SHOCKER: "THE ASSASSIN!"

ROGUE GOES TO A SORORITY INITIATION

HENRY MORGAN: FIRST INTERVIEW IN A DECADE

"THE SWINGING SET;" KARIM AGA KHAN

FASHION FORECAST: BACK TO SCHOOL, BACK TO WORK

AND, THE ROGUE GIRLS
THE INVISIBLE MAN

In William Burrough's world of cool it's like ice, daddy, like ice!—personality by Ann Morrissett
WILLIAM LEE BURROUGHS, a man who for many years has been a mystery in the writing world, is becoming increasingly visible these days. His notorious book, "The Naked Lunch," after surreptitiously floating between continents besmeared with rumor, has of late been clothed in so many reviewers' words that the work itself may come as an anti-climax for those who finally get down to its bare reality; down to what is, in fact, "at the end of the fork" of readers who now find the book available in U.S. bookstores.

Published by Olympia Press in Paris in 1959, "The Naked Lunch" soon won an international reputation, word-of-mouth, for its startling, nightmarish, brilliantly obscene writing. What it seems to boil down to—if such phosphorescent prose can be boiled down—is a disjointed series of hellish hallucinations, wild sexual fantasies, sadistic orgies, brutal burlesque, and scathing satire, all in such vivid, colorful and concentrated language that censors have had difficulty in determining whether to class it as literature or pornography. One might expect that "Naked Lunch" (dropping the "The" in U.S. publication), now that it has been brought out by Grove Press in America, would be given a hard time in the courts of Freeland, not only for its incessant use of four-letter words, but for its graphic descriptions of all forms and combinations of homo- and hetero- and auto-sexual activity imaginable. But so far the censors have left it alone, and it has been treated as the important literary work that many critics consider it to be. John Ciardi of The Saturday Review was among the first to praise Burroughs as "a writer of great power and artistic integrity engaged in a profoundly meaningful search for true values." Norman Mailer called him "the only American novelist living today who may conceivably be possessed by genius."

At the 1962 Edinburgh International Writers' Conference, Mary McCarthy and Mailer both proclaimed Burroughs as "the writer of the century who has most deeply affected the literary cognoscenti." Jack Kerouac pronounced Burroughs "the greatest satirical writer since Jonathan Swift."

A few dissenters have emerged, but the character of their dissent might well only increase the appetite of the curious: "Though he reminds me of other writers," wrote Alfred Chester in Commentary, "he falls short by comparison. In his tireless and tiresomely intellectual use of obscenities and in his shrieks of outrage, he is like an adolescent Henry Miller. In his savage political parodies, he is like a naive George Orwell. In his brutal sexual fantasies, he is like a timid Marquis de Sade. In his overpowering belief that the mention of petroleum jelly, baboons'behinds, and contraceptives will infallibly provoke laughter... he is like a senile Joey Hirsch, the boy next door to me when I was ten." Time magazine's invisible critic intones: "Although Burroughs fancies himself a satirist and occasionally resembles one when the diary's heroin fog clears a little, the value of his book is mostly confessional, not literary."

The curious will not be so disappointed, perhaps, as these reviewers. Nor would the direct descriptions of sexual activity, which Burroughs lavishly and luridly paints, have gone unnoticed in the censors' books a few years back. Anglo-Saxonisms abound in graphic, explosive verbal illustrations of who does what and to whom, as in the following mild selection: "They embrace, fall to the floor and roll under a great magnifying glass set in the roof... burst into flame with a cry that shatters the glass wall, roll into space, ing and screaming through the air, burst in blood and flames and soot on brown rocks under a desert sun." On top of such fairly straight descriptive passages are others depicting variations of sexual activity with races and species known and unknown, in places and conditions riotously unspeakable. Surrealist late-Medieval painters of hell's corruptions and perversions almost pale next to this modern Dante, most critics agree, whatever the curfew, the censorious, and the incensed may make of him.

