

**Self(ie)-Surveillance:
Religion, Recording Instruments, and the Body**

by

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Abstract

Self-surveillance connotes that surveillance is not only a top-down phenomenon being enforced solely by governments or security agencies; it rather suggests that people are subjected to control and observation even by and among themselves. Derived from this notion, the term selfie-surveillance refers to a specific type of self-surveillance, emphasizing the role of recording instruments that also reflects the growing contemporary obsession with recording/sharing one's body through social media. The notion of selfie-surveillance can benefit from Burroughs's conception of control as junk—a metaphor for the never-ending desire for something with no practical purpose, like narcotics—as a key to analyze the emerging culture of surveillance on two levels. First, the fact that NSA surveillance is taking place for the sake of surveillance itself, gathering as much data as possible even if for no practical purpose; second, that the rise of selfies reflects an egocentric desire to solidify the bodies. Following an introductory chapter on the significance of the selfie and its relation to surveillance, chapter 2 investigates the theoretical advances of control of the body with a focus on its religious dimensions. It will first draw on Foucault's notion of panopticism as a tool to identify the notion of self-surveillance; then, Deleuze's understanding of the body—something not limited to the biological boundaries of the flesh—will be further explored in order to show how shared images are segments of the body and thus subjected to control. Chapter 3 offers an analysis of selected works of Burroughs to enrich the theories of surveillance discussed in the previous chapter. Burroughs's investment in esoteric religious traditions enables him to offer a critique of control society that operates similar to junk. Burroughs believes the word to be a virus—an evil enemy that equals ego and encourages the body to consume image as junk. Yet, resistance towards control is possible through challenging the unification of the body and the recorded self.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Anyone who fights with monsters should take care that he does not in the process become a monster. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss gazes back into you.

—Friedrich Nietzsche¹

But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.

—George Orwell²

Nineteen EightyFour is an important book but we should not bind ourselves to the limits of the author's imagination. Time has shown that the world is much more unpredictable and dangerous than that.

—Edward Snowden³

The remarkable notion of surveillance is undoubtedly informed by various socio-political elements; but what often gets overlooked within both the academic context and the public sector is that surveillance is deeply constructed by, and represented through a myriad of religious beliefs/rituals as well as works of literature. In the aftermath of his revelations, Edward Snowden described NSA surveillance “worse than Orwellian,”⁴ an expression that signifies the crucial imaginary aspects of the existing surveillance as well as its forms of representation. For such a long time, George Orwell's **Nineteen EightyFour** had grasped the imagination of both the academic and the popular by bringing to light the centralization of state power and the use of technologies to screen the face of Big Brother into every corner of people's lives. Nevertheless, surveillance had fundamentally altered by the late 20th century, and those thinking in Orwellian terms have to judge surveillance practices “well beyond the nation-state—in advertising and

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Marion Faber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 68.

² George Orwell, *Nineteen EightyFour*, ed. Bernard Crick (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 416.

³ Edward Snowden, “Edward Snowden Interview: The Edited Transcript,” *The Guardian* 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/18/-sp-edward-snowden-nsa-whistleblower-interview-transcript>

⁴ Griff Witte, “Snowden Says Government Spying Worse than Orwellian,” *The Washington Post* 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/snowden-says-spying-worse-than-orwellian/2013/12/25/e9c806aa-6d90-11e3-a5d0-6f31cd74f760_story.html

formulation of panopticism and his analysis of observatory techniques, along with the reassessments of his works, help understanding modern technologies of surveillance that are still evolving. In addition, Deleuze's perception of the body as something that is always in the process of becoming could shed a new light on the notions of virtual bodies and selfies in the 21st century. Via the mentioned theoretical frameworks, this research, at the final stage, offers a religious comprehension of self(ie)-surveillance through a close reading of Burroughs's works of fiction.

