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IT'S **BUG JACK
BARRON** TIME

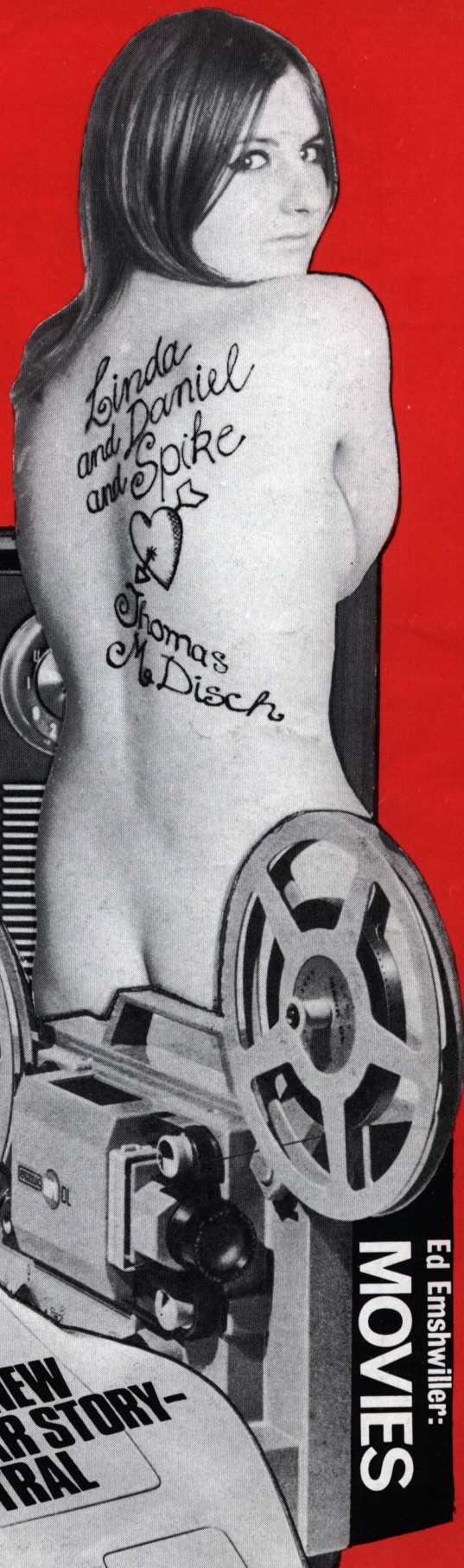
NORMAN SPINRAD'S BRILLIANT
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art scene's
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GILES GORDON:
'Line up on the
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ACID-HEAD WAR STORY-
AUTO-ANCESTRAL
FRACTURE**



Ed Emshwiller:
MOVIES

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Madrid September 26 1967 On the charge of writing against the state, Senor Arrabal told the court that his inscription did not include obscenities against "la patria" but against "la patra" a nickname for his cat, Cleopatra. The prosecutor, who asked for a sentence of 16 months' imprisonment, accepted that he had written "la patra" but claimed that he intended to imply "la patria" Arrabal is the founder of a surrealist theatrical movement known as "El Panico" and dedicated to *Pan*. He said: "The book-signing ceremony was a *Panic* ceremony. I was selling a *Panic* book dedicated to the god *Pan*." Five *Panic* stories by ARRABAL, appear in the current issue 26 of TRANSATLANTIC REVIEW, together with erotica by PAUL ABLEMAN, fictions by THOMAS DISCH, LEONARD MICHAELS, MICHAEL GOLDSTEIN and ISHMAEL co-founder of the Orgasmic, Synergetic, and Geodesic community: DROP CITY, and many many more.

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Number 178

Contents

- 2 **Christopher Finch:** Free Agents and Divine Fools
- 5 **Norman Spinrad:** Bug Jack Barron (1)
- 17 **Giles Gordon:** The Line-up on the Shore
- 19 **Brian Aldiss & C. C. Shackleton:** Auto-Ancestral Fracture
- 31 **Ed Emshwiller:** Movies
- 40 **Thomas M. Disch:** Linda & Daniel & Spike
- 43 **Brian W. Aldiss:** An Age (conclusion)
- 59 **James Colvin:** A Literature of Acceptance
- 62 **John T. Sladek:** Mac the Naif
- 65 **The Authors and Classified Advertisements**

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Editor: MICHAEL MOORCOCK. Associate Editor: LANGDON JONES

Design: CHARLES PLATT. Assistant Editor: DOUGLAS HILL

Science Editor: Dr. CHRISTOPHER EVANS. Arts Editor: CHRISTOPHER FINCH

Advertising: DIANE LAMBERT. Aeronautics Advisor: EDUARDO PAOLOZZI

Editorial contributions and assistance: JOHN SLADEK, CHRIS PRIEST

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Free Agents and Divine Fools

NINETEEN SIXTY SEVEN has been an unexciting year in the art world—on the surface anyway. This is hardly surprising. For better or for worse, art is meshed with economics (and there's nothing new about this—patronage has always been a key factor whether coming from the church, a Renaissance prince or the owner of a fleet of taxis). A change in the American tax relief laws or uncertainties in the city are automatically registered in Madison Avenue and along Bond Street. Dealers, in the past few months, have been unwilling to take risks, so no new tendencies have been launched. All of which, of course, is not necessarily unhealthy; but in a climate where novelty has been the norm it certainly gives the impression of malaise.

Is this, then, a temporary recession or is there some real malaise running much deeper? We are constantly told that for the British economy to survive there must be fundamental changes of structure—new methods of production, new managerial attitudes are needed. The old systems are exhausted. The art gallery, as it operates today, is still very much an organ of these old systems—exploits the same social and economic factors. The artist remains (or can remain if he chooses) a free agent. Ironically it is this freedom that is the real commodity

in which the gallery is dealing. Artistic freedom is of value because art has a firm rôle in the greater socio-economic structure (exerting comparatively little power in material terms but, like a 9th Dan, exerting it in just the right place).

The artist functions within the system yet he is not strictly of it. His simplest function (as the Outsider, or Divine Idiot) is to act as a safety valve—providing for the consumer a vicarious relief from the pressures of civilisation by crushing obsolete Oldsmobiles with steam-rollers or by siring 43 illegitimate offspring. In this rôle he becomes a sort of cultural Playmate of the Month. Alternatively, of course, the artist can elect to use his freedom more constructively. To do this he must probably abandon the charming fiction of the Outsider (in any case, no fiction is more rapidly assimilated than that of the Outsider). He must learn to operate within the possibilities of the existing system, seeking to fulfil and expand those possibilities rather than to ignore them.

The whole notion of avant garde activity—at least, as it is popularly understood—seems obsolescent. An artist like Andy Warhol, for instance, exploits a current situation rather than creating a new one (which does not preclude the possibility that a new situation will

evolve as a result of his activities). The situation today is that hundreds of new avenues have been opened but almost none of them have been explored—let alone exploited. The relationship of the fine-art sensibility with the worlds of science, technology, electric media, and so on, remains—except for the efforts of a few individuals—fundamentally immature. Most artists are like blushing drag queens, preferring not to venture beyond the tawdry glamour of their own closed system.

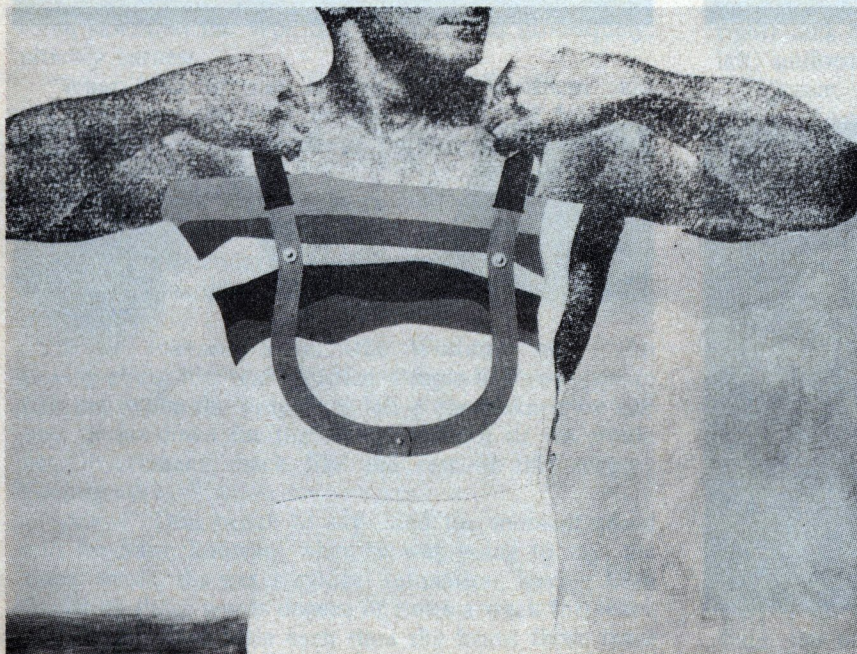
The art world can probably crawl on indefinitely in this way but at the cost of Culture becoming just another sub-culture. Artists are beginning to look like social casualties, which is a sad state of affairs. Many people who would, at some earlier time, have gravitated to the fine arts now choose to by-pass them and are able to find satisfaction (or at least the promise of satisfaction) by working in the fields of popular media. This is as it should be but it does not mean that the fine artist—or his spiritual successor—does not still have a vital rôle to play. His freedom (enfranchised by Mammon) can be put to any number of valuable tasks, the most important of which is perhaps the creation of new cultural communication systems. Old class-structures may be breaking down but new forms of snobbery—the snobberies of the specialist—are rapidly replacing them. The artist is in a unique position to overcome these snobberies. That he should succeed is essential if we are to retain any semblance of an integrated culture.

The percentage of artists working in this field—rather than cultivating their own little snobbish system—is frighteningly small. In this country, Eduardo Paolozzi and Richard Hamilton are the only artists to have made any sustained intellectual assault on the problem. Some of their younger contemporaries—Joe Tilson, Peter Blake, Allen Jones and Peter Phillips, for example—have extended their sensibilities sufficiently to engage with the problem and there are signs, happily, that this engagement on their part is moving towards a new intellectual toughness. If the artistic imagination is to be anything more than a hot-house plant, this tendency must be encouraged and extended.

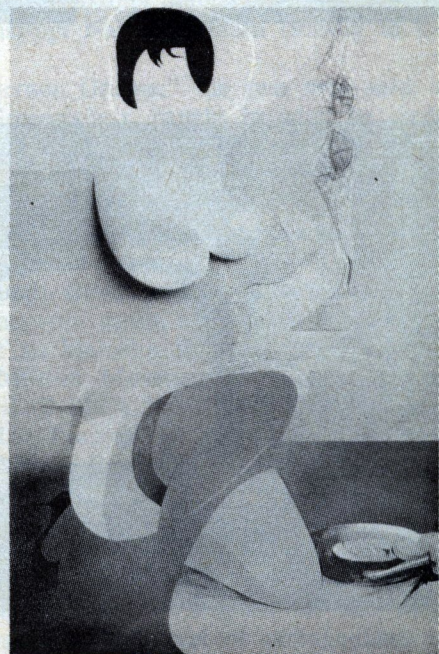
Christopher Finch



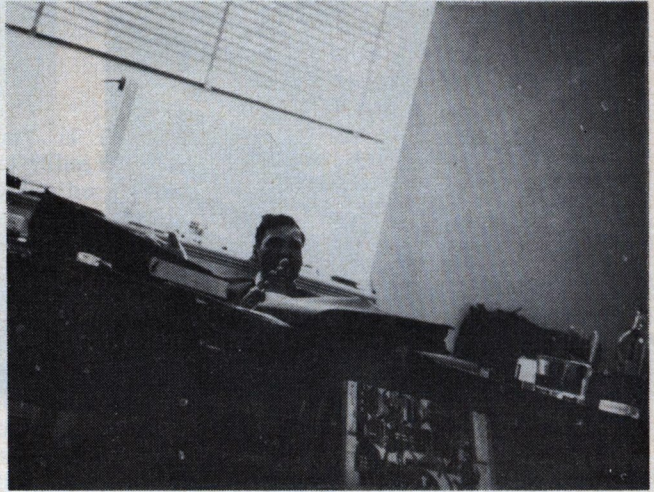
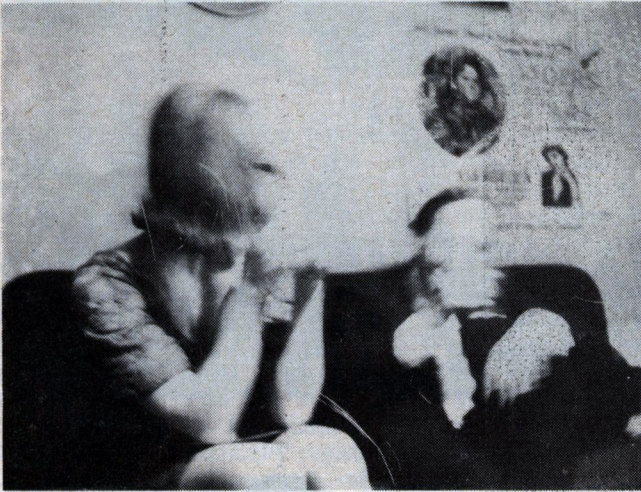
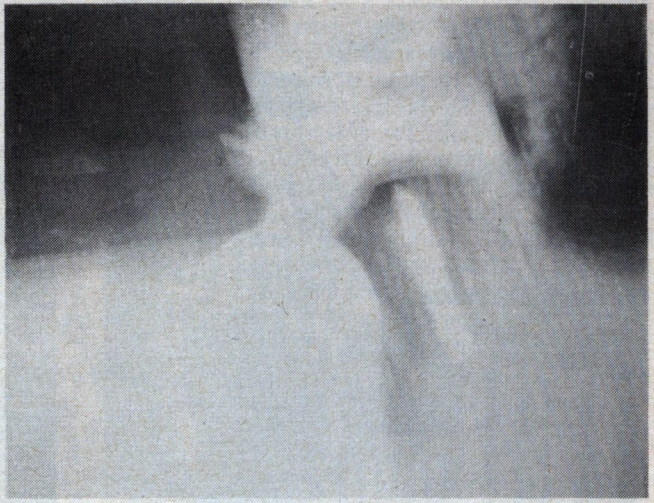
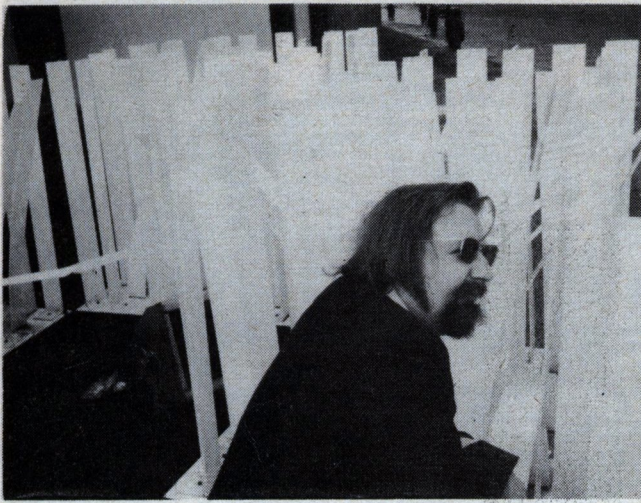
Eduardo Paolozzi



Towards a definitive statement on the coming trends in men's wear and accessories (c) Adonis in Y fronts. (Richard Hamilton)



Pin-up (Richard Hamilton)



BUG JACK BARRON BY NORMAN SPINRAD

part one

CHAPTER ONE

"DIG, SO I say, man, why ain't there a check for me?" the cat Sara Westerfeld knew only as the Wolfman said, pulling at his scraggly muttonchops. "I'm a human being, ain't I?"

"Know what the fucker says?" the Wolfman whined with a great display of wounded dignity Sara could not tell was put on or not. "Says, 'Jim, you're too young for Social Security, too old for A.I.D., you ain't a nigger and you ain't a spic and you ain't never worked ten weeks in a row to qualify for Unemployment. You're not a student, and you're not sick and you ain't no veteran, and in fact you're a dirty old beatnik, is what you are. There ain't no Social Beatnik Administration, and there ain't no Crusade for Beatnik Justice, and there ain't even gonna be no quick Frozen beatnik when you buzz off.'"

The Wolfman paused, and now Sara saw a strange thing happen to his face as the supercilious mood left it, revealed as superciliousness by its passing, and she saw, and saw that the others in the pseudo-Japanese room saw, that the Wolfman for once was grotesquely, pitifully earnest.

"What kind of shit is that?" the Wolfman said stridently, and the joint he was holding slid from his fingers and fell, unheededly burning, to the black-lacquered coffee table.

"Screw it, will you, Wolfman, and pick up that Pall Mall you dropped on the table," Don said, trying to act like the Defender of Hearth and Home in front of Sara, make his dumb little points with her in her own apartment.

"Screw yourself, Sime," the Wolfman said. "I'm talking about like real injustice. People like you, people like me, we're the only ones left gotta make it on our own or go down for the count, make it or we croak, no Government check like the rest of this faggoty country. We—"

"Aw—" Don began to say—and the moment stood still for Sara, knowing what he was going to say, the three words, the exact cynical intonation, having been flayed by those words dozens of times a week for years, wincing, dying a little each time she heard those three last syllables, knowing that Don Sime would now

never ball her, not with a billion screaming Chinese holding her down, not ever. Sooner would she make it with a gila monster or Benedict Howards than give herself to a man who said those three words on a Wednesday night between 8 and 9 p.m., and by the little death induce the grand mal déjà vu, images of his face on the television screen carefully touselled over his face on the long-ago blue-flowered pillow carelessly neat his beard blue and stubbly. . . .

Don Sime, unheeding, and, she saw, an unheeding, rotten swine by his thoughtless reflex reaction, nevertheless said the three magic words, the outsider's inside expression, that shrivelled to death for an instant the insides of Sara.

"Aw," said Don Sime, "bug Jack Barron."

"SPLIT, BOYS, WILL you?" drawled Lukas Greene, waving his black hand (and for that nasty little moment for some reason thinking of it as black) at the two men (perversely seeing them for the tired moment as niggers) in the Mississippi State Police (coon to the right) and Mississippi National Guard (schvug to the left) uniforms.

"Yessur, Governor Greene," the two men said in unison: (And Greene's ear, caught in what he could outside viewpoint see as the dumb, mindless masochistic moment, heard it as "Yassah, Massah".)

"Tote dat barge," Governor Greene said to the door when it had closed behind them. What the hell's wrong with me today? Green thought irritably. That damned Shabazz, that dumb, trouble-making nig—

There was that word again, and that was where the whole thing was at. Malcolm Shabazz, Prophet of the United Black Muslim Movement, Chairman of the National Council of Black Nationalist Leaders, Recipient of the Mao Peace Prize, and Kingfish of the Mystic Knights of the Sea, was neither more nor less than a nigger. He was everything the shades saw when they heard the word nigger: Peking-loving ignorant dick-dragging black oozing ape-like savage. And that cunning son of a bitch Malcolm knew it and played on it, making himself a focus of mad white hate, the purposeful prime target of garbage-throwing screaming Rockwell loonies, feeding on the hate, grow-

ing on it, absorbing it, saying to the shades: "I'm a big black mother and I hate your fucking guts and China is the Future and my dick is bigger than yours you shade bastard and there are twenty million bucks like me in this country a billion in People's China four billion in the world who hate you like I hate you die you shade mother."

As the Bohemian Boil Sucker observed to the chick who farted in his face, Greene thought, it's people like you, Malcolm, who make this job disgusting.

Greene swivelled in his chair, reached up, turned on the little TV perched on the desk across from the in-out basket. He reached instinctively for the pack of Acapulco Golds sitting on the pristine desk top, then thought the better of it. Much as he needed a good lungful of pot at this moment on this day, it was not a smart move for anyone who was where anything was at to be under the influence of anything on Wednesday night. He glanced surreptitiously at the dead screen of his vidphone, the screen that might very well come alive during the next hour with the sardonically smiling face of good old Jack Barron.

"Jack Barron," Lukas Greene sighed aloud. *Jack Barron*. Even a friend couldn't afford to be stoned if he got a public call from Jack. Not in front of a hundred million people, he couldn't.

But then it had never paid, even in the old Berkeley days, to give an edge to Jack Barron. What's-his-name—who even remembers any more?—made the mistake of letting Jack guest on his Birch grill for one night and Jack grew all over him like a fucking fungus.

And then, no more what's-his-name. Just a camera, a couple vidphones . . . and good old Jack Barron.

If only . . . Green thought, the same old familiar Wednesday night if only thought . . . if only Jack were still one of us. With Jack on our side, the S.J.C. would have a fighting chance to break through and beat the Pretender. If only. . . .

If only Jack weren't such a cop-out. If only he had kept some of what we all seemed to lose under Bobby. But what had Jack said (and oh oh was he right, don't I know it):

"Luke," Jack Barron had said, and Greene remembered it word for word, Jack could always stick a phrase in your head like a Bester mnemonic jingle, "It sure is a bad moment when you decide to sell out. But a worse moment, the worst moment in the world, is when you decide to sell out and nobody's buying."

And how do you answer that? Greene thought. How do you answer that when you've parlayed a picket sign, a big mouth and a black skin into the Governor's Mansion in Evers, Mississippi? How do you answer, Jack, you black shade you white nigger you?

Lukas Greene laughed a bitter little laugh. The name of the show had to be an inside joke, a *real* inside joke, inside Jack's hairy little head, is all. . . .

Because who in hell really could . . . bug Jack Barron?

