

## Study on the Concept of Time in William Burroughs' *Junky*

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### Abstract

**William Burroughs is a distinguished American writer of the twentieth century. As a typical representative of the Beat Generation, his works are full of drug and homosexual elements, and his writing does not follow the traditional rules of creation, and is not confined to the established form, framework, and structure, characterized by vulgar language, loose structure, and form, and is an important spiritual leader of postmodernist literature. His first novel, *Junky*, is a semi-autobiographical novel based on William Burroughs the article presents to the reader the truth about drugs in the simplest and most straightforward way. Since the publication of the novel, scholars have studied the characters, the social context, and the political elements of the novel through the text. In the course of the author's study of the text, it was found that time in the drug addict's world does not exist in a conventional time as we perceive it, and we call this unconventional time "drug time". Based on the addict's perception of drug time, it can be found that drug time is very postmodern, personalized, fragmented, and diversified. The author uses physical time, psychological time, and literary time to integrate and analyze the time clues in the text to explore the role of time in drug addiction and the cause-and-effect relationship behind the addict's strange behavior.**

### Keywords

**Drug Time; Postmodern; *Junky*; Addicts.**

### 1. Introduction

William Burroughs was born in 1914 in St. Louis, Missouri, to an affluent family, he had been reading literary works inspired by his mother. In this good family environment, he received a good education, and he then attended Harvard University and graduated in 1936. Unlike many graduates of prestigious universities, instead of looking for stable, well-paid employment, William Burroughs began to float around, dabbling in several professions and making relationships with a variety of people. What he saw and felt then inspired him much in his creative works. He authored a number of opuses based on his real-life experiences, and readers can discern both postmodern storytelling style and the shadow of traditional linear narrative. It is with this style of writing (cut-up method) that his "drug trilogy"--- *Junky*, *Naked Lunch*, *Queer* has become popular, and through these three semi-autobiographical novels, people were able to see the complete William Burroughs. For the reader, his first novel *Junky* "acts as a chronicle, an archive of the underbelly, and a trustworthy history of the unseen world of drugs" (Burroughs, 2013, p. 235).

In Ginsberg's introduction to the novel, it could be learned that publishing a book on drugs in a time when simply talking about marijuana could get the person arrested took a lot of guts (Burroughs, 2013). So, to avoid being accused of complicity with the author, the publisher would insert any objection in the text before the book was published. And *Junky* was published as part of a bundled sales model with a book written by a narc for the public.

Carl Solomon commented, "Since De Quincy's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, *Junky* is a ray of light in this wasteland of addiction" (Burroughs, 2013). Unlike De Quincy who shows the reader the fascinating power of opium, *Junky* strips the addict bare from the start of the novel,

without shame or pity. Throughout the novel, the reader is introduced to a 30-year-old white man named William Lee living in New York City who begins using morphine and develops an addiction to narcotics—or junk. Over the next five years or so he uses drugs, engages in petty crimes and drug peddling, and moves to Texas, New Orleans, and finally Mexico City all the while intermittently kicking his junk habit.

Time has always played a significant role in fiction, and there is no fiction that does not take time into account. The author discovered that domestic and foreign researchers' research on the time angle of *Junky* is insufficient after sorting through domestic and overseas literature. A close reading of the text reveals that time is worth investigating, and readers can get a hazy impression that time and addicts' lives are tightly interwoven. Research has uncovered the factors that contribute to addicts' odd conduct as well as the common sense of time in our daily lives.

The thesis will solve the daily confusion about time by combining the meaning of time given by different courses while seeking the relationship between addicts and time. Except for the mechanical time (clock time) that people are usually familiar with, which is used to help humankind know the specific time. In addition, the changes in energy in thermodynamics allow us to see that time did exist. Mental time was first proposed by Henri Bergson. It is a relatively subjective time. Time will change with the fluctuation of people's mental state. "When you are immersed in your own time, your life will be merged with time", no longer a utilitarian calculation of time. To some extent, the time we feel flies by so quickly every day is psychic time. Time in literature is a kind of time taken out of the real world that can be fully felt when readers read books. In the process of reading, what they see and hear and the author's characters are consistent, and what people know is usually brought by the author, the time in the text is greatly bound by the work, the author's work of a few minutes to a few hours between the jump may only interval a few actions or a paragraph of narration, day and night is also just a split second. Therefore, through the unique perspective of time, the analysis of the addict's verbal behavior and the distinctiveness of the work presented by Burroughs as an addict himself can greatly clarify that time and drugs do have a great impact on normal people.

