

A Man Called Burroughs
Photographs by Harriet Crowder

The Function Room, London
5–20 February 2015

Catalogue



Call Me Burroughs called to me at first sight, with its spectral image on the front cover staring out of an inky void of interstellar space, and its back cover with its avant-garde liner notes in French as well as English. And what esoteric French! Jean-Jacques Lebel drops in references to ‘la machine célibataire’ and ‘l’anus solaire,’ as if Duchamp and Bataille were far too familiar to bother naming. As for what was on the inside, Emmet Williams got right to the point of the album: ‘His voice is terrifyingly convincing.’ Hearing it, you realize: Burroughs weaponized fiction. After this, other writers suddenly became just words on paper to me and have remained so ever since.

But the call of Burroughs didn’t reach me via the 1965 vinyl album itself. I first heard the siren song and fell in with Burroughs thanks to a couple of bootleg cassette tapes handed to me in 1982. A pair of Perspex boxes with homemade cardboard fillers, they were decorated with halves of a hand-coloured image of Burroughs in glasses, tie, jacket, and trilby hat, taken by François Lagarde in 1978 (left). On the reverse sides of the bisected images were fragments of his 1962 essay ‘The Future of the Novel,’ so that my bootlegged tapes of *Call Me Burroughs* were, like all his works, a time machine made of cut-up words, images and recorded voice.

I was given these tapes by C. P. Lee, nowadays a lecturer at Salford University, but, back in the late seventies and eighties, the charismatic frontman of the Manchester satirical rock band, Alberto y Lost Trios Paranoias. Fresh out of school and star struck, I didn’t know what to make of excerpts from *Naked Lunch* and *Nova Express*, but I’d seen how Burroughs’ name covertly permeated my hometown music scene as much as the spliffs and hot knives. It’s worth remembering that in those days, long before the Internet, this is how word was passed around, via bootlegged cassettes handed from those in the know, the cult cognoscenti, to new initiates. This was just before The Man Himself materialized in Manchester to do his ‘Final Academy’ turn at the Hacienda, and turned on a new generation.

So music was the gateway drug to the hard stuff, the Real Thing, and if I’ve preserved the cassettes for thirty years, long after I had a machine to play them, it’s because they suggested an inside connection to secret, otherworldly knowledge. This is what makes Jim Pennington’s discovery of the backstory to the cover of *Call Me Burroughs* so perfect: the other dimension turns out to be this world after all, and the photo that might have been taken at night on one of the moons of Jupiter was in fact snapped one afternoon in mid-Wales. The secret is that there is no secret, for those with the eyes to see and the ears to hear – or as Burroughs put it: Only those for whom the knowledge is intended will find it ...

The Hardiment Suitcase

Jim Pennington

Harriet Crowder was born on 31 August 1933 in Birmingham. She studied photography at Guildford School of Art in the mid-1950s and went on to work as a freelance photographer for Ken Garland Associates on Galt Toys projects. In 1964, she signed Garland's *First Things First*, a design manifesto calling for designers, photographers and what today are called 'creatives' to resist the lure of 'high pressure consumer advertising' and instead devote themselves to utilitarian and educational projects. Crowder later became a medical photographer, retiring in 1993 after working for twenty years at the Hammersmith Hospital neutron therapy centre run by Dr Mary Catterall and the Medical Research Council. She lives in Barnes, London.

In 1958, Crowder met a man called Melville Hardiment. He had seen her running for the number 13 bus and flagged it down for her. They were married in 1960 and divorced in 1969.

Melville Hardiment (1915–1996) left school at fifteen and was told by his mother to join the army. He was stationed in India and in Burma. After a march through jungle to escape Japanese forces, evading capture just outside Singapore, he and five others were taken on a fishing boat to Java and thence, via Australia, back to the UK. In 1944, taking part in the Normandy landings, he was the only survivor in his platoon. The poem he wrote in an effort to exorcise the experience regularly appears in anthologies of war poetry. After the war, his life was punctuated by freelance radio commissions, teaching jobs, poetry publishing, five wives and nine children. He founded a magazine called *Antiphon*, dedicated to encouraging creative writing in secondary schools. Lack of funds and an outspoken subversiveness meant it only managed four of the ten issues it had promised its subscribers. Among his freelance work was a programme about drug addiction in England and one about ex-patriate writers in Paris. This is how he met and became, for a year or so at least, a friend of the writer William Burroughs.

The programme on drugs was never broadcast, 'kyboshed', Hardiment wrote to Burroughs (31 October 1961), for supposedly encouraging people to become addicts. Besides, because there were so few addicts at the time, the BBC did not consider them a pressing problem or their culture interesting. Hardiment claimed, 'the big shots at Broadcasting House are shitting their pants and dead scared to put the thing over the air' (letter to Burroughs, 26 September 1961). Nonetheless, Hardiment was able to use the material he had recorded in the form of a pamphlet published as a supplement to the magazine *Axle Quarterly* (edited by Alan Blaikley, Ken Howard and Paul Overy). Hardiment's *Hooked*, with photographs by Harriet Crowder, was the fifth in the series 'Axle Spokes' that dealt with 'socially important issues' such as sexuality, drugs and pop culture.