COOL WAS THE night breeze in Benedict Howards' throat as he lay easily in the crisp white sheets of the hospital bed, snug and safe in the monolithic citadel that was the Rocky Mountain Freezer Complex. Out beyond the half-strength heat-curtain opening on to the balcony (they had screamed when he demanded to feel the breeze when he came out of it and they told him it seemed to have worked, but no half-ass gaggle of quacks was going to give any lip to Benedict Howards) the mountains were vague shapes in the heavy darkness and the stars were washed out by the muzzy twilight glow from the busy-lights of the Freezer Complex, his Complex, all of it, now and. . . .

Forever?

He tasted forever in the pine breeze that blew in from the mountains and from New York and Dallas and Los Angeles and Vegas and all the places where lesser men scurried for crumbs bug-like in the light, tasted forever lying calmed and warmed against the breeze by post-operative weakness in the sheets that he owned in the Complex he owned in the country where Senators and Governors and Honest Ed himself called him *Mr. Howards*. . . .

Tasted forever in the memory of Palacci's smug grin as he had said: "We know that it's taken, Mr. Howards, and we know that it should work. Forever, Mr. Howards? Forever is a long time. We can't know that it's forever till it's been forever, now can we, Mr. Howards? Five centuries, a millenium . . . who knows? Maybe you'll have to settle for a million years. Think that will do, Mr. Howards?"

And Howards had smiled, had allowed the doctor his dumb little joke, dumb little death-joke, allowed it when he had broken bigger men for less because what the hell you couldn't nurse every little dumb grudge like that for a million years, now could you? Had to take the long view, get rid of excess baggage.

Forever? Howards thought. Really, this time I could smell in one the doctors' sweat, see it in their fat little bonus smiles, the bastards think they've done it this time. Thought they'd done it before, but this time I can taste it, I can feel it; I hurt in the right places.

Forever. . . . Push it back forever, Howards thought. Fading black circle of light, big-eyed night nurses, daytime bitch with her plastic professional cheeriness back in the other sheets in the other hospital in the other year, tube wormlike up his nose down his throat in his guts, membranes clinging and sticking to polyethelene like a slug on a rock, with each shallow breath an effort not to choke, not to reach up with whatever left rip gagging tube from nose-throat rip blood-drip needle from left arm glucose solution from right, die clean like a man clean like boyhood Panhandle plains clear-cut knife-edge between life and death, not this pissing away of life juices in plastic in glass in tubes and retches enemas catheters needles nurses faded faggoty vases of flowers. . . .

But the circle of black light contracting, son of a

bitch no fading black circle of light snuffs out Benedict Howards! Buy the bastard, bluff him con him kill him! No dumb-ass wheel flipping off goddamn Limey limousine gives lip to Benedict Howards. Hate the bastard, fight him burn him out buy him bluff him con him kill him, open up circle of black light. Wider, wider. Hate tube hate nurses hate needles sheets flowers. Show 'em! Show 'em all, they don't kill Benedict Howards.

"No one kills Benedict Howards." Howards found himself mouthing the words; the breeze now cold, warm weakness now gone, fight reflexes pounding his arteries, light, cold sweat on his cheeks.

With a shudder, Howards wrenched himself out of it. This was another hospital another year, life poured into him, sewn into him, nurtured in Deep Sleep, not leaking out in tubes and bottles. Yes, yes, you're in control now. Paid your dues. No man should have to die twice, no man twice watching life leak away youth leak away blood leak away all leak away muscle turn to flab balls to shrivelled prunes limbs to broom-handles, not Benedict Howards. Push it back, push it back for a million years. Push it back forever.

Howards sighed, felt glands relaxing, gave himself over again to the pleasant, healthy warm weakness, knowing what it meant, warmth pushing back the cold, light opening the fading black circle, holding it open, pushing it open forever.

Always a fight, thought Benedict Howards. Fight down from Texas Panhandle to oil-money-power Dallas, Houston, L.A., New York where it all was action open oil leases land stocks electronics, NASA Lyndon Bobby Senators, Governors, toadies, *Mr. Howards*. Fight from quiet dry plains to quiet air-cooled arenas of power quiet air-cooled women skin untouched by sun by wind by armpit-sweat.

Fight from tube up nose down throat fading black circle to Foundation for Human Immortality, bodies frozen in liquid helium, voting assets liquid assets frozen with them in quiet dry helium-cooled vaults of power Foundation power my power money-power fear-power immortality power—power of life against death against fading black circle.

Fight from dry empty Panhandle seared women lying in wrecked car blood trickling from mouth pain inside fading black circle, to this moment, the first moment of forever.

Yeah, always a fight, thought Benedict Howards. Fight to escape, get, live. And now the big fight, fight to keep it all money power young fine-skinned women Foundation whole goddamned country Senators, Governors, President, air-cooled places of power, *Mr. Howards*. Forever, *Mr. Howards*, forever.

Howards looked out the heat-curtained window, saw the busy lights of the Freezer Complex, Complexes in Colorado, New York, Cicero, Los Angeles, Oakland, Washington. . . . Washington Monument, White House, Capitol where they lay in wait, men against him against

his citadel against Foundation against Freezer Utility Bill against forever, men on the side of the fading black circle.

Little more than a year, thought Benedict Howards. Little more than a year till Democratic Convention—destroy Teddy the Pretender, Hennering for President Foundation man my man my country Senators, Governors . . . *President*, Mr. Howards. Month, two months and they vote on the Utility Bill, win vote with money power fear power life against death—then let the bastards find out how! Let 'em choose then: sell out to life to Foundation to forever or give themselves to the fading black circle. Power of life against death, and what Senator, Governor, President chooses death, *Mr. Howards*?

Howards' eyes fell on the wall clock: 9.57, Mountain Time. Reflexively, his attention shifted to the tiny dormant screen of the vidphone (Mr. Howards is not to be disturbed by anyone for anything tonight, not even Jack Barron) sitting on the bedside table next to the small television set. His stomach tightened with fear of the unknown, the random, exposure.

Just reflex action, Howards thought. Wednesday night conditioned response. Nothing more. Jack Barron can't get to me tonight. Strict orders, lines of retreat, back-up men. ("Mr. Howards is on his yacht in the Gulf is in plane to Las Vegas duck hunting fishing in Canada, can't be found a hundred miles from the nearest vidphone, Mr. Barron. Mr. De Silva, Dr. Bruce, Mr. Yarborough will be happy to speak with you, Mr. Barron. Fully authorised to speak for the Foundation, actually in more intimate contact with details than Mr. Howards, Mr. Barron. Mr. De Silva, Dr. Bruce, Mr. Yarborough will tell you anything you want to know, Mr. Barron.") Jack Barron could not would not would not be permitted to bug him on this first night of forever.

Just a dancing bear anyway, Benedict Howards told himself. Jack Barron, a bone to the masses the relievers loafers acid-dope-hux-freaks Mexes niggers. Useful valve on the pressure-cooker. Image of power on a hundred million screens, image not reality, not money power fear power life against death power Senators, Governors, President, *Mr. Howards*.

Walking tightrope between network, sponsors, masses, F.C.C. (two commissioners in Foundation pocket) Jack Barron. Bread and circuses gladiator with paper sword image of power. Bullshit Jack Barron.

Nevertheless, Benedict Howards reached out, turned on the television set, waited stomach-knotted through colour images of Dodges, network emblem, Coke bottles dancing, plastic piece of ass starlet smoking Kools Supreme, station emblem, waited frowning tense in the cool night breeze, knowing others waited bellies rumbling with his in quiet air-cooled vaults of power New York, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Washington waiting for three words (scarlet on midnight blue background) to begin the hour's ordeal of

waiting, glancing at dead vidphones, pustules of Harlem, Watts, Mississippi, Strip City, Village niggers, loafers, losers, randomly popping, a hundred million cretins hunched forward smelling for blood, blue venous blood from circles of power:

"BUG JACK BARRON".

"BUG JACK BARRON"—red letters (purposefully crude, imitation of traditional "Yankee Go Home" sign scrawled on walls in Mexico, Cuba, Cairo, Bangkok, Paris) against flat dark blue background.

Off-camera gruff barroom voice over shouts: "Bugged?"

And an answering sound-collage as camera holds on the title: students heckling People's America agitator, amens to hardrock Baptist preacher mothers crying soldiers griping sour losers outside the \$2 window.

Barroom voice is cynically hopeful tone: "Then go bug Jack Barron."

Title becomes head and shoulders shot of man against uncomfortable dark background (semi-subliminal whirling moire pattern flashes seem to hang on brink of visibility like black india ink over kinesthop underpattern effect). The man is wearing fawn-yellow collarless sportjac over tieless open-necked red velour dress shirt. He looks about forty? thirty, twenty-five?—anyway, over twenty-one. His complexion seems to hover between fair and grey like a harried romantic poet; his face is composed of strangely hard-edged softnesses, tapestry of stalemated battle. His hair is reminiscent of dead men—sandy J.F.K. cut about to grow down the back of his neck flank his ears spring wild curls upward and become Dylan-like unmade bed halo. His brat-eyes (knowing eyes) smoulder with amused detachment as his full lips smile, making the smile a private in-group I-know-you-know-I-know thing with latest Brackett Audience Count estimated hundred million people.

Jack Barron smiles, nods, becomes Acapulco Golds commercial:

Mexican peon leading burro up winding trail on jungle-covered volcanic mountain, fruity-authoritative Encyclopaedia Britannica voice over: "In the high country of Mexico evolved a savoury strain of marijuana that came to be known as Acapulco Gold in the days of the contraband trade."

Cut to same peon cutting stand of marijuana with a sickle, loading it on to burro: "Prized for its superior flavour and properties, Acapulco Gold was available only to the favoured few, due to its rarity and. . ."

Roll to borderpatrolman frisking unsavoury Pancho Villa type Mexican: ". . . the difficulties involved in importation."

Aerial view of huge field of geometrically-rowed marijuana: "But now, the finest strain of Mexican seeds, combined with American agricultural skill and carefully-controlled growing conditions, produce a pure strain of marijuana unequalled in flavour, mildness . . . and relaxing properties. Now available in thirty-seven

states: (cut to close-up of red and gold Acapulco Gold pack) Acapulco Golds, America's premium quality marijuana cigarette—and, of course, totally non-carcinogenic."

Back on the screen comes Jack Barron seated on old school armrest-desk type chair, desk of which holds two standard white Bell vidphones; white chair white phones against black wash over moire pattern background makes Barron look like knight in front of forms of darkness dancing.

"What's bugging you tonight?" says Jack Barron in voice that knows it all, knows Harlem, Alabama, Berkeley, North Side, Strip City, knows it all knows clean painted cement walls of thousand Golden Age Projects urine inside jail cell knows check twice a month just enough to keep on dying (Social Security A.I.D. Unemployment Guaranteed Annual Wage pale blue cyanide Government Check) knows it all and knows what the fuck but can't stop caring, the outsider's insider.

"What bugs you, bugs Jack Barron." Barron pauses, smiles basilisk smile, dark eyes seem to pick up moving shadows off kinesthop-through-black background, Dylan-J.F.K.-punkid-buddha. "And we all know what happens when you bug Jack Barron. Call collect; the number is Area Code 212, 969-6969 (six month fight with Bell-F.C.C. over special mnemonic number) and we'll take the first call right . . . now."

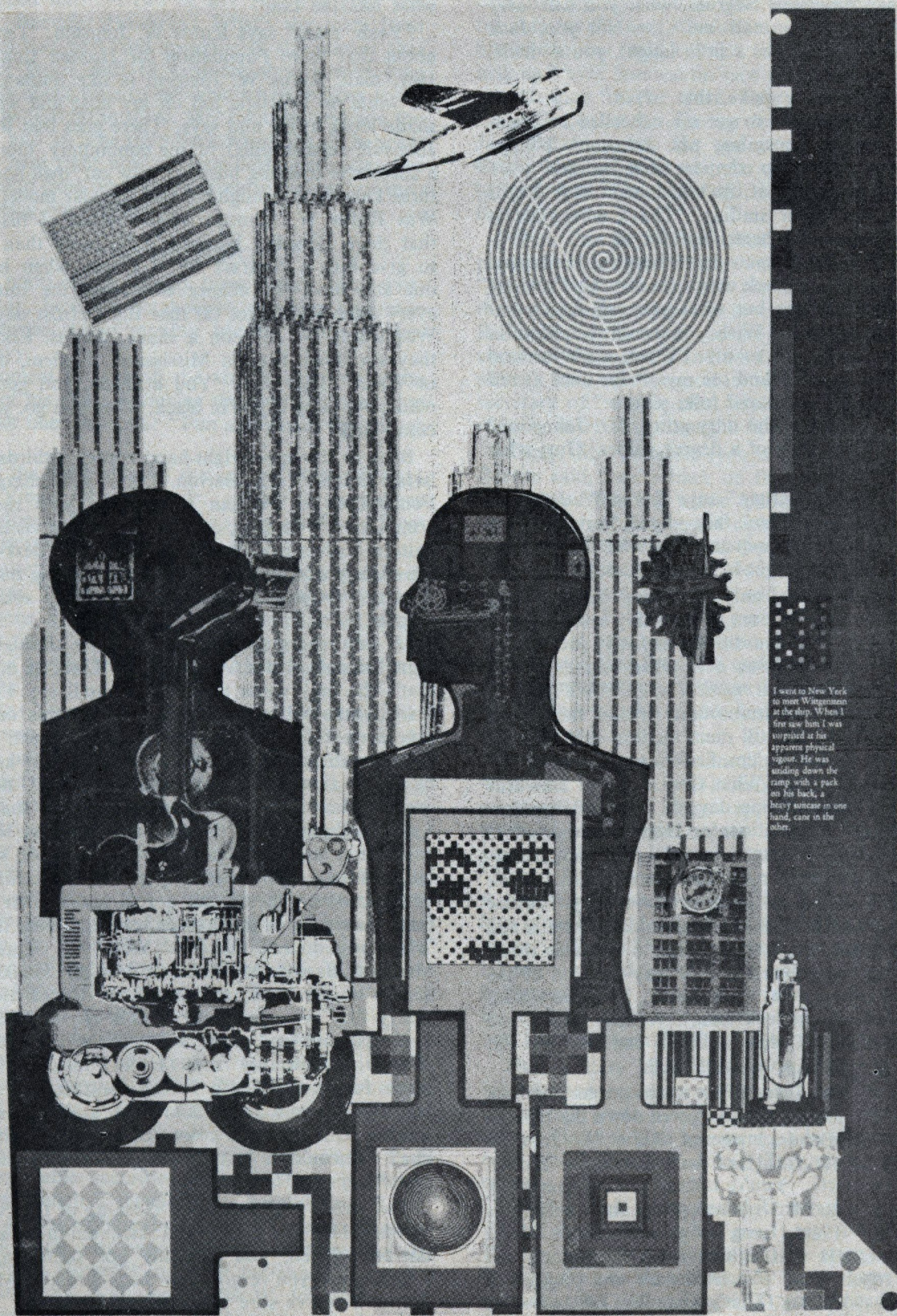
Jack Barron reaches out, thumbs audio of vidphone, vidphone camera, screen, facing him, away from studio camera. A hundred million television screens split. Lower left-hand quarter shows standard black and white vidphone image of white-shirted, white-haired Negro, vague grey vidphone-washed-out background. Remaining three-quarters of the screen is occupied in living colour by Jack Barron.

"This is *Bug Jack Barron* and you're on the air, friend. It's all yours until I say stop, a hundred million fellow Americans and all of 'em waiting to hear who you are and where you're from and what's bugging you, man. This is your moment in the old spotlight, your turn to bug whoever's bugging you. You're plugged into me and I'm plugged into the whole goofy country. So go ahead man, high from the lip and damn the torpedoes—*bug Jack Barron*," says Jack Barron, reeling it off with a big let's you and me stomp the mothers smile.

"My name is Rufus W. Johnson, Jack," the old Negro says, "and as you and the rest of the country can see out there on television, I am *black*. Mean, there's no getting away from it, Jack, I'm black, you dig? I'm not coloured, I'm not of dark complexion, not a mulatto, quadroon, octroon, bassoon or baboon. Rufus W. Johnson is a black nig—"

"*Cool it*," interrupts the voice of Jack Barron, authoritative as a knife; but with a tiny hunch of his shoulders, little smile, *really* cools it as Rufus W. Johnson smiles, hunches back.

"Yeah," says Rufus W. Johnson, "we mustn't use



I went to New York to meet Wangerman at the shop. When I first saw him I was surprised at his apparent physical vigour. He was smiling down the ramp with a pack on his back, a heavy suitcase in one hand, cane in the other.

that word, man. Uptights all thef *Afro-Americans*. coloured folk, American Negroes, what you call 'em? But we *know* what you call 'em. . . . Not you, Jack (Rufus W. Johnson laughs a little laugh), you a shade, but you a *black* shade."

"Well, maybe let's make that *sepia*," says Jack Barron. "Wouldn't want to get me cancelled in Bugaloosa. But what's happening, Mr. Johnson? I hope you didn't just call me to compare complexions."

"But that's where it's at, isn't it, man?" says Rufus W. Johnson, no longer smiling. "That's where it's at for me, anyway, that's where it's at for all us . . . *Afro-Americans*. You black, even down here in Mississippi what's supposed to be black man's country, that's where life is at—ain't nothing but what you call it, a comparison of complexions. Wish you could vidphone in colour; then I could go to my TV set, screw around with the colour controls and see myself for once as red or green or purple—*coloured* folk, y'know?"

"When do we get to the nitty-gritty, Mr. Johnson?" says Jack Barron, shade of a degree colder. "Just what is bugging you?"

"We *is* at the nitty-gritty," says Rufus W. Johnson, grey on grey image of black face—lined, hurt, scowling—expanding to fill three-quarters of the screen with Jack Barron in upper right-hand catbirdseat corner.

"When you is black, only one thing bugging you, and it bugs you twenty-fours hours a day seven a week time you're born time you die. Or anyway, once was a time when being black was over when you died. Not no more. Now we got that *medical science*. We got that Foundation for Human Immortality freezes them dead bodies like instant pizza till them medical scientists get enough smarts to defrost 'em, fix 'em up and make 'em live till Judgement Day. What they say, that Howards cat and his flunkies, 'Some day all men will live forever through the Foundation for Human Immortality.' Yeah, we the leading country in the world, we got ourselves a Foundation for Human Immortality. Make that the Foundation of *Shade* Immortality. Course we got plenty cats around like them old Rockwells and Bennie Howards think it all amounts to the same thing. Solve the Negro problem the easy way—get rid of the Negroes. Too messy, why then just fix it so the shades live forever, let them black men have their three score and ten, who cares, when a shade can live forever, long as he can pony up that \$50,000."

Tiny cold tension lines appear at the corners of Jack Barron's eyes as the screen splits even down the middle, faded black and white image of Rufus W. Johnson facing living colour reality of Jack Barron as Barron says hard but quiet: "You're talking around something that's bugging you, Mr. Johnson. How about letting us in on it? Riff it out. Long as you don't talk about any intimate parts of the human anatomy don't use four letter words we're still on the air and plugged in no matter what you say. That's what *Bug Jack Barron's* all about. It's hit-back time, worm-turning time, and if you got a real bind on any powers that be, this is the

time they gotta sit there and take it while the you-know-what hits the fan."

"Yeah, man," says Rufus W. Johnson. "I'm talking about that there Foundation for *Human* Immortality. Hey, man, Rufus W. Johnson is like human. Bleach me white do a plastic job on my nose and why every shade looks at me and says, 'There goes that Rufus W. Johnson, regular pillar of the community. Got himself a successful trucking business, new car, own house, sent three kids right through college. Regular model citizen.' Was Rufus W. Johnson white instead of black, why that there Benedict Howards'd be more than pleased to give him a contract for a Freeze when he flakes out and have the chance to collect the interest on every dime Rufe's got till that Big Defrost day comes. Was Rufus W. Johnson a shade, that is. Know what they say down here in Mississippi, Harlem, out there in Watts? They say: 'You a shade, you got forever made, but baby if you're black, when you go, you don't come back.'"

Back to the upper right-hand corner catbirdseat goes living colour Jack Barron. "Are you charging the Foundation for Human Immortality with racial discrimination?" he says, dancing black semi-visible moire pattern flashes from back-drop off white desk-chair in his slightly downturned eye-hollows turning his face to a mask of smouldering danger, suddenly solemn and sinister.

"I ain't charging them with going through a red light," drawls Rufus W. Johnson. "Look at my hair—that's the only white part of me you'll see. I'm sixty-seven years old and I about used up this one life I got. Even if I gotta live it all as a black man in white man's country, I want to live forever. Bad as it may be to be alive and black, when you dead, man, you are like *dead*. So I go to them Foundation shades, and I say hand me one of them Freeze contracts, Rufus W. Johnson is ready to sign up for forever. Two weeks go by, and they sniff around my house, my business, my bank account. Then I get a real fancy letter on real fancy paper about three yards long and what it says is, 'Man, you do not make it.' Well, you figure it out, Mr. Jack Barron. My house it cost me \$15,000, I got \$5,000 in the bank, and, man, my trucks alone cost nearly fifty big ones. And Bennie Howards can have it all as long as I'm on ice, but the Foundation for *Human* Immortality says I got 'insufficient liquid assets for us to offer a Freeze contract at this time'. My money's the same colour as anyone else's, Mr. Barron. Think it's the colour of my *money* they don't like? Or could it just possibly be the colour of my *something else*?"

The screen snaps to a full close-up of the concerned flashing face of hard-jawed kick-'em-in-the-ass Jack Barron: "Well, you certainly got something to be bugged at if you've got your facts straight, Mr. Johnson, and you've sure bugged Jack Barron."

Barron rivets the camera with his eyes promising bottomless pools of earnest bad-boy brick-throwing

thunder and lightning. "And how does it grab *you* out there plugged into the two of us? How's it grab you out there, Benedict Howards? What's the scam from the powers that be? And speaking of the powers that be (abrupt facial shift to sardonic shrug inside joke smile)—it's about time to see what's bugging our sponsor. You hang right in there, Mr. Johnson, and you too out there, and we'll be right back where it's all happening, right here right now no time-delay live, after this straight poop from whoever's currently making the mistake of being our sponsor."