## 2. An Analysis of Physical Time Concept in the Novel

The development of the concept owes much to the birth of the clock, Thomas de Padua (2013, p.10) argues, "In terms of our culture of the time, the 17<sup>th</sup> century can be considered to have set entirely new standards." As clocks became more widespread among the population of the age, people's perceptions of time are also improving, hence breaking the monopoly of the church and monarchs over time for a long time, thereby promoting the emergence of individual consciousness, as well as the study and development of related fields. The 17<sup>th</sup>-century German physicist Leibniz considered time as an order among successive things, and he argued from his early years to the end of his life that time depends on change and is embedded in it (Leibniz, 1998).

When studying the composition of the material, Democritus believed that the atom is the indivisible material entity that constitutes everything. For Leibniz, on the other hand, the atom as a material entity, however small, is a part of space, and what occupies a part of space cannot be indivisible, and what is divisible must consist of parts, and therefore cannot be the ultimate reality. Therefore, Leibniz pointed out that everything is made of atoms, but not Democritus' atoms of matter, but mental atoms, which Leibniz called "monads" (Leibniz, 2010).

In Leibniz's view monads have an inherent tendency to change, and the successive perceptual states of monads form sequences of perceptual states that are successive in time for that monad. And monads are the "basic material" for constructing the universe, both as tangible entities and as aggregated objects, formed by an infinite number of monads, then as the "basic material" or

the ontological basis of monads, itself must be in the process of change (Leibniz, 1998), and monads, also as the “basic materials” that make up time, change does not come from the outside, rather, the tendency of internal change is the nature of finite entities, and the internal change of monads will trigger the change of time.

In the 19th century, the British physicist Kelvins proposed a new theorem based on Carnot’s theorem (thermodynamics) in 1851, which is known as the second law of thermodynamics.

The thermodynamic theory describes the flow of energy, a dynamic process of increasing and decreasing entropy, the change in energy is often proof that time has existed, meantime it could help us to explain why time is linear, why life is always moving towards the future and the philosophical question posed by Herakleitus: “One cannot step into the same river twice” (Emerson, 1849).

### 2.1. Drug Time Triggered by Monads States

In the world of William Burroughs’ junkies, time changes with the frequency, dosage, and interval of their drug use. However, the authors argue that the effects of drugs do not act directly on time, but that the change in time is caused by a change in the “basic material” that makes up time—the monads—which indicates that drugs somehow change the internal properties of the monads and are able to affect time. Internal properties of the monads can affect time. This coincides with Leibniz’s view in *Monadism* that “monads are energetic, the basis and final unit of things, and they act on each other through God” (Leibniz, 1998). Thus, a change of state of a monad is always accompanied by a change of state of another monad, i.e., as shown in Fig 1, for any state  $S_\alpha$  of a monad  $\alpha$ , there must be a corresponding state  $S_\beta$  of a monad  $\beta$ . So, people could establish an order of time in a constantly changing state and looking at this constantly changing order of time can be seen as a cause-and-effect relationship that exists in things. In Burroughs’ eyes, drugs are putting the cause and effect that turns a person into a junky, and in the novel, He gave the answer about why people become junkies:

You don’t wake up one morning and decide to be a drug addict. It takes at least three months’ shooting twice a day to get any habit at all. And you don’t really know what junk sickness is until you have had several habits. It took me almost six months to get my first habit, and then the withdrawal symptoms were mild. I think it no exaggeration to say it takes about a year and several hundred injections to make an addict. (Burroughs, 2009, p. 8-9).