The study of surveillance has recently shifted to go beyond Foucault's panopticism and Orwell's Big Brother as the two major metaphors that had captured this critical discourse. One of the efforts to go beyond previous theoretical frameworks is based on Deleuze's conceptual tools in regard to control societies and concepts such as modulation and assemblage; yet, the scholarly literature on surveillance, considering the formulation of control, has dismissed works of Burroughs, by whom Deleuze is inspired. Even within the Deleuzian framework and studies on representations of surveillance,⁹ Burroughs is not discussed at all. In many senses, *Naked Lunch* alongside other Burroughs's writings on/in control, could be the alternative to *Nineteen Eighty Four* as a more precise and well-warned description of contemporary forms of surveillance. The reason for this dismissal could be the difficulty of reading Burroughs in comparison with the accessibility of *Nineteen Eighty Four*. *Naked Lunch* is a polyphonic work of fiction with no linear narrative and no single narrator; it is full of jargon from discourses of medicine and pharmacology; and there is an abundant amount of violent, abject, and pornographic (homo/hetro)sexual scenery within the pages of this novel. Also, Burroughs's reputation as a counterculture writer who might easily be labeled as a deviant, voyeur, hedonist, drug addict, and

paranoid figure, might hinder scholars from citing his works as something enlightening. Nevertheless, from a post-structuralist point of view, the biography of the writer has nothing to do with the text and its interpretations. The dangers of control society that Burroughs brings in front of readers' eyes is worthy of critical attention regarding both internal and external aspects of surveillance as well as its religious dimensions.

The concept of self-surveillance has recently gained consideration from social scientists, though its religious connotations are yet to be explored. According to Paulo Vaz and Fernando Bruno, "techniques of surveillance are necessarily related to practices of self-surveillance,"¹⁰ since, within a Foucauldian framework that reinforces the proximity between power relations and the care of the self, power "is everywhere and therefore also inside us."¹¹ Vaz and Bruno distinguish between two historically distinct types of self-surveillance: one, proper to early modern disciplinary societies, promotes the normalization of power, while the second type is associated with contemporary problematizing of health-related behaviors and risk factors. Hence, self-surveillance not only refers to "the attention one pays to one's behavior when facing the actuality or virtuality of an immediate or mediated observation," but it rather includes "individuals' attention to their actions and thoughts when constituting themselves as subjects of their conduct."¹² In other words, self-surveillance does not rely solely on an "invisible but unverifiable power, but also on normalizing judgments."¹³ Vaz and Bruno argue that understanding the Panopticon as an Orwellian Big Brother is a result of understanding self-surveillance merely as a self-monitoring phenomenon; on the other hand, it is the care of the self that constitutes the second type of self-surveillance. The modern medical discourse on health,

¹⁰ Paulo Vaz and Fernando Bruno, "Types of Self-Surveillance: From Abnormality to Individuals at Risk," *Surveillance & Society*, no. 3 (2003): 272.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 273.

¹² *Ibid.*, 273.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 274.

“God’s eye” helps reflecting “the priorities of the Enlightenment to discover accurate, exhaustive and perhaps hidden information using rational method,” as well as showing how “abstract” and “disembodied” its techniques are; nonetheless, the roots of contemporary surveillance are “deeper and more complexly intertwined.”²⁴ Additionally, understanding the cyberspace social media as a realm of confession is misleading, since, according to Lyon, the Christian confession is about “humility” and it is whispered to one person, while a post on social networks is “self-advertising” and it targets “publicity” or “publicness.”²⁵

Religion and surveillance could be closely connected in view of the self and its components like the ego. The obsession with taking a perfect selfie is bonded to an ego that seeks to gain full control of the body, and mastery over the self. Although it might be a false, reductionist generalization to argue that what all religions share in common is a notion of an esoteric, internal ego, it is definitely a more widespread concept than God or confession, since at least many interpretations of Abrahamic, Indian, and East Asian religions address the abstract notion of ego, even though with different names (e.g. *Nafs* in Islam). It is not the goal of this paper to offer a psychoanalytic interpretation of surveillance practice/F2 12 Tf1 0 0 1hhos(e.3the Z0 60UG0L

makes it more conscious by attributing a static image to it. A good example is the trend of “After Sex Selfies” in social media, as it not only reflects an extreme intention for revealing and sharing the private, willingly,

Chapter 2 Control of the Body: Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze

In every game and con there is always an opponent and there is always a victim. The more control the victim thinks he has, the less control he actually has. [...] If the opponent is very good, he will place his victim inside an environment he can control. The bigger the environment, the easier the control. Toss the dog a bone, find their weakness, and give them just a little of what they think they want. So the opponent simply distracts their victim by getting them consumed with their own consumption.³³

This chapter investigates the theoretical and methodological possibilities of understanding

2.1 Foucault, Religion and Panopticism

The ideal point of penalty today would be an indefinite discipline: an interrogation without end, an investigation that would be extended without limit to a meticulous and ever more analytical observation, a judgement that would at the same time be the constitution of a file that was never closed, the calculated leniency of a penalty that would be interlaced with the ruthless curiosity of an examination... The practice of placing individuals under 'observation' is a natural extension of a justice imbued with disciplinary methods and examination procedures.