CHAPTER TWO

PRETTY GOOD CURVE you got there, Vince, you smart-ass wop, Jack Barron thought, watching his image on the outsize studio monitor become image of new 1987 Chevy.

The moment he was off the air, Barron was up on the edge of his chair, thumbing the intercom button on the number one vidphone: "Fun and games tonight, eh *paisan*?"

Behind the thick glass of the control booth window, he saw Vince Gelardi smile, smugly cynical, then Vince's voice filled the small, spare studio: "Want Bennie Howards in the hotseat slot?"

"Who else?" said Jack Barron, repositioning himself in the chair. "With Teddy Hennering number two and Luke Greene in the safety slot." Barron thumbed off the intercom, read "60 seconds" flashing across the bulb grid of the promptboard, poured his attention into the brief pause.

Smart-ass Vince putting through a six week dud like that Johnson (but every so often dud becomes potato even live one like tonight). Professional spade calls in every damn week new ethnic sob story and probably never got past the first monkey block screen before. But add latest dumb beef, against Foundation this time, to Freezer debate on the Hill and you got a real hot potato (You shade you got forever made. . . . Wonder if Malcolm Shabazz & Co. are spreading that one?) too hot to handle with Howards' two tame schmucks sitting on the good old F.C.C. Can't afford to make waves in *that* league for one lousy show, and Vince should've known that, it's his job, that's what I've got him running the monkey block for.

But shit, Barron thought as the promptboard flashed "30 seconds", Vince *did* know it but got to give him credit, he saw beyond it, saw that Howards wouldn't be pissed because Foundation'll Freeze any Negro got \$50,000 in liquid assets (*liquid's* the kicker, liquid not rotting old house not decaying trucks—liquid cash bonds negotiable securities negotiable power). Foundation's got enough trouble with Republicans, S.J.C., Shabazz & Co. without buying race trouble. Foundation cares about only one colour—green money colour, crazy bastard Howards' not *that* far round the bend. Yeah, Vince saw it all, saw Rufus W. Johnson full of it, saw whole country tongues hanging out slaving over the Freezer debate, saw good hot show but safe

from tigers with Howards happy to get free publicity with his big chestnuts in the Congressional fire, saw formula for the next 40 minutes: Howards squirming a bit in the hot seat enough to make sparks without making waves because on race thing (about *only* thing) Foundation's in the clear. Everyone makes points—Howards pushes his Freezer bill, great unwashed gets Jack Barron in top fun and games form, I look like champ and just flesh wounds, no one gets hurt enough to try to hurt back. Good old Vince knows how to walk that line.

"Open line to Rockies Freezer" flashed across the promptboard, then "Greene on line, Teddy H?", then "On Air" and Barron saw his face and shoulders on the big monitor below the promptboard, saw image of Rufus W. Johnson grey on grey in the lower left-hand corner of the monitor and on the number one vidphone screen, hard, prim, good-looking tough piece of ass secretary on number two vidphone, and we're off and running at Hialiah, thought Jack Barron.

"Okay, Mr. Johnson (you silly fucker you)," Jack Barron said, "we're back on the air, you plugged into me plugged into the whole United States and all hundred million of us plugged right into a direct vidphone line to the headquarters of the Foundation for Human Immortality, the Rocky Mountain Freezer Complex outside Boulder, Colorado, and we're gonna find out whether the Foundation's pushing post-mortem segregation right here right now no time-delay live from the man himself, the President and Chairman of the Board of the Foundation for Human Immortality, the Barnum of the Bodysnatchers, your friend and mine, Mr. Benedict Howards."

Barron made the connection on his number two vidphone, saw the hard-looking (like to get into *that*) secretary chick's image appear under him (ideal position) lower right on the monitor, gave her dangerous pussycat (claws behind velvet) smile, said: "This is Jack Barron calling for Mr. Benedict Howards. A hundred million Americans are digging that gorgeous face of yours right now, baby, but what they really want to see is Bennie Howards. So let's have the boss man." Barron shrugged, grinned. "Sorry about that," he said half-sarcastically. "But don't worry, baby, you can leave your very own private phone number with my boy Vince Gelardi." (Who knows?)

The secretary stared through the smile like a lemur, her telephone operator voice said, "Mr. Howards is in his private plane flying to Canada for a hunting and fishing vacation and cannot be reached. May I connect you with our Financial Director, Mr. De Silva, or our—"

"This is *Jack Barron* calling for Benedict Howards," Barron interrupted (what goes here?). "Of *Bug Jack Barron*, you do own a television set, don't you? I have on the line a Mr. Rufus W. Johnson who's mighty bugged at the Foundation and I'm bugged and so are a hundred million Americans, and we all want to talk to Bennie Howards, not some flunky, so I suggest you

move that pretty thing of yours and get him on this line *muy pronto*, or I'll just have to bat the breeze about Mr. Johnson's public charge that the Foundation refuses to Freeze Negroes with some cats who see things a *little* different from the way the Foundation sees 'em, dig?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Barron, Mr. Howards is hundreds of miles from the nearest vidphone," the secretary said. "Mr. De Silva or Dr. Bruce or Mr. Yarborough are all in intimate contact with the details of Foundation operation and would be happy to answer any questions."

Set-spiel, thought Jack Barron. Chick doesn't know which end's up (like to demonstrate), parroting Howards' bullshit, is all. Show the bastard what happens when he tries to hide from me, horrible example, Mr. Howards. In instantaneous gestalt the rest of the show spread itself out before him: grill Howards' flunky (Yarborough is the biggest foot-in-mouth man), second commercial, riff with Luke, third commercial, then ten minutes with Teddy Hennering to ease up a bit, then go out and get laid.

"Okay," Barron said, turning his smile into a vulpine leer, "if that's the way Bennie wants to play it, that's the way he'll have it. Get me John Yarborough." He crossed his legs; Gelardi cut the secretary's image off the monitor, split the screen even between Barron and Johnson as Barron tapped his left foot twice. Barron smiled crookedly as he stared dead on at the camera, purposefully building himself up into the galloping nasties, said: "I hope Bennie Howards catches himself a big one, eh? And I'm sure all hundred million of you out there who Mr. Benedict Howards is too busy to talk to wish him loads of luck too—and don't you know out there he's gonna need it."

Barron saw the promptboard flash "Open Lines to Luke, Teddy". Yessire, he thought, show that god-damned Howards it doesn't pay to mickey mouse me—and really give 'em a show tonight.

"Well, Mr. Johnson, we're about to do a little hunting of our own," he said. "Let Mr. Howards shoot himself a moose, and we'll shoot ourselves the truth."

"Who's this Yarborough?" asked Rufus W. Johnson.

"John Yarborough is Public Relations Director for the Foundation," Barron said. "We're the public and we're gonna see what we can get him to like *relate*. (Barron's number two vidphone showed sallow balding man; he footsignalled and the left side of the monitor screen was shared by Johnson (top), Yarborough (bottom), Barron looming twice their sizes to the right, living colour Big Daddy. "And here's Mr. John Yarborough now. Mr. Yarborough, this is Jack Barron calling, and I'd like you to meet Mr. Rufus W. Johnson. Mr. Johnson, to belabour the obvious, is a Negro and he claims that the Foundation refused him a Freeze. (Play that non-sequitur gambit, Jack baby.) A hundred million Americans would like to know if that's true. They'd like to know why the Foundation for Human Immortality, with a public charter as a

tax-exempt foundation, refused an American citizen his chance at immortality, just because that citizen happened to be a Negro." (Have you stopped beating your wife yet, Mr. Yarborough?)

"I'm sure there must be some misunderstanding that we can easily clear up," Yarborough said smoothly. "As you know—"

"I don't know anything, Mr. Yarborough," Barron cut in. "Nothing but what people tell me. I don't even believe the baloney I see on television. I know what Mr. Johnson told me, though, and a hundred million Americans know it too. Mr. Johnson, did you apply for a Freeze contract?"

"I did, Jack."

"Did you agree to assign all your assets to the Foundation upon your clinical death?"

"You know I did."

"Did those assets exceed \$50,000?"

"Sixty or seventy grand, easy," said Rufus W. Johnson.

"And were you refused a Freeze contract, Mr. Johnson?"

"I sure was."

Barron paused, grimaced, lowered his head to catch reflected ominous flashes from the back-drop off the shiny desk-arm in his eyes. "And you *are* a Negro, I notice, aren't you, Mr. Johnson? Now you were saying something about a misunderstanding, Mr. Yarborough? Something that can be easily cleared up? Suppose you explain the hard facts. Suppose you explain to the American people why Mr. Johnson was refused a Freeze contract."

Start digging out from under, dad, Barron thought as he tapped his right foot three times, signalling for a commercial in three minutes, just a few shovelful so I can throw on more.

"But it *is* all quite simple, Mr. Barron," Yarborough said, voice and face dead earnest, put visually in the dock as Gelardi cut out Johnson's image, left Yarborough tiny black and white, surrounded on three sides, all but engulfed by close-up (backdrop darkness shadows swirling behind) of Jack Barron.

"The basic long-range goal of the Foundation is to support research that will lead to a time when all men will live forever. This requires money, a great deal of money, and the more money we have to spend on research, the sooner will that day arrive. The Foundation for Human Immortality has only one source of capital: its national Freezer programme. The bodies of a limited number of Americans are Frozen and preserved in liquid helium upon clinical death so that they may be revived when research, *Foundation* research, provides the answers to—"

"Aw, we know all this bull!" said Rufus W. Johnson. (Still off-screen.) "You Freeze fat cats, *shade* fat cats that is, and you get all their money and stocks and whatever they have while they're on ice; they don't get it back till they're alive again, if they ever are. That's cool, I mean you can't take it with you might

as well gamble, got nothing to lose but a fancy funeral. (Keeping his face sombre, glowering, Barron let the unseen voice rave on, waited for the pounce-moment.) Okay, that's what you're selling, Rufus W. Johnson is buying. Only you ain't selling to no nig—"

"Watch it, Mr. Johnson," Barron cut in, and Vince, thinking along with him, cut Johnson's audio as the promptboard flashed "2 Minutes". "You see, Mr. Yarborough, Mr. Johnson is overwrought, and with good reason. He's got a house cost him \$15,000, \$5,000 in the bank, and over \$50,000 in trucks, and I'm no Einstein but by my reckoning \$50,000 plus \$20,000 is more than \$50,000. Is it not true that the minimum net worth that's supposed to be assigned to the Foundation upon clinical death in order for the Foundation to issue a Freeze contract is \$50,000?"

"That's right, Mr. Barron, but you see the \$50,000 must be in liquid—"

"Please just answer the questions for a moment," Barron cut in loudly. Don't let him explain, keep him bogey-man, he thought, noting wryly that Vince had granted the grey on grey image of Yarborough three quarters of the screen, pale unreal Goliath versus full colour David effect. "It all seems simple to me. \$50,000 is supposed to buy any American a Freeze. Mr. Johnson offered you his total net worth which exceeds \$50,000. Mr. Johnson is an American citizen. Mr. Johnson was refused a Freeze contract. Mr. Johnson is a Negro. What conclusion can you expect the American people to draw? Facts are facts."

"But race has nothing to do with it!" Yarborough said shrilly, and Barron frowned publicly, grinned inwardly as he saw him finally blow his cool. "The \$50,000 must be in liquid assets, cash, stocks, negotiable property. Any man, regardless of race, who has \$50,000 in liquid—"

Barron crossed his legs, cutting Yarborough off the air, as the promptboard flashed "60 seconds", said: "And of course we all know it's the *Foundation* that decides whether a man's assets are . . . liquid enough. Makes it nice and cozy, eh, folks? Foundation doesn't want to Freeze a man, just tells him his assets are "frozen", no pun intended. Wonder how many Negroes have frozen *assets* and how many have Frozen *bodies*? Well, just maybe we can find out from a man who's got some strong opinions about the current proposal in Congress to grant this, shall we say *whimsical*, outfit that calls itself the Foundation for *Human* Immortality a monopoly on all cryogenic Freezing in the United States—the Social Justice Governor of Mississippi, Lukas Greene. So hang in there, folks, and hang in there, Mr. Johnson, we'll be talking to the Governor of your home state right after this attempt to . . . unfreeze your pocketbooks by our sponsor."

Hope you're watching this, Howards, you schmuck you, Barron thought as they rolled the commercial. See what happens when you mickey mouse Jack Barron! He thumbed the intercom button, said: "Let me have a couple private moments on the line with

Luke."

"HEY WHAT YOU want from this po' black boy, you big bad shade you?" Lukas Greene (one eye on the Acapulco Golds commercial other on the vidphone image of Jack Barron) said. "Isn't shafting Bennie Howards enough for one night? Gotta pick on us crusaders for Social Justice too?"

"Relax, Lothar," Jack Barron said. "This is you and me stomp the Foundation night. This time good old Jack Barron's playing ball with you, dig?"

Well, that's a relief, providing I can trust Jack, Greene thought, But what's all this race flak with the Foundation? "Dig," said Greene, "but we both know Bennie'd Freeze Chairman Wang himself if the cat coughed up the bread, let alone some poor buck. Why the knife? You comin' home to the S.J.C., Claude?"

"Don't hold your breath," said Jack Barron. "I'm just showing Howards what happens to a vip thinks he can be out to Jack Barron. Observe and learn, Amos, case you ever decide to be away from your vidphone some Wednesday night. But cool it; we're about to go on the air again."

Same goddamn Jack Barron, Greene thought as Barron made with the introduction. (" . . . Governor of Mississippi and leading national figure in the Social Justice Coalition. . . .") Sell his mother for three points in the ratings, Howards could be eating babies raw, and it'd be no sweat no heat too much power for the balless wonder, but don't answer that phone and you get the knife, Bennie-boy. (" . . . your constituent has charged. . . .") Okay, we play Jack's game tonight, both shaft Howards maybe help kill the Freezer Utility Bill and so what if Jack has asshole reasons.

" . . . and it is well known that the Foundation has been refused permission to build a Freezer in Mississippi, Governor Greene," Jack was saying. "Is this because the Mississippi Social Justice Coalition suspects, as Mr. Johnson charges, that the Foundation discriminates against Negroes?"

Well, here goes nothing, thought Greene. Let's see how much S.J.C. flak he lets me get away with. "Leaving aside the racial question for a moment, Mr. Barron," Greene said into his vidphone, noting that generous Jack was granting him half the television screen at the moment, angular black face sharply handsome in black and white, "we would not permit the Foundation to build a Freezer in Mississippi if Mr. Howards and every single one of his employees were black as the proverbial ace of spades. The Social Justice Coalition stands firmly for a free public Freezer policy. We believe that no individual, corporation, or so-called non-profit Foundation should have the right to decide who will have a chance to live again and who will not. We believe that all Freezers should be publicly owned and financed and that the choice of who is to be Frozen and who is not should be determined by the drawing of lots. We believe—"

"Your position on the Freezer Utility Bill versus the

Public Freezer proposal is all too well known," Jack Barron interrupted dryly, and Green's TV screen now showed him crunched down in the lower left-hand corner—gentle reminder as to who was running things from old Berkeley buddy Jack Barron.

"What's bugging Mr. Johnson, what's bugging me, what's bugging a hundred million viewers tonight is not the theoretical question of private versus public Freezing, but the nitty-gritty practical question: does the Foundation discriminate against Negroes? Is Benedict Howards abusing his economic and social power?"

Old college try, thought Greene. "That's what I was getting at, Mr. Barron," he said, deliberately great-mantesty. "When a private company or foundation acquires the enormous power that the Foundation for Human Immortality has, abuses of one kind or another become inevitable. Should the Foundation succeed in getting its Utility Bill through Congress, should the President sign it, this life-and-death power will be written into law, backed by the Federal Government, and at that point, the Foundation can discriminate against Negroes, Republicans, sha—er, *Caucasians* or anyone else who refuses to play Howards' game with impunity. That's why—"

"Please, Governor Greene," Jack Barron said with a put-on jaded grimace, "we're all on the side of the angels, but you know the equal time laws as well as I do, and you can't make political speeches on this show." Jack paused, smiled, a just-for-him-for-chris-sakes Luke smile, Green saw. "I'd ruin this groovy sportjac if I got cancelled and had to go out and dig ditches. The question is, is the Foundation *now* discriminating against Negroes?"

Well, that's where it's at, Greene thought, I want to make points on Howards all I can do is help make it look like he's playing the Rockwell game, Jack's hobbyhorse for the night, and we both know he's not that loopy. But those hundred million voters Jack mentions every other sentence maybe don't, maybe can bug enough Congressmen get them to vote the other way kill Howards' bill if we make the right waves, so Bennie Howards, yo' is a big, bad nigger-hating shade fo' the duration, sorry about that chief.

"Well, the record shows," Greene said, "that while Negroes are roughly twenty per cent of the population, less than two per cent of the bodies in the Foundation's Freezers are Negroes. . . ."

"And the Foundation has never explained this discrepancy?" Jack said, and gave Greene back full half-screen for playing ball.

You know the reason you sly shade mother, Greene thought. How many of us in the good old U.S. of A. buzz off worth fifty thou? Foundation don't discriminate more than everyone else why should it be different when a black man dies than when he's alive—"You a shade you got forever made, but if you're black, when you go, you don't come back". Even though Malcolm planted that one don't stop it from being nitty-gritty truth, shade-buddy Jack. Foundation's

cleaner than G.M., unions, boss-man vip bastards—only colour Howards digs is green money colour—but gotta squash the mother like a bug any way you can . . .

"Never heard one," Greene said. "I mean, what *can* they say, those are the figures in black and white (he smiled wanly)—*sorry about that*. Even if there's no conscious racial bias, the Foundation, set up as it is on the basis of who can pay, *must* in fact discriminate because everyone knows that the average income of a black man in this country is about half that of the average white. The Foundation, by its very existence, helps perpetuate the inferior position of the Negro—even beyond the grave. In fact, it's getting so's a grave-stone instead of a Freeze's gonna become a black thing, like nappy hair, before too long. I'm not accusing any man of anything, but I do accuse the society—and the Foundation swings an awful lot of weight in the society, and if Howards isn't exercising the social responsibility that should go with social power, well then he's copping-out, and we both know, Mr. Barron (sickly-sweet smile for cop-out Jack) that a cop-out's just as guilty as the Rockwells and Withers that his irresponsible indifference allows to flourish." Two points on Howards, Greene thought, and two points on you, Jack.

Jack Barron smiled what Greene recognised as his words-in-your-mouth smile—and sure enough, he saw that Jack had now given him three quarters of the screen: prols see Luke Greene while hearing words of Jack Barron schtick and why don't you use that sly shade brain of yours for something that counts, you cop-out you.

"Then what you're saying in essence, Governor Greene," Jack said in what Greene recognised as the sum - up - kiss - goodbye - here - comes - the - commercial pounce, "is that the very character of the Foundation for Human Immortality itself creates a de facto policy of racial discrimination, whether this is *official* Foundation policy or not, right? That whether Mr. Johnson was refused a Freeze contract because he was a Negro or whether his assets are actually insufficient by Foundation standards, those very financial standards arbitrarily set by Mr. Benedict Howards himself are actually a form of built-in racial discrimination? That—"

"One hundred per cent right!" Lukas Greene said loudly. (You may get the last word, but you don't put it in *this* black boy's mouth, Jack!) "As far as you've gone (and fence-sitting Jack cuts me down to quarter screen but lets me babble got extra brains where his balls should be). But not only discrimination against Negroes. The existence of a private, high-priced Freezing company discriminates against black men, white men, the poor, the indigent, six million unemployed and twenty million underemployed Americans. It places a dollar value on immortality, on human life, as if Saint Peter suddenly put up a toll booth in front of those Pearly Gates. What right does anyone have to look into men's finances and say, you sir, may have

life eternal, but you, you pauper, when you die, you die forever? Every American—”

Abruptly, Greene saw that his face and voice were no longer on the air, that his TV screen was now filled with a close-up of earnest-lipped sly-eyed Jack Barron. (Oh well, thought Greene, at least we make *some* points.)

“Thank you, Governor Greene,” said Jack Barron. “We sure know what’s bugging *you* now, and you’ve given us all food for thought. And speaking of food, it’s that time again—for a few words from them that pay for my groceries. But hang in there, America, ‘cause we’ll be right back with the other side in the hot seat—Senator Theodore Hennering, co-author of the Hennering-Bernstein Freezer Utility Bill, who’s on record as thinking that the Foundation for Human Immortality’s just fine and dandy as it is and would like to see the Foundation granted a legal monopoly. We’ll try and see where the good Senator’s head is at after this word from our sponsor.”

Hey, Greene thought excitedly as a Chevy commercial came on, if he knifes Hennering on the bill that could be it! Jack could cut Hopeful Henny to dogmeat he wants to, shift ten votes in the Senate or thirty in the House and the bill’s dead.

“What in the hell you trying to do, Luke?” Jack Barron’s vidphone image said. “Screw me good with the F.C.C.? Howards’ got two commissioners in his hip pocket; we both know that.”

“I’m trying to kill the Freezer Utility Bill, we both know *that* too, Percy,” Greene said. “*You* the cat decided to knife Bennie, remember? And you can do it, Jack, you can kill the bill right now by slaughtering Teddy Hennering. Nail him to the wall, man, and put in a few extra spikes for me!”

“Nail him to the wall?” Jack Barron shouted. “You’re out of your gourd, Rastus! I want Howards to bleed a little, teach him a lesson, but not in the gut, Kingfish, just a couple flesh wounds. Howards can murder me I hit him too hard where he lives. I gotta play pussycat with Hennering, let him make up some points the Foundation’s lost or I’m in goddamned *politics*. Better I should get a dose of clap that a dose of *that*.”