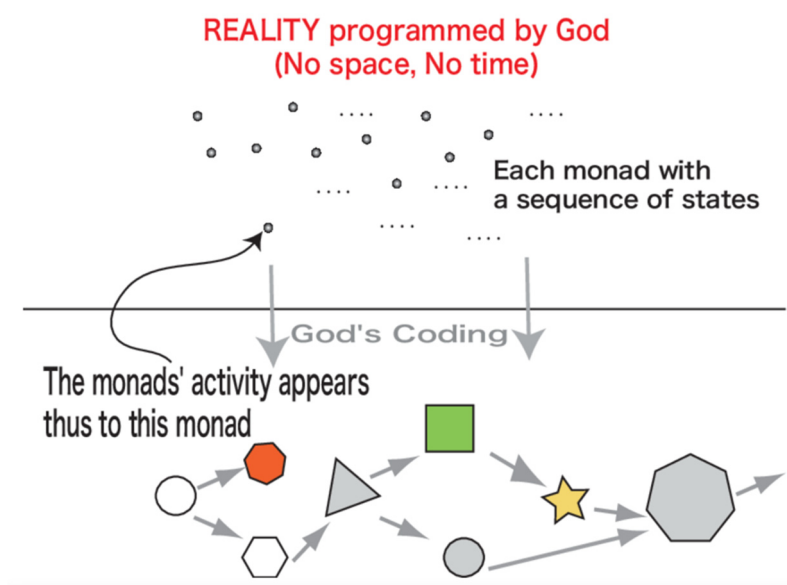


Fig 1. Interpretation of Monadology (Soshichi Uchii: 2009)

It could be seen from this that the initial “change” starts with repeated injections. This change requires “at least three months’ shooting twice a day” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 8) by increasing the number of injections per day and shortening the time between injections until a normal person has become an addict after several addictions. In this process the drug is equivalent to the monads in Leibniz’s eyes, rooted in the cells of a junkie’s body, through continuous injections, never-ending change, then everything junkies feel and hear changes, including the perception of time.

By the time the addict realizes that he can no longer live without drugs, he is already caught in a cycle of drug time. Burroughs argues that indirect drug use gives him health and energy, laying out that “when you stop growing you start dying” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 9), but the addict is growing because they can get cellular rebirth and turnover in the repetition of drug use and detoxification. So, is it possible that addicts get a longer life (time) than normal people, apparently this is just an illusion given to them by drugs, Leibniz concluded late in life “Time is not some kind of reality in which everything happens, but first of all, it is a phenomenon of consciousness.” By taking drugs on a regular basis, the addict alters the state of monads, which results in a significant shift in junkies’ time, the cells of their bodies are constantly adapting to the monads in a drug-influenced state, and by never-ending changes in the monads through uninterrupted injections, then everything the addict feels and hears is changing, including the perception of time. “It’s believed that with just a few micrograms of the hallucinogenic drug LSD, our perception of time expands into the realm of the wonderfully magical” (Sewell et al., 2012, p. 411), as well as other drugs.

You should have seen him. He stretched a board between two ladders and lay down on it. Paint kept dripping into his face. He gets a kick out of doing things like that. We get some frantic kicks out of that wheel when we’re high. We lay on our backs and dig the wheel and pretty soon it begins to spin. The longer you watch it, the faster it spins (Burroughs, 2009, p. 9).

In the novel, the addict will feel the passing of time because of the drug intervention. In Leibniz’s theory of monadism, monads are of the characteristic of continuous, dynamic and “points” in the mathematical sense, for example, the line formed by “points” can be infinitely extended and shortened, so the time composed of singletons can also be elongated or shortened. “The longer you watch it, the faster it spins” (Burroughs, 2003, p. 27). It is the addict’s experience of being under the influence of drugs that causes the wheel he or she sees to spin at an increased rate per unit of time. If the original wheel takes five minutes to turn 100 revolutions, but when the acceleration increases it may only take two minutes to complete. Then it can be found that the time perceived by the addict at this point is faster than the time in the normal world. At the same time, when the effects of the drug wear off, the addict will feel the time more slowly than normal people feel, they have been used to the Zoetrope-like pleasure brought by the drug time, and then when they face the reality of the boring and tedious, back to the reality of the sense of difference, everything becomes tasteless, the addict will gradually collapse under the double torture of time and drug withdrawal, until they “embrace” drugs again.

