They do not ask me, "What is William Burroughs really like?"

When my friends and associates hear I was a guest at the Great Feast in Joujouka along with William Burroughs, they ask me, "What is William Burroughs like?" No "really." They assume (correctly) that unlike, say, Johnny Carson, William Burroughs isn't really like anything—or isn't like anything real.

I tell them, "I can't really tell you, but if you really want to know, you can begin by kinesthesizing William Burroughs's face," as follows:

Sit. Look straight ahead.

Part your teeth, then close your lips as lightly and evenly as you can.

Relax your features completely. Let your eyelids droop.

OK, by now you should feel like your face is that of the 59-year-old remittance man of the Burroughs adding-machine fortune; mentor of Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac when they were at Columbia as students and you were simply at Columbia; author of Naked Lunch, The Soft Machine, Nova Express, The Ticket That Exploded, and The Wild Boys, who accidentally killed his wife while attempting to shoot an apple off her head; star of Chappaqua, a movie you hated; former private eye; former exterminator; former junkie; former Tangerine pederast; former scientologist; and the world's only vociferous proponent of apomorphine as the sole effective cure for heroin addiction; philosopher of the prospect of electronic reshaping of human consciousness; old friend of and collaborator with painter, novelist, actor, and screenwriter Brion Gysin, European point-of-contact with the Mysteries of Joujouka. Your facial moves go like this: say the first clause of a sentence in a flat, nasal, St. Louis, Missouri—via-Harvard Yard twang:

"The quick brown fox...",

Pause; then, flare your nostrils; un-
KARPEL AND THE GOAT GOD
The author of Naked Lunch pauses, flares and unflares his nostrils, flicks his tongue, purses and unpurses his lips. "Wa—al," he says.

flare your nostrils; flick your tongue through your lips to moisten them; extend the corners of your mouth, then let them contract; quickly purse and unpurse your lips, puff out your cheeks ever so slightly, then let them sink back; then, and only then, continue:

". . . jumped over . . ." Pause, flare, unflare, flick, extend, contract, purse, unpurse, puff, sink:
". . . the lazy . . ."
Pause, flare, unflare, flick, extend, contract, purse, unpurse, puff, sink.

Take a long, long drag on a cigarette held loosely twist index and middle fingers; exhale through your nose, then—Pause, unflare, flick, extend, contract, puff, sink:
". . . dog."

Good gracious, you will ask, what must my face look like when I am going through all this pausing, flaring, unflaring, flicking, extending, contracting, pursing, unpursing, puffing, sinking? The answer: immobile. Your face seems utterly immobile from as near as a few feet away. I can detect no movement unless I sit close to you and stare—I can stare at you, you are much too busy putting your visage through its paces to be embarrassed.

But, you will ask, aren't these facial isometrics . . . distracting?

Distracting? It would be more accurate to say that they are riveting. I cannot take my eyes off them. They externalize the fact that you are the most highly innervated, hyperesthetic specimen of humankind that I have ever encountered. All your synapses have been fused by decades of autochemotherapy for walking schizophrenia. Your physiognomical musculature twitches in accordance with the principle discovered by Galvani, the Italian sadovivisector, who connected an electric device to a frog's amputated leg and watched it convulse. You are heading from an overload. You can even feel the pain no more. And as I stare at you, I find myself mesmerized by the invariable sequence of your tic—I perceive your consciousness and mine as each a shiny globule of mercury (yours . . . somewhat more sizable; after all, you are William Burroughs), and as they approach each other in space—sitting on brocade bolsters along the white-washed wall in the Master Musicians' common house—as they finally touch, the surface tension of each is so extreme that it draws the surface of the other to itself until, suddenly:

Sloop! One big shiny globule, and I discover to my amazement that when you have a concept you wish to convey to me, you simply convey it. You don't have to verbalize it or, for that matter, to communicate it to me. The only reason you speak to me at all is to touch base with me occasionally, an intermittent servobeep so we can trim the interface between our docked brains, keep them in proper alignment. For those of you who are, so to speak, "into" Heinlein: grok. For those of you who've read Tom Wolfe's The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test: intersubjectivity. For those of you who've done more acid than Tom Wolfe: interobjectivity.

No sooner had I installed myself physically next to William Burroughs than I found myself psychically next to him, having a, shall we say, tête-à-tête with the gentleman.

"You were up here years ago," I say. "Has the music changed a great deal?"

"Wa—al," draws Burroughs. He has been drinking wine and smoking kif and his awareness is cantilevered into the void like a gargoyle. Pause-flare-unflare-flare-extend-contract-purse-unpurse-puff-sink. "When I was up here the last time," he says, pause-flare-unflare-flare-extend-contract-purse-unpurse-puff-sink, "they didn't have this building . . ."

Pause-flare-unflare-flare-extend-contract-purse-unpurse-puff-sink. Then his features compose themselves into a gentle, distracted smile. William Burroughs has ostensibly given my question as much response as it's going to get. But the spaces between the syllables of his "answer" radiate implication, and between my unanswered question and his unquestioned answer I can see with my mental peripheral vision an impalpable force field of truths arrayed like iron filings between two horseshoe magnets. My feeling is not "I think he's trying to tell me something" but "I guess I've just been told something." I have had this feeling near Andy Warhol, Charles Manson, Mick Jagger, Hugh Hefner—of being within the field of emanation of a Master Mind, of my mentality having been temporarily incorporated into a supraintelligence—gulps!—steam-cleaned, charged, and tested for leaks, and reinstalled with a 30-day warranty, parts and labor. I assume such personages as Napoleon, Stalin, Roosevelt, Hitler, de Gaulle, Johnson, and, yes, Nixon, have had this awful power. And if you ain't got it, Backpacker, you ain't gonna get it no matter how many coupons you send in to the Rosicrucians.