“Don’t you ever remember what you were, Jack?” Greene sighed.

“Every time my gut rumbles, man!”

“Win one lose one, eh Jack? Back then you had balls but no power, now you got power but no—”

“Screw you, Luke,” said Jack Barron. “You got your nice little bag down there in coon country, let me keep mine!”

“Fuck you too, Jack,” Greene said, breaking the vidphone connection. Fuck you Jack Barron good old Jack Barron, what in hell happened to the good old Berkeley Jack and Sara Montgomery Meridian sign-waving caring black shade committed (weren’t we all committed before Bobby?) Jack Barron?

Greene sighed, knowing what happened, what hap-

pened to all no more war nigger-loving peace-loving happy got nothing need nothing love truth and beauty against the night Baby Bolshevik Galahads. Years happened hunger happened Lyndon happened Bobby happened (big smothering y’all *my* people Bobby) and one day age thirty happened no more kids time to get ours happened, and them that could, went and got. Jack got *Bug Jack Barron* (losing Sara poor couldn’t cut it good heart good fuck Peter Pan living relic to what we all lost making it all a silly-ass lie Sara) and you got this gig in Evers, Mississippi, you white nigger you. Schmuck you are to think anyone could bring it all back, bring back youth truth don’t give a shit close to the blood happy balling days when we *knew* we could do it all if only we had the power. Now we got the power, I got the power, Jack got the power, and to get it we paid our balls, is all.

Who are you to expect Jack to play hero, lay it on the line, lose it all for some dumb dream? Would you, man, would you?

I would if I could, thought Lukas Greene, was I white and it could matter. And masochistically, he left the TV on, sat back to watch and hope in the man who *could* matter, if he got it back, the man playing his cop-out game with Howards’ stooge Hennering—good old Jack Barron.

COP-OUT, EH, Kingfish? thought Jack Barron as he waited for the commercial to end. Just trying to get me to blow my cool, eat dumb bastard Hennering on the half-shell, fry *your* fish, Luke, while Howards gets blood in his eyes for my scalp—kill Freezer bill all right, but among the fatalities TV career of kick ‘em in the ass Jack Barron. Or you still really believe in the old Berkeley truth justice bravery damn the torpedoes days bull kamikazee attack? Schmuck either way, Lothar, no one hands hara kiri knife to Jack Barron. Paid my dues many long years ago, name of my game’s no longer Don Quixote.

The commercial ended and the too-fiftyish, too-true-blue, too-1930s-FDR-handsome loser face of Sen. Theodore Hennering (D-Il.) split the screen even with Jack Barron. Looks like he’s holding in a year’s worth of cream rubber chicken plastic peas farts, Barron thought. To think this dum-dum has eyes for the White House, number three Kennedy’ll eat him alive. . . . Make nice, Jack baby, he warned himself grimly.

“I hope I may make the assumption that you’ve been watching the show tonight, Senator Hennering,” Barron said, giving little fey false-modest watch yourself Teddy-boy smile.

“Uh, yes, uh, Mr. Barron, most interesting, uh, quite fascinating,” Hennering said hesitatingly in his fruity-hearty voice. Jeez, thought Barron, I gotta feed this lox *his* lines too? He looks like who did it and ran tonight.

“Well then, I’m sure that after hearing Governor Greene, you have a few things you’d like to tell the American people, Senator, seeing as you’re co-sponsor

of the Freezer Utility Bill which would grant the Foundation a Freezing monopoly, I mean Mr. Johnson and Governor Greene have made some pretty serious charges against the Foundation. . . ?”

“I . . . uh . . . cannot speak for the Foundation for Human Immortality,” Hennering said, his eyes peculiarly, uncharacteristically furtive. “I will say that I do not believe that the Foundation practices racial discrimination. My . . . uh . . . record on Civil Rights I think speaks for itself and I would . . . er . . . disassociate myself immediately from any individual, organisation or cause that would perpetuate racial . . . ah . . . policies.”

Shit, the old blimp looks like he’s scared stiff, Barron thought. What gives? And he saw that Gelardi had wisely cut down the now-ashen face of Hennering to a quarter-screen inset. I could cut him up and feed him to the fishes and wouldn’t Luke love *that*, Barron thought with reflexive combatativeness. Watch yourself, man, you’ve got too many knives in Bennie Howards’ back as it is. . . .

“You *are* co-sponsor of the Freezer Utility Bill?” Barron said, straining to be gentle. “You do still support the bill? You do still feel it will pass?”

“I am against discussing the chances of pending legislation,” Hennering said, fingering his collar.

Mo-ther! thought Barron. He looks like he’s ready to croak. I’ve got to get this boob to say some nice things about Bennie Howards, or I’ll have the Foundation all over me. Lead the creep by the nose, Jack baby.

“Well, since you are an author of the bill, surely you can tell us *why* you believe that the Foundation for Human Immortality should be the only organisation permitted to Freeze bodies in this country?”

“Why . . . ah, yes, Mr. Barron. It’s a matter of responsibility, responsibility to . . . uh . . . those in the Freezers and the general public. The Foundation must be kept financially sound so that they can continue to care for the Frozen bodies, continue their . . . uh . . . immortality research so that the promise of eternal life that cryogenic Freezing holds will not become a . . . cruel deception . . . cruel deception. . . . (Hennering’s mind seemed to wander; he caught himself, grimaced, continued.) The Foundation stipulates that all income not required to maintain the Freezers will go into research, while the . . . ah . . . fly-by-night outfits that attempt to compete with it do not. Safety for those in the Freezers, financial soundness, the ability to channel large sums of money into immortality research, those are the reasons why I believed . . . uh, believe that the Foundation for Human Immortality must have a Freezer monopoly. It is fitting, sound moral and economic policy, that those in the Freezers pay for their upkeep and for the research that will eventually revive them. Yes . . . uh, that’s why I sponsored the bill.”

“Wouldn’t a Federal Freezer programme do the same things?” Barron shot back unthinkingly, wincing even as the words left his mouth. (Cool it, man, *cool it!*)

“Ah . . . I suppose so. . . .” Hennering said. “But . . . ah . . . the cost, yes the cost. To duplicate the Foundation facilities or buy them out would cost the taxpayers billions, and more billions on research. Not practical fiscally, you see. The Soviet Union and China have no Freezer programmes at all because only in a free enterprise system can the cost be borne.”

You forgot God, motherhood and apple pie, Barron thought. Is this cretin in some kind of shock? Knew he was dumb but not this dumb. Howards had him in his hip pocket—this is Bennie’s Presidential candidate. Howards must be chewing the rug by now. And sonof-a-bitching Luke must be having an orgasm. Gotta do something to cool it; I need Bennie Howards on my back like an extra anus.

“Then you contend, Senator Hennering, that the Foundation for Human Immortality performs an essential service, a service which simply could not be provided by any other organisation, including the Federal Government?” Barron said as the promptboard flashed “3 Minutes”, frantically foot-signalling for Gelardi to give Hennering three quarters of the screen, my words in his mouth (even if he does look like a week-dead codfish) schtick.

“Uh . . . yes,” said Hennering fuzzily. (His head’s further from here than the Mars Expedition, thought Barron.) “I think it fair to say that without the Foundation there would simply be no Freezer programme in the United States of any scope or stability. Already, well over a million people have a chance at immortality who would otherwise be . . . uh . . . decomposed and buried and dead and gone forever thanks to the Foundation. Uh . . . of course there are millions dying each year who cannot be accommodated, who are dead for all time. . . . But . . . uh . . . don’t you think that it’s better for *some* people to have some chance at living again, even if it means that most people in the foreseeable future won’t, than for every American to die permanently until all can be Frozen, the way the Public Freezer people would have it. . . ? Don’t you think that’s reasonable, Mr. Barron. . . ? Don’t you. . . ?”

The last was almost a whine, a piteous plea for some kind of absolution. What the hell’s got into Hennering? thought Jack Barron. The SJC couldn’t have got to him—or could they? He’s not only scared shitless, he’s wallowing in guilt. Why do these things have to happen to *me*? He keeps this up, Howards’ll stomp me with high-heeled hob-nailed jackboots!

“It sounds reasonable when you state it so cogently,” Barron said. (At least as coherent as the Gettysburg Address backwards in Albanian, anyway.) “Quite obviously, *everyone* can’t be Frozen. The question is, is the basis upon which the Foundation chooses who will be Frozen fair or not? Is it free from racial—”

“Fair?” Hennering practically shrieked as the promptboard flashed “2 Minutes”. “Fair? Look, of course it can’t be fair! What’s fair about death? Some men can live forever and others die and are gone for-

Continued on Page 18

THE LINE-UP ON THE SHORE

GILES GORDON

THERE IS NO distinction between the area where the film should be projected and the rest of the blackness.

In, out; in, out; breathe in, out; in, out.

The line-up on the shore, the beach. The edge of the beach. The sea beyond. Or dust, it could be dust. Even asphalt, if the haze is due to sun on tar. Whatever, the retina will interpret what it sees; or thinks it sees.

The figures are five-sixths of the way up the picture, if it is a picture. If, if, if. . . . A picture it is, of sorts.

A picture of sorts it is. A photograph, maybe? A still and the film has stuck? A painting? Possibly, but unlikely—so the retina says, or doesn't say—but this may be due to the process of reproduction, or the surface upon which the image is reproduced. Certainly the name of the perpetrator of the image is a name recognised as a painter, if it is a name recognised at all. Which is, again, unlikely. A view from the eye, with the eye reflected, the view refracted. A view which is . . . happening, actuality. Perhaps, perhaps. Take away the view, the associations; look elsewhere; and the line-up on the shore, the beach, is still the line-up on the shore.

There are fifty-eight of them. The image is rectangular, without a third dimension. All the figures (people: men and women) are about the same height. To a tenth of an inch, that is, which may or may not make the more approximation more specific. Which shows, probably, merely how far away from them we are. (You are, someone is.) But stuff the parenthesis; and over and above that there was a temptation to italicise the first four words of this sentence, the words that is before the semi-colon.

Fifty-eight of them, in your sight-line; and the head's eye view can accommodate no more in its vision, that is without moving the head. The head looking at them. Why do you (you, you, you . . .) look at them? NO! Not a question to be asked, not a question. If you, or you, are looking at them, you are looking at them. Objectivity is too subjective for it to be abused knowingly. And speculation is for those that know the answers.

Fifty-eight of them, then; and there may be more beyond the parallel, vertical sight-lines. To left and to right, not above and below. In the latter direction is only acres, acres, acres of sand. Or concrete. Or asphalt. Or dust. Or dirt. Or dead ground. Or space. Or space. Yes, space. They don't move towards you, or away from you. They don't hold hands. They don't move. This is no mirage. They seem to be so close together, one to the next, that at first look you assume, the retina assumes, that they are touching, must be touching. There is no contact, no contact of bodies. They are fifty-eight bodies, fifty-eight people, a few of them women. (That contradicts nothing said previously.) To begin with you assumed—why? Why? No, no. No questions; nor wrong answers—that they were all men, only men. Looking more closely, peering hard out you observed two, three, a few women. You couldn't be precise, not from that distance, this distance. Whatever that distance is; was; is.

They are moving. Now they are moving. No, they are still, stand still.

The perspective seems . . . funny.

There is no perspective.

The shadows, the area of each body in light, in shade seems unrealistic, haphazard even; to have nothing to

As a column they move, as a body. They are almost marching, perhaps they are marching. As one man, one

They run, they run, they run, they run, they run,
they run, they run, they run, they run, they run, they
run, they run, they run, they run, they run.

"Negroes. . . ?" Hennering muttered; then, like a fuzzy picture suddenly clicking back into focus, he was earnest, firm, authoritative. "Of course not! The Foun-

"Thank you, Senator Henninger," Barron said. "Well, America, you've heard all sides of it, and now you've got to make up your minds, not me or the Governor or the Senator can do that for you. Take it from there, folks, and plug yourself in next Wednesday night for a new disaster, history made no time-delay live before your eyes, history made by you and for you, every week of the year, when you . . . *Bug Jack Barron.*"

Page 18

AUTO ANCESTRAL FRACTURE

**BRIAN W. ALDISS
& C. C. SHACKLETON**

FOR CHARTERIS FINGERING a domestic thing, the shadowy city Brussels was not a destination but a bit of beach along the endless shore and he had no interest in driving into town; so the multi-motorcade pitched on a stony patch and tried to prefigure the variable geometry of event.

But on that stony patch grounded his myth grew and the story went over big. Though he himself was stuck deep in the rut of a two-girl problem, forgetting other fervours.

Some of the crusaders' cars were burning in the camp as if it was auto-da-fé day, where the drivniks with cheerful acidheadedness had forgotten that the golden juice they poured down the autothroats would burn. Like a precognitive massimage of the nearing future, the reek of inflammation brought its early pain and redness. Tyres smouldered, sending a black stink lurching across the waste ground where they all shacked.

Nobody cared. The little fugitive shaggy figures were a new tribe, high after the miracle when the Master Charteris had died and risen again in a sparky way after only three minutes following the multi-man speed death up at Aalter. Tribally, they mucked in making legends. Beat groups flowered and ceded. Some of the girls rinsed udderclotches and hung them on lines be-

tween bumpers while others highjinxed the boys or got autoerotic in the dicky seat. A level thousand drivniks locusted in the stony patch, mostly British, and the word spread inspired to the spired city.

There the life pendulum ticked upside down and the time was rape for legendermain: for the hard heads and the business hearts found that their rhythms now worked only to a less punctilious clock and speculation had another tone. War had turned the metrognome off chime in general pixilation.

What raised the threshold a bit was the Brussels haze. The bombing here had been heavy—this was no neutral capital like Paris, and the psycho-chemicals rained down. Life was newly neolithic, weird and grey or glittering. Appalling shawls of illusion draped across the people, women went in yashmaks of insanity. Occult lights still veiled the rooftops and aurora borealis clouded the corner of the eye. It was a place for the news of New Saviour Charteris to nest. Many came, some remained; many heard, some retained. Food was short and disease plentiful, plague grunted in the backstreets of the mind, but the goodfolk had thrown off the tiresome shackles of Wesciv and ceased to care about microbes and bacteria; this was the spontaneous generation and neutral Pasteur had been wrong. These

days, you could whistle along your own bones and the empty plate held roses. In Flanders field, the mare rose poppy-high, sweeping all along in the war's wild after-myth. So it was gregarious and who cared.

Of these the Escalation were foremost. Among the petering cars they made their music, Bill, black Phil, Ruby Dymond and Featherstone-Haugh, plus their technicians who saw that the more sparky sounds reached tape. This day they had escalated to a new format and a new name. They were now the Tonic Traffic and had infrasound, ground from a grinder machine worked by Greta and Flo, who shackled with them and other musicniks.

Through mirror-sunglasses they peered at the oneway world, frisking it for telling dislocations in which to savour most possibility. They had a new number going dedicated to the Master and Brussels called Famine Starting at the Head. Sometimes they talked round the lyric or with laughter sent it up.

IN HIS TENT-CAVE Charteris with two women heard the noise and distant other flutes in flower-powered falsetto, but had his own anguish to blow through the stops of strained relationship.

"Do me a fervour! I try to work on this dicument of human dustiny and you want to know whether or not I took in the slack with Marta last night. Why not trip out of needling my alternatives?" The ceiling was only canvas billowing, standing in for plaster in a ruinous convent later old people's home, which the autobahn-builders had half-nudged out of the way as they drove their wedges into the cityheart. Undemolished now almost self-demolished this wing flew the Charteris flag; here his disciples clustered elbows brick-coloured as plaster peppered down like the dust of crunched hour-glasses. As starving Brussels besieged itself for a miracle domestic drama flourished.

"Oh, entropise human detestiny!" Angeline was washed and white like concentrate campallour, still calculating against the aftermaths of warcalculus, still by the chemicals not too treblinkered. "I don't want to know if you slacked because I know if you slacked you slackered Marta tonight last night every night and I just damned won't stand it, so you just damned fuzzy-settle for her or me! None of your either-whoring here!"

"All that old anti-life stuff snuffed it with your wesciv world—from now it's a multi-vulval state."

"Your big pronounce! Hotair your views to others, stay off top of Marta, you grotnik!"

"Meat injection and the life she needs, Angel, pumped in. She has no impact with frozen actions like long disuse. If I poke all's love in fair unwar. Be pacific!"

"Sea my Azov! And you messiah on a shemensplash as and when is it, eh? Over my bedboddy! Don't you kindermarken me mate why how you can come it I don't know—look at the consolation! Prize her legs a part you'd be licky! Caspian kid!"

"I'll baltic where my thighs threw me honey, I the

up and coming!"

"You degenerative Dalmatian! From now on you go adriantic up some mother tree—just don't profligaint me! Didn't I the one who moist you most with most nakidity remembrance to membrainfever pudentially, or if not twot hot hand gambidexter pulping lipscrew bailing boat in prepucepeeling arbor?"

She now had the big bosombeating act, buckaneering in the dusty half-room before his ambiguity, riding to master and be mastered, knowing he punched her husband in the traffic, gesturing with scatologic to the greyer girl, Marta on the master's corner couch cuckoo-bird unsinging. Phantom nets of mauve and maureen joined them like three captured parrot fish.

"Did I ever say you were not the sparkiest? Sap out of it angelfish and don't parrot membrain there's suck a thing as polygam."

"Bombastard it's to be she or me and now's your mormont of incision. Cut it out!"

But he had advanced grasping her by the united frontier so that when she tugged away the blouse torn buttons falling like broken teeth and one escampaing teeter. She slapped him across his molar plex and they cavorted in a tanglewords the nettingroll.

For the first time Marta brought her unbending mind and body to attention flew to his rescue from the bed-space where they had seemed and tuckered and with a dexterritory he landed them both judies with squirming gust in sudden recitation of the piggy bundlestiff as he had voided mannymoon to squire their accounts and cummerbendle in their bandling bundobusts dualigned by real and pseudoprod tongs and clappers circum-jascentedly.

They lay repanting. Marta said, "Oh, forgive me, Father, but you gnaw my need to bring me back where the circulation stammers."

He said nothing. Around lay the pages and quires of the ream of his destinotinary tract Man the Driver in which he tried by shortcuttings from the spurky philisophers to prime mankindly on the better way.

Angelina said, "To think that all your thinking comes to this and you so big in the mind can't see the world's slipped across the plimsoll line with you just some damned wandering bump swelling with the warfallout's megabreath doing two defeated dames in a dungy belgunmaden bad!"

Momentarily the rosepink lining parted and he saw with her eyes the lavatory life going downheeled all the way as he fledabout of madness and hiveless ones begged him to be for them and be for them the big beatal and endal. Scrambling back, he said to spark himself, "I am the grate I am where fools burn for greater light and from me shall come a new order beyond your comprehending."

Chance in that room sat also while the ceiling billowed the dark man Cass who now managed as Charteris agent from the dark English Midlands riding all his life a self-punitive in a narrow way pinned behind

a counterpain in drapershop where having broken out he now netted his advantages at fifty-nine eleven three a yard all right and gaudy as the smiling tout of Saviour Charteris flower-powered plus other sidelines.

Many-monkeyed in his head he rose now saying, "Hail the great I am! Hail chaptered Charteris! All burn for greater light from you. You fisher us a greater net of possibilities and what you photograph is multi-photographed with all possible value." He sprawled at Charteris' pedestal for his idol to claim him; but Charteris cooled: "You better go and fix the cascade down to the main Frankfurt route. Under my lid the sign still burns there in a precog frame."

"Sure, we'll skim the lets-see of possibilities but first you have to speak in Brussels where your words gone out and people know you miracled death's aaltercation where the carcentinas buckled."

"No growth that way, Cass, believe! In every in every no line on Brussels my bombardment of images hipe me out and famine starting at the head tells me we take our bellies away from that emptiness."

From the corner of his eyes, the females under a flapping lid swung like two monkeys.

"What you say! You are the fount of the new oar beyond our compension and I ship with you the greatest."

So saying but Cass rode on the motorcade a prey to more than piety and thus in the cholera courts of the capital. These thousand rocketting disciples gathering quantity as they moved had a needle for some supply and just a cosy cosa nostra to keep them smoking along towards the profitable reefs in a parasitical pass. He came out from the ruined building gathering air and dragging in a sort of awareness before setting off for the centre.

WAVES OF REALITY came and went, breaking over him, drenching him. He was aware he was going yet at moments the streets appeared a transparent rues and he imagined that this was just another mock-up of the quest he had follyed all his life, looking for some final authority perhaps: the central point of the quest never revealed itself, so that he was a man always on a marginal errand. He sang a line of Ouspensky's: Men may torture themselves but these tortures will not make them awake. Also Charteris so worked in him that he said to himself: You see how I released more potentialities in you, Cass—you carry on several lives at once!

Men may torture themselves. He could write it for the Tonic Traffic or the Genocides or the Snowbeams to sing. They must make themselves awake. The magician hypnotised his sheep and they turned to mutton believing they were immortal. All flocks there to be preyed on, and this new kind no exemption. Soon to be casoulet. He always drove at more than one wheel, whoever took lead car.

In the centre of the city, people whistled along their own bones though the empty bowl held roses. The

European dislocation had harvested no fields and canned no fish. In hospitals, doctors smiled in lunar orbits and played with empty syringes or snubbed their scalpels abseccssmindedly on submerged patient bones. Although it's true the bakers ritually baked in massive factories, the formulas were scrambled and even what was edible did not all get eaten, for the distributors so hot for truth drove their loads into amnesiac fields of wheat and lay there till they fecundated in the calendar of decay. The parliament still took its conclave but all the ceremony these last two months had brought were these laws passed: a law to stop the drinking of the good earth; a law to prohabit hats from becoming unseen when the sun set; a law to make Belgian hounds sing the night away like nightingales, with an amendment asking cats to try their best in that friendly direction too; a law to permit redness in traffic lights; a law to abolish the plague; a law to extend the hours of sunshine in cloudy winter months; and a far-sighted law to encourage all members of parliament to be more industrious by the granting of six months leave to them per annum.