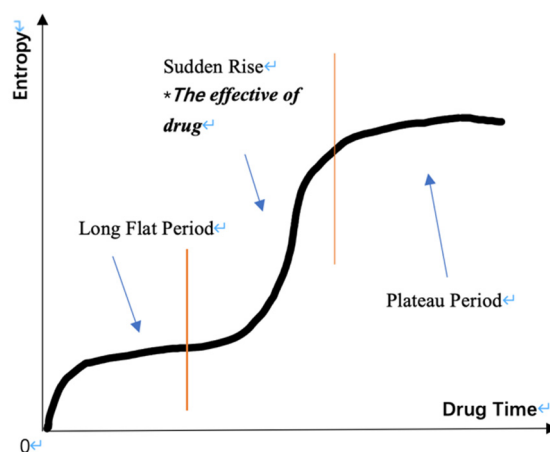
The reader could witness the empty world of the addict, in their time there is no expectation of life, only a constant thirst for drugs. Over time, their time system has been distorted by the drugs, and everything becomes particularly fast when they are using drugs, which allows the addict to experience double pleasure in a limited time. And once the effect of the drug wears off everything slows down, time seems to freeze in every second, assuming that the speed with the help of the drug is plus two than what a normal person feels, then the speed felt by the addict after losing the drug decrease four than when he was on the drug. This is unacceptable for an addict who is in a state of extreme mental sensitivity, and time drives him crazy.

## 2.2. Drug Time under Energy Change

The Second Law of Thermodynamics describes a spontaneous, one-way, irreversible phenomenon in physics. It is a theory developed by the German physicist Rudolph Clausius and the British physicist Lord Kelvin on the basis of the first law of thermodynamics, which has the same characteristics as time and from which an individual can even feel time.

Clausius stated that heat can be transferred spontaneously from a hotter object to a colder object, but it cannot be transferred spontaneously from a colder object to a hotter object without causing other changes (Clausius et al., 2018). When observing a process of the passage of time, energy is involved in the drive, for example, the wear and tear of car tires are due to the heat generated by friction with the ground, and the aging of the human body is the result of the body's constant production of heat that has to be generated. Physicists call this spontaneous one-way irreversible process "entropy" ( $\Delta S > 0$ ) "The entire difference between the past and the future may be simply because entropy is lower in the past" (J. Earman, 2006, p. 406). And it is in the increase of entropy that readers feel time.

The process of addiction is always accompanied by a sudden and dramatic increase in energy, just as shown in Fig 2. Before the addiction, the junky is in a state of low entropy, and as chemicals are injected into the body, the body acts as a closed "container" and the system becomes more and more chaotic, a process of increasing entropy. The junky is "addicted" to this increase in entropy, and he is stuck in a cycle of drug time, injecting one at a time until they lose themselves, the drug interferes with the sense of time so that he doesn't even realize himself addicted, the junky's day loses the meaning of time "they need junk to get out of bed in the morning, to shave and eat breakfast. They need it to stay alive" (Burroughs, 2009, p. 40). The time of the drug attack became the only time they could feel. Basically, no one can survive a single minute away from drugs, as Burroughs writes in his book "Of course, junkies don't as a rule die from the withdrawal of junk" (Burroughs, 2009, p. 40). No junkie wants to return to the harsh realities of addiction when drug time is so intoxicating.



**Fig 2.** The Relationship Between Entropy production and Drug Time

It is not only their spirit that is changed by drugs but also could be seen in the flesh the rough marks left by time, addicts have been pumping drugs into their bodies through their veins, so the veins will be harder to find than a normal person's:

His veins were mostly gone, retreated back to the bone to escape the probing needle. For a while, he used arteries, which are deeper than veins and harder to hit, and for this procedure, he bought special long needles. He rotated from his arms and hands to the veins of his feet. A vein will come back in time. Even so, he had to shoot in the skin about half the time. But he only gave

up and “skinned” a shot after an agonizing half-hour of probing and poking and cleaning out the needle, which would clot up with blood.