—Michel Foucault³⁵

According to Jeremy Carrette, religious studies' interdisciplinary approach finds Foucault's work particularly fascinating, because, "religion is examined as part of his analysis of cultural facts... Foucault takes account of religion in the shaping of Western knowledge, and it is this dimension which needs to be rescued. It is unfortunate that most readings of him have obliterated or marginalised the religious content in the narrow confines of their studies."³⁶ But what exactly is Foucault's religious question or content? Although the question of religion became a central theme in Foucault's late works on early Christianity, Carrette believes that it always formed part of Foucault's wider studies and "was consistently included as a significant part of the 'apparatus' (dispositif) of knowledge."³⁷ In other words, Foucault's religious concern aims at the relation

Panopticon is basically a technological invention, or in Foucault's terms "a figure of political technology" in the disciplinary society.⁴⁰ He defines discipline as a type of power, or "a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets... a physics or an anatomy, a technology."⁴¹ Bentham's aim in designing panopticon was to make the disciplinary institutions more effective and efficient. Foucault notes that Bentham's invention was complementary to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's dream of "a transparent society, visible and legible in each of its parts, the dream of there no longer existing any zones of darkness."⁴² In other words, the Enlightenment not only exposed the liberties, but also created the disciplines. Here panopticon is not a metaphor; it is a material object, a form of architecture or a diagram

Foucault... firmly locates the soul on the surface of bodies in a way similar to Deleuze, but without the psychoanalytical framework of phantasy. The body is shaped and controlled by the idea of the soul as a mechanism of power not phantasy. It is correlation of r

because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.”⁴⁶ To the same extent, Foucault does not limit forms of surveillance to panopticon and mentions that the procedures of power that are at work in modern societies are numerous and much more diverse and rich. It would be reductive to argue that the principle of visibility governs all technologies of power used since the 19th century. For instance, Eric Stoddart argues that “Surveillance is indeed not what it once was. The panoptic gaze has not been averted but displaced by multiple surveillance assemblages”⁴⁷ This notion of assemblages, derived from works of Deleuze in order to go

pursues it and rips it apart so He can be first, and have the organism be first. The

otherwise, be spoken of in the abstract.”⁵⁴ All bodies have their own limits that are produced by that body. For Spinoza, “a body is an infinity of parts (or modes) with a fixed relation of motion and rest among its various parts, and this relation of motion and rest allows one body to be distinguished from another.”⁵⁵ Similarly for Deleuze and Guattari, bodies are not distinguished from one another in respect of substance, but rather of motion and rest, or quickness and slowness. In other words, a body is identified by the relation of its parts to one another, as well as the environment surrounding it. Bodies are affected by different things and in different ways, “each type of body being characterised by minimum and maximum thresholds for being affected by other bodies: what can and what cannot affect it, and to what degree.”⁵⁶ In addition, the

entering a more productive future.”⁶¹ Since a body cannot exist independently and is produced through its connection with other bodies, “becoming” is not an alteration from one form into another with a starting point and an end point; becoming is rather a process or a transformation in itself.

The method Deleuze uses to approach the body could effectively relate to the study of religion. Deleuze’s emphasis on becoming instead of being resembles similarities with the notion of ritual in the context of religious studies, especially the way in which Victor Turner has formulated the term. Ritual theory is determined by the image of passing across a threshold or a frontier. For Turner, “real ritual effects transformation, creating a major ‘before’ and ‘after’ difference.”⁶² Hence, threshold is a creative space and produces a temporary state of transformation. Ritual refers to practices that describe the possibilities of religious experience more accurately than belief which clnu

as the refusal of personal identity and the irreducible affirmation of difference itself.”⁶⁵ Although the emergence of the virtual world at the end of the 20th century sounded to be a significant step toward creating BwOs that are non-identical, it seems in contrary social networks have produced a judgemental system similar to that of God.