Grove Press, which has come to grips with police censorship throughout the country for its publication of D. H. Lawrence's "Lady Chatterley's Lover" and Henry Miller's "Tropic of Cancer," is crossing its fingers on this one. The publicity may not harm sales, but endless court cases are costly. On behalf of "Naked Lunch," Grove might well argue that any mind deranged enough to be influenced by the truly violent and outrageous scenes concocted in these wild junk-dreams would hardly have the patience, or perhaps the literacy, to sit down and read such a manual. Also, the morbid length to which Burroughs' sexual scenes usually go are more apt to create disgust than desire, and any thrill that the reader might get from Burroughs' verbal roller coasters have the sobering reality of the void below and the black stillness at the end of the line to counteract them. Burroughs' nightmares may be the censors' kicks, but they're also a screaming catharsis and a wizard-worded warning to the complacent; for the old quack doctors interspersed in Burroughs' writings are an aspect of Burroughs himself, who moralizes even as he sinks, who prescribes as he suffers.

If it may please police to puzzle over Burroughs' purposes, what may bother them in his writing as much as anything are such sections as: "And always cops: smooth college-trained cops, practiced, apologetic pater, electronic eyes weigh your car and luggage, clothes and face; snarling big city dicks, soft-spoken country sheriffs with something black and menacing in old eyes color of a faded grey flannel shirt..." And: "He [the Narcotics Squad agent] looked at me and smiled. The smile stayed there too long, hideous and naked, the smile of an old painted pervert, gathering all the negative evil of O'Brien's ambiguous function." He does not stop at the jazz; however; Burroughs also burlesques backwoods American bureaucrats, caricatures international queens, and parodies medical quacks in some of the most outrageously funny writing of our time.

But more than this, "Naked Lunch" lays bare the writhing victims of junk and ruthlessly dissects the junk-pusher. Throughout the book move the grey, anonymous ghosts with "cancelled eyes of junk," the disgusting old junkies who "gibber and squeal at sight of it. The spit hangs off their chin, and their stomach rumbles and all their guts grind in peristalsis while they cook up, dissolving the body's decent skin, you expect any moment a great blob of protoplasm will flop right out and surround the junk... Junkies have no shame... The addict regards his body impersonally as an instrument to absorb the medium in which he lives, evaluates his tissue with the cold hands of a horse dealer. 'No use trying to hit there.' Dead fish eyes flick over a ravaged vein."

Taking these scenes out of context, however—although they probably will often be so taken—is not entirely fair to the total effect which "Naked Lunch" produces. The bared, rock-bottom lusts and hatreds and sadistic cruelties and vulgar crudities and final, dead insensitivities exposed in "Naked Lunch" may in some ways, or moments, titillate the reader, as they may have expressed Burroughs' own states of mind in writing them. But it is more likely that they will in the end repel and nauseate, electrify and horrify—and perhaps even purify and if they may have Burroughs himself.

AND WHAT OF this "grey, junk-bound ghost" whom they called in Tangier "El Hombre Invisible"—the Invisible Man? Today, Bill Burroughs is a tall, gaunt

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The Invisible Man
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figure, nearing fifty, who haunts a small, inconspicuous Paris hotel, which does not even have a name, in the artist and student quarter popularly called "Quartier Latin." In his narrow room, there are a bed and table, a chair or two, a gas range on which he cooks simple meals and brews tea. The most important pieces of furniture in the room are Burroughs and his typewriter. Like two machines with a hard metallic knowledge of each other, Burroughs doubly faces his typewriter, feeds endless paper into it, neglects the little monster only when a visitor, or a sudden whim to be elsewhere, carries him away—to the little café downstairs, to London, possibly back to Tangier.