It is precisely because of the energetic changes in bodily functions that the junkies themselves and bystanders know that his behavior has occurred in the past that “traces of the past exist, with no traces of the future, simply because the entropy of the past is lower the distinction between the past and the future is the low entropy of the past” (Carlo Rovelli, 2018, p. 142). It is this flow of energy that makes all actions have no place to hide, veins that are becoming more and more difficult to find, the body is becoming thinner, hallucinations and weird behaviors are the best proof that time has ever existed. Even so, addicts continue to revel in the fleeting pleasures of drugs. They can say it’s the last shot before each energy hit, but when the body’s energy calms down again, they’ll want another shot regardless, in pursuit of energy that won’t go away. This is why the addict is constantly seeking new drugs, from marijuana to cocaine to heroin or increasing the dose little by little, because each time the entropy increases, meantime the entropy in the body rises, the cells in the body become more and more unsatisfied with the low energy state they were in, and this craving is only satisfied for a moment by constantly trying higher and higher energy. as Burroughs wrote in *junky* “As I began using stuff every day, or often several times a day, I stopped drinking and going out at night.” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 39). Because alcohol and sex can produce so little energy compared to drugs, addicts have unknowingly fallen into an energy-designed time scam and are hard to escape.

People observe and feel the traces of energy and thus feel the changes brought about by time. Under the second law of thermodynamics, the authors argue that energy, as a manifestation of the flow of time, can be directly displayed on the surface of the body in a way that is visible to the naked eye compared to the complex mental world of the addict. It is possible to calculate the length and frequency of an addict’s drug use from the density of the needle holes in his or her skin or to perceive the torment suffered during the endless hours of drug use by the degree of ulceration on the junkie’s arms. In general, Energy is constantly flowing, and it drives everything to change, both outside and inside. So, one second and the next there is a radical change, it allows time to become tangible, allowing the onlooker to witness a normal person becoming addicted to drugs step by step and becoming unstoppable. If time is another factor that makes an addict addictive, then energy is an invisible hand behind time that keeps pushing you to keep getting addicted and make every second of an addict’s life different.

### 3. An Analysis of Psychological Time Concept in the Novel

The concept of psychological time was first introduced by the French philosopher Henry Bergson in his book— *Time and Free Will*, and he divided time into two types: physical time represented by clocks, also known as objective time, and time that is directly related to life and therefore continuous and indivisible and can only exist as a whole. The definition of duration was originally derived from Bergson’s analysis of the famous paradox posed by Zeno of the ancient Greek school of Philhellenes. Bergson argued that motion manifests itself intuitively as divisibility and discontinuity in physical space, but in reality, everyone can intuit intelligibly in our experience that motion is some kind of continuous, singular and indivisible process. That is, motion is represented in space as an intermittent transition from one point to another, but in reality, the points are indivisible from one another. It is not the separate points in space that are involved in grasping motion, but the enduring residual traces left by objects passing through space, the transition from one sense to another. In the stretches of inner consciousness, each person grasps the real movement and thus perceives time. And the tangibility of the addict’s time on drugs in Burroughs comes from the duration of drugs on the psyche.

### 3.1. Duration of Drug Time

**Duration as the real time is a completely subjective thing, and the rhythm it presents can vary** from person to person. In Bergson's words, the duration that exists by our consciousness has its rhythm, a rhythm that is very different from what physicists refer to as time (Bergson, 2004). Drug time does not follow a set schedule, rather it varies according to the addict's consciousness and behavior. Having been exposed to drugs, a normal person's consciousness will be affected in a windy manner. This will affect the addict's judgment of time.

Thus, time has lost its traditional function in the world of junkies. Addicts are able to feel through their bodies, and the length of time in which they feel is determined by their psyche, the flow of their lives. Bergson said, If I pull myself from the edge to the center, I find in the depths of existence the most general, the most permanent, the duration time—the self (Bergson, 2004). The effects of drugs make a normal person lose himself, and gradually his life is overwhelmed by drugs. After that, the duration of their life can only be realized through drugs, however, this type of duration is short-lived. The addict attempt to achieve duration after running out of drugs “whining and pawing at me and talking about the money he was going to have for sure in a few days, or a few hours” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 81). For the desperate need for drugs, they could make any promise to anyone. They don't know when they will be able to pay back the money for the drugs but to get the drugs, they try to promise the least amount of time in exchange for a momentary extension of the drug time, which can be months or days or even hours because objective time is no longer important in their eyes. It seems that addicts have equated the flow of life with the flow of drugs in their muddled day-to-day lives, and by virtue of their dependence on drugs, addicts have their own shot schedule. Even someday “When you quit junk, everything seems flat, but you remember the shot schedule, the static horror of junk, your life draining into your arm three times a day” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 198). Even though the drugs have objectively left the addict's life, the traces of their existence are still deeply embedded in their consciousness and they still remember the sensation of compressing their lives into their bodies while using the drugs.