I remember reading in a book catalogue about some William Burroughs items cited as originating 'from the Hardiment Suitcase'. Harriet told me she remembered the holdall Burroughs had left behind in their car after a trip to Worcester to visit her parents. She still had some photographs from the journey. I'd met Melville Hardiment in 1977 and he'd shown me an interview he'd done with Burroughs in 1960 and an essay he'd written about

Burroughs and the Paris scene. He didn't mention the visit to Harriet's parents, the suitcase or what was in it, or the fact that Harriet had photographed an interview session he'd set up the same year with Burroughs, Clancy Sigal, Patrick Bowles, Silvio Yeschua and Tom Kremer.

In the course of his friendship with Burroughs, Hardiment helped Burroughs meet a copy deadline for a crime magazine article entitled 'A Day in the Life of a Junky' (they split the fee), he arranged a meeting in Bristol with the neurophysiologist and robotician Dr W. Grey Walter (1910–1977) of the Burden Institute after they had gone together to hear the scientist lecture on 'The Neurophysiological Aspects of Hallucinations and Illusory Experience' and he drove Burroughs around the country on weekend trips so the American could get a taste of what it was like outside of London.

Melville and Harriet travelled on the number 13 as far as Camden Town, where Melville got off to catch the 29. They made a date to meet the following week at the ICA in Dover Street. The relationship strengthened despite Harriet's parents' concerns. 'Haven't you met any doctors in London yet?' was her mother's most frequent question after 'Has Melville got a proper job yet?' In an attempt to mollify her parents' disapproval Harriet suggested, on one of their drives around the country, that they (Melville, Burroughs and she) should pass by Worcester to have tea with her parents. 'Everyone be on best behaviour, please.' And they were. On the way through Brecon, they stopped for a break in front of the Bethel Calvinist Methodist Church. It was an irresistible shot: in that almost blinding midday sun, framing Burroughs under the arch of a dark alley. Just as irresistible had been the graffiti scrawled on the alley wall and the sunlight reflected back up into his face from the ground.

That was the summer of 1960. Harriet and Melville married on 29 October and honeymooned in Paris for a week. Melville combined the honeymoon with his project on ex-patriate writers. They stayed in the Hotel Tournon, the haunt of well-heeled writers like James Jones and Chester Himes. Not far away was Mme Rachou's no-star hotel, the ruck-sackers paradise in Git le Coeur known later as the Beat Hotel. There they met and photographed Brion Gysin and Sinclair Beiles. They also visited Maurice Girodias in his Olympia offices further down the street. Girodias was impressed by Harriet's work, especially the picture of Burroughs against the graffitied wall and later used it in the first issue of the magazine *Olympia* (1962). There, the cropped photo appeared next to work-in-progress fragments from Burroughs' *Nova Express*.

While the Brecon wall shot surfaced again – notably alongside Anthony Burgess' review in *The Guardian* of the 1964 Calder edition of *Naked Lunch*, and on the cover of the LP *Call Me Burroughs*, variously un- or misattributed and without Harriet's knowledge – the photos she took at the interview session sank into the archive until 2014 when I printed the transcript and Melville's memoir of the Paris scene.

The interview pictures, apparently taken in the same flat where the *Hooked* shooting-up shots were staged, show Burroughs seated in an armchair in a room with the American writer Clancy Sigal and three other men: the Beckett-translator Patrick Bowles, a student of French literature Silvio Yeschua and the board game inventor Tom Kremer. Before the interview started, they listened to a recording of Burroughs reading from the work-in-progress for *Nova Express* emanating from the large reel-to-reel tape recorder (on loan from the BBC) standing

between them. Unusually, this set of photos contains a series of close-up shots of Burroughs without his glasses on, looking directly to camera. Harriet told me why: 'We wanted to see the effect on his pupils of the drug he had taken.' It seems the session was not just a cosy literary salon, but a Sunday afternoon drug experiment as well. This aspect of the meeting is confirmed by Kremer, and, although denied by Yeschua, might explain Burroughs' reference in a letter to Brion Gysin (17 May 1961): 'Mr Melville Hardiment and Mr Kramer (sic) set me up I think in that LSD session when old pal Mel took photos and recordings and Kramer interrogated me with a toasting fork.' The woman behind the camera apparently having slipped his recall.