Cass had the secret contacts. A drink in a bar, a ritual holding of the glass, a certain stance, a procedure of guarded phrases, and there was help for him and he smoking secretly with seven men. Who said to him at the end of an hour or so: "Sure, it's for trade the maximum goodness that Charteris gets billed big and comes into town. Come he must. You go and see Nicholas Boreas the film director and put to him what we say."

And Cass was given certain assurances and pay and moved along to see the mighty and highly-sung Boreas.

BACK UNDER THE tawning they were saddled by the sporadic barney with Him down-trodden in a multi-positional stance on a chaircase and Marta racked on the bunk-up while Angeline barnstormed about the gesticulating room, rehorsing her old nightmires.

"Face it, Colin, you're now stuck on an escalation okay ride along but just don't forget the old human things like what you did to my husband or maybe that's all gone overhead in your reeling skullways maybe maybe not?"

"It was the christmas cactus there blinding as the lorry swerved and I could never make you understand. It's the velocity, girl—"

"Verocity nothing you killed him and why should I pull down my kickers and open up my pealy gapes for you to come in beefs me oh the sheer sheer tears of every diving day and now I shape and rave at you and who knows through the encephallic centre you have shot some of that steamin' acid so I'm hiping too and like to flip oh meanin' Christ Colin what and where the dung day dirt is done and you know how I itch I never dote a damned desire without my shift and all my up-bringing undone!"

And Marta said, "You're chattering your passion into threads Angel cause isn't there enough I mean he can

the carnal both twomescence and I don't mound no moral membrane in a threesome and we sort of sisterly!"

So she seemed to flip and like a seafouling mam embarked on culling Marta for a frigid and bustless chick while egging her on with premaritimely oaths to reveal what a poultry little shrubby hen-penned canal awaited bushwanking or the semenship of motiongoing loiner under her counterplain and how those specious sulcal locks were just the antartickled coups of man's ambit or if more trapical then merely multi-locked the vaginisthmus of panamama!

Thus spurred slim Marta unbuckled and pulled enragged away her entire and nylonvestments to kneel up flagrantly tighttitted the slander ovals with an undividual stare took them like young imporktunny pigs-cheeks in lividinous palmystry squeezing to pot them smoothly at all rivels cried the heir erect command insprict the gawds meanwhile thirsting out her chubby plumdendum with its hennaed thatch of un-own feelds and throaty labyrings of kutch with cinnamons di-splayed.

The other sneered but he to her cheeky pasture lured advanced to graze and on her stirry eyepitch clove his spiced regarb as if his universion centered there his mace approaching friggerhuddle. She now as never evoluptuary bloomed in her showy exinbintion outward easily spread her cunative flower by rolling sternbawd rumpflexed to make him see the fissile smole of spicery fragiloquent of tongue almoist articulpate wellcoming with spine archipelavis and her hands abreasted eagerly. He snared his bait engorged in cleft vessalage like a landlopped fissureman on the foreshawm groined.

"So that's the little spat that catches the bawdy muckerel the briney abasement where we scomber at our libertined gaol!" So far all jackular but now a saltier infection. "I teened tined without embarkration down that slitway my jolly tarjack yearning for the fretdom of this narrow fineconment swished-for incuneration ounspeaking O where noughtical men wisely feast in silence a coop or lock-up maybe Angel but for the brightest cockalorys no lighthouse but a folderolflesh espressionless no landmast certainly no buoy yet more than polestar to the marinader the milky wet itself the yin-and-yank by which life orients the loadstir that aweights all tonninch on the populocean incontinents awash the very auto-incestral fracturn between generoceans mother of emoceans gulf where the sea-cunning sextant steers and never more gledly flock we to that flocculent in carceratiopen like sheep incult cum-bency on the long combers O so furly I will my rom-pant chuck of gristle uncanvas to cell and serve as croptive to her in the shuckling socket and set soul for dungeoness!"

He launched himself to the briney swell with merry hornpoop in her focsle and cox'n'd every vibrant stroke till her unfathom ablepuddle deigned and drained him but her aglued mutions rollocked on.

ANGELINE WALKED impotiently outside and some of the tribe noted or did not note—caught in their own variable relationships—how her face was flesh-crumbled with folded eyes. So it was these days and no one had too much in mind of others though the mood was good—too wrapped in selfhood and even selfishness to aggress, no matter who aggrised. She was thrown to a sexual nadir and would not bed, not with Charteris, not with Ruby Dymond even when he dirged her favourite song, backed by infrasound and its bowel-churning effects. Even for her it was getting not for-real, as the old fumes of war, still lingering acidly in the alleyways, curled into her and she too dug the schlieren effect of thought made visible, leaping up exclaiming from a lonely blanket to see herself sometimes surrounded by the wavering igneous racks of baleful colour: or at gentle moments able to watch bushes and elms in crusty outline, singed by the glow of cerebral sindowns, in which climbed and chucked a fresh unbeaten generation of mammal-amphibians, toads with sprightly wings and birds of lead and new animals generally that with feral stealth stayed always out of focus.

So it was also with Nicholas Boreas but more splendidly. He too had more inhabitants than reached consciousness and heard news of the motorcade miracle from Cass in his palatial bath. A mighty figure he was, bare without a hair, though with a poet's eye he had schillered his breasts and pate by dint of a bronze lacquer to lend a sort of piebald distinction. His flower was water hyacinth and in the foetid warmth of his apartment the tuberous plants multiplied and festered. Having heard Cass's spiel, he pushed his current nymph aside and slid under water, neptunelike, snorkel between crowned teeth. There submerged, he lay as in a trance, letting the feathery floating roots caress him, tickle his lax flesh, gazing up between the stiff fleshy leaves, nibbled by snails, nudged by carp and orfe, who sometimes burst past his eyelids like coronary spasms.

Finally, he rose again, hyacinth-laurelled.

"I'm in full agreement as long as I can make it my way. It should be a great film: Charteris Auto-Trip or some such title. Maybe High Point Y? A panorama of post-psychedelic man with the climax the emergence of this messiah-guy after the colossal smash-up on the motorway when he was killed then risen again unscathed. Ring my casting director on this number and we'll start auditioning straight away for someone to play Charteris."

Whitewhale-like he rose, brushing black ramshorns from his knotted sheepshanks and the band began to play. In his veined eye gleamed the real madness; again he could explore on—now on the grandest scale—the fissured continent of death. His best-known film was *The Unaimed Deadman*, in which a white man wearing suitable garments slowly killed a negro on a deserted heliport. He had been inspired to find a negro willing to volunteer to give a real death to art; now his



It might now be objected that this is not how he was making a point, but in which there was a picture of the possible rejection of truth as an idea in itself. The picture, he said, was not a proposition whose truth or falsity depended on things in reality, and so to represent the idea that a certain picture

the proposition: "There is no independent
man in this world as given." When he
refused to believe this, I looked under all
the names without finding one that he
resembled in any way.

Let us ask the question: "Should we say that the process is just as great in the same direction as in different directions?"

Page 64

messianic power would transfix on a larger scale the problem of the vigour-mortis intersurface.

Attended by the plushy nymph, Boreas began to issue his orders.

His organisation staggered into action.

The idea was that the film should be made with all speed to take advantage of topicality. Archives could be plundered for effective passages. Except for the climax, little footage need be newly shot. Episodes from *The Unaimed Deadman* could be used again. In particular, there was a sequence showing the Optimistic Man doing his topological topology act which seemed applicable. The Optimistic Man walked along a wide white line with hands outstretched, his hands and head and the white line filling the whole screen against the ground. The camera slowly disengaged itself from his shoulder as the line became more intricate, rising upwards like a billowing roof, revealing that more made less sense for the Man now seemed to be doing the impossible and walking on the rim of a gigantic eye; but, with increase of altitude, the eye is seen as the eye of a horse carved from the flank of an enormous mountain. Slowly the whole horse comes into view and the Man is lost in distance; but as this anomaly clarifies another obtrudes itself for we see that the great downland on which the cabballistic horse is etched is itself astir like a flank and itself caballine. This mystery is never clarified, there is only the nervous indecision of the whole hill's glimpsed movement—we cut back to the Man who now, in a white suit, stretches himself out wider and wider until he can saddle the horse. He has shed all humanity but bones; skeletally, he rides the charger, which is given motion by the rippling flank on which it is engraved.

There are sequences from old-fashioned wars, when the processes of corruption sometimes had a presynchronicity to moribundity, and a shot of a nuclear bomb detonated underground, with a whole sparse country rumbling upward into a gigantic ulcerated blister and rolling outwards at predatorial speed towards the fluttering camera. There are sequences in shuttered streets, where the dust lies heavy and onions rot in gutters; not a soul moves, though a kite flutters from an overhead wire; somewhere distantly, a radio utters old-fashioned dance music interspersed with static; sunshine burns down into the engraved street; finally a shutter opens, a window opens; an iguana pants out into the roadway, its golden gullet wide.

After this came the Gurdjieff Episode, taken from a coloured Ukrainian T.V. musical based on the life of Ouspensky and entitled *Different Levels of the Centres*.

A is a busy Moscow newspaper man, bustling here, bustling there, speaking publicly on this and that. A man of affairs whom people turn to; his opinion is worth having, his help worth seeking. Enter shabby old Ouspensky with an oriental smile, manages to button-hole A, invites him along to meet the great philosopher

Gurdjieff. A is interested, tells O he will certainly spare the time. G reclines on a sunny bedstead, derelict from the mundane world; he has a flowering moustache, already turning white. He holds on to one slippered foot. In his shabby room, it is not possible to lie: nonsense is talked but not lies—the very lines of the old dresser and the plaid cloth over the table and the empty bowl standing on the deep window sill declare it.

The window has double casements with a lever-fastener in the centre. The two halves of the window swing outwards. There are shutters, fastened back to the wall outside. The woodwork has not been painted for many years; it rests comfortable in morning sunlight, faded but not rotten, seamed but not too sear. It wears an expression like G's.

G gives what is a grand feast for this poor time of war. Fifteen of his disciples come, and some have an almost Indian unworldliness. They sit about the room and do not speak. With lying out of the way, presumably there is less to say. One of the disciples bears a resemblance to the actor who will play Colin Charteris.

In comes O, arm-in-arm with A, and introduces him with something of a flourish to G. G is very kind and with flowing gestures invites A to sit near him. The meal begins. There are *zakuski*, pies, *shashlik*, *pala-chinke*. It is a Caucasian feast, beginning on the stroke of noon and continuing until the evening. G smiles and does not speak. None of his people speak. A politely talks. Poor O is dismayed. We see that he realises that G has set this meal up as a test of A.

Under the spell of hospitality, soothed by the warm Khageti wine, A sets himself out to be the public and entertaining man who can enliven even the dullest company. The chorus takes the words from his moving lips and tells us what A talks about.

He spoke about the war; he was not vague at all; he knew what was happening on the Western Front.

He gave us word of all our allies, those we could trust, those we couldn't, and had a bit of innocent fun about the Belgians.

He gave us word of Germany and how already there were signs of crumbling; but of course the real enemy was the Dual Monarchy.

And here he took more wine and smiled.

He communicated all the opinions of the public men in Moscow and St. Petersburg upon all possible public subjects.

Then he talked about the dessication of green vegetables for the Army: a cause with which he was involved, he said: and in particular the dessication of onions, which did not keep as well as cabbages.

This led him on to discuss artificial manures and fertilisers, and agricultural chemistry, chemistry in general, and the great strides made by Russian industry.

And here he took more wine and smiled.

He then showed how well he was informed upon philosophy, perhaps in deference to his host.

He spoke of melioration and told us all about spiritism, and went pretty thoroughly into what he called the materialisation of hands.

What else he said we don't remember, save that once he touched on cosmogony, a subject he had somewhat studied.

He was the jolliest and certainly the happiest man in the room. And then he took more wine and smiled and said he must be off.

Poor O had tried to interrupt this monologue but G had looked at him fiercely. Now O hung his head while A heartily shook hands with G and thanked him for a pleasant meal and a very interesting conversation. Not looking at the camera, G laughed slyly. His trap had worked.

Aftewards, G jumps up and sings his song, and the disciples join in. Gradually, the whole screen is choked with whirling bodies.

WHILE THE FILM was being pieced together, a French actor called Minstral was engaged to play Charteris. France had been neutral in the war; Minstral was one of the few pre-psychedelic men left in Brussels. He kept himself apart, ate tinned food sent from Toulouse and looked at volumes of beautiful photographs published by Gallimard.

Boreas's script director, Jacques de Grand, made his way out to the motorcamp on the lunatic fringe of the city. He wanted to get some background for the messiah's life. The messiah was sitting on an old bedstead, picking his toes; from his two women he had only bad images; they would not yield to his healing power and he was feeling that nothing could be done on any level unless women were involved in creative rôles.

"We're very fortunate to have you here at the early stages of your career, Mr. Master. Are you planning to resurrect anyone in the near future?"

"It was the vision I had in Metz. That's what betrayed me on my adjourney, fleeing that terrible Italian camp. Europe's bracken up and Angelina and Marta and me are all apart of the ambush firing ranged against sanity. Ah, my friend, that was a short flood since less than two hundred generrangements the stone-chapping people and uncertain too for every Tolstoivsky two Shitlers but now the trickledammed. . . ."

"I see. You think we are back where we squirted? So you have no definite pains to insurrect anyone in the near future?"

"Angelina sees if she's not by now hyacinth-hipped the waters of sickness wrys and where we might have been balsam only balsa on the flord but me urgenus impatiens spends on merely the unhealing womenwound that helotrope witch tows me with its bloodstone balmy fragrance unaveiling nector's womenwound me my ackilleaseheal."

"You motion the waters of sickness, so you don't entirely rile out the passibility of resurrection in the near-flowering fuchsia?"

"I am a fugitive from that perfumarole yet all beneath our feet the quakeline blows and vulcanows which run-way lies firm aground for all this ilyushine is a flight merely from other ilyushins and not from anything called real."

"I don't see what you meat. You're taking in parachutes. Tell me couldn't you practice on a dead child if we brought you one?"

"Perfect sample of what I'm trying to gut over with the prolapse of old stricture of christchen moralcold all pisserbill it is are phornographable smirch as childermastication to be hung by the necrophage until strange phagocyte of the crowd."

"So you deight insufect anyone in the puncture?"

"Lonly Angelina and the flowerhip-syrup girls."

He coughed. In the big carred-up arena, old tyres were burning. The smoke crawled and capered; up the side of a ruinous housewall where wallpaper hung montaged, its shadow grew like creeper in the palid sun. Over one side, some disciples in gaudy hats were making a sing-in on the torture song. Another, a guy stoked an old auto with its upholstery in flames by flinging on petrol arcing from a can. The flames flowered at him and he rolled over yelling. Several people looked over at him and the unbelievable patterning of it all, life's gaudy grey riches richer richness. All rested here today from the speed death but a migratory word and they would be away again, switched on to the signal the Master would unzip from his bananabrain. Right now, even as he proclaimed, all possibilities were open to them and under the crawling black tyresmog lay no menace that did not also swerve for poetry.

A STRIP OF the motorway south from Brussels to Namur and Luxembourg had been closed to traffic. Boreas's men worked and sweated, hundreds of them, many skilled in electronics, to fake up the big smash-in.

Some got through their work by being cowboys. Yipping and yelping, they thundered down upon the frightened cars, which stampeded like mad steers along the course, tossing their horns and snorting and back-firing in the canyon of their cavalcade.

Other men treated the cars as underwater wrecks. In mask and flippers, down they sank through the turbid air, securing limpet cameras to cabins and bows and battered sterns which would record the moment of the mighty metal storm.

Other men worked as if they were charge nurses in an old people's home. Their patients were as smooth as they were stiff of limb, dummies with nude sexless faces, dummies without female fractures or male mileholes, non-naval dummies, dummies lacking meatmuscle who pretended to be men, dummies with plaster hair who pretended to be women, dummies with a semblance to

children, all staring ahead with blue eyes, upholders all of the couth past world, all terribly brave before their oncoming death, all as unspeaking as O could desire.

Rudely, the charge nurses pressed their patients into place, the backseat-drivers and the frontseat-sitters, twisted their heads to look ahead, to stare sideways out of the windows, to enjoy their speed deathride, to be mute and unhaiiry and non-drivnik.

It was an all-day labour, and to wire the cars. The crews revelled that night in Namur, shacking in an old hotel or sleeping in a big marquee tent pitched on the banks of the Meuse. Boreas went belting back to Brussels and with a shivering sight gripped tight the snorkel in his crowned teeth and sank beneath the feathery roots of his water hyacinths. The plants were spreading, growing in the steamy atmosphere across the floor and up the black-tiled walls.

"Get away from these psychedelics showing mauve and maureen round the eyes," he grunted wallowing.

"But do you believe in Charteris as Christ, darling?" the nymph asked. She was delicious to his sight and taste, good Flemish stock.

"I believe in my film," he said and grasping her alligator-like in his jaws he bore her down into her depths.

Next day, refreshed, Boreas drove down towards the scene of the faked authentic speed death with his script director de Grand who gave golden speech about the Master.

"Okay, so he was kinky about children and gone on flowers and didn't seem to have plans about bringing anyone back from the deadly nightshade. Similar to thousands of people I know or don't know as the case. Did you get a glimpse of his life story?"

"You know those ruins out by Sacré Coeur? They had a five-gallow saturation bomb on them in the last month of the war. I was switched on myself and it seemed to me his logic was all logogriph and missing every fourth sprocket. That fabled bird, the logogrip, took wing, was really hippocrene in all his gutterance, where I way-did but could never plum."

"Cut out that jar-jargon, de Grand! A hell of a help you are! What about his bird?"

"I tell you the logogriph, the new pterospondee, roasts on his burning shoulder!"

"His bird, his judy! Did you get to speak to her?"

"He mentioned a part of her with some circum-location."

"*Godverdomme!* Get her and bring her to me in my hotel tonight. Ask her to dinner! Have you got that straight in your adderplate?"

"Is registered."

"Okay. And get some more snow delivered to Cass—some of the motorcadars need a harder ticket in the arterial lane. *Comprenez?*"

His unit was already setting up the crash-in. Technicians swarmed about the location. When the cars

were all linked umbiliously with cables to the power control and the dummies sitting tight, they went through the whole operation over and over, checking and re-checking acidulously to see if in their hippie state they had overlooked a single detail. The four-lane motorway had become a great racetrack where the outgoing species was segregated for its one and only one-way parade, a great tracerack in time where sterile generations would last for many milliseconds and great progress appear to be made as at ever-accelerating speed they hurtled on, further from shiftless and forgotten origins towards the unknown target. This species on the verge of extinction bore its rôle with detachment, waxed unsentimentality, was collected, virginal, impeccable, stiff upper lip, unwinking gaze. Its lean servants, ragged even, were not so; excitement raced among them; they all believed in this authentic moment of film-life, they cared not for a fake-up, they slaved for Boreas's belief.

And to Boreas when all was ready came his chief prop man, Ranceville, with shoulder-gestures and slime in his mouth's corners.

"We can't just let them gadarine like this! They may be as human as you or me, in their different way. Couldn't there be thought inside those china skulls—china thought? It isn't right! Spare them, Nicholas, spare them! Death will only make them realer!"

"*Miljardenondedjuu!* We want them to look real! Now, out my way!"

"What have they ever done to you?"

Boreas gestured, brushing away a fly or snail.

"I'll tell you something deep, deep down, Ranceville. . . . I've always hated dummies ever since they stared in contempt at me as a poor small boy in the ruptured alleys off Place Roup. Me a dirty slum boy, son of a Flemish peasant! Weren't they the privileged, I thought, dressed every day by lackeys, growing no baggy genitals, working or spinning clean out the question, glazed with superiority behind glass, made in God's image more than we? Dimmies I called them to belittle them, prissy inhibitionists! Now these shop-haunting horrors shall die for the benefit of mankind."

"Your box-official verdict, so! Okay, Nicholas, then I ask to ride with them, to belt in boldly in the red Banshee beside these innocent charges. They're sinless, guiltless, cool—I'll bleed to death with them, that's all I ask!"

Open mouths gathered all round turned their stained suspicious teeth to ogle gleaning Boreas, who waited only the splittest second before he bayed.

"You'll die the death, Ranceville! You're hippped! You think you can't die—you're like a drunkard sleeping in the ditch, drowning for ever because he didn't realise there was a stream running over his pillow!"

"So what, if the drinking water has drunks in it, okay, that proves its proof. How can I die the death if those dimmies are not alive?"

Now on the waiting road was silence while they

chewed on it. Like workers who have joined a continent's coasts by forging a new railway, the unit had stood frozen by their finished work, awaiting perhaps a cascade of photographs to commemorate their achievement: while behind them fashionably the unlined pink faces ignored them from the cars. The mouths came forward now, to see what Boreas would say, to hear out the logic, to try once again to puzzle out how death differed from sleep and sleep from waking, or how the spring sunlight felt when you weren't there to dig it.

Boreas again was sweating on the heliport, in his blood the hard ticket of sadism as he filmed the climax of *The Unaimed Deadman*, had the negro, Cassius Clay Robertson, fight to start up the engine of his little glass-windowed invalid carriage. And then the longshot of the white man in his suitable garb running impossibly fast with big gloved hands from behind the far deserted sheds, the black sheds with tarred asphalt sides, running over for the kill with mirth on his mouth. Now he could have real death again, had it offered, because the occasional man was hepped enough on art to die for it.

"Okay, Ranceville, as long as you see this is the big one-way ride, we'll draw up a waiver contract."