It was in Tangier, in fact, that "Naked Lunch" took shape. Paul Bowles, an American writer and composer who has lived in Tangier many years, recalls Burroughs' little room in the native quarter of Tangier, and the constant mess it was in: "His papers were all over the floor, and when I would ask him 'What's all that?' he would say, 'That's my work.' It was Allen Ginsberg, main spokesman of the "beat" poets who picked it all up and put it together, otherwise it never would have become a book."

According to Bowles, Burroughs was on and off "junk"—opium derivatives—during this period, but mostly off while writing. Many of the notes in the book indicate that Burroughs was probably using other drugs during this period as well, non-habit-forming ones which he regards in an entirely different light than opium drugs. Today, though the effects of drugs on consciousness still interests Burroughs and he reportedly continues to experiment with them, he has become almost a crusader against addicting drugs and their debilitating effects. Outlawing anything, however—from wicked words to devil drugs—isn't Burroughs solution: he hates censors worse. It isn't that the opiates are so harmful to the health, Burroughs says; it's just that they're so boring. When he found himself doing nothing but staring at his shoe for eight hours at a time, and down to his last check in Tangier, Burroughs went to England for the apomorphine cure by which he now swears, and which he describes in the introduction to the Grove Press edition of "Naked Lunch," "Testimony Concerning a Sickness." "Junk is not a means to enjoyment of life," Burroughs states flatly, "it is a way of life."

What led this intelligent, well-bred, and well-educated beneficiary of the Burroughs Adding Machine fortune to become a junkie? From his first book, "Junkie" (Ace, 1953), which he wrote under the name of William Lee at the age of 35, many autobiographical details emerge. "My earliest memories," he wrote, "are colored by fear of nightmares. I was afraid some of the dreams would still be there when I woke up. I recall hearing a mad talk about opium and how smoking opium brings sweet dreams, and I said: 'I will smoke opium when I grow up.' " Burroughs recalls his hallucinations, and his fascination for a book written by a burglar who claimed to have spent a good part of his life in jail. "It sounded good to me," Burroughs wrote, "compared with the dullness of a Midwest suburb [of his native St. Louis] where all contact with life was shut out."

Burroughs also found Harvard University dull, which he attended during the depression; ditto the army, which he attended during the war, until he severed part of a finger. "This man is never to be recalled or reclassified," said his army notation. Burroughs told me that it was not so much that he had conscientious scruples against the army, but he did not like it personally and also thought it inefficient. It seems clear, however, that Burroughs has both a fascination and horror vis-a-vis violence, evident in his writing as well as in many of the details of his life.

There is something coldly amoral and efficient about Burroughs' approach to himself, to life, to drug experiments; yet under his stoic facade one can sense an extreme sensitivity and even kindness, which seem to have taken refuge beneath a formal, almost faceless exterior. His letters to his long-time friend Bowles he still signs "Bill B."—as if Bowles might not know exactly who it is. In my own several contacts with Burroughs in Paris, we remained on a "Mr." and "Miss" basis, even though our discussions centered on intimate matters. His tone is flat and his eyes seldom look directly at you, making it difficult to remember his face clearly. His poet friend Alan Ansen describes him as "A tall ectomorph . . . his person constituted by a magic triad of fedora, glasses and raincoat rather than by a face, his first presence is that of a man down on his luck . . . A cracker accent and use of jive talk fail to conceal incisive intelligence and a frightening seriousness.

A distinguishing feature is the mania for contacts. One sometimes feels that for him drugs and sex exist only to provide opportunities for making appointments. It is a revealing clue to his own particular isolation.

What occurred between Burroughs' childhood dream of sweet opium dreams and escape from boredom, and his present disillusionment with the opiates he now regards as the ultimate boredom? Like so many young men after the war, Burroughs drifted through a number of pointless but strangely characteristic jobs—exterminator, private detective, bartender—though his small income from the family trust basically made him financially independent. Among the petty criminals and drug addicts he then began to associate with in New York, he found perhaps temporary relief from his boredom, and expeditied—via drugs and sex—the human contacts he had always found difficult. But, according to Ansen, the "stupidity" of these types began to get on his nerves. Going to live in the Columbia University area, he became a kind of mentor to a number of students, among them poet Allen Ginsberg and novelist Jack Kerouac.

