truly wanting to kill each other and be the last image seen by the other, (3) yet there is a terrible familiarity and connection to this person, to the other. The connection is based on sound, the splicing of the voice and the body together on tape, but it is all based on the notion of control. Here is where Burroughs begins his attack on the language of love permeating the air waves. Love language used here is control, the reason the narrator plots murder of the man who has the advantage. Love is an advantage over the other. "Love" as society calls it may not exist in this section, but Burroughs certainly portrays a kind of love that makes the reader uncomfortable.

"Do You Love Me?" is one of the more musical sections in *The Ticket*. The cut-up consists of a number of song lyrics, most of which would have been familiar to a reader during the time of publication. Besides the use of nonsense nursery rhymes, immediately conjuring for the reader the reproductive pictures of baby and mother, there are a number of songs that are picked out and repeated, cut up and thrown out together while sex noises play. The reluctant lover of the young monk is conjured with the sounds of the tape recorder, sex sounds, and the music of love that are played as the monk and his phantom make love. Two song references within the bulk of the section are "Tell Laura I Love Her" and "I've Got You Under My Skin." The first is the story of a young man Tommy, who in an attempt to get his lover a wedding ring, crashes and dies in a car race (Valens). The tragedy itself is easily a horrifying example of the things love can inspire one to do, but the repetition of the line "Tell Laura I love her" and the ghostly presence Laura feels at the church as she prays for her lost love are the truly concerning pieces of the song. Tell Laura I love her, my love for her will never die – these lines cause Tommy to continually manifest his presence. Tommy and his sacrifice, the inherent control Laura had over the course of his life, is reimagined every time we hear him say he loves her. Every time, and here in the context of the cut-up, the ghost of Tommy comes to the reader and reasserts how his love will never die. "Tell Laura I love my blue heaven – Tell Laura oh jelly love you" (Ticket 50). Burroughs continues with other examples to develop a conflicted narrative between love language and music.

The song "I've Got You Under My Skin" is the musical embodiment of Burroughs' concept of schlupp and its ties to consumptive love. Like many of the other song references, this is a song that was written and recorded then later re-recorded by multiple artists. Thus the voices of these artists, if the reader is familiar with any of them, come out to haunt the text. Repetition is dangerous, with

sound, because repetition is how the song, words, and sound, slide in without notice. These are the lines sung at random moments, the words that come tumbling from the mouth when the tune starts to play. For this song, there is very little lyrical change. The song consists of one single stanza along with two repetitions of the chorus, but what a chorus!

I'd sacrifice anything come what might / For the sake of havin' you near / In spite of a warnin' voice that comes in the night / And repeats, repeats in my ear / Don't you know, little fool, you never can win? / Use your mentality, wake up to reality. / But each time that I do just the thought of you / Makes me stop before I begin / 'Cause I've got you under my skin. (Porter, par. 2)

Burroughs only has to say "Got you under my skin on my mind" (Ticket 50) and the connection is instantaneous. Words that were once simply an example of devoted love, now with the reluctant phantom lover of the monk, of the perversion of sex, Bradly laughing and ejaculating in the face of the "parody of love-making" (49), take on new connotations. This is what Burroughs has been showing us all along. These words, taken literally, are horrifying. A man who avoids waking up to reality because his lover

is near, who is warned off by voices in his head, perhaps experiencing a psychotic break, the physical and mental block of control created by the presence of the lover, and a love who exists always near, under the skin. The lover has schlupped into the body of the other and can no longer be removed. This is the mental tone: Burroughs' criticism of a love that demands too much, consumes, and controls, whether through the biological schlupp or the narrative presented in the music of love.

Burroughs begins, in his later works, to shift away from the biological schlupping that is prevalent in the Nova Trilogy. It is already clear that the body is problematic. The body is the avenue for parasitic entrance, especially during the act of sex. However, the later trilogy, particularly *Cities of the Red Night* and *The Place of Dead Roads*, rejects the body altogether and moves into the realm of the spirit, the soul. David Ayers explains this idea in his article when he says, "1. In the beginning was the word. 2. The word was and is flesh'...So flesh itself is the control message, word, virus. The body itself is now written. It cannot be healed of its scars because it is itself the scar" (Ayers 230). Ayers says that the body is the location and source of the invasion, as has been shown in examples from both *Naked Lunch* and *The Ticket That Exploded*. Burroughs comes to the conclusion that it is impossible to throw off the control message

while still trapped within the body. Thus, his mythology in this trilogy has an overwhelming focus on the soul and self outside of the body. In his novel, *The Place of Dead Roads*, Burroughs says that the physical differences present in the body, the ability to differentiate, is the reason why the parasite of control can exist in the body without completely merging (Place of Dead Roads 192). Sex continues to be a theme, and it can be argued that characters still merge together, but the tracks of music, sound, and love begin to deviate from each other.