In his discussion of the religiosity of “Artificial Intelligence” (or AI), David Noble recognizes the efforts to make computers as an attempt to create minds without bodies; however, it seems as though cameras are the external, communicative bodies of intelligent computers in respect to Deleuze’s formulation of the body. Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey is a great example depicting how AI is related to camera. In this movie, HAL 9000 is a supercomputer that controls the spacecraft. HAL, which stands for “Heuristically programmed ALgorithmic computer,” is represented in the movie as a red camera eye located on various parts of the ship. HAL is an example of how enchanting and mysterious a camera could be. Through their space flight, the two human pilots have a discussion on whether or not HAL has feelings. The movie comes to the conclusion that, if HAL has some sort of feeling, it is definitely the will to power, and to gain mastery over humankind. When one of the pilots is finally trying to shut HAL down, it starts to sing a song that was the first thing it had learnt to say, a return to its unconscious childhood at the moment of death. It might be incorrect to say that computers have feelings in “reality” outside of this film, but the representation of HAL in one of the most widely acclaimed sciences-fiction movies demonstrates a tendency to divinize computers, and to give them uncanny attributions. The camera, in this context as the eye of intelligent computers, functions as an all-knowing being that wish to gain control over humans.

Generally speaking, there is a distinction between two types of cameras: those that are set at public spaces and those carried by individuals’ bodies. The public camera functions like

⁶⁵ Ibid., 50.

panopticon, it is a dark abyss always at work, and one should always assume that it is working.

Chapter 3 The Algebra of Need: William Burroughs on/in Control

The technocratic control apparatus of the United States has at its fingertips new techniques which if fully exploited could make Orwell's 1984 seem like a benevolent utopia.

—William Burroughs⁶⁶

In The Bop Apocalypse: The Religious Visions of Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Burroughs

Lardas argues that with a broad understanding of religious experience can one recognize the three Beat writers as being interested in things of the spirit. According to Lardas, the religious energy that the Beats once generated is still present, albeit in a different form than it possessed; “Despite efforts by others to ‘call the tune’ of the Beats’ legacy, the nature of their message—to resist that which is given you and create a world as divine as possible out of everyday materials—continues to resonate.”⁶⁷ Burroughs’s writing, in particular, has intertwined this loose religious experience with a critique of “control” in the both social and individual levels. Control, according to Burroughs, happens in a macro, external scale for the benefit of the upper class, as well as in a micro, internal level within individuals’ psyche. Thus, the power to observe and surveil is not limited to the government or CCTV, as ego also operates like a camera, recording, saving, and—in the case of selfies—sharing or revealing one’s actions. This chapter

to critique the control society, but also to suggest modes of resistance by means of challenging the unification of the body and the recorded self.

3.1 Control, Junk and Virus

I can feel a probing insect intelligence behind the camera.

—William Burroughs⁶⁸

Burroughs's body of work has been a source of inspiration for Foucault and Deleuze regarding his formulation of the concept of "control" as the future's total need. Deleuze and Foucault believe that we are entering a new "control society" which is different from both "sovereign society" and "disciplinary society." According to Deleuze, "There have been, of course, various remnants of disciplinary societies for years, but we already know we are in societies of a different type that should be called, using Burroughs's term—and Foucault had a very deep admiration for Burroughs—cont 1

of artistic integrity, and the distinction between morality and immorality.”⁷⁵

Testimony Concerning a Sickness,” an appendix to *Naked Lunch* Burroughs describes junk in details:

Junk yields a basic formula of “evil” virus: *The Algebra of Need* The face of “evil” is always the face of total need. A dope fiend is a man in total need of dope. Beyond a certain frequency need knows absolutely no limit or control. In the words of total need: ³ : R X O G Q ¶ We y R X would. You would lie, cheat, inform on your friends, steal, do anything to satisfy total need. Because you would be in a state of total sickness, total possession, and not in a position to act in any other way.⁸⁰

Additionally, Burroughs calls junk “the ideal product” and “the ultimate merchandise,” since “No sales talk [is] necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy... The junk merchant does not sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product.”⁸¹ The latter, selling a consumer to a product, is a fundamental characteristic of any form of junk or virus. One wonders if the same rule is applicabl4 Tm[() TJ0003Y100500560,-140(m33.2o)5(r)] TJET O

“The junk virus is public health problem number one of the world today”⁸³ Byrroughs maintains.