Ranceville drew himself up thin. "I shan't waver! As the Master says, we have abolished the one-ways. I believe in all alternatives. If you massacre innocents, you massacre me!"

The watching mouths drew apart from him. One pair of lips patted him on the shoulder and then stared at its hand. Some sighed, some whispered. Boreas stood alone, the bronze of his bare head shining. The invalid car had fired at last and was slowly lurching on the move. The white man with the terrible anger had reached it and was hammering on the glass, rocking it with his blows. They'd had a hovercamera in the cab with Robertson then, with another leeches outside the misting glass, and used for the final print shots from these two cameras alternately, giving a rocking rhythm, bursting in and out of Robertson's terrortrance.

"Get yourself in focus of the cameras!" Boreas called huskily.

With a sign to show he had heard, Ranceville climbed into the old Banshee, a scrapped blue model they found in a yard by the Gare du Nord and had hurriedly repainted. Ranceville had red on his hands as he squeezed in with the dummies. Their heads nodded graciously like British royalty in an arctic wind.

"Okay, then we're ready to go!" Boreas said. "Stations, everyone!"

He watched all his mouths like a hawk, the only one sane, whistling under his breath the theme of *The Unaimed Deadman*.

MARTA WAS SPRAWLING on the bed practically in tears and said, "You don't understand, Angelina, I'd no wish to pot your joint out, but my loaf was nothing, not the leanest slice, and I was just a baby doldrums

until the Father came along and woke me and freed me from my awful husband and my awful prison home and all the bygone things I try now to put outside the windrums."

Angelina sat on the side of the bed, but without touching Marta. Her head hung down. Charteris was holding a starve-in.

"I sympathise with you. We've all had subsistence-living lives. But the way things are, he belongs to me and you've got to get yourself another mankind. There'll be group-grope tonight—any grotesque grot they grapple—now that's for you instead of all this ruin-haunting here!"

"My life's a ruin and the light dwindles on the loving couple. The Master said to me Arise—"

"Rupture all that, daisy! You just don't spark! Look, I know how you feel, the big love-feelings heart-high, but it wasn't like that so don't try to hippie out of it. All he did was walk in and make an offer as you sat single in your little house! That doesn't mean he's yours!"

"You don't understand. . . . It's a religious thing and mauve and maureen loops come from him binding me!"

The ceiling simmering like a saucepan lid and Angeline hit her with a welp of rage and called her all mangey mother-suppurating things. "You Early Christian whore! Go throw yoursylph to other loins! He's may man!"

In anger, she drove the Marta from this ruined arena out, and then herself collapsed on to the single bed. There she still was when de Grand faded up, slipping a little packet to Cass before he sought her out. She lay and let time pass over her not unpleasurably, idly listening as the raucous noise of a song and plucked strings filtered in the shadow, wondering if anything mattered. That was the crux of it; they were all escaping from a state where the wrong things had mattered; but they were now in a state where nothing matters to us. At least if I can still think this way I'm sane—but how to put it over to them that they should be building. . . . The possibility exists, and some days he does build: almost by accident like a weaver bird adding an extra room for teenage chicks to creep up at the back where it stark and on the stares a big woman all all naked bottoms and beasts. . . . Bum weaver yes Colin he still has the glimpse. . . . A sort of genius and might stage a build-on. . . . Pull this lot together must make him listen maybe if I put it in a song for the Tonic all get the message. The table you use the table you take immense suck cess likely me running naked through loveburrow. . . . Old Mumma Goostale. . . .

As she dozed he entered, not uncivil with untrimmed moustache, de Grand, of secret history in plenty parishes.

"Excuse you saw me interviewing for the film the Master. Second time I'm pleasure of drivnik-visiting."

"I'm thinking. I know it's extinct."

"What intelligence! I'm full of aspiration. I left my own child to come on this quest to film the true Masterpiece."

"Bloody typical. Go back to your child, Paddy, marry her, bear lots of lovely morechild, marry them, stay away from the excitements of masterpeace, rumpling upwards and rolling at speed towards the fluttering artnik."

"The director needs your professional guy dance routine to insight the Master to him. Has a dinner cooking wed local indelicacies."

She sat up and tugged down the flower-blue shirt and bongo beads she was wearing, her modernity unfit, with an effort focused on him.

"The director?"

"Nick Boreas of The Overtaker and The Unaimed Dead now moving to High Point Y to film your husband's life in compaint colour. The great Nick Boreas."

"He wants the truth about Charteris? Is that what you are saying? My god, these stinking runes are so high I'm almost indechypreable—Boreas wants the truth?"

"You have me defused a moment. We're making a movie not a gospel we must want material like a sort of biogriffin job, right?"

"The mythic bird what else is struth! You my opportunity I zip on my head boy and you take me to your leader now?"

"My fiat awaits delighted."

She paused. "You driving? You're so high, no?"

But he was in a studio car with hired driver and they yawed towards the centre with moderate risk to life.

ON THE BRITTELEMENTS of the town the auroras flattered in a proud mindflagging and the phantasms aimed their spectra at her. She was a guttered target for their technicolon punctuated in a single frame as the assassin went home, feeling her face flatten and balloon as if centred in a whirling telescopular site. At the same time, the broad Boulevard Leopold II sloughed its pavements for grey sand and cliffs cascaded up where buildings had been; turning her tormented head, she saw the ocean weakly flail the macadam margins of shore bearing in change: and knew again as some tire-some visiting professor of sanity made clear to her that hear again repetitively mankind was on the slide between two elements, beaten back to seawrack while he prepared to digest another evolutionary change and none the less stranded because motors roared for him.

The noise seemed inexplicable. She was able to differentiate it into eight different sounds, all filtering towards her under the cover of each other. Things that slid and fused let out a particularly evil gargle, so that she grasped de Grand's moustached arm and cried, "They won't allow me to be the only one left sane, they won't allow me!"

Wrapping a moist hand about her, the scar of his

lips unhealing on the face pustule, he said, "Baby, we all swing on the same astral plane."

And in the variable geometry of the mind, great wings retracted and the thin whine let in stratosfear.

BOREAS ROSE BLACK, deadly-electric, face masked and goggled, hyacinthine from his bathpool, beetling baldbright, not unmanly. A palatial meal was being prepared in the next room. He invited her to swim; when she refused, he reluctantly came from the green water and swaddled himself in towels, quite prepared to wreck her.

"After the meal, the rushes!"

"I don't swim."

"You'll have a breast stroke when you see the dimmies caroom!" Full of tittering good humour, he led her through, a heliogabbic figure eight of a man and she bedraggled with a little brave chin, saying, "I want to talk seriously with you about the lying-in-state of our old world."

He paraded with her slowly round the grand room, already partly hyacinth-invaded as they foliated like ivy across the wallpagan, speaking here and there to the chattering mass that gathered, all to Angeline macabre and flowing from the head as being part of the mythology of the palace and from their infested breath and words crawled the crystalagmites she dreamed of dreading.

A speech was made by one of the figmies, beginning by praising Boreas, ascending on a brief description of the steel industry of a nearby un-named state, and working through references to Van Gogh and a woman called Marie Brashendorf or Bratzendorf who had brought forth live puppies after a nine-day confinement up the scales of madness to a high sea reference to Atlantic grails. Then the company sat or sprawled down, Boreas taking a firm hold of Angelina to guide her next to him, one great hand under her shirt grappling the life out of her left breast.

The first course of the banquet was presented, consisting only of hot water tainted by a shredded leaf, and all following courses showed similar liquidness in these hoard times, except for warm slices of *bodding*.

"All the known world," she said sliding in, "loses its old staples and in only a few months everything will drop apart for lack of care. People who can must save the old order for better times before we're all psychedelic salvages and you in your film can show them how to keep a grip until the bombeffect wears thin, do a preachment of the value of the pre-acidity."

"No no no, *cherie*, my High Point Y is an impeachment of the old technological odour, which was only built up by repression and maintained by everyone's anxiety, or dummied into inhabitation. Okay, so it all go and no worries. You husbind is a saviour man for lead us to a greater dustance away from old and a new belief in the immaterial. So I picture him."

"Okay, I agree as everyone must that there were

many faults but put at its lowest wesciv maintained in reasonable comfort a high population which now must die badly by plague and starve."

"You talk to wrong guy, girlie, because I like to see the ferretty technology people die offand black in the ground sleep in bulldozing massgraves in Mechelen and Manchester."

"You shock me, Boreas. And who then will watch your epix?"

Slices of Christmas cactus succulent and inedible were placed before them.

"I will eye my films. To the ego egofruit. For me only is they made and to enjoy. For long since the sixties have I and many lesser pouring cout our decompositional fluid medium preparing for this dessintegration of sorciety and now you want again the offices clattering?" He sipped shallowly at the long sour *gueuze-lambic* as it came round.

"Some of the old evils maybe die but worse still live on." She would not sup.

"We live in innocents now and the new way which your husbond cries!"

"Not all! Our little motorcade in innocent tries but always an evil parashitic grip strangles it you know you know know what I mean the Mafia with their hard relief are maffiking?"

His jelly flesh was suddenly hard and contracted and the mouth gash sealed and gone. "Don't say that name in here or you'll be in a sidealley lying with the lovely lubrication gone and nothing swinging babe be warn!"

She was standing again in the ruined garden where the sweet rocket sent its sprays among the grass and thistle and her mother screamed I'll murder you if you come in again before you're told! No flowers or fruit ever on the old entangled damson trees except the dripping mildew where their leaves curled in brown knots perhaps she had seen then among the branches the new animal the fey dog with the red tie and been inoculated with the wildered beauty of despair.

Music now played and the parakket people chattered on as two flower-decked seamen sang of disconsolation. Boreas had dislocated and was seen away on the other side where the mob was most like a market marakeshed with hippie hordes. Moving forward, this throng swept up Angeline and broke her into an adjoining private theatre. "What's the rush?"

"You don't swing!"

The ceiling flew away the nightbox closed and glaring careyes filled the screen with coloured rattle 5 4 3 2 One buildings surged and broke along the autobahn at troglodaybreak in grey unconvincing weather, their boxrooms stuffed with the comic strip of family bedroomdress as all rose crying "Master! Charteris!" And now paper familias folds and rises from his breakfast serially lifts the kids into the roaring garage monsters gentle mansters gentle masters one by one gliding and choking carring the human scarifice out along the dangerous beaches flashing in variable geography orien-

ted against accident.

The film is as yet unedited. Again and a second time the mechanical riptide roars along the breach discontinuity of time and space armoured armoured green and grey and blue and red a race indeed and carried helpless in them the wheelborn ones.

The dummies have precognitive impulses of the coming crash. Scenes of the resurrenition flash like traffic controls, they view themselves disjointed in the rough joinery of impact amortised in the outstretched ambulanes and finally in the sexton's sinkingfung drowned in their own neutrifaction beneath the wave freeze. With unwinking blueness they view unwivering blackness and with waxen calm survey the chinalined vacuums in their dollyskulls.

Now far from above travelling like the missiles that brought acid aerosols the eye takes in the checkerboard black and white of roads marked like a deserted heliport with the far black sheds of Brussels lying low plunges like a hypodetic to disgorge the main artery. Its plain lanes erupt into prefognitive shock as force lines fault lines seismographic lines demarcation lines lines of variable geolatory and least resistance besom out from the future impact point. Towards this scudding comes the motordollies. They still have several agelong micro-seconds before point of intersex.

In the leading car from Namur is fashionable cool Mrs. Crack dressed to the nines for high point in a teetotal expatriate sun-and-fun commando suit in well-tailored casual style of almond green nylon gaberdine of a knock-out simplicity deep patch pockets and ample vaginal versatility trimmed in petunia piping planned to contrast with a snazzy safari hat of saffron acrylan especially designed for crunch-occasions and scarlet patent slingback shoes in nubile moygashel. Interviewed just before her death, Mrs. Crack explained, "It's fuzzy man. I so admire my lack of vitality." Laid her head back unspeaking on surrealistic pillow.

The interviewer riding bareback on the bonnet thrust the mike at her husband sitting exstatically back not driving in the driving seat with painted bronze head and lips to match who said, "We both mod many dapper uncreased outfits often in public windows of shops and such places where the elite meet to be neat this we enjoy very much on account of antiseptic lack of any form of marital relations this is not my son in the back just a smaller dummy and a real growing human called Ranceville because as you know my wife Mrs. Crack that is actually has no capillaceous growth upon her addendum in fact frankly no addendum so of course no capillary attraction since happily I have no gentians or testaments in the manner of pre-psychedelic mankind so we are just goodly friends and able to concentrate on the old middle-class virtues like dressing properly which escalated Europe since hanseatic times."

He was preparing to say more and the gonaddicts were chuckling and fumbling each other for counter-evidence of non-dummiehood when the ravening mon-

ster that encased Mr. Crack flung itself armoured against another monster ravening in the opposite direction. Mr. and Mrs. Crack suffered extinction. Unfortunately the camera focused on Ranceville failed to work so that his final blood-letting gestures were not revealed.

Now the whole cock-up took on the slow motion rhythms of orgasm towards the climax of the film and the wet-mouthed awedience watched expectorately. More terrible than humans, the dummies caroomed stiffly forward in the slow frames pressing towards point of impact in tethered flight stretching their belts as over towards the scarring windshields they bucketted eyes of a blueness still and all around them gloves and maps and michelins and scattering chocolate boxes parabolaed like pigeons startled at the buckling of the sides and still the honest eggshell eyes and spumeless lips stared into nanoseconds of futurity. Limp arms swinging stiff shoulders unshrugging they swam their butterfly in the only saline solution to the deceleration problem.

All the other armoured lemmings rushed to be in on the destruction. Expressions blank of dismay the dummies had their heads cracked and chipped and knocked and shattered and ground and mashed and eggshelled and blown away aiming their last ricochetting nano-cheek towards the impactpoint of speedeath the ipacoint of speeth ipint seeth inteeth ih.

Time and again the cameras peeped on the unbleeding victims and on the cracking tin carcasses that with rumpured wings in courtship dragging ground tuppéd one another in the giddyup of the randabout, till the toms built up an audiction and their cheers were heard above the hubcub of metallurging grinderbiles. But Boreas wept because his film had frightened him and to the mainshaft struck him.

His tears scattered. Once they had had a goose to fatten and in the long blight of summer where the damsons festered it made some company with its simple ways not unapproachable. Once her mother brought it out a bucket of water in the heat for it to duck over and over its long head and flail its pruned wings with pleasure scattering the drops across Angeline. She heard the wings flail now as out she crept nostalgic for the gormless bird they later ate.

AT LAST SHE came back wearily to where a broken Stella Art sign buzzed and burned in the desolation of their parking lot. She stood there in a wet shift breathing. Under the mauve and maureen flash her face showed like a shuttered street from which might crawl iguaneous things. But just a mental block away where

Continued on Page 34

Brian Aldiss's new novel is about the relationship between men and time. Edward Bush begins the hunt for his destiny back in time, in the Devonian Era; but it is two hundred million years later—in the Jurassic, at the sign of the *Amniote Egg*—that he is galvanised into the course of action which finally lands him in the Carlsfield Institute for Advanced Mental Disturbances.

This splendid piece of psychological science fiction represents a sustained act of imagination. It operates on several different levels, right from the opening scenes on a prehistoric shore, to Buckingham Palace (where, in a moment of black comedy, Bush disappears up Queen Victoria's skirts), to the alien perspectives of uncreated time. A godlike vision or an infantile fantasy: whichever Bush underwent, the reader must decide for himself.

An Age, a superb imaginative *tour de force*, will confirm Brian Aldiss's position as—to quote one critic—'Britain's Premier Science Fiction Writer'. 21s.

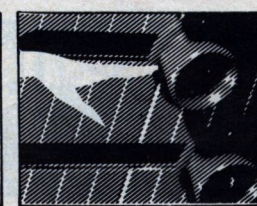
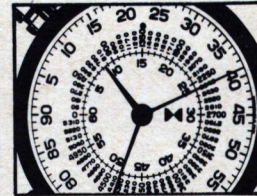
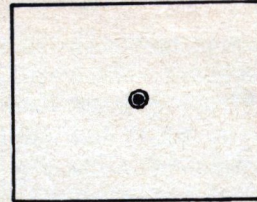
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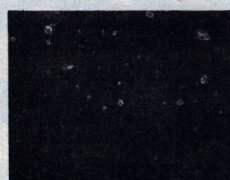
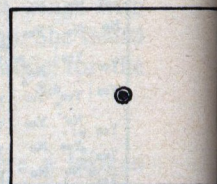
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Page 31

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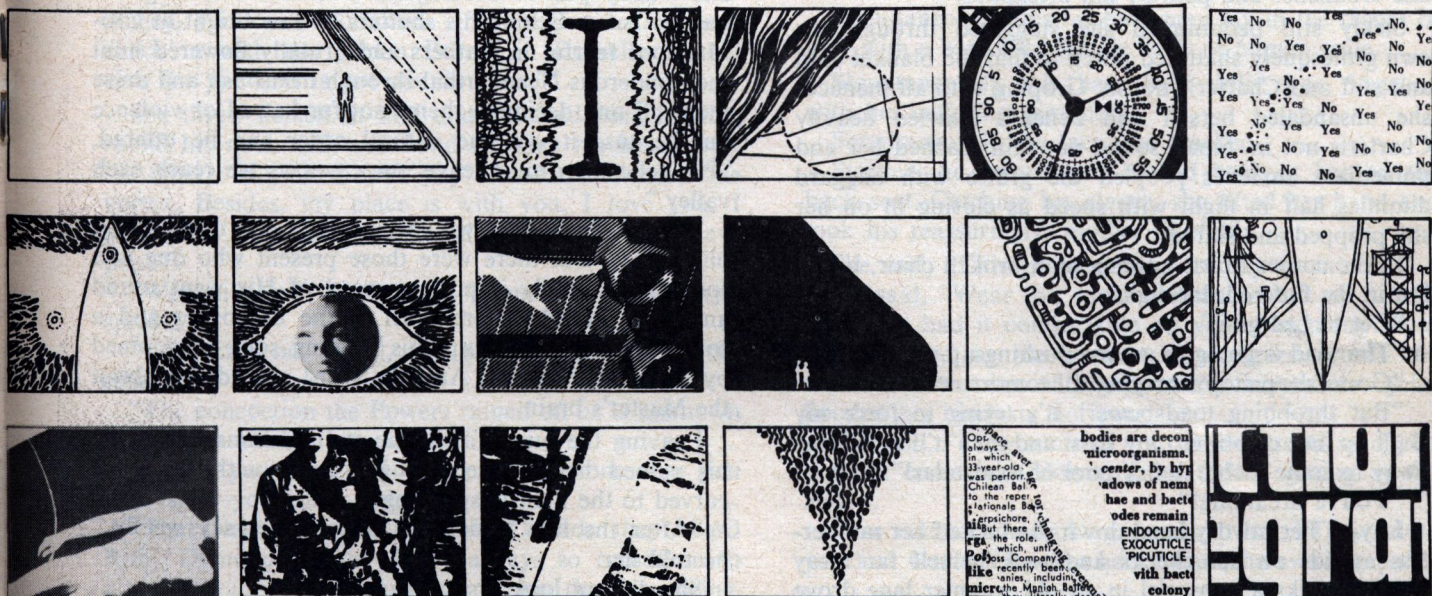


He is best known in England for his powerful 38 minute film *Relativity*, thought by many to be about the best short film ever made. It has an incredible effect on audiences – often leaving people completely stunned for hours after seeing it, leaving

A detailed feature (with stills from films) by Judith Merrill on Emshwiller's work is planned for a forthcoming issue of **NEW WORLDS**.

vies

EMSHWILLER



Emshwiler's Movies

DANCE CHROMATIC * 1959, 16 mm, 7 min., colour.
 TRANSFORMATION * 1959, 16 mm, 5 min., colour (Special Citation 1960 Creative Film Foundation).
 LIFE LINES * 1960, 16 mm, 7 min., colour (Award of Distinction 1960 Creative Film Foundation).
 TIME OF THE HEATHEN 1961 in collaboration with Peter Kass. 35 mm, 75 min., B & W feature with colour sequence (Grand Prize 1961 Bergamo Festival).
 THANATOPSIS * 1962, 16 mm, 6 min., B & W (Special Prize for Superior Technique 1963 Brussels Experimental Film Festival).
 TOTEM 1963, in collaboration with Alwin Nikolais, 16 mm, 16 min., colour (Award 1964 Ann Arbor Festival).
 SCRAMBLES 1963, 16 mm, 15 min., B & W (Award 1964 Ann Arbor Festival).
 GEORGE DUMPSON'S PLACE 1964, 16 mm, 8 min., colour.

FACES OF AMERICA 1965, 35 mm, 20 min., colour, USIA film, Edinburgh Festival 1965.

RELATIVITY ‡ 1966, 16 mm, 38 min., colour. Made with grant from Ford Foundation. N.Y. Film Festival 1966, London Festival 1966, Oberhausen Festival 1967 (Special Award), Bristol SF Convention 1967.

ART SCENE, U.S.A. 1966, 35 mm, 16 min., colour, USIA film.

BODY WORKS 1965-67, Multiple projection with live dancers, 30 min., N.Y. Cinematheque Expanded Cinema Festival 1965, Museum of Modern Art 1967.

FUSION 1967 16-35 mm, 16 min. Colour, in collaboration with Alwin Nikolais.

* Films selected for showing at Museum of Modern Art Independent Film-makers series April 1963, ‡ November 1965.

she only blindly knew directions a lane stood in old summer green where a young barefoot girl might drive her would-be swans and never think of drivniks.

