

Burroughs shocking, but not funny

by Kerry Knoll
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Eye Opener]

Toronto's Cinema Lumiere seems to be a suitable place for American writer William Burroughs to speak. It is a dilapidated structure, but, like the characters of Burroughs' novels, still standing and functional.

The inside is a black and dimly lit affair, which the proprietors attempted to cheer up hanging great long sheets of colored cloth in the backstage and by playing slow jazz records.

Burroughs spoke to a full house, an unusual thing, since a five dollar admission was charged for the 45 minute reading. But not so unusual when one considers the nature of Burroughs' reputation.

Over the last three decades, the man has published over a dozen novels that have chronicled the life and times of the

drug addict, commented in the rudest ways on political figures, and defined the world in a way that can only be called surrealistic.

His style of writing could be described best as a cross between National Lampoon and Henry Miller, with a little bit of Tom Wolfe journalism thrown in.

Burroughs made headlines in the middle sixties when his book Naked Lunch was banned in Massachusetts for obscenity. He called Norman Mailer and Allen Ginsberg to the stand; eventually the book was back in the stores.

In 1975, Burroughs was voted into the distinguished American Institute of Arts and Letters.

The reading was not very good. Burroughs gave an acceptable presentation, but the material he selected for the occasion, drawn from many different periods of writing, seemed to be aimed at entertainment rather than

giving the audience an understanding of his work as a whole.

For instance, he described the typical American's daughter as being "cunt deep in shit."

He wrote a song in memory of the Sex Pistols called "Bugger the Queen" which he said he hoped someone would sing one day.

He gave the audience a long explanation of the "shits" in our society, people infected by a particular virus that makes them that way. "A wise old black faggot," he read, "said to me some years ago" "Some people are shits, darling." Burroughs suggested a mass assassination as a remedy.

He made a statement on his flag which got a loud burst of laughter: "What does the American flag mean to me? Soak it in heroin and I'll suck it."

Then there was the one written about President Roosevelt's staff, which consisted of a drag queen, a panhandler, a purple-assed baboon and a peddler of used condoms. Lots of laughs.

Now, there is nothing at all

wrong with this type of literary humour, except that it is intended to be funny and it is not, really. Its effect relies almost totally upon shock.

It did shock some, probably, but not most of those who made up the audience and were hard-core Burroughs

fans. Who else would pay to hear the same things anybody could hear at one in the morning walking down Yonge Street? The only difference was they heard it from a distinguished looking gentleman dressed in a three-piece suit.

Another Nib Knocking on the Shop of Love

Squeak of wet skin, rub of dimples belly to button, her long musical fingers lethal and fully licensed claw the soft curtains gently apart. Grinning, I load wobbly hips, squirt snow in her flammable bush, (O delicious moment, uncork and pass our thanksgiving wine and pass our thanksgiving wine Ye love curators, murderers, flatters of flat words, (All of us now dearly departed who did not foresee the limp bacon strips, the swollen yolk and family squats are gathered here today to resurrect a shrivelled nib in this whore's well of ink.

William Dodge

Wives remain battered

OTTAWA (CUP)—The "Battered Wives", a punk rock group that has been attacked for exploiting violence against women, has decided not to change its name after all.

Last month, the group had bowed to pressure from women's groups objecting to their name and their publicity and had changed its name to "The Wives".

But, at a recent Toronto press conference, it announced it was going back to its original name because its fans thought shortening the name was a cop-out.

However, the group will not be around for the next while because one of its members has just quit.

gimmick.

The groups pointed to the band's name and to its logo, which shows a fist with lipstick on it coming out of a heart dripping blood as exploitative of the serious problem of wife-beating.

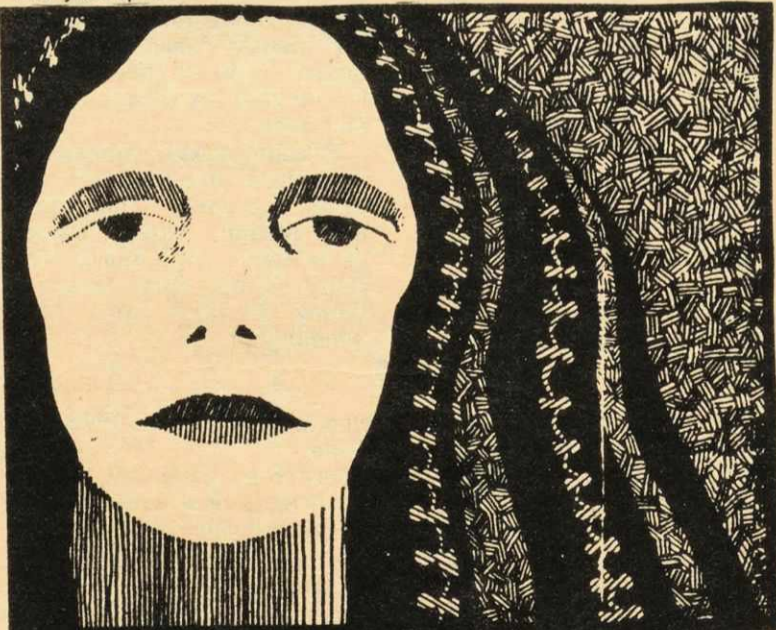
According to NUS delegate Barb Stewart, the band's name promotes the legitimacy of violence against women and "more importantly, trivializes it".

"It makes it something to be laughed at. It makes it seem not dangerous, but part of the daily relationships between men and women."

However, band spokespeople said that nothing in its

act promoted violence. The name "Battered Wives" came from its feeling that its music was accepted by neither punk rockers nor mainstream pop artists, and it thus felt "battered".

A spokesperson for the group's booking agent said that, if women still object to the name, "it's just tough".



Until it finds a new drummer, the band said at the press conference, it won't be touring.

The band first came under fire in October from women's groups and from the National Union of Students, who urged its members not to book bands which exploit violence against women as a publicity

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