Catalogue

Photographs by Harriet Crowder, 1960

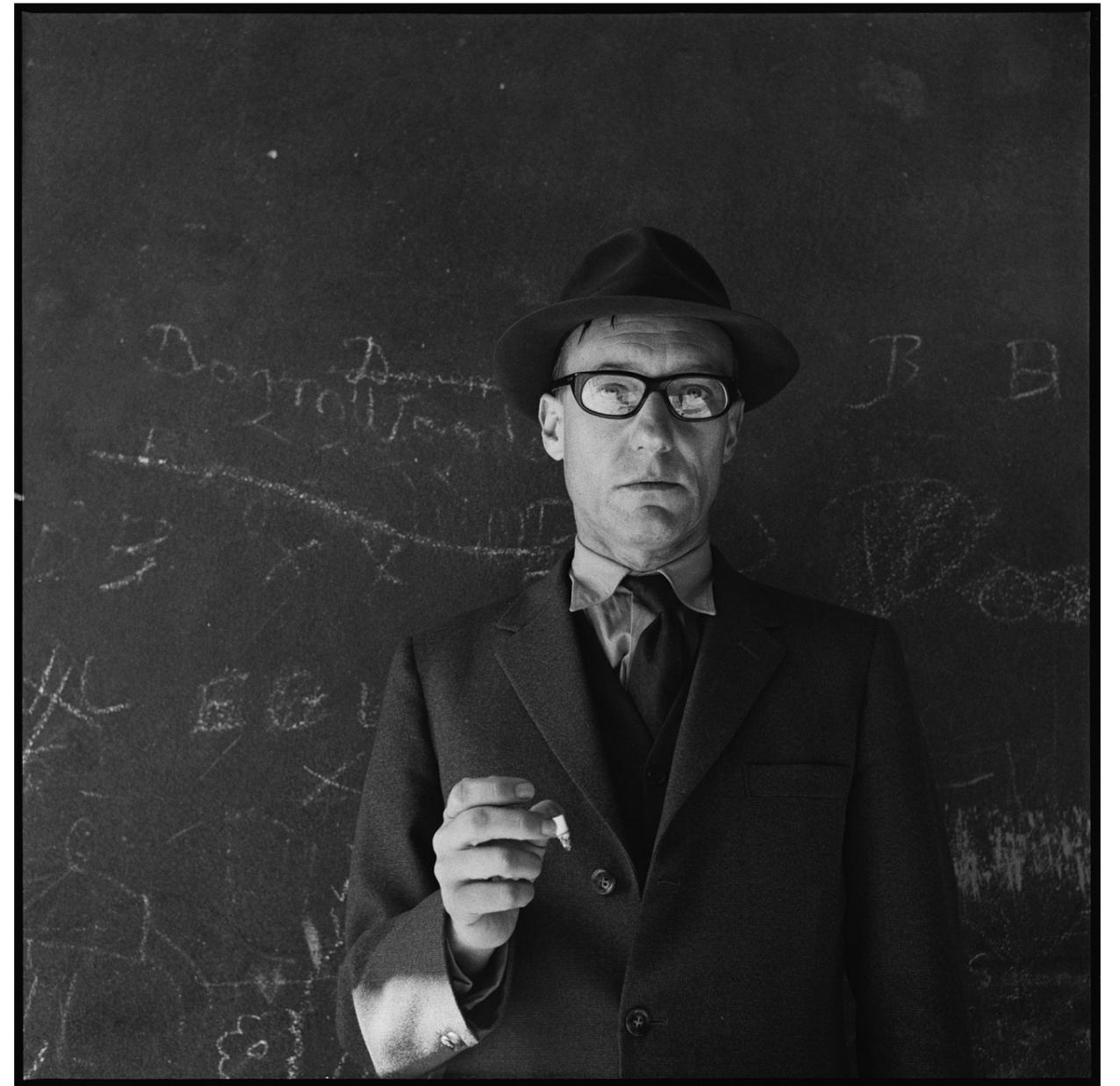
- 1 *Man Standing at Bethel Square, Lion Street, Brecon, Wales*
image size 1030 × 1030 mm, sheet size 1100 × 1105 mm
edition: 7 copies + 3 artist's proofs, 2015
- 2 *Portrait of a Man*
image size 510 × 510 mm, sheet size 600 × 605 mm
edition: 7 copies + 3 artist's proofs, 2015
- 3 **9 photographs**
contact sheet, 3 strips of 3 '6 × 6' black and white negatives
- 4 **10 photographs**
contact sheet, 3 strips of 3 and one single '6 × 6' black and white negative

Printed Matter

- 5 'On The End Of Every Fork', review by Anthony Burgess of *Naked Lunch*
London: *The Guardian*, 20 November 1964, p. 9
- 6 *Call Me Burroughs*
LP record, 310 × 310 mm, Paris: The English Bookshop, 1965
- 7 *Burroughs, Pelieu, Kaufman: Textes*
anthology, 210 × 270, Paris: Editions l'Herne, 1967
- 8 *Intrepid*
magazine, 216 × 280 mm, Buffalo, NY: Intrepid Press, 1969
- 9 *Hooked*
pamphlet, 165 × 203 mm, London: Axle Publications, 1963



1 *Man Standing at Bethel Square, Lion Street, Brecon, Wales, 1960*





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contact sheet, 3 strips of three '6 x 6' black and white negatives

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20.11.64
NEW FICTION

William Burroughs

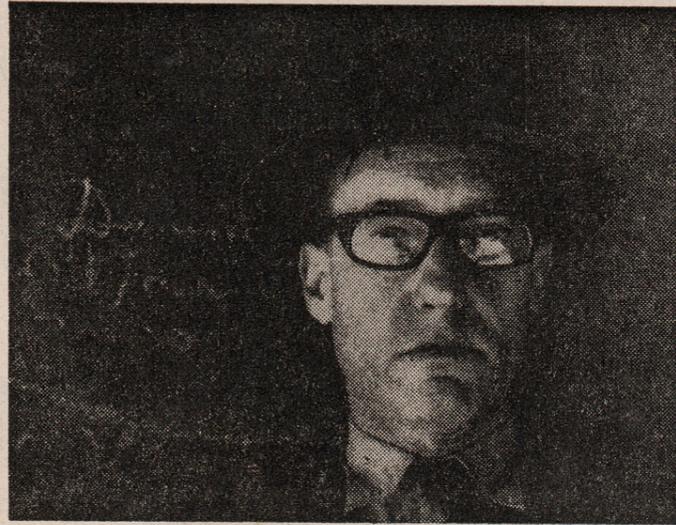
ON THE END OF EVERY FORK

by Anthony Burgess

THE NAKED LUNCH, by William Burroughs (Calder, 42s).