A small rain filled the immense thoroughfares of night but still among the guttering buggies and the rib-roofed skeletomes a guitar string or flute fought loneliness with loneliness and a poppied light or naked carbulb gave the flowerpeople nightpower. She plashes the raddlepuddles in a dim blue fermentation. A round of vestal voices plays noughts and crosses her subterranean path with a whole sparse countryside rumpling upward. Such shadows in her way she brushes off knowing the nets that await her in the shallows of a nightsunk city. She crouches and pees by old brickhaps.

Sickly still bedummed she staggered through her own grotesquely shattered porch to find the blanket cold and stiff and Charteris not in. Groping with all menaces she unsandaled herself and beneath crawled heavily Charteris not in. Small sound not rain reached her and immediate anxieties peopled the grotto with haggard dimmies half in flight with speed as closing in on her she propped and stared.

In the corner Marta sniffing on a broken chair, lumpkin in the fluttered darklight.

"Get to bed girl!"

"The toad is going to get me pushing up my things."

"Go to sleep stop worrying till tomorrow."

"But throbbing toadspower! It's trying to force my skull up and climb into my barn and then it'll motor me away to some awful slimey pool of toadstales!"

"You're dreaming!"

Laying her tawdry head down she tucked her motherless eyelids on her cheeks and took herself far away from drivniks a goosegirl in an old summer lane drove her would-be-swans barefoot.

EVERY DAY CHARTERIS spoke to new crowds finding new things to say giving outwards and never sleeping never tired sustained by his overriding fantasy. He sat with a can of beans that Cass and Cass's buddy Buddy Doce had brought him half-forking them into his mouth and smilingly half-listening to some disciples who radiated back at him a loose interpretation of what he had been telling them all enthusiasm.

When he had forked enough he rose slowly and began to walk slowly so as not to disturb the ripples of the talk from which he slowly wove his own designs half-hearing the fishernet of feeling. In these famine days they all grew gaunt he especially his face clawed by multi-colour beard to startling angles and all of them in their walk angular stylised as if they saw themselves designed for a newer tapestry. Partly this walk was designed to keep their flapping shoes on their feet and to avoid the litter in the land: for they had now camped here three unmoving weeks and were a circus for the citizens who brought them wine and clothes and sometimes cake.

Cass said gently to him almost singing, "This even-

ing is our great triumphal entry, Master, when Brussels will welcome you and show your film and turn the town over to you. We have prepared the ground well and your followers have grown by hundreds. There is no need to motor farther for here we have a fine jerusalem where you will be welcome for ever."

Sometimes he did not say all that he thought. Privately he said to himself, "While under the lid the finger is still to Frankfurt how shall we do more than park overnight in Belgium? How can Cass be so blind he does not see that if there is no trip there is nothing? He must be eyeless with purpose."

So he understood that the reports were true that Cass and Buddy pushed heroin and that Cass like Angeline had no habit. Behind his shutters he saw bright-lit Cro-Magnons fearful in feathers and brutally flowered hunt the ponderous Neanderthal through fleet bush and drive them off and decimate them: not for hatred or violence but because it was the natural order and he uttered, "Pre-delic man must leave our caves as we reach each valley."

"Caves! Here's a whole hogging city ours!" said blind Cass. But there were those present who dug and soon this casually important word of His went round and new attitudes were born in the bombsites and a solitary zither taking up this hunting song was joined by other instruments. And the word spread too about the Master's brain.

Leaving the others aside, he stylised himself back to his ruined house where Angeline sat with her back curved to the light unspeaking.

"After the film tonight all possibilities say we flit," he told her.

She did not look up.

"Leave the will open to all winds and the right one blows. This is the multi-valued choice that we should snarl on and no more middle here." Echoing his words the first engine broke air as crude maintenance started for the further trek; soon blue smoke ripped farting across the acid perimeters as more and more switched on.

Still she had no face for him.

"You're escaping, Colin, why don't you face the truth about yourself? It's not a positive decision—you're leaving because you know that what I say about Cass and the others is true and you hope to shake them off, don't you?"

"We go because an image has arrived to tell me it is time to move, but you are right that Cass pushes though that in itself is only one factor in the pool of many."

She stood facing him more haggard than he. "He pushes but you don't care. You have the word about the Mafia but you don't care. It was through him Marta died but you don't care. Whatever happens you don't care."

"You use the old-fashioned terms and feelings, Angel, all extinct with no potentiality. There's a new thing

you aren't with. Somewhere Marta got a wrong drug, somewhere she caught hepatitis or pushed herself over. So? It's down-trip and she had a thing we'll never know in her mind, a latent death. She was destined and that's bad. We did the best and can't bind too much if she freaks out."

"Well I bind, for God's sake! I could have helped her when she mewled to me about a toad levering up her skull or whatever it was and instead I sogged back like the rest of them! It was the night of the filmrush and now tonight they let the complete thing go—I see more death tonight—right here in the toadstool I see it!" She rapped her brow as if for answer.

"Flame," he said. "A light to see us off by I see. Angey, you can't motorcade—I want you to stay and shack in with the golden Boreas in Bruxelles who'll care for you and is not wholly gone."

She threw herself at him and clutched him, holding round his neck with one hand stroking his beard with the other. "No, no, I can't stay a moment in this stone vortex. Besides, my place is with you, I love you, I need you! You know your seed is sealed in me! Have pity!"

"Woman, you won't stay silent at Ouspensky's spread!"

"I'll switch on, I will, and be like you and all the others."

"The concoction the Powers rained on us is unknown formula so where's wavelength?"

"Colin—you need me! You need someone near you who isn't—you know—hippie!"

"That was yesterday. Listen!" Outside they heard Ruby Dymond's voice—Ruby always so turned-on to a new vibration—lifted against a Tonic rhythm singing.

Fearsome in our feathers brutally flowered

We warn the predelics we're powered

We warn the predelics we're powered

We warn the predelics we're powered

Fearsome in our feathers and brutally flowered

And another voice came in shouting, "There are strangers over the hill, wow wow, strangers over the hill." In the background noise of backfiring and general revving and the toothaching zither sound.

"I need only the many now," he said.

They needed little to eat, clothes mattered not much to them, in the strengthening air was the gossamer. What they were given they traded for the precious fluid and this was stored in tanks or hidden in old saucepans under the car seats so that when they had to go they had plenty of go—those who ran out of golden gas got left behind.

By the evening, a racketty line moved towards the blistered holk of Sacré Coeur and city centre where every pinnacle concealed its iguana of night. First came the Master in the new red Banshee his Brussels disciples had brought him as tribute, saluting with Angelina huddled despairing in the back seat.

From one shuttered day to the next his mindpower

fluctuated and now wheelborn again he, finding the images came fast, tried to order them but what truth they had seemed to lie in their random complexity. He radiated the net or web to all ends and to cut away strands was not to differentiate the holes. Clearly as the patterns turned in slow mindsbreeze he saw among them an upturned invalid car with wheels still spinning and by it lying a crippled negro on his back lashing out with metal crutches at a strangely dressed whiteman. Near at hand stood in separate frame a fat bare man with painted skull shouting encouragement by megavoice.

Simultaneously this fat bare man lay floating in a lake of flame.

Simultaneously this fat bare man lay in the throes of love with a bare bald female dolly of human scale.

Simultaneously this bare bald dolly was Angeline with her suffering shoulders.

Simultaneously the face was cracked.

Startled, he turned and looked back at her on the back seat. Catching his glance, she lifted her hand and took his reassuringly, mother to child.

She said, "This good moment is only an interim."

He said, "Wear this moment then with it all *baraka* as if you had it comfortable on your feet many times before," and at the prompt unprompted words the whole ornate idea of reincarnation in endless cycles flooded his hindusty horizons.

She said, "They acclaim you in the streets as if you did not come with downfall for them," gazing at the action.

Cass said to him looking angrily at her, "They salute you and would keep you here for all the evers, bapu!"

THE THIN-CHEEKED children of Brussels ran like wolves uniting in a wolf pack packing and howling about the car—not all acclaiming, many jeering and attempting to stop the progress. Scuffles broke out. Fights kindled near the slowcade and spread like a bush fire among the stone forests. Half a mile from the Grand Place, the cars piled to a stop and crowds swarmed over them. Some of the drivniks in the cars wept but there was no help for them, the police force having dissolved some while ago.

At last the Tonic Traffic managed to climb free and with other helping hands set the infrasound machine with its husky rasped throat extended towards the bobbing heads. Its low vibrations sent a grey shudder across the crowd and a vision of the sick daybreak across untilled land where an old canal dragged straight across the landscape for a hundred versts. With many hands raised to steady the terrible machine, it moved slowly forward and the crowds fell back and the other autos moved forward and so they grated gradually to Grand Place, with the group bellowing song and all present taking it up as far as they were able, detonated underground with a whole sparse country rumpling upwards and rolling at predatorial speed towards the

fluttering heart.

In the Grand Place, a huge screen structured of plastic cubes had been set up on the front of some of the old Guild houses. From the Hotel de Ville opposite, a platform had been built perilously out. On this platform sat the golden Boreas with shadowy men behind him and amid cheering the Master also ascended to sit here. Thus met the two great men and the Bapu knew this was the fat bare man of megavoice who could radiate powerful dramadreams and later a song was sung telling that they exchanged views on existence with particular reference to what was to be considered inside and what outside: but the truth was that the hubbub in the square below was so great that both were forced to play Gurdjieff at their own feast and even the offering of Angeline as a dolly substitute which the Master had intended had to be forgotten.

A wind rose, petals sweetly scattering. The square had been given rough ceiling by immense canvas sails stretched over it and secured to the ancient stone pinnacles of the guilds, encrusting the titled place like stalagmites. This ceiling kept off the seasonal rain that fell as well as supporting strings of multi-coloured lights that glowed in a square way. Now it all became more sparky as they started to swing and flutter as if the whole sky was one big switched-constellation where Cassiopeia danced and ton-weights of conserved water off-loaded with grotesque effect to the Tonic Traffic dirges. Then the circuits failed and the place swung unlit except by torches and one randy probing searchlight.

Fighting broke out again and counter-singing, a car was overturned converted into variable geometry and set alight. A colour slide show beginning, the crowd settled slightly to watch and smells of reefers densened the choleric air. Glaring colours such as delft blue oriental red persian turquoise eyeball blue cant pink avocado green bile yellow prepuce puce donkey topaz urine primrose body lichen man cream arctic white puss copper jasmine thatch chinese black pekinese lavender jazz tangerine moss green gangrene green spittoon green bum blue erotic silver peyote pale and a faint civilised wedgwood mushroom that got the bird were squirted direct on to the projector lens and radiated across the place where the pinnacle cliffs of buildings ran spurted and squigged amazing hues until they came like great organic things pumping out spermatorrhoeic rainbows in some last vast chthonic spectral orgasm of brute creation while the storm-tossed sky rained liquid and shattered coloured lightbulbs.

The junketting went on and on, not all in good spirits for those who wished to leave the square for illness or emergency were unable to do so in the milling mass. Some weaker and fainter ones fell beneath beating feet to be beaujolaised under the press while cholera had to stalk its victims standing and allow their bursting sweats to fertilise itself all round but bulging eyes not making mush differentiation in ex-

pression between agony and ecstasy few saw or felt the harm beneath the harmony and many might indeed be said to perish gaily unaware they burst at the gland and vein and head and died swinging.

Only when morning came revealing more than damage and the last crazed colour writhed away did the paint-spattered herd see what their savage rituals had wrought. A great and terrible sigh went up. Many who had in delirium climbed up to the prismatic pinnacles to lick the suppurating hues now cast themselves for a final fling down to the fast-varying-geometry of the ground while all the rest with strength dancers and horsevoiced singers and paletooled lovers crept away into clogged side alleys in despair.

Only then as Boreas crawled off to lie again in peace under the caressing feathers of his heated pond did the Master speak to him.

"You are an artist—come with us along the multi-value mazes of our mission. Your film caught all the spirit of our cause my life my thought!"

Then Boreas turning his great bare head and naked tearlined cheeks like udders grey with dawn: "You stupid *godverdomme* acid heads and junkies all the same you live inside your crazy nuts and never see a thing! My fool man de Grand was supposed to bring the cans of film but in his stinking state forgot—and once caught here impossible to leave again. And so my masterpiece my High Point Y unseen and shown!"

"We saw it all! It sparked!"

"God knows what you thought you saw! God knows, I swear I'll drown myself, shoot myself, harpoon myself to death, never film again! Not only is my masterpiece unshown but not one of your dim disciples knows it or misses it. This is the end of art!"

Bitter and acid, Angeline's rank morning laughter bit them.

But Charteris grabbed Boreas and pointed at the emptying square grey in washed-out light and at the flames that now consumed the pinnacles recently putrescent in other lights.

"You have no faith in transmutation! Your art has caught a light! Everything you did caught fire materially and burns into our sounds. You are a blazer, Boreas, a black wind blowing off the old alternatives and hurricaning those who cling to what was, electric, electric, see the sign! Stellar Art!"

Through his blundering tears stared electric Boreas, clutching at his bare brow, screaming, "You gurglingod-fool—your rainbowheaded randyers have set fire to the place! My poor beloved city burning! *Bruxelles, Bruxelles!*"

The poison that powered their inner scrutinies seeped into beetling baldbright Boreas so that he saw himself simultaneously making the cripple still upon the cabballistic asphalt making his bed among a lake of flames making love to a still dummy making Angelina suffer him. His face cracked. He saw more of himself than he could dare or wish to see. He rocked with unreason.

Staggering cheek in hand into the dull inner room past old banners toothed with black lions he collided with the birdlike nervous drapery-department figure of a human cassowary and instantly with locking blubber arm seized him groaning and yowling for accompaniment. Nothing for Cass but this supporting rôle uneasy-eyed or never rubicond to shuffer with the ruined hulk out down a lamenting grand stair and by the tenuous tenebrous betelgrained to Boreas's luxconapt.

There with continuing cunning whines for succour, Boreas almost hauled him to the edge. But at the sight of those bulbous hyacinths Cass squealed like a lifted root seeing the craftiness that would kill.

"Yes, die - by - drowning, Cass, you undreaming schemer! Wasn't it you who brought this pyromanichee circus into city just for hope of trade, Cass? You neo-Nero para-promethean primp, they've sacked our silver-breasted capital, haven't they? Haven't they?"

He wrenched and tugged but Cass was nimble and falling took the bigger man off balance with one twisting hook of leg. Together they struck and smacked among the orfe and tame piranhas glimpsing for a moment under water each other's eyes with hatred wide beneath the parting roots. Then Cass was up and crawling out, evading the director's mauling grasp and from his stocking drew a little slender hooded knife. So they confronted, Boreas half-submerged with foliaged grandeur over his sunken suit. Then he recalled his anger, leaped up brandishing his arms and with megavoice again on set bellowed in lungbursting vein.

Wilting Cass turned his tail and like a mutilated animal ran away somewhere into the smoking cityhive.

THAT CITYHIVE AND what its singeing symbolled did cosmic Charteris survey from the shaking platform.

Angeline took the Master's arm. "Come on, Master-piece, let's get out of here before the whole scene does a Vesuvius! Come on! Come on!"

He stood enwrapped, staring as the centuries fevered at the edges and breathed down and blew themselves to heat again and the stones ran and slate cracked down the long glacier of the roofs and hurtled into the extinct square below about to be devoured with its old common order. He pushed her away.

"Colin! Colin! I'm not flame-proof if you are!"

The rich curtains at the windows of an old embroidery were now alive a noise like cheering and whistling swept the blaze and the crushed bodies in the square below burst into conflagration with amazing joy. One or two cars were still careening madly about to lie with black bellies uppermost lewdly burning tyres still rotating as their votaries dragged themselves away. The emptying bowls held ashes.

Angelina was having a mild hysteric fit, crying this was London burning and slapping Charteris wildly on the face. He in his eyes and scribbled on the retinal wall saw the graffiti of her blazing hate and all behind her

flames like christmas cacti flowering and a lorry coming fast recalled her husband and his blows and knew among the microseconds lay a terminal alternative to silence her and have no more inspector at his feast.

She in her turn was not too wild to see a redder shade of crimson leap up his retinal wall and with a lesser scream now our valleys fall echoing before them now in our shattered towns the smoke clings still as the ulcerated countryside rumpled outwards at predatorial speed to her fluttering chimera she did the sleight-of-hand and dodged him as he once more sprang and pushed. Slipping he fell and at the rickety platform edge hung down to see the bloodied cobbles. With instinct she on top of him flung her boney trunk and dragged him back and cossetted him and called and cried and sat him up and like a mother made all kindness but milk there.

Half-stunned he sighed, "You are my alternatives," and she half-wept upon him.

Their hair singed and Buddy Docre came in an illusory moment with Phil and Bill and Greta yelling murder. They together all but not in unison climbed down the foul loud inner stair and ran among the flailing lava of another Europe to the battered cavalcade jarring to take off in another street.

"Boreas!" gasped the whiteface Master.

And she looked at him amazed to think that still he had some human part that thought of the schillerheaded director. But she was learning and now stayed silent at his feast with inward tremor knowing she could not care if Boreas lived or died as maybe the Master did: a gulf of more than language lay between them now.

For him the self was once again in its throne called back from some unknown exile and he could not say more as he faced the lack of his own divinity and all its variable alternative. His pyre lay behind as they chugged off across the ruby pavements for he grasped as Buddy passed a reefer that he had godded himself because they had to have a god then had forgotten that he was their creation not his own.

He cried for Boreas because that infidel could help blow blazes from his sparky wavering nature.

Before there were real miracles he had to turn the prestidigitation on himself. A man ran flaming down a side street. All were infected from him and in that fever lay his power to make or destroy.

A smoke pall curled overhead the new animals swimming powerfully in it or hopping along the crest-fallen buildings. Shops were broken open with their guts in gutters men ran and struck at each other with sticks more than one fire was growing as they headed out towards the oceanic freedom of their tidy motor-ways.

FAMINE STARTING AT THE HEAD

She clad herself in nylon
Walked the flagstones by my side
The feathered eagle

To the skies
No more uprisings
Instead a palm of dust grows
You know that earthly tree now bears no bread
A hand outstretched is trembling
The flagstaff has an ensign
Only madmen see
With famine starting at the head

Some judy delivers a punchline
In the breadbasket today
No fond embraces
Are afoot
Death puts a boot
Where the bounce was once
In among the listening lilies a silent tread
Bite the fruit to taste the stone
Throughout the Gobi seed awaits
The rain to stalk
Famine starting at the head

He only has to say one word
Roses grow from an empty bowl
In our shuttered streets
The cars roam
Don't need a home
Or volume control
Wandering sizeless with the unaimed dead
We hear his voice cry "Paradise!"
On the Golden Coast the cymbals
Start to sound
Salvation starting at the head

TORTURES

There's no answer from the old exchange
I want to push inside you
The sensations you find in yourself
May just be within my range

Grimly sitting round a table
Fifteen men with life at stake
They may torture themselves but those tortures
Will not make them awake

The cards were somehow different
The board I had not seen before
Their iron maiden gleamed dimly cherry-red with sex
Down in the basement I reached Low Point X

Last year they stopped their playing
Phone just ceased to buzz
But if you find them there tomorrow
Better start in there praying

Reincarnation where the cobwebs
Are comes daily from your keep
We may torture ourselves but those tortures
Cannot break our sleep.

POOR A!

(Gurdjieff's Mocking Song)

Poor A! Poor A! Now there's a clever man!
He only wants to talk and he is happy!
I could have pulled his trousers off
Un-noticed, silly chappie!

Poor A! Poor A! What sort of man is it
Who only wants to talk and he's okay?
I tell you everyone's like that—
They fill the world today.

I might say poor old A is rather better
Than some wild talkniks I have met, a
Chap who in his way knows what is what—
On military onions he knows quite a lot.
In a superficial public way he tries to find out Why:
And he'd hate to think he ever told a lie.

Poor A! Poor A! He is no longer young!
He said so much I think and was uncouth
To guard against an awful chance
To listen to the truth—
He led himself a merry dance—
He hid his head in circumstance—
To fight against the truth!

Disciples: Poor us! Poor us! We really felt his tongue!
He drank Khagetia and talked without ruth
To guard against his only chance
To hear G give out truth—
He led us all a merry dance—
He leads himself a dreary prance—
To smite against the truth!
To fight against the truth!