The psychoanalysis Burroughs underwent around this time he now speaks of disparagingly, though he apparently gives it credit (as in "Junkie") for freeing him from "morality."
Yet there is something horrendously moral in his writing, a phenomenon in which his old psychoanalyst may find subject-matter for a book of his own someday. Burroughs has stated that sections of "Naked Lunch" are, in fact, tracts against capital punishment, the ultimate obscenity. Though he also seems to have a fascination for science, as he does for obscene death, he has stated that he is anti-science and anti-machine: we have seen what we can do with them, now take them away. He is bitter, too, about the U. S. Government's permissive attitude toward alcohol—although Burroughs himself uses it—in comparison with the less harmful hemp products: hashish, marijuana, kif—"pot," "weed."

A New York woman editor who met Burroughs a few times in his earlier days says, "There was a great cruelty that struck me about the man. I remember feeling this was a person I'd better stay clear of. Yet at times he had a remarkably benign attitude, he seemed to exude a great kindness, but I felt there was something unnatural about it. It was probably from drugs, although I didn't know much about such things then. I had no idea he would ever have been able to resolve these conflicts in any sort of creative way, as he now apparently has."

IT IS NOT CLEAR at what point or how Burroughs brought himself to marriage, and he is personally most reticent about (Continued on page 76)
this aspect of his life. But it is reported by Anslen that after a period in New Orleans he took his wife and two children to Mexico, where "things are possible, living cheaper, dope less trouble, boys ditto." It was around this time, at the age of 35, that Burroughs started writing "Junkie"—about his life as an addict in the U.S. and Mexico—at the urging of Ginsberg. It was also during this period that Burroughs shot his wife while playing "William Tell" at a party. He had been aiming at a whisky glass on her head, according to Bowles. How much his faulty aim may have been due to his physical condition at the time, or to poor shooting skill (later, in Tangier, he practiced often), or to a desire in some level of his mind to rid himself of her, it is impossible to say. The Mexican court called it "imprudentia criminale" (criminal negligence) and dropped the case. Burroughs himself later told Bowles that after he had been let off, he wondered if he were not actually guilty. 

Subsequently, Burroughs spent a while on a Texas farm, then joined an anthropological expedition to South America. One of his own purposes was to track down jage, the hallucinatory drug that supposedly gives its users telepathic powers. Disillusioned by opiates, though not yet through with them, Burroughs still seemed to be on his quest for the sweet dreams he had longed for in his childhood. In a letter to Allen Ginsberg, Burroughs describes his first reactions to jage as dizzying, numbing, sickening. On his second try, with one-third the first dose, he came a little closer to his heart's desire: "Except for blue flashes and slight nausea—though not to the point of vomiting—the effect was similar to weed. Vividness of mental imagery, aphrodisiac results, silliness and giggling." In a letter to this writer Burroughs wrote: "The jage letters are of course largely fictional." He gave no further explanation, and there was no indication in their original publication—in Big Table 2—that they were "fictional"; nor is there anything in these descriptions, mild compared to the hashish ravings of the 19th-century American writer Ludlow, or the raptures of Baudelaire, or, in fact, Burroughs' own writings, that would suggest any evidence or reason for falsification. He tried jage a few more times, according to his Ginsberg letters, taking a crate of it back with him to the city of Bogota; but as the extract was not as effective as the fresh vine, his jage experi-
gentleness, perhaps vulnerability, that a few had also noted beneath his cold formality—a kind of humanity beneath his blank, seemingly unfeeling exterior. Seeing him seated at his typewriter, one feels that he has at last found his “work,” and it is perhaps this which now holds him together, providing his visions and his courage to continue. Yet the present direction of his writing is considered increasingly chaotic by some literary critics, absorbed now in the “fold-in” technique in which Brion Gysin, a poet friend, has reputedly encouraged him. Burroughs demonstrated the new method at the Edinburgh Writers Conference in 1962 (as he had done for me in his Paris hotel room). It consists of folding a page of writing vertically down the middle and placing it on another page of writing, then artfully splitting the sentences which overlap so that the texts of both pages—with some editing—interweave and convolute in a way that is sometimes startlingly original and emphatically expressive (as in some sections of “The Soft Machine,” which Burroughs at this writing is still reworking for U.S. publication), sometimes absurdly nonsensical and repetitiously irritating.