IT'S amazing how little is needed to slake the thirsts of the pornography-hounds, the prurient sniggerers, the protectors of public morals. From the title of Mr Burroughs's masterpiece they will be led to expect something illicitly agapoid, a sort of phallic Laocoön, and they will be disappointed. What they will find, on the other hand, is a palimpsest of obscenity so emetic that no amount of casuistry will be able to justify a charge of inflammation and corruption. This, God help us, is no "Fanny Hill" or "Lady Chatterley's Lover." It is a picture of hell, and hell is not corrupting. The obscenity is not of Mr Burroughs's devising: it is there in the world outside. We're all sitting grinning at a ghastly meal which he suddenly shows us to be cannibalistic. The meat on the end of every fork is revealed as the guts and blood of our fellow-men. It is a revelation which will please nobody and may spoil a few appetites, but it has to be made, though few have the courage to make it. Mr Burroughs joins a small body of writers who are willing to look at hell and report what they see. The body is, in fact, so small that I can think of only one other writer with whom he may be compared. This is Jonathan Swift.

I suppose there is a sense in which Swift's "Modest Proposal" may be regarded as obscene, or perhaps the final book of "Gulliver's Travels." But only a corrupt world will be disgusted by *saeva indignatio*. Swift's starting-point was a sense of outrage with the world that the corrupt may still regard as insane. Burroughs's vision is that



of a man who has escaped from the agony of drug-addiction and regards the inferno with the cleansed eyes of the remembering artist. His introduction is autobiographical and clinical; he appends a long article from "The British Journal of Addiction." Some of his more charitable readers, too weak-stomached to take the art, may wish to look on the whole work as a snakepit record, a terrible but necessary thesis on the nature of the life of the damned, a piece of unusually frank didacticism. They will be wrong, since Burroughs is demonstrating that his difficult subject can only be expressed through the static (that is, neither didactic nor pornographic) shaping of the artistic imagination.

Naturalism is not enough here, nor is the euphemistic or the periphrastic. There are flights which some will glibly categorise as surrealistic, fantasies of violence which are cognate with those in the Airman's Diary of Auden's "The Orators" but which serve no mere schoolboy's rebelliousness. There are fugues which derive their themes from the everyday symbolism of rage—the processes of sex and excretion, developed into perversion and coprophagy. The creation of new and horrible worlds, as in the same author's "The Ticket That Exploded," is as necessary to Burroughs's vision as it is to Dante's. There is no device which seems to me to be purely fanciful or gratuitous; I can think of no other way in which a book like this could possibly be written.

As in any important piece of literature (and *The Naked Lunch* is very important) one ends by admiring the art which is able to transmute such terrible subject-matter into the pretext for a kind

of joy (compare "King Lear"). It is the mystery of art which enables us to read Swift again and again and emerge not harrowed but elated. Mr Burroughs's art is highly individual. He has in his time admired both Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, but he has developed techniques which seem to betray very little of the influence of that mistress and that master. For that matter, he admires Sterne and Jane Austen. His concern is with art first and last, and it is doubtful whether the cries of outrage which his book will undoubtedly provoke in this country will disturb him much. The making of this particular work of art was part of an ineluctable vocation. It demands to be read. It will make the rest of the autumn's offerings look remarkably lumpish or puny.