Music and sound within the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy occur repeatedly with two specific themes, those of sex and of the cat. Beginning with *Naked Lunch* and its "medley of tunes and street noises, farts and riot yips" (*Naked Lunch* 191) that Douglas Kahn describes as "a pastiche, a sound salad heard on a radio receiver that was ejaculating" (308), the Nova trilogy employs flutes and drums, a phallic instrument, the other that mimics the rhythmic thump of sex, of the heart, of the body. These instruments reoccur in the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy, specifically present before or during sexual acts. An interesting change is the insertion of poetic sections that function as the cut-up lyrics did in *The Ticket That Exploded*. Sometimes these lyrics have references, consider the sections in *Western Lands* alluding to the national anthem (*Western Lands* 222) and popular Christmas poems (240), but more often than not these made-up songs have no connection to pop culture's music. In *The Place of Dead Roads*, the stick song is symbolic of this deviation from cultural reference. The

character is writing lyrics referring to man and his stick, with lines that parallel the warning Burroughs gives about women and sex. He writes:

A man's best friend is his stick...Pick up your stick on the double / Your chick's a bloody snitch / Ride your stick like a witch / She'll sing you into Sing Sing / Unless you sprout a wing / Fly away on your stick / And fly away quick. (141)

Other than the obvious connotation sticks has to dicks, these song lyrics parallel the conclusions found in *Ticket*. The woman takes the "stick" and uses it to manipulate the man into "Sing Sing." Much like the connections between love and song, the woman has to bewitch the man with sex and notions of love through song to keep him in place, trapped. These lyrics imply that the way to throw off control is to fly, but it does not mean that sex itself is banned. Instead, sex, or the "stick," is the implement by which a person can fly away.

With the introduction of the cat as a symbol and a recipient of love, sound and music are once again shown to follow. The mythology of the Cat God Kunuk is one such example. Language or words have not penetrated this "God" since he is relatively unknown, which makes him a stronger force. Burroughs specifically says, "The quickest approach to Kunuk is through his voice" (*Western Lands* 207), and continues to write a scene where Hassan-i Sabbah, in summoning the god to create an amulet against dogs, both hears and feels the power of the twang reverberating through the metal wires. The cat, in opposition to the dogs who are related to the control system of bureaucracy, becomes symbolic of the fight against the virus. Consider the Deercat and the sounds that precede it being named "the spirit of total revolution and total change" (243). Cat whines and shrieks fill the air as the Deercat, the black hole, consume the word, the image, any attempted system of control. However, these

examples have little to do with love. Control, yes, and the pervasive use and misuse of sound, but what of love?

Love is related to the cat for multiple reasons. Burroughs appreciated the independence of spirit demonstrated by the cat and found through his relationship with his cats, Ruski, Fletch, and Smoker, a refined definition of what love could be. As he says in his autobiography, *The Cat Inside*, "All relationships are predicated on exchange, and every service has its price. When the cat is sure of his position, as Ruski is now, he becomes less demonstrative, which is as it should be" (*Word Virus* 505). The idea of relationship begins to move away from the body and from relation to sex. Cats and sex do not go together; the love of a cat is not a biological need that can be used to control. Instead, as the relationship becomes more established, more independence can be assumed. This love requires, even demands, a degree of separation. Burroughs explains, "The cat does not offer services. The cat offers itself. Of course he wants care and shelter. You don't buy love for nothing" (504). Love in this sense is a kind of exchange, an exchange of Guardianship. The cat gives itself to the human to be taken care of, but can revoke that privilege at any time. A cat's independence is a reassertion that the love they demonstrate is in no way connected to the ways of the control system. He explains

**LOVE IN THIS SENSE IS  
A KIND OF EXCHANGE,  
AN EXCHANGE OF  
GUARDIANSHIP.**

**LOVE AS A PAINKILLER, BUT LIKE JUNK IT IS ADDICTIVE,  
LIKE SOUND IT IS INVASIVE. ONLY A TRUE, PURE FORM  
OF LOVE COULD BE AN EFFECTIVE PAINKILLER.**

this kind of love further in *The Western Lands*, with talk of familiars and descriptions of separation from the body.