Was “Naked Lunch” the one-blust effort of an aging junkie who, with this phantasy-magic burst, shot his wad? Or was it the brilliant, disorganized first explosion in a chain series that will further startle and astound the reading public? Whatever the future verdict may be, in heaven, hell, or Edinburgh, there is no doubt that Grove Press has chucked up a raw, naked, acid talent that has strongly purged the American literary scene. If Burroughs has another “Naked Lunch” in him, it’s sure to come up.

Europe CONTINUED FROM PAGE 71

forget about it in Europe. Though you hail from California and have a built-in sneer regarding winos, drink wine in Southern Europe; wine and the local brandy distilled from it. Though beers have always seemed on the plebian side, drink beer in the Germanic and Scandinavian countries.

However, don’t become too attached to these new tastes. You’ll find that the wonderful Irish stout which costs almost nothing per pint in Dublin, is procurable almost anywhere in Europe in tiny six-ounce bottles—which will cost you up to a dollar. The genuine aged fino Sherry, which you got down in Spain for a nickel a glass, will set you back almost as much as Scotch in some of the Northern Eu-

ropean countries. Learn to love ‘em, but then forget ‘em when you leave the country of their birth.

And here’s a real shoestring tip. If you’re a “bottle baby,” take full advantage of the free-loading opportunities you have in just about every country in Europe. They just love to have you inspect their distilleries in Scotland and Ireland, their wine cellars in the Champagne country of France, their breweries in Germany, Holland and Denmark, the sherry blending bodegas in Spain.

Possibly the best beer drinking we’ve ever experienced was in the Tuborg brewery, in Copenhagen, with its “atmospheric” bar room and its perfectly presented brews at just the right temperature. And, friend, you can sit there all day and lap it up, on the house! Which reminds us, this is also a good place to pick up a fellow traveler of feminine flavor. The tourist girls who make the tour of the Tuborg (or Carlsberg) brewery and then sit around waiting for an hour or two are usually “with it,” as the saying goes.

HOW ABOUT getting around Europe? The best bet we know of, always assuming your budget is a bit higher than one buck a day, is to get together with several others and buy a European car. The idea is either to resell it at trip’s end, or bring it back to the States where, even after paying shipping and customs, its value will be higher than your original cost.

If your budget is really low, you can consider a Fiat 500 or a Citroen 2CV, both of which run about $750 brand new. However, if possible, we’d suggest you try to make it at least a Renault 4L, a new model which sells for $950 in Paris. We speak from experience on this, since we bought one last November.

Any of these cars will give you at least 40 miles to the gallon, which counts in Europe where gas runs as high as 80 cents a gallon. The RenauL needs no lubrication and an oil change only once every 3000 miles. It’s water-cooled, but has a sealed radiator so that you never have to add water or anti-freeze. In a year’s time, it is expected to only depreciate in value from $200 to $300.

Use your own arithmetic, according to how many of you are splitting the car costs. It’s pretty cheap transportation.

If this is impractical and you figure on train travel, then consider a EuRailpass. Cost is $110 for one month, $150 for two months, $180 for three months. And it’s all first class, as often and as far as you want throughout West Europe, except for the British Isles. If you’re going to be doing a lot of travel, it’s worth it—par-

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