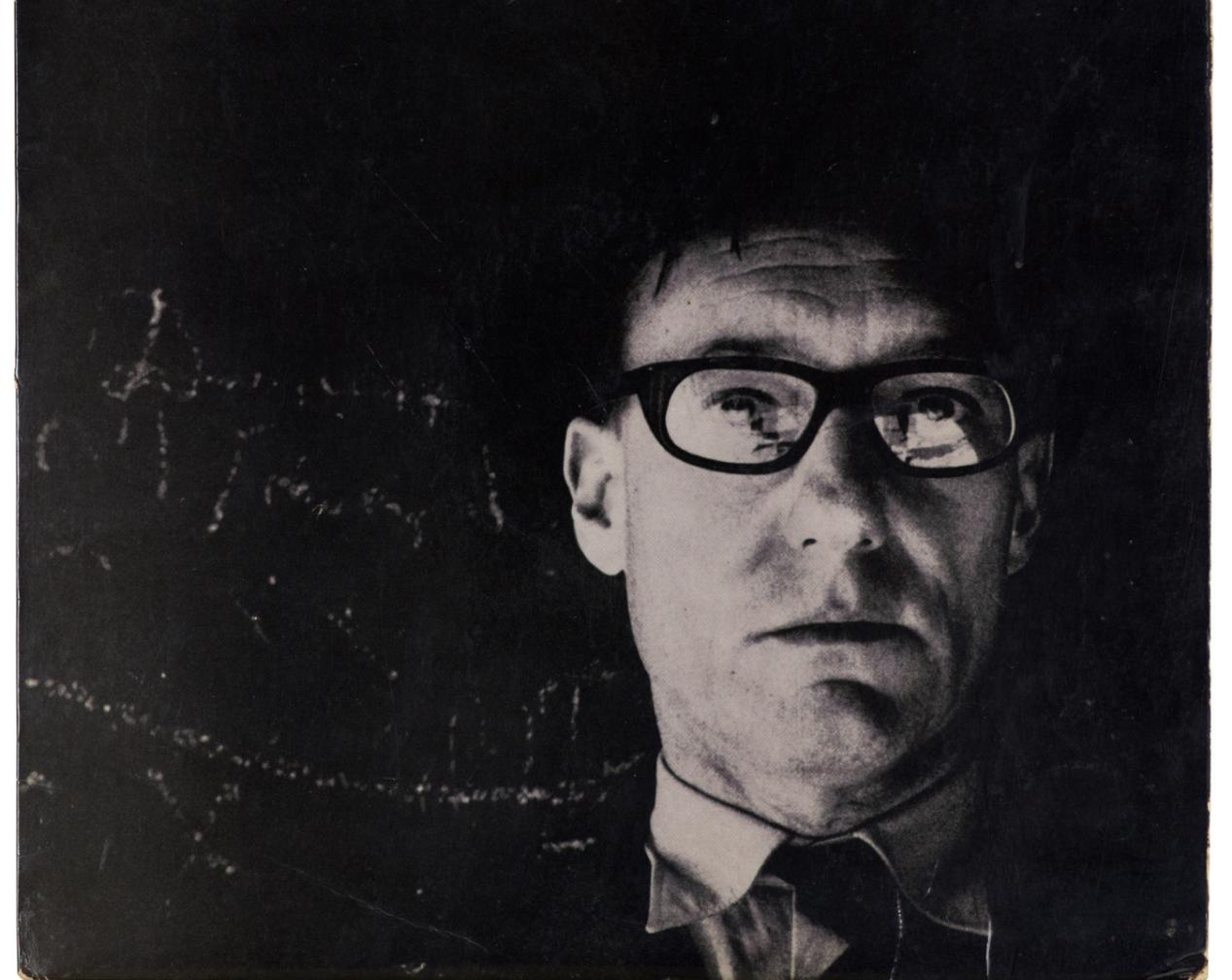
.....NEXT WEEK.....

Christmas books

- BRIAN BEHAN
- MALCOLM BRADBURY
- ANTHONY BURGESS
- ALEX COMFORT
- DONALD DAVIE
- GEOFFREY GRIGSON
- THOMAS HINDE
- FRANCIS KING
- PHILIP LARKIN
- DAVID MARQUAND
- JAMES MORRIS
- ERIC NEWTON
- NIKOLAUS PEVSNER
- RAYMOND WILLIAMS

—and many other contributors to a six-page survey of the season's books.

CALL ME BURROUGHS



5 'On The End Of Every Fork', review of *The Naked Lunch* by Anthony Burgess
London: *The Guardian*, 20 November 1964, p. 9

6 *Call Me Burroughs* (recto)
LP record, 310 x 310 mm, Paris: The English Bookshop, 1965

CALL ME BURROUGHS

Excerpts from "THE NAKED LUNCH" (Paris, Olympia Press, 1959)

and "NOVA EXPRESS" (New York, Grove Press)

by **William BURROUGHS**

Born in Saint Louis, Missouri, William Burroughs has lived in many corners of the world. In recent years mostly in Paris, London and Tangiers. His first novel "Junkie" came out in New York, but his great work "The Naked Lunch" was published in Paris, in 1959, by Olympia Press. It was followed by "The Soft Machine", 1961, and "The Ticket That Exploded", 1962, also by Olympia Press. The "Naked Lunch" has since appeared in New York and London, and has been translated into French as "Le Festin Nu". Burroughs is now back in New York, where Grove Press just published his latest book, "Nova Express".

There is more to William Burroughs than meets the eye. I won't go so far as to apply to Burroughs' prose Schenberg's premise that a good composition is playable in only one tempo. And I will leave it up to the door-to-door salesmen of this record to pretend that the master's voice is an indispensable key to the arcanes of "The Naked Lunch" and "Nova Express". But Burroughs reading Burroughs helps. The way (for me, at least) Joyce the frustrated Irish tenor, plowing through the waves of Anna Livia Plurabelle, endowed "Finnegans Wake" with an authorized and unforgettable sound pattern; the way Gertrude Stein's mother-of-us-all tone established forever after the rhythmic cadences of "The Making of Americans"; and the way Ezra Pound, holding forth at breakfast on you-name-the-subject with a voice bowed with the intellectual weight of centuries, bared the method and madness of "The Cantos".