In the meantime, “drug duration” is a qualitative experience, creating and subtly changing every second, in a continuous flow of creation and change. “A junky run on junk time. When his junk is cut off, the clock runs down and stops. All he can do is hang on and wait for non-junk time to start. A sick junkie has no escape from external time, no place to go. He can only wait” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 128). Obviously, the junky's psychological time will slow down with the occurrence of withdrawal. Waiting for the strong psychological gap and discomfort brought by the drug will make the junky's psychological time slow down. Pain has been magnified unprecedentedly in a very short period. The cycle of going from detox to relapse and back again is all too common among addicts. According to Bergson, this behavior could be explained by the fact that “duration is the impulse of life”, arguing that “every species, even everybody, retains only certain impulses that originate from the universal impulses of life, and that all possess the tendency to use these energies to their advantage” (Bergson, 1998, p. 47). In addition to the energy that can be conserved by the law of conservation of energy, this energy consists of the ability of life to deal with external objects and to sustain itself. This kind of instinctive impulse is what causes addicts to return to drugs when they are dying from withdrawal reactions and choose “regeneration.”.

William Burroughs states that “in addition to the drug itself, your experience during addiction is also flat, almost like a two-dimensional plane” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 152). And the “duration” gained through drug abuse does not remain in their lives as memories or experiences.

When talking about the conditions that make an addict addicted, apart from the chemical component, time is another source of addiction that is not easily detected. Addicts are easily addicted to the time trap of drugs. Compared to addiction on a physical level, addiction on a

psychological level is more difficult to trace and quit. As Burroughs himself says “You know how bored you get when you have a habit. It’s like all the lights went out” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 169). Drugs give the junky great physical and psychological dependence. Once psychological time takes over from objective time, they believe they are in control of time and enjoy the feeling of being in control of time. The cruel thing is that when the effects of the drug wear off, the reality comes crashing down on them and the contrast overwhelms each addict, forcing them to use the drug once again. Drugs continue to erode their bodies, their will, and their desire to live. People who have been using drugs for a long time become withdrawn from their community, and once off drugs they become agitated, incompetent, and raging, and the addict believes that in quitting drugs, they also quit a way of life.

### 3.2. The Reality of Time

Gadamer, Hans-Georg the German philosopher, divides temporal experience into “temporal experience of nothingness” and “temporal experience of self” in *Die Aktualität des Schönen. Kunst als Spiel, Symbol und Fest*. The empty experience of time is the time that one experiences in the practical attitude of everyday life, the “time for something” when one is bored and time is experienced as an unbearable emptiness in a chaotic repetition. The “time for oneself” is the time when one is no longer counting time, no longer trying to dominate time, but is fully engaged in it without the boredom of emptiness or the rush of emptiness, and every moment is a reflection of the activity of life itself (Hans-Georg, 1977). Therefore, the time at this moment becomes truly one’s own, it is integrated with life, it is open and closed together. It is believed that the distinction between these two kinds of time is the inner examination of things by the human being.

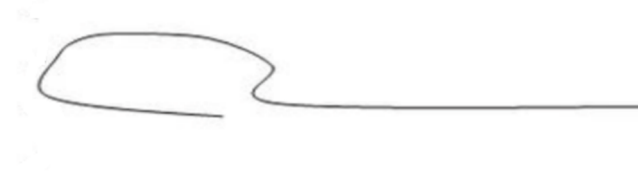
For the addicts, the only time they have is when they are enjoying drugs, and they will forget the time and places when they are on a drug binge of all kinds. “Even When I was on junk I wouldn’t meet Angelo for months, when I got off I always ran into him on the street somewhere” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 165). It is only natural that people are fully immersed in one thing when they naturally ignore everything around them, for junkies, drugs are something that they can give all their energy to treat, they feel with all their heart and soul to fill the emptiness of life’s empty life with drugs “They are subject to junk climate. They are warmed and chilled by junk” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 142). They experience the seasons of the year in their own time. They no longer mechanically calculate the time at their disposal, they no longer count the profit and loss, they do not need external objects to fill their experience of time. It is also appropriate to categorize the time outside of drug use as “the experience of empty time,” when the addict spends all of his or her time waiting for more attractive drugs to become available, waiting for the flow of drugs in the bloodstream. With drugs being almost consumed, time is experienced as an unbearable emptiness in a haphazard repetition. They “looked harried and desperate” (Burroughs, 2009, p. 81).