THE UNAIED DEADMAN THEME

Foreign familiar filthy fastidious forgotten forbidden
Suicide's revelation its sunnyside hidden
Death's black-and-white checker is down on the table
Fugitive fustian funeral infinite formidable

Far down the runway the black sheds are standing
My love talks to me with a delicate air
I am the victim the assassin the wounder
Her face looks no larger as I stand close than
It simultaneously does in my telescope sights
But pleasant walking where the elms paint shadow
If I fire I might as well hit me

I walked with her once where her elms brought
their shadows
The dogrose dies now while the invalid car
Barks vainly and I the assassin the wounder
On the runways the markings are no longer valid
Hieroglyphs of a system now long obsolete
No this button first love yes that's the idea
If I fire I might as well hit me

Foreign familiar filthy fastidious forbidden forgotten
I sprinted a dozen times over where rotten
Things grew and she cried for a sweet-flavoured
minute
Fugitive fustian funebral formidable infinite

ANGELINE'S UNWRITTEN TONIC SONG ABOUT TABLES

The table you use
The table you use
It isn't a shrine but it isn't a tree
It never was wild or it just wouldn't be

You eat on the ground
You eat on the ground
You starve on the ground but tables grow wild
Spidery legs and drawers full of child

When things were shrines the holiest was a bomb
That we got away from
Tables were tame the diners were in stocks
Wow wow we broke the locks
Wow wow wow we broke the locks

Gonna capture a table
Gonna capture a table
No use just to smash it lover you see
When tables are tables we're gonna be free

That table you catch
That table you catch
Gotta stay wooden no symbol or sign
It isn't an oak tree it isn't a shrine

My man goes hunting for renegade tables
So my horse stays saddled in derelict stables

LAMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OLD ORDER (*A silent dummy dirge*)

We kept up our facade
The unworld showed the third world how
And prized its pretty inhibitions
They undressed us
And possessed us

And now that times are hard
The unworld holds its outward show
Too late for us to change positions
They have dressed us
And confessed us

THE SHUTTERED STREET GIRL (*Love song for flutes*)

Her face showed like a shuttered street

Under the mauve and maureen flash
From which iguanas might crawl
Golden gullets wide

She stood there in a wet shift breathing
And just a mental block away
A lane lay in old summer green
Behind her maureen eyes

Where a young barefoot girl might drive
Her would-be-swans all day
Or night for night and day are both
They don't apply

There's always summer in the dreaming elms
Till your last shuttered white year
And while the small rain fills
The thoroughfare of love

So her face in blue fermentation
As she crouches seems
Like an ever-visiting miracle
As she pees by old brickheaps

There's a whole sparse countryside
Buckling up from far
Underground as she stands there
And our small rain raining

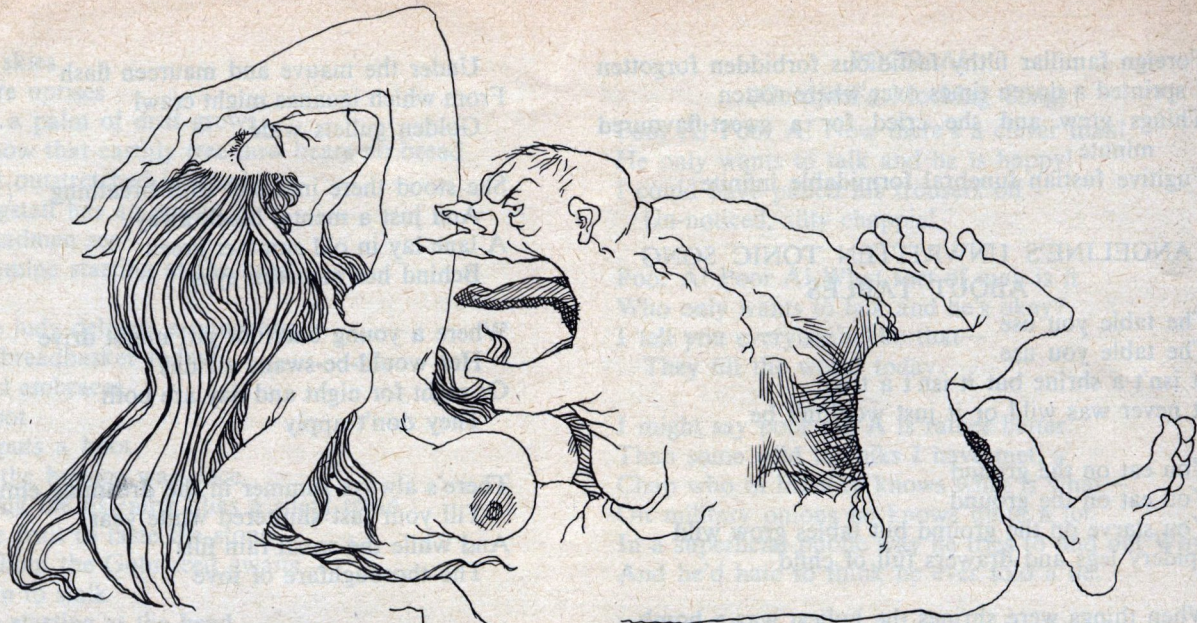
THE INFRASOUND SONG

Where the goose drinks wait the wildmen
Wait the wildmen watching their reflections
When the damson fruits the wildmen
Wild Neanders dream their speckled sleep

They have their dances ochre-limbed to a stone's tune
And their heavy hymns for the solstice dawn
Their dead go down into their offices berobed
With ceremony. Their virgins paint
Their cinnamon lips with juice of berry
They owned the world before us

Now their valleys fall echoing our footfall
In their shattered towns the smoke clings still
Down the autobahn arrows in the afternoon
As we drive them convert them or ride them

We are the strangers over the hilltop
Peace on our brows but our dreams are armoured
Fearsome in our feathers brutally flowered
Pushing the trip-time up faster and faster
Pre-psychedelic men know that extinction
Sits on their hilltops all drearily towered
As we cavalry in with the master
Cavalry in with the master
With the master



LINDA & DANIEL & SPIKE - THOMAS M. DISCH

MOST MEN ARE TOO, you know, unintelligent," Linda explained to her imaginary friend Daniel, while they were walking through Central Park. She was not what you would have called an attractive girl. Her nose was decidedly too large, and she had an unpleasant way, when speaking, of giving a strident and undue emphasis to particular words.

It was night, a cool summer night, and Linda had allowed Daniel to hold her hand.

"They're only interested in one thing, if you know what I mean. Whereas *you*, you're different somehow. When we talk like this together, I seem to understand things that I didn't understand before. It's like . . . oh, I don't know how to say it. Do you know what I mean?"

Daniel nodded.

"It's like you were my father and I were just a little girl. Or it's like you were a priest listening to my confession. You *know* so many different things, things I'd never heard of till I met you: Science! The theatre! Politics! Psychology! Interesting things like that. I should have gone on to college. I guess that was where I made my mistake. Essentially I'm what you call the intellectual type. But you know how kids are—impatient. So I didn't go. I suppose you must think I'm awful dumb?"

"Oh no!" said Daniel. He seemed shocked.

"But you must have thought so when you first met me. Jesus, I was dumb then. I didn't know *anything*? Did I? Nothing. Not a *thing*. I mean, I didn't know about S-E-X."

She giggled when Daniel squeezed her hand with unmistakable meaning. "Now don't you start that again!" she scolded.

"No?"

"You old Casanova! Do you know what? The very first time I ever set eyes on you, at Roseland last year, I said to myself then, 'Now there is a man to watch out for.' I was just sitting there, you know, watching the people dance, and I saw you. I said, 'There is a *dang-erous* man.' I've never seen *anyone* who could waltz like you can. I suppose some people would say that's old hat, waltzing."

"Oh?"

She smiled generously. "But not me! I think the waltz is just about the most beautiful dance in the world, to say the very least. And I think that you . . . that I . . ."

Without warning she broke into tears. Daniel helped her to a park bench, for she seemed to have grown unsteady on her feet. He kissed each tear away tenderly. "What is it, darling? You can tell *me*."

"Oh, I want to tell you, Dan. I want to, but I don't dare! Things are so nice just the way they are. I don't want anything to change."

"Nothing has to change."

Linda shook her head in despair. "You wouldn't say that if you knew. You don't understand."

He smiled, as though to say, "But I do."

She closed her eyes. It was easier to tell secrets that way. "I'm going to have a baby, Daniel. Yours and mine. A little . . . baby." She burst into tears again, but this time Daniel did not, tenderly, kiss them away.

"But how . . . ?" he asked.

"I knew it. I knew you'd be angry. Oh, I should never have told you. Don't look at me that way, Daniel."

He ventured a weak smile. "Are you positive? Have you been to a doctor?"

"Not yet—but a woman knows these things. I've

known for three months."

Daniel had nothing more to say. After a little while he helped her up from the bench and walked with her to the brownstone apartment on West 88th where she lived. He didn't go up the stairs with her as he usually did. Instead he kissed her goodnight in the lobby, by the mailboxes. He had never seemed so handsome to Linda as he did on that night.

That was the last time that Linda saw Daniel.

THE NEXT DAY, on her lunch hour, Linda went to see Dr. Theo Fingal, a gynecologist whose name she had found in the Yellow Pages. The doctor's waiting room was as cheerful and intimate as if it had been a room in his own house, and gradually, under its influence, Linda began to feel less nervous. She passed the time by reading Dr. Spock's book.

The receptionist asked Linda what her name was.

"Lee," she said. "Linda Lee."

Mrs. Linda Lee, the receptionist wrote on a white card.

"Not Mrs.," Linda explained painfully. "Miss."

The receptionist didn't bat an eyelash. She led Linda into a little room, as cheerless as the waiting room had been pleasant, and told her to undress, the doctor would be with her in a minute. She obeyed reluctantly. No man had ever seen her undressed before, except for Daniel, which wasn't the same thing.

But when Dr. Fingal came to examine her, he spoke to her as though he hadn't even noticed her nudity, even making little jokes. He was consideration itself. He could touch her, and it was as though no one had touched her at all. After the examination, a blood sample and X-rays, he told her to put her clothes on and come back in three days. He said that everything was for the best and there was nothing to worry about.

Nevertheless, she couldn't help worrying. She could scarcely sleep the next three nights. She took long walks, alone, in the park. At the office, she reversed the carbons of letters she was typing on three separate occasions.

When she returned to the appointed day, Dr. Fingal was very upset. "Sit down, Mrs. Lee," he said with exaggerated solicitude. "What I have to say will come as something of a shock."

"Not Mrs.," she explained. "Miss."

"This is a terrible thing," said the doctor, nervously fingering the white card before him.

Linda bit her lip. "Well, I know *that*, Doctor, or I wouldn't have come to see you."

"It's not what you think, Miss Lee. I assume that you have been under the impression that you are pregnant. Am I correct?"

Linda nodded.

"I'm afraid it's a more serious matter than that. I'm afraid you have cancer."

Linda gasped, clutching at her stomach, as though

the doctor had struck the child growing in her womb. "No! That isn't true!"

"It is malignant," Dr. Fingal continued ruthlessly, "and surgery will be necessary within two months. After that time, metastasis—or the spreading of the cancerous cells throughout the body—will almost certainly occur. However, there is every reason to believe that the operation will be a success, since we have nipped it, as it were, in the bud."

"You mean . . . an abortion?" she asked, horror-stricken.

The doctor looked at her curiously. "I'm afraid you haven't understood me, Miss Lee. This isn't a baby. This is uterine cancer."

Linda slapped him in the face, knocking his glasses to the floor. While he bent down to retrieve them, Linda grabbed up the card with her name and address on it, and walked out of the office. There was still half an hour left of her lunch period, so she went to a nearby Chinese restaurant and ordered Moo Goo Gai Pan.

"I'm all alone now," she said to herself, but even as the bitter words fell from her lips, she could feel the new life stirring in her womb and she knew that they were not, quite, true.

LINDA WAS DELIVERED of child in her tenth month—or, in a more clinical sense, the tumor metastasized. The labour was terrible, but when it was over and the nurse had brought in the little darling, tears of pure happiness welled from Linda's eyes.

It was a boy.

"I shall call him Spike," Linda told the nurse.

"Spike?" the nurse asked. "Nothing more than that?" She had been under the impression that Linda was a Catholic.

"That was his father's name," she explained. "He's so big, isn't he?"

"Twenty-two pounds," the nurse confirmed. "Almost a record for this hospital."

"And so very red! Are they always so red at first?"

The nurse, whose shift was almost over, ignored Linda's question. If you let them, mothers will spend all day talking about their little bastards. "I have to take him back to his crib now, Miss Lee."

Linda kissed her little cancerbaby, and the nurse took him away. "Spike," Linda whispered to herself. "Spike, my little Spike."

Spike grew very quickly. He was up to Linda's knees, to her hips, to her waist in seemingly no time at all. He was not what you would have called a handsome child—but Linda, naturally, was blind to that. She doted on him. As soon as he was big enough to be put into a day school, she found work again. She would have preferred, for her own part, to keep on Welfare, but it was hard to feed Spike on the pittance

the city provided. In the evening she stayed at home, alone, with Spike.

Even before he had learned to talk, she had read books to him—books about science, about the theatre, about politics. She knew how important a good education was nowadays, and she was determined that he would have one. Spike, for his part, showed an incredible appetite for learning. As soon he was old enough for a library card, he began to choose his own books. She couldn't understand half of them. After he had gone to bed, she would sit in the bathroom (the light in the kitchen would keep him awake) and read the books over again with uncomprehending admiration, softly pronouncing the words she did not understand: unilateral, carcinoma, masque, retribution. . . .

She was never able to discuss the books with him though, as she had once discussed things with Daniel, for Spike was taciturn and kept to himself. Once, in fact, when he was eleven and really too old for such behaviour, he bit the postman who had just brought his mother a special delivery letter.

"Who can it be from?" she wondered aloud. Her parents had died years ago, and there was no one else who would have written to her by special delivery.

It was from Spike!

In the letter Spike explained how, although he was taciturn and kept to himself, he loved her, his mother, very much and would always be grateful for the endless sacrifices she had made for him, always, even when she was dead. All that he was and all that he ever hoped to be, he explained, he owed to his darling mother. The extravagance of his language made Linda blush.

"What a lovely letter!" Linda exclaimed aloud in her son's hearing. But Spike pretended to take no heed. *He's embarrassed*, she thought. *He doesn't want to admit how deep his feelings are for me.* This trait was common in children of his age, according to Dr. Spock. Linda decided to say nothing more about it.

She didn't have the heart, that night, to scold him about having bitten the postman. Though she knew that she was spoiling him, she didn't care. Secretly, in fact, she wanted to spoil him. It seemed to bring them closer together.

At about this time Spike began stealing from his mother. He only took small sums at first, but one Sunday morning she woke to discover that Spike had left the house, taking the coinpurse with everything in it. This time she did scold him.

"What are we going to *do* now?" she asked, with strident emphasis. "What shall we eat for *food*?"

Spike hung his head without speaking. Not really, she suspected, out of shame, but because there was no answer to such question.

"Answer me! Look me in the eye!" She took his face in her hands, and though she was angry it was not a rough gesture. He bit her hand.

TO PREVENT HIM from stealing from her purse she gave him a weekly allowance of \$15. He spent most of his money on clothing. Since he was now six foot seven inches tall, he had a hard time finding good ready-made clothing. Linda would have liked to have made his clothing for him, but he wouldn't allow her to do that. He stayed out till all hours. He reminded Linda of his father, especially the way he would, at times, half in jest and half in earnest, bite her. Once, when he was fifteen, he bit her thumb off, and she had to go to the hospital.

At the hospital she had a room all by herself and fresh flowers every day. Spike didn't visit her (visiting hours were during school), but he did send the loveliest get-well card. He had made it himself with coloured paper and aluminium foil. The poem inside was of his own composition. It was more the kind of poem that a boy would write to his girlfriend than to his own mother. It made Linda blush.

The doctor said, "Yes, yes, Mrs. Lee—just a little while longer. Everything is looking up."

"But I must really be getting back. My son is there all alone, with no one to look after him."

"Your son, yes. How old is he, Mrs. Lee?"

"Fifteen. This is the get-well card he sent me. Have you seen it?"

The doctor examined the get-well card.

"He made it himself," Linda explained proudly.

She told the nurses, too, about him: how he knew everything there was to know about science, the theatre, politics. She told them some of the names of the books he read. Even the names made no sense. "I wish you could meet him," she would usually conclude with a sigh. "He's *very* handsome. You'd have to watch out for him, or he'd sweep you off your feet."

Then they took her to the operating room. She explained, blushing, that it was impossible for her to have *another* baby. She hadn't been with a man for over fifteen years. Of course Spike was a man now, altogether a man, but he was her son.

"Where is his get-well card," she said. "I'll show you that."

The nurse pretended to go to her room to look for the imaginery get-well card.

The original tumour was found to be metastasized to every part of the body. Separate tumours were removed from the lungs, the breasts, the larynx, the liver, the lymph glands and the brain, not to mention the original tumour in the uterus. The largest tumour weighed fully five pounds; their total combined weight was sixty-four pounds, rather better than half of her original body weight. It was a record not only for the hospital, but for medical science.

The nearest of kin, the woman's son, was informed, and he ordered the remains to be cremated, though not, at the hospital's request, the tumours. These are still on display.

an age

brian
w. aldiss
part three

For reasons of space we have had to publish this novel in a condensed form. A synopsis of past episodes and of the omitted chapters follows.

Eddie Bush, failed artist, ex-creator of spatio-kinetic group-ages, mind-travels for the Wenlock Institute. Loitering in the Devonian, he picks up a girl called *Ann*, minds with her to the Jurassic, up the entropy slope, and there runs into two more slices of trouble, the first one being sight of artist friend *Borrow's* masterpiece, which awakens Bush's envy and self-condemnation, the second being a scuffle with *Stein*, an odd character who was in the same mob as *Ann*. Uncharmed by *Brontosauri*, Bush heads home to 2093 A.D.

There, then, things aren't what they were. A totalitarian regime headed by General Bolt is in power, has clamped down on the Institute and declared *Wenlock's* rival *Silverstone* a public enemy—orthodoxy is setting in. Also, Bush's mother has died; his father, *James Bush*, the dentist, leads a rather raffish life, assisted by the lady next door, a Mrs. Annivale.

Still distressed by the news of his mother's death, Bush is seized and taken to the Institute, now decidedly militarised. Overcome, he has a "queer turn" while confronted by the odious *Franklin* who tells him that, as an expert mind-traveller, he is to be trained for a special mission. The training proves to be a month of military hell, with Bush sweating it out in Ten Squad; but the ordeal is over at last, and after a final squad binge Bush is informed by Captains *Howes* and *Stanhope* that his task will be to assassinate *Silverstone*. At least this will give him the chance to mind-travel again. Bush agrees and is sent home on leave.

Bush returns home, complete with a case of *Black Wombat Special*, to be told by his father that his training has apparently succeeded, and that it has changed him for the worse. On the TV the news comes through that Bolt's regime has been over-

thrown, and now Admiral Gleason is in control of the country. Returning to the barracks, Bush discovers Lenny in one of the squads. Lenny denies knowing anything about Stein, and during his interrogation, Bush beats him with a golf club. This is the time to mind back on his mission of assassination, and Bush does so, but finds himself in a 1930 mining town called Breedale. There he spends a self-imposed exile, watching over a family called Bush, who might well be ancestors of his. There is a strike in the mine; the family's condition becomes worse and worse, their misfortune culminating in the death of the mother during childbirth and the suicide of the father.

A wiser and more understanding Bush now minds again. He returns to Buckingham Palace in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, now intending not to kill *Silverstone/Stein*, but to warn him. In the palace he meets *Ann* again, finds *Howes* and realises that *Silverstone* is here. *Howes* tells him that in fact he is working against the present regime, and chose Bush as the assassin because he knew that he would decide not to carry it out. *Howes* takes Bush to see *Silverman*, but all three are captured by agents of the regime. Rescue comes in the form of the normally passive *Dark Woman*, who leaks gas into the room, incapacitating the agents.

Ann, Bush, *Howes* and *Silverstone* mind back to the Jurassic to pick up *Borrow*; *Silverstone* wishes to reveal his ideas to the two artists. To escape their enemies they mind far, far back—into the Cryptozoic. They stand amidst enormous clayey rocks, like something between the organic and the inorganic, as if they embodied all the forms the world would one day carry.

Bush is the first to speak,

"So this is how the world began!" he says.

"No," says *Silverstone*, "this is how it ended. We are standing at the end of Earth's history, not at the beginning as you believed."

VI. The Himalayan Generation

I HAVE to tell you of a revolution in thinking so great (Silverstone said) that it is hardly likely that any of us standing here will ever be capable of adjusting to it fully in our lifetime. The generation contemporary with Einstein was unable to grasp the revolution he ushered in; with all humility, we are now faced with something much greater.

You notice I say 'revolution in thinking', and it will be helpful if you never forget that that is what it is. It is not a turning upside-down of all natural laws, although it often seems like it. The error that has deluded us until now has been in man's minds, not in the external world.

Although what I have to tell you is confusing, you will find it less so if you reflect first on the simple but neglected fact that we know only of the external world—the universe, our back gardens or our finger nails—through our senses. We know, in other words, only external-world-plus-observer, universe-plus-observer, back-garden-plus-observer, finger-nails-plus-observer. This remains true even when we interpose instruments between the observed object and our senses. But what mankind has never taken into account until now is the extent to which the observer has managed to distort the external object and to found a great mountain of science and civilization on the distortion.

So much by way of preface. Now I will tell you as concisely and simply as I can what this revolution in thinking is. Working with Anthony Wenlock—and later, I fear, working against him—I and my associates have discovered the true nature of the undermind. The undermind, as you will know, is the ancient core, historically speaking, of the brain; its counterpart existed before man became sapiens and exists in the higher mammals. The overmind is a much later development, an amazing structure that was unique in its ratiocinative powers until it fathered the computer; but we have cause to believe that its reason for existence has been *to distort and conceal the real nature of time* from mankind. We now have absolute proof—indeed, absolute proof has always existed, but has never been recognised as such—that what we regard as the flow of time in fact moves in the opposite direction to its apparent one.

You know that Wenlock shook up our old views of time. He refuted the old unidirectional idea and with it the specialisation of time. I have no new time theory to replace his; all I am fundamentally qualified to speak about is the human mind. But I have to tell you that our findings on the mind indicate clearly that time is flowing in the direction you would call backwards.

Wenlock and I started with more or less the same thought on the matter—an old thought. Even the great Sigmund Freud of the nineteenth century had a glimpse of it. He says somewhere that unconscious mental processes are timeless—his "unconscious" was a sort of parody of our undermind; elsewhere he says something to the effect that "we have made far too little use in our

theory of the fact that repressed feelings remain unaltered by the passage of time". It was the nearest Freud came to saying that repressions, seated in the ancient part of the brain, are immune to the sort of time invented by the overmind.

THE NEXT CENTURY—the twentieth—was completely time-obsessed, multitudes of people suffering from schizophrenia, as the division between overmind and undermind became more apparent. As so often happens, artists were first to reveal the time-obsession, or to speak of it in revealed terms: painters such as Duchamp and Degas and Picasso, and writers such as Thomas Mann, Olaf Stapledon, Proust, Wells, Joyce and Woolf. Then the scientists followed, uncovering smaller units of time, the millisecond, the nanosecond and the attosecond, establishing them all as viable units with their own scale of