The first time I heard Burroughs' voice was over rabbit pie at a friend's apartment in Paris. The sound of the talk, as well as the subject (rabbit pie, for instance, and John Fitzgerald Kennedy), was full of the American thing, and I thought: Mark Twain must have talked like this, and Ambrose Bierce, and I'm sure he likes apple pie. Later, when I first heard these excerpts from "The Naked Lunch" and "Nova Express" (recorded in Paris when Burroughs was still presiding over the Wayfarer Strangers at the old "beat" hotel at 9, rue Git-le-Cœur), Twain and Bierce and the apple pie were still in evidence, plus a large dose of Texas. Charley the medicine-show man setting tonic to a lot of rubes who ought to know better but take a chance because as everybody knows chance is a fool's name for fate. And I was impressed that Burroughs had not oiled his voice box for the recording session, after the fashion of the late great Welshman and the recent wave of tellers of tales, to lure his listeners with lubricity and melodrama.

Burroughs reading Burroughs is Plain Talk: "I am a recording instrument... I do not presume to impose 'story' 'plot' 'continuity'... Insofar as I succeed in Direct recording of certain areas of psychic process I may have limited function... I am not an entertainer."

The play-back of this "recording instrument" sounds like a slow but faithful old Ford, with out-of-date St. Louis plates, a buggy somewhat the worse for international wear and tear on rocky roads, but hell-bent for interplanetary travel. Or as interplanetary as you can get when you are only two inches off the ground. Only two inches off the ground—but always two inches. These two inches may seem like two light years to a lot of Burroughs' readers, especially to those with their feet planted squarely on the ground. The author's voice cannot help but narrow the gap. The old Ford just keeps jogging along, the high beams playing peeping tom to the elusive language of night, the low speed stalling traffic in the thousand-mile-a-minute language of junk.

Sometimes decked out as time's winged chariot comin' for to carry me home, the old Ford occasionally gets souped up into time's winged phallus comin' for no reason at all. But its wings are clipped—fortunately or unfortunately, depending upon your cup of tea—and the listener-spectator seldom shoots along too fast to read the Burma Shave signs along the jungle stretches of the journey, or to overhear here and there innocent kids in school washrooms telling over and over again the one about the three principal parts of a stove (lifter, leg and poker) while their grown-up relatives, in another part of the forest, try in vain and repulsive ways to relate to the unnatural order of things in a world where ladies and gentlemen long, long ago ceased to function as human beings ("Well all right... But why cancha just get physical like a human?").

"Naked Lunch is a blueprint," writes Burroughs, "a How-To book... How-To extend levels of experience by opening the door at the end of a long hall... doors that only open in silence... Naked Lunch demands silence from the reader. Otherwise he is taking his own pulse..."

Silentium! Let the man talk. His voice is terrifyingly convincing.

Emmett Williams

Photo by Harriet Crowther - cover by Tientje Louw
Edited by The ENGLISH BOOKSHOP 42, Rue de Seine, PARIS

Ulysses, le Tropic du Capricorne, Au-Dessous Du Volcan, le Festin Nu, quatre systèmes solaires qui ont donné à la langue dite anglaise son odeur de plaie cosmique. La déesse de la Fertilité, au centre de l'arène Univers, mit au monde ces quadruplés dans une crise de rire. L'idée (victorienne) de roman, comment aurait-elle pu survivre à un tel accouchement?

Joyce et Burroughs ont transféré dans le langage, le craquement du monde. Des charges hallucinogènes ont été placées entre les mots: dès qu'on y touche, tout saute.

L'écrivain n'est plus un simple fabricant de machine célibataire, il est la machine célibataire (The Soft Machine) sur laquelle la vie cogne des textes de sang. Burroughs, celui qui porte le nom d'un engin, annonce la ruine et prépare la liquidation définitive de la broyeuse neutralisatrice appelée Science. Entre Art et Civilisation son choix est fait. (Civilisation est ce qui casse et plaque l'individu dans son élan. Celui qui se relève toujours et va trop loin est un créateur). Entre le vécu et l'écrit, son choix est fait. (L'essentiel, irracontable pour des raisons techniques, est ce qui alimente notre incendie. La littérature, par contre, toujours de qualité sinon de quantité industrielle, singe l'existence, respecte la loi et assure la conservation de la conscience collective). Ainsi le créateur rejette-t-il avec dégoût les plaisirs du fonctionnariat et les avantages de la réification.

Le voyant apprend ce que c'est que traverser le Réel. Burroughs, lui, tape au fond du vagin cosmique, de l'anus solaire, de la boîte crânienne piégés. Il ré-sexualise les rites clandestins ou automatiques pour en faire quelque chose de sacré, de terrifiant. Les "modestes propositions contre la peine de mort" intercalées dans le Festin Nu sont là pour nous rappeler, en pleine guerre sexuelle, que notre ambiguïté affective est sans limite. Un bruit d'iceberg entrant avec jouissance dans le Titanic émane du Corps du Docteur Benway.

Il ne s'agit pas de beaux sentiments, mais de nécessités organiques dont il faudra tenir compte tôt ou tard. Je vois clairement la participation de Burroughs à la lignée du Divin Marquis.

Inventeurs d'une haute sauvagerie visionnaire - absolument interdite - par qui les grands dépassements sont incarnés. Inutile de dénombrer les générations ou les siècles nécessaires pour que la société les rattrape et monnaie leurs ossements intellectuels.

Maintenant vous allez entendre la voix et pénétrer sur le domaine mental de William Burroughs.