## 4. An Analysis of Literature Time Concept in the Novel

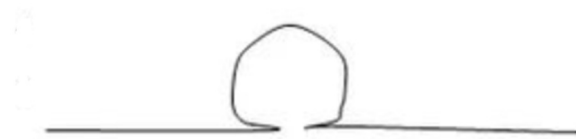
### 4.1. The Cut-up Technique

In *Junky*, it could be found that William Burroughs, as a postmodernist novelist, breaks the traditional way of writing novels, especially breaking with the traditional linear narrative method of novel writing. Linear time is also the dominant concept of time in British Victorian fiction and American novels, *The Great Gatsby* by Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald reveals the short life of Gatsby, from his moment of glory to his untimely death, while Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* follows the linear trajectory of the protagonist’s growth in the same style as Dickens’ novel. Aristotle, who proposed linear time, believed that linear time does not only consist of the traditional four parts of “beginning-development-climax-ending”, but is a “linear narrative” as

long as it is a line and orderly. Therefore, flashbacks and interludes in literature should be considered as “linear narratives” because they generally follow the principle of “one line” but are expressed in the form of “curves”, as demonstrated in Fig 3 and 4.



**Fig 3.** Flashbacks



**Fig 4.** Interludes

After excluding these features of the linear narrative, the author finds that the covert plot of the novel is advancing linearly through the continuous evolution of drugs, a narrative technique that exists between linear and non-linear, and this technique is called “cut-up”, a special literary device, which in Burroughs’ view, is more in line with the human state of consciousness, just as in the novel when people read it, they hardly feel the story moving forward. The use of this creative technique was the result of the influence of his close friend, the painter Brion Gysin. They applied this technique extensively to the imagery of popular culture and modern literature, making it a powerful artistic tool.

“As in the novel when you read it, you hardly feel the story moving forward” (Burroughs, 2013, p. 209). Time moves, but at the same time it doesn’t move for a second; places change, but the protagonists seem to stay where they are; characters change like shapeshifters, with names and traits only loosely linked and soon no longer linked at all. William Lee, whether from Claysington to Texas or Texas to New Orleans, meets all kinds of people every day, and in Lee’s eyes they are just passing travelers, are “pigeons”, are bums. whether from south to north or from far to near their lives are only the cycle of drugs to withdrawal and relapse. The junky’s memory is fragmented and the descriptions are illogical, and Burroughs can depict the daily behavior of junkies well through “cut-up”. By this method, the author liberates the reader from traditional grammar and syntax.

Each chapter begins with an arbitrary beginning, the world of junky has no specific time and moment, so at the beginning of each chapter of the novel, the author can only judge the sequence through fragmentary memories, “during the next month”, “this day”, “that day”, “a few nights after”, “the destination reached” or some continuous action. It seems that there is invisible scissors that divide each scene and reassemble it into a collage. In an interview with William Burroughs, when Ginsberg asks “What steps to take to free consciousness from control”, and Burroughs says that to move away from words and replace them with other forms of expression requires us to shed our old “armor”. Thus, in reading the novel *Junky*, the reader’s consciousness is subverted as never before, breaking with conventional thinking, and if people use the postmodernist term, the “meta-narrative” is completely subverted, and the wholeness disappears.

This extremely different narrative time is more in line with the characteristics of Burroughs who as an addict at that time, the addict's mind is sometimes sober and sometimes evanescent, so the reader can feel more tangibly through Burroughs' narrative the purpose of getting to communicate with the addict at some level.

#### 4.2. Reader Intervention Narrative Time

It is also important to note that William Burroughs allows the reader to intervene in the time of the narrative. This is not the case in the classic Victorian novel, where the reader is not given the freedom to intervene in the narrative time, which is firmly in the hands of the author. Throughout *Junky*, the author gives the character a great deal of freedom to share his stories. The characters' internal monologues and streams of consciousness take center stage, while the author's external narrative gradually fades to the background. As a result, the reader switches from passive reading to active participation, enabling a new sense of narrative freedom.