The cat as a familiar is perhaps the most important aspect of William Burroughs' reconciliation of love, control, and the body. As discussed previously, the body is the avenue through which the virus attains control. Sex and love sounds are incredibly invasive and can be used to further control the body. Thus, the cat as a familiar, as a psychic companion, is an avenue of potential escape. Burroughs says:

The Familiars of an old writer are his memories, scenes, and characters from his past, real or imaginary...Yes, quite simply and quite literally cats serve as sensitive screens for quite precise attitudes when cast in appropriate roles. The roles can shift and one cat may take various parts. (506)

The cat is now a projection screen for the pervasive memories and images trapped within the writer. This is fleshed out in *The Western Lands* with the writer's projection of the cat, Smoker, and his relationship to him. Two stories emerge, that of the writer, William Seward Hall, and of his friend, Professor William. Both Hall and William recount the discovery of the cat,

but William explains that there was no cat present and Hall was projecting the idea of a cat (*Western Lands* 251). When the cat is lost Hall becomes distressed and, depending on the story, either finds Smoker as blackness consumes him or, in waiting for Smoker to return, suffers a heart attack and dies from exposure to the elements (250). This death scene is vital to fully understanding the conclusions Burroughs was trying to make with reference to the body. Death was, and is, the ultimate escape from the control system. The death of this writer in connection to his re-discovery of the cat is a release from the struggle with writing and the impossibility of escape from control while in the body. It is a strange parallel to Burroughs and his last words before his death: "Love? What is it? The most natural painkiller what there is. LOVE" (*Word Virus* 528). Perhaps this is what makes love such an addiction. Love as a painkiller, but like junk it is addictive; like sound it is invasive. Only a true, pure form of love could be an effective painkiller. Only the pure guardianship love for the cat, for the cat familiar that transcends the body, can be the temporary escape necessary for a man so consumed by the notion of control, both in his fiction and in reality.

Over time, the works of William Burroughs demonstrate the development of themes connected to the body, sound, sex, and love. These larger themes tie together and show a maturation of thought. Sex is no longer the main focus, and the body is dangerous, thus it is necessary to move towards a spirit existence or inevitable death. Sound, though often connected to the control system, is like sex in that it is used in favor of and against control. Ultimately, escape from the control system while in the

body is deemed impossible, though this does not mean a total surrender to the system. Instead, the developing notion of love and its connection to the cat posits a new idea. Love in connection to body, to sex, is consumptive and relies heavily on the control system for its power. In contrast, the love for a cat is forcibly located outside of the body. This guardianship love leads to psychic connection in the form of familiars, an avenue through which the body and the system that tries to control it is subverted. Perhaps this is the only form of escape available while one exists in the world.

## WORKS CITED

- 1 Ayers, David. "The Long Last Goodbye: Control and Resistance in the Work of William Burroughs." *Journal of American Studies* 27.2 (1993): 223-36. JSTOR. Web. 26 Oct. 2014.
- 2 Burroughs, William S. *Naked Lunch: The Restored Text*. Ed. James Grauerholz and Barry Miles. New York: Grove, 2001. Print.
- 3 Burroughs, William S. *With William Burroughs: A Report From the Bunker*. Comp. Victor Bockris. New York: Seaver, 1981. Print.
- 4 Burroughs, William S. *The Place of Dead Roads*. New York: Picador, 1983. Print.
- 5 Burroughs, William S. *The Ticket That Exploded: The Restored Text*. Ed. Oliver Harris. New York: Grove, 2014. Print.
- 6 Burroughs, William S. *The Western Lands*. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Viking, 1987. Print.
- 7 Burroughs, William S. *Word Virus: The William S. Burroughs Reader*. Ed. James Grauerholz and Ira Silverberg. New York: Grove, 1998. Print.
- 8 Kahn, Douglas. "Part V: Meat Voices." *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999. 290-322. Print.
- 9 Miller, Paul D., Aka DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid. *Rhythm Science*. Cambridge, MA: Mediawork/MIT, 2004. Print.
- 10 Porter, Cole. "I've Got You Under My Skin." *Metro Lyrics*. CBS Interactive, 2013. Web. 9 Dec. 2014.
- 11 Valens, Ritchie. "Tell Laura I Love Her." *Metro Lyrics*. CBS Interactive, 2013. Web. 9 Dec. 2014.