Attention! Là où vous voyez du délire, il n'y a que la faiblesse de votre regard et la débilite de votre intelligence. Puisiez-vous, au moins, en tirer les signes d'un décalage entre votre état "normal" et l'état second ou troisième qui est celui du poète. Puissiez-vous comprendre que cette faiblesse doit être surmontée par vous et ce décalage éliminé en vous pour que le délire (vécu par vous) devienne signifiant.

Car il ne suffit pas que le verbe, à son intensité vibratoire maxima, émette ou retransmette des ondes, des images, des idées. Il faut que ces ondes soient captées, absorbées et retransmises à nouveau. Pourquoi l'extase, la transubstantiation et les autres phénomènes qui relèvent de la magie du verbe provoquent-ils la panique?

Messieurs les propriétaires-gérants de la Révolution, c'est à vous que je parle. Admettez-vous enfin que tout est à refaire puisque vous avez tout raté - et que vous avez visé trop bas et trop mal? Vous qui portez le masque, la livrée, l'uniforme invisible, vous êtes bien dressés et peut-être qu'à la longue vous avez fini par aimer le cirque pour lequel vous travaillez. Mais ne dites pas que c'est ça la vie, et cessez d'exiger que nous nous contentions de si peu, nous aussi.

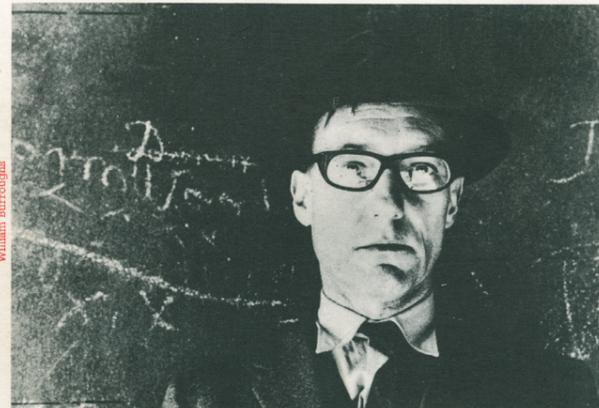
A présent, messieurs, nous savons que l'art révolutionnaire n'est pas ce qui bourre le crâne, mais au contraire ce qui déclenche dans l'être l'élan de la surconscience et de la souveraineté.

William Burroughs, je ne connais pas d'écrivain américain vivant - à part le poète Allen Ginsberg - qui puisse être si exactement désigné par le mot **révolutionnaire**.