Sitting there, I am reminded of a passage in The Ticket That Exploded—"eyes old unbluffed unreadable he hasn't said a direct word in ten years and as you hear what the party was like . . . you will begin to see sharp and clear"—and precisely at that moment Burroughs faces the miscellaneous conclave and makes a pronouncement. "Wonderful party! Wonderful party! Everybody wondering who everybody else is. . . ."

Titter titter. Hmmmm.

And then, just as temples began to thrrob behind the sharpness and clarity with which they were suddenly able to see what the party was like, Burroughs turned and—here, I told you my monacle was too strong for you to look through, even for a moment—burbled with slightly more volatility than one could ascribe merely to his degree of cerebral tincture, "very fancy 1920s night club!"

Oh, William, they whewed. Hah hah.

The following morning Burroughs stood on the village green, tall and stooped and robed in a navy-blue djellaba, sipping mint tea, chatting with his ruddy-cheeked top, passing the time until lunch. Did the scene look like a Moroccan-location remake of Green Pastures as a rock musical, William Burroughs Is De Lawd? Student-faculty tea at the Joujouka College of Musical Knowledge?

"How goes it, William?" I ask him. I note that he is not a formidable presence. He is, rather, a formidable absence, an individual who by the very tenuousness of his corporeal presence suggests the proximity of Elsewhere.

He furrows his pale lofty brow. "I'm looking for an angle for my story," he says. Copy! Hold the front page! William Burroughs, who has done for the smell of K-Y and rectal mucus what Pearl Buck did for China, is looking for an angle on Joujouka! I have an angle for him: he would write through the eyes of B.J., recurrent persona of the Nova novels. Or am I mistaken, Mr. Bradley Mr. Martin, is there no connection at all between see-the-action B.J. and Bou Jeloud, Master of Skins, Master of Fear, Lupercus, Pan, patron of the Great Feast, who will dance tonight in Joujouka as your tot snaps away with his Instamatic, you with your insight like a four-way flash?

But I don't suggest it, because once I have thought it, it has been suggested to William Burroughs. I just look him right in his mercilessly compassionate eyes and say, "I'm certain that you'll find an acute one."

It would not be the angle he had described in the decade past. William has weathered the popularized, diluted, deluded (Continued on page 96)
(Continued from page 70) misconstruction of the ancient tradition he expounds, the so-called new consciousness of the Sixties. He had written deceptively complicated books whose inner simplicity zinged right past legions of collegiate dilettanti who thought that anything you couldn't make head or tail of had to be heavy. He had seen his work become little more than several inches worth of the obligatory display of paperback spines that line the revised standard five-foot shelf of hip.

For instance, how many of you out there in magazineland remember the line the revised standard five-foot heavy. He had seen his work become little more than several inches worth of the obligatory display of paperback spines that line the revised standard five-foot shelf of hip.

If one of the many bands from the early Sixties. He had written deceptively simple, whose inner complexity would be accessible only to connoisseurs of the inaccessible. Perhaps one of you may tape his Joujouka story, run it backward, and discover squirreled away therein the forbidden handshake of the Mystic Knights of the Sea, the Secret of the Watergate, the last words of Dorothy Kilgallen, the formula for Coca-Cola syrup, or The Face on the Barroom Floor. I am reminded of a lyric of Chicago singer-songwriter Bill Quateman—"You know the obvious truths are most hidden/And we hide them when we try too hard to see." Protractors ready?

COMMERCIAL AFTERWORD: There's a legend that if the pipes of Pan ever stop playing, it's curtains for all of us. Having been to Joujouka, I don't believe this legend is true—I know it's true. Although the Master Musicians have been playing since the dawn of time, through feast and famine and war and peace, Joujouka music is now in serious danger. Joujouka is one of the poorest villages in Morocco, which is one of the poorest countries in the world. A Joujouka player may see only six to ten dollars in cash a year. Unless the musicians have income from outside the village, the music will stop and we'll all be in the soup—the musicians, me, you, and oui.

There are several ways of experiencing something of the drama and energy of Joujouka music while simultaneously paying one's dues to its makers. One will be by buying Ornette Coleman's provocative new album, recorded live at Joujouka, which will soon be released. The musicians also get a percentage of Brian Jones Presents the Pipes of Pan at Joujouka (Rolling Stones Records COC 49100, distributed by Atco). If either is unavailable at your record store, or if you would like to order so that the difference between the wholesale cost and retail price goes directly to the musicians, you can send $5.98 plus a dollar for postage to Association Serifa Folklorique, Suite 20B, 350 West 57th Street, New York, New York 10019. Contributions are welcome, too, and will shortly be tax-deductible. The villagers will use part of the proceeds to construct houses so that a small number of guests can be accommodated. A new recording has been produced that will be the finest album of African music ever; negotiations for its distribution are in progress with a major label. If you'd like to be notified when the new record is released, when a North American or European tour is planned, or if you want any information, send a self-addressed stamped envelope.