identity, and escape from the body and the world of the senses as humankind's paramount concern."⁸⁵ In *The Matrix*

force or entirely on physical control of the mind will soon encounter the limits of control.”⁹⁰ This further explains the word/image-based apparatuses of control society in contrast with the need for physical confinement in the disciplinary societies. For Burroughs, language is a virus, similar to the flu virus which may once have been a healthy lung cell but it is now a parasitic organism that invades and damages the lungs. “The word may once have been a healthy neural cell. It is now a parasitic organism that invades and damages the central nervous system,”⁹¹ Burroughs notes in *The Ticket That Exploded*. “He believes modern man has lost the option of silence and surround; “Try halting your sub-vocal speech. Try to achieve even ten seconds of inner silence. You will encounter a resisting organism that forces you to talk. That organism is the word. In the beginning was the word. In the beginning of what exactly?”⁹² In fact, Burroughs’s conception of language and the word has a satirical quality that imitates the biblical literature with a quasi-scientific tone. “Modern man has advanced from the stone ax to nuclear weapons in ten thousand years... Perhaps the word itself is recent about ten thousand years old. What we call history is the history of the word. In the beginning of that history was the word.”⁹³ It is a fundamental characteristic of Burroughs’s thought to put *Homo sapiens* in a larger evolutionary scale that also gives a more comprehensive picture of the planet Earth’s long future. This conception of history—similar to *2001: A Space Odyssey*—where the source of human wisdom and the will to power is a black monolith from outside the planet Earth—affects one’s judgment of the quite recent technological developments as an admirable progress since this could even be a regress if one imagines the Earth in the next thousand years. More significantly, Burroughs’s sort of new historicist approach to language results in identifying (progressive or regressive) shifts through

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁹¹ William S. Burroughs, *The Ticket That Exploded* (New York: Grove, 1994), 49.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 49-50.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 50.

the development of human subjectivity. The word virus is not a priori to the human species, and it is affected by its surrounding environment. In the context of selfie-surveillance, recording instruments have arguably created new forms of subjectivity, and they have changed encounter of the self with its images of the past namely by creating massive archives that could last forever. For instance, it is now the first time in history that a (privileged) person is able to watch the video recording of his/her moment of birth when coming out of mother's womb.

“Remember that the written word is an image,”

Burroughs's suggested type of resistance toward the control society does not primarily target governments but rather the individuals; "If you wish to alter or annihilate a pyramid of numbers in a serial relation, you alter or remove the bottom number."¹¹⁰ Although his resisting tactic in *Naked Lunch*

from a confrontation, a long way. A dreary abrasive dull way, sad voices, dirtier, older.”¹¹³ Burroughs is putting the blame on the ego or the word virus—an evil enemy that organizes the body and the self, and can hardly stop consuming junk and/or image. In Guy Ritchie’s 2005 kabbalistic movie, *Revolver*, “the greatest con” that the ego ever pulled is to make “you believe that he[*she*] is you.”¹¹⁴ Still, “if you change the rules on what controls you, you will change the rules on what you can control.”¹¹⁵ From this gnostic vision that propagates a peculiar form of personal politics, the wicked ego is in control of consuming recording instruments and their by-products, and the manner of change and resistance passes through elimination of the conscious ego rather than removal of the controlling instruments themselves. In other words, *how* to use these tools is the key enigma.

It seems impossible and impractical to completely avoid using recording instruments or other surveillance technological tools. Indeed, Burroughs does not see technology as something essentially hazardous that has disenchanting our world, or has alienated us; he rather embraces the futuristic possibilities of recording instruments. Burroughs condemns those writers who refuse to admit the things that technology is capable of doing; “I’ve never been able to understand this sort of fear. Many of them are afraid of tape recorders and the idea of using any mechanical means for literary purposes seems to them some sort of a sacrilege.”¹¹⁶ Moreover, one reads in *Naked Lunch* that the narrator himself is “a recording instrument” and “not an entertainer”¹¹⁷—a statement highlighting the seriousness of his words as well. So, does Burroughs’s approval for technology stand in contrast with his fear of “a probing insect intelligence behind the

¹¹³ William Burroughs,

camera”¹¹⁸ It seems as though technology has a two

full awareness of the method he was using,”¹²² as well as some of Burroughs’s other novels—all sharing the same theme of control-junk-virus. Although the cut-up method may seem as a mere creative strategy to produce new forms of art, it has a broader connotation of rejecting the given or organic meaning of a text or an image. Burroughs has actually done cut-ups with recorded sounds/voices as well as film negatives in order to reduce the user’s level of consciousness. Baldwin believes “Burroughs’s random cut-ups are designed to break free from the control of the Word,”¹²³ and argues that “chance juxtapositions” of word/image produce new realities disputing “societally constructed narratives (especially as generated by the media).”¹²⁴ That is to say, cut-ups re-order and re-organize; they contest the (seemingly natural) attribution of an image to an idea (and vice versa). In terms of selfie-surveillance, cut-ups could question association of images of bodies to conscious, fixed identities. For instance, a user of social media could (randomly) fake his/her identity so to dislocate the attributed images and data. But utilizing cut-up as a resisting tactic against (selfie-)surveillance is inseparable from the ways in which the body is recognized.