Jean-Jacques Lebel
Avril 1965

Réalisation S.F.P.P. - Paris
IMP. SAINT-ROCH - PARIS

L'Herne Burroughs Pélieu Kaufman Textes

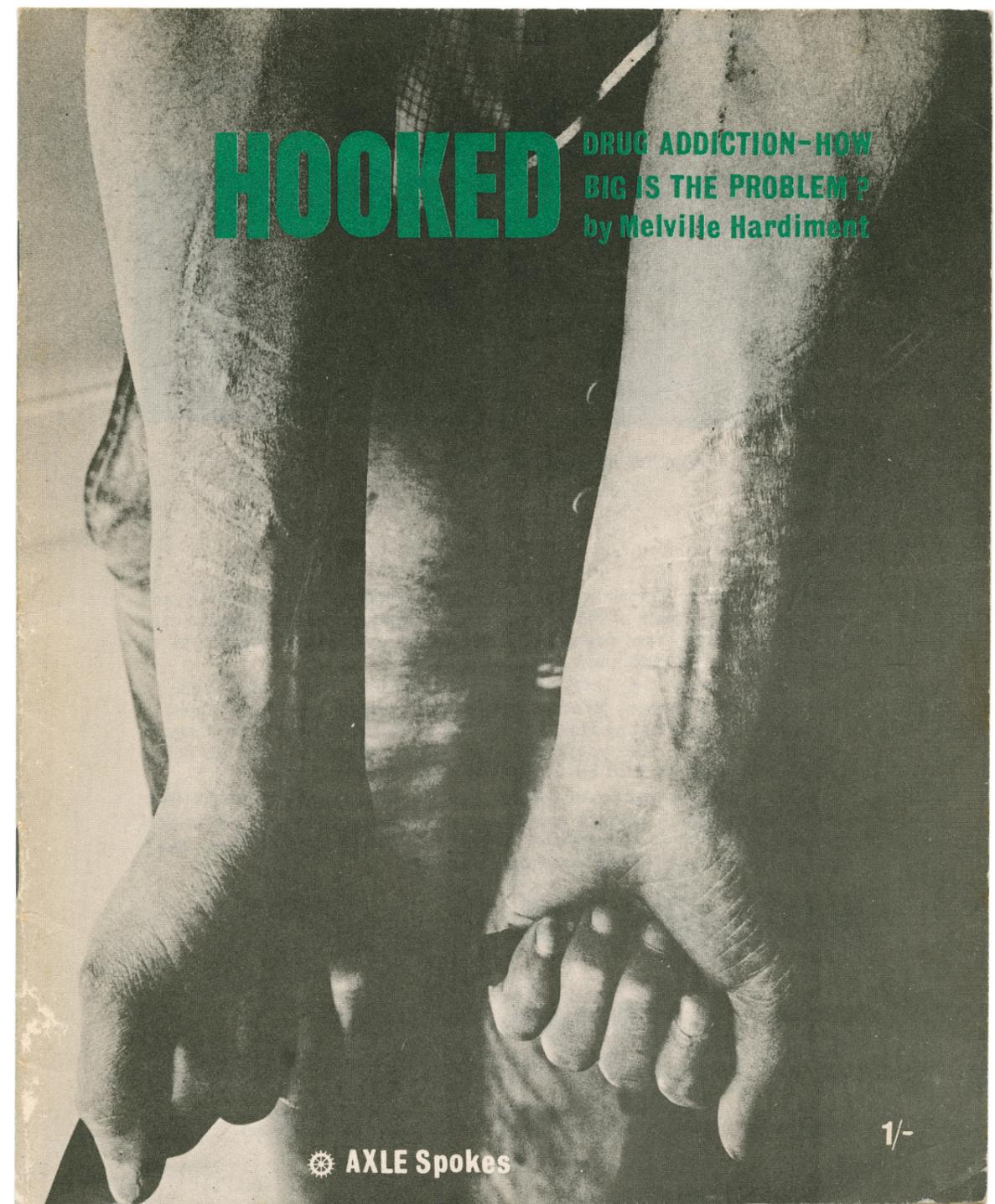
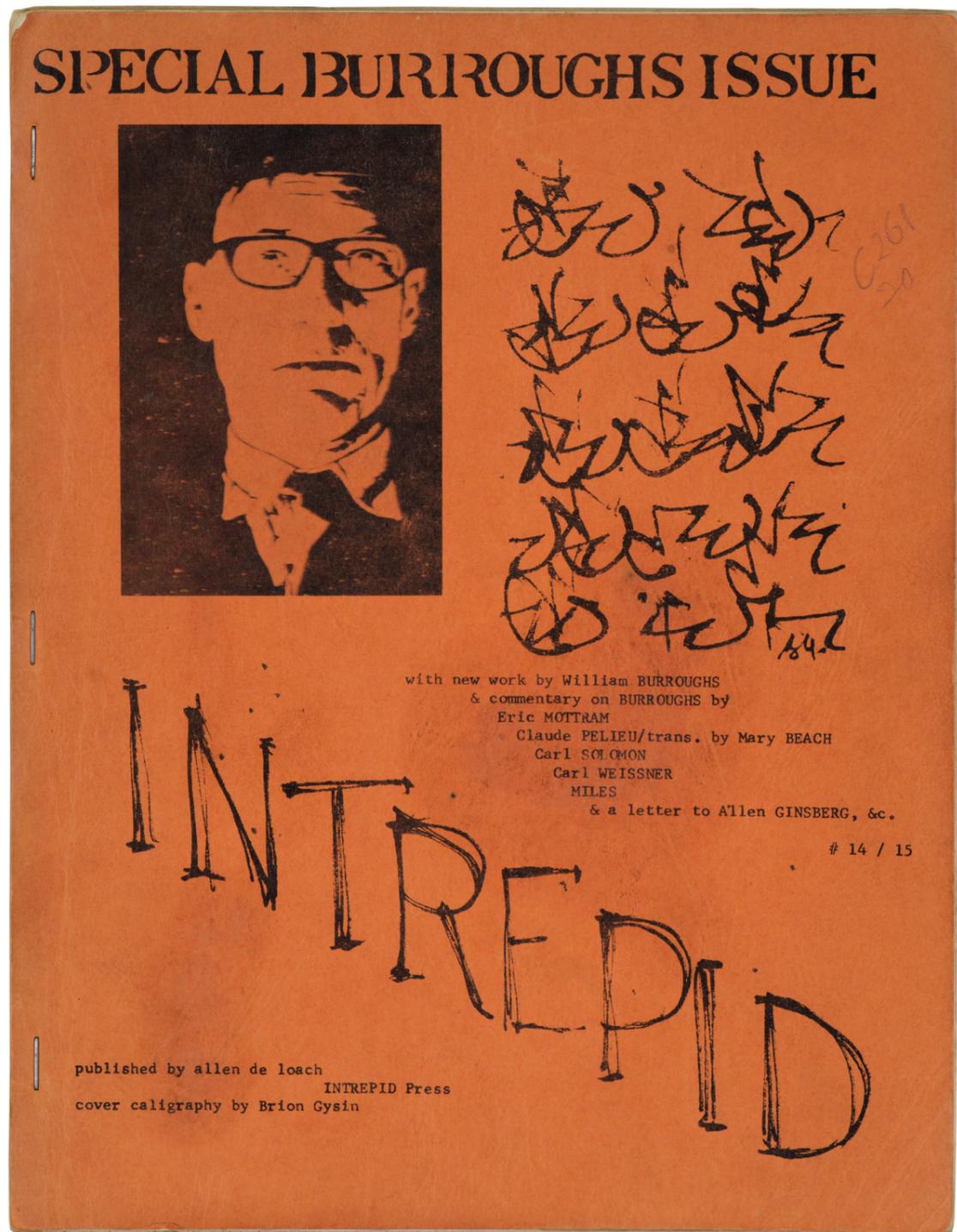


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