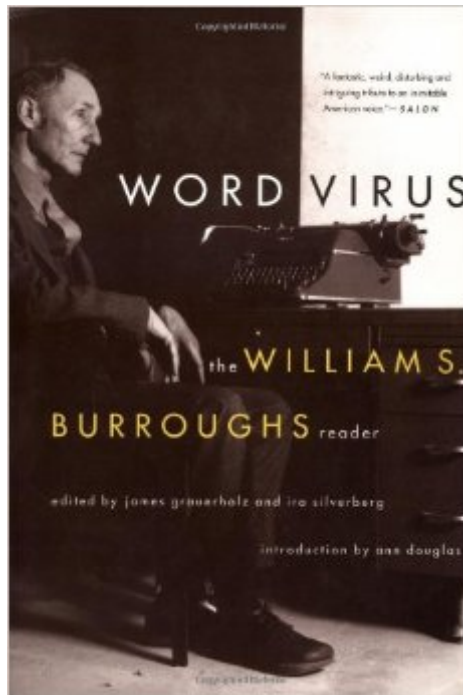


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Word Virus: The William S. Burroughs Reader (Burroughs, William S.)



Synopsis

With the publication of *Naked Lunch* in 1959, William Burroughs abruptly brought international letters into the postmodern age. Beginning with his very early writing (including a chapter from his and Jack Kerouac's never-before-seen collaborative novel), *Word Virus* follows the arc of Burroughs's remarkable career, from his darkly hilarious "routines" to the experimental cut-up novels to *Cities of the Red Night* and *The Cat Inside*. Beautifully edited and complemented by James Grauerholz's illuminating biographical essays, *Word Virus* charts Burroughs's major themes and places the work in the context of the life. It is an excellent tool for the scholar and a delight for the general reader. Throughout a career that spanned half of the twentieth century, William S. Burroughs managed continually to be a visionary among writers. When he died in 1997, the world of letters lost its most elegant outsider.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (12 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Every book that anyone owns will, upon reflection, remind them of the period of their life in which they read the book. Sort of like music. If I look at my bookcase, I can run my eyes over the spines of a hundred or so spines, and by extension, a hundred or so feelings given to me from those books. 'Word Virus' is by no means an exception to this rule. If anything, it proves it. Simply due to its extensiveness, and the complexity (or stupidity depending on how you look at it) of Burroughs' writing, it took me a few months to hack through in my final year of high school. Even now, the

glaring red spine amongst my other books manages to evoke my feelings of that time even now. But by god it's worth it. There is nothing more frightening than Burroughs' prose. Everything he writes cannot be understood intellectually, but rather emotionally. You read his words, trying to make head or tail of what is printed in front of you, but that's not the point. You just have to let his ideas, his experiments simply wash over you and you'll understand them in due course. A true shining light in literature. Believe the myth.

If you need a quick fix of Bill, you'll be in hog heaven as you lug this big tome around. If you're a newbie, this is the petri-dish place to begin. A remarkable labour of love, smartly compiled, spanning the master's entire range of work, with generous excerpts from all periods and supplemental explanatory notes by both Grauerholz and, periodically, Burroughs. Do not hesitate. Minutes To Go.

A very expansive and definitive collection for the Burroughs enthusiast. This does not have it all, but it does offer a generous portion of this man's work. Including the forementioned, in the other reviews, collaboration with Jack Kerouac. Grauerholz really put together this labor of love. I'd recommend it for first timers as well as old time collectors. Inbetween each chapter biographical information pertinent to that era is included. Also features a cd spoken word sampler, that pulls material from the Giorno boxed set. I'd also recommend that hefty delight.

With the James Grauerholz and Ira Silverberg essays telling me things I never knew about a man I spent a great evening with at a Manhattan dinner party, this is a compendium of WSB's greatest works, either in their entirety or in excerpt. What can be said about Burroughs that has not been said. He gave Ginsberg a copy of the complete poetry of Hart Crane and, years later, Tennessee Williams is using Crane's poems for titles and so is Jim Morrison of the Doors. (Crane is the missing link between the post-surrealist poets and the Beats.) Burroughs influenced many hundreds of artists and writers. My introduction to him was in my glowing review of "The Wild Boys," a book that cannot be filmed but, like the film of "Naked Lunch," must be, somehow, some day. He was a charming man, and this book contains many of his finest writings. One can see him in one's mind's eye doing a reading, begging pharmacists and dealers in Chinatown only to be told, "No glot. Clom Fliday." For years, a buddy has referred to me as "Dr. Bradley/Mr. Martin," the obscene bureaucrats that our doctors and spies have turned into. Now, guess what Wild Bill and Ted Nugent had/have in common?

The book condition in general is good. The pages still look brand-new though some pages are folded. There should be a CD in the inside back cover but it is unavailable. The dust jacket is a little bit scratchy and less sleek.

in the word virus collection william s. burroughs is represented in all of his fragmented glory. from talking body parts, to subliminal kids, from street junky's to hindu spiritual presences. burroughs wandered in a world of his own and while a lot of his books scare or confuse first time readers, the word virus jumps styles frequently enough to hold the attention while giving those in the know, new items as well as some possibly overlooked personal insights from the writer himself. and the free cd gives you a sense of his true humor and will make you want that phat box set! and i haven't even finished it yet.

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