Body alters. “The human body is scandalously inefficient. Instead of a mouth and an anus to get out of order why not have one all-purpose hole to eat and eliminate?”¹²⁵ Burroughs identifies the human body as an experiment, a machine that is inefficient and needs reinventions, an infinity of parts in the act of becoming. In *The Western Lands* “Man” or “homo sap” is described as “God’s final product”; it is “an unsuccessful experiment, caught in a biologic dead

¹²² Ibid., 42.

¹²³ Douglas Baldwin, “Word Begets Image and Image is Virus: Understanding Language and Film in the Works of William S. Burroughs,” *College Literature* 27, no. 1 (2000): 69.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 70.

¹²⁵ William Burroughs, *Naked Lunch: the Resorted Text*. James Grauerholz and Barry Miles (New York: Grove, 2001), 137.

end and inexorably headed for extinction.”¹²⁶ The body should alter in order to become compatible with its surrounding environment; “The human body is filled up vit [with] unnecessitated parts. You can get by vit vone [one] kidney. Vy [why] have two? The inside parts should not be so close in together crowded,” one reads in *Naked Lunch*¹²⁷ It seems as though Burroughs would agree with Judith Butler’s argument, that “The boundary of who I am is the boundary of the body, but the boundary of the body never fully belongs to me.”¹²⁸ Burroughs’s desire to minimize and simplify the body is reflected even further in (the written description of) one of his dreams:

People who grow their own meat on their own bodies... like arm bacon and leg roasts. It grows back, but not quick enough to keep up, so that they are always in danger of eating themselves. In fact, so delectable is the flavor of liver, they can hardly restrain themselves from cutting their bodies open and eating it, although they know this is fatal. However, the recuperative growth is amazing. If, say, they only eat half the liver, they can make it. And some have been known to eat their hearts out, and die in gastronomic ecstasies. The brain is especially toothsome, and it is an awesome sight to see a self-eater dipping into a hole on top of his skull and eating the raw brain, with an expression of ever-increasing idiot relish.¹²⁹

Burroughs is inventing a body without organs (BwO), challenging the notion of organism or the natural body which, using Deleuze’s terminology, is originally designed by God. Believing that “Western man is externalizing himself in the form of gadgets,”¹³⁰ Burroughs welcomes the emergence of an alternative body which is decentralized and dispersed. Similar to the recording instruments, the human body can be both limitative and liberating. As long as the body is an integrated system compatible with the self (and its gadgets such identification cards and cellphones), it can be subjected to control; whereas a body without organs, being torn apart, can

¹²⁶ William Burroughs, *The Western Land* (New York: Penguin, 1988), 41.

¹²⁷ William Burroughs, *Naked Lunch: the Resorted Text*. James Grauerholz and Barry Miles (New York: Grove, 2001), 152.

¹²⁸ Butler, Judith. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009).

¹²⁹ William Burroughs, *My Education: A Book of Dreams* (New York: Viking, 1995), 153.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

escape means of control since it does not have a single identity to be traced easily. It is valuable here to mention Micheal Sean Bolton's posthumanist approach to Burroughs's body of work

Chapter 4 Conclusion

Surveillance is not everywhere, but its presence has become normalized.

—Henry Giroux¹³³

Contrary to popular belief I don't think we are exactly in the **Nineteen EightyFour** universe. The danger is that we can see how [Orwell's] technologies that are [in] **Nineteen EightyFour** now seem unimaginative and quaint. [...] Nowadays we've got webcams that go with us everywhere. We buy cellphones that are the equivalent of a network microphone that we carry around in our pockets with us voluntarily as we go from place to place and move about our lives.

—Edward Snowden¹³⁴

This July 2014 interview with Snowden further clarifies what he means by “worse than Orwellian” culture of surveillance—mentioned in the introduction. Here, Snowden expresses his concern for the everyday practices of surveillance, but also its voluntary aspects. Selfie-surveillance accents this voluntary quality, reinforcing the formation of a new subjectivity as a result of growing obsession with recording instruments, an example

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