As the main character in the novel describes what he sees and hears from a first-person viewpoint, the reader can participate in William Lee's travels from a second-person point of view, so that into the narrative time it can be an equal exchange of dialogue and information with the author's point of view. The author uses interrogative sentences several times in the novel, giving the reader time to think and pause in the text by asking questions, thus diluting the author's lead in context and giving the reader a sense of joint choice with the author.

*Junky* provides the reader with two completely different endings, at the end of the last chapter of the novel:

“Kick is seeing things from a special angle. Kick is momentary freedom from the claims of the aging, cautious, nagging, frightened flesh. Maybe I will find in yage what I was looking for in junk and weed and coke. Yage may be the final fix (Burroughs, 2009, p.216).”

The reader finally learns that William Lee has gone to Colombia, where he may continue his pursuit for newer drugs, and perhaps where he can quit the drugs he has been using all his life, an ending that Burroughs leaves to the reader to choose.

In the novel, the reader also can choose when the story ends regardless of the author's intentions, and while the basic order of narrative time remains with the author, it is the reader's right to choose the length of the narrative. Richard Lynch summarizes Fowles' freedom into three kinds: “social, existential, and narrative freedom” (Lynch, 2002, P. 50). In a sense, narrative freedom is also a kind of existential freedom, since “for freedom, success is irrelevant”, (Sartre, 1943, p. 602) and as long as the reader is free to choose the duration of the narrative, whether or not it changes the author's original construction of narrative time, the choice itself indicates the presence of the reader in the text.

It is Burroughs who gives the reader a great sense of participation in the narrative time of the novel, and in a sense the reader is able to advance the story along with the novel's protagonist. The sober reader can accurately judge the time points when the addict acts abnormally, especially reader could notice the detail that addicts will feel particularly sensitive to time during the withdrawal process, so the text will mention time many times, but once the addict enters the world of drugs again, all the descriptions of time in the novel seem to disappear, and there are only descriptions of things in the eyes of the addict, so the standard for dividing whether the addict is sober or not becomes time and through the mastery of these points in time, the outsider can really come into personal contact with the group of junkies through the text and feel the warmth and coldness of the addict under the drugs.

## 5. Conclusion

Burroughs indicated the very postmodernity of drug time the novel. Individualization of time is particularly evident, which is the psychological time mentioned previously. The psychological time differs from traditional time in that there will not be a logical relationship between things that are well ordered and inferable, but more focused on the experience of the individual life, and the addict will appear in a thousand forms under the effect of drugs. This concept of time will be used in the work of the city or the major events of history, and all the feelings and experiences will be gathered in the individual. This expresses that the focus of William Burroughs' work is no longer on the noble factors of the nation, state and history, but on the confusion of individual life. At this point, time enters the work as a way of understanding life and the world, "not only as a structural element but also as a social, psychological, philosophical, the humanistic theme is consciously realized and artistically expressed by the novel".

Burroughs' treatment of time fragmentation restores the real drug time to an infinite extent. A fragmentation in time is bringing about a new understanding of time. As a result of this fragmentation, the sense of continuity between the past and the future has disappeared, and therefore the experience of the new time will only be focused on the present. In the words of Burroughs, addicts are people who cannot focus on the past or the future, and even forget who they are. In describing this experience, Jameson in a conference calls it the euphoria of addiction or schizophrenia, which he views not as a derogatory term but rather as a pattern or type of schizophrenia, with a particular focus on the expansion or deformation of experiencing time. Drug addicts and schizophrenics feel a loss of identity when their time is fragmented, being fragmented, and their self has no past or future.

Drug time is also characterized by its diversity of time, indicating that the subject of time in Burroughs' work has disappeared. The drug time can be presented by taking any form of entity or energy, without being limited by mechanical time. The perception of time in an addict's life can be derived from his or her physical and psychological sensations. The boredom, anxiety, and irritability of withdrawal can remind them that it is time to take drugs, and bystanders can infer the time or frequency of drug use by observing the physical appearance of the addict. While the novel does not specify the exact time, the reader can perceive the progress in the plot, the changes in the addicts' physical state, and the sequence of events. This is a characteristic of temporal diversity, the text itself does not need to emphasize the time factor too much, as the passage of time itself has shown itself in the development of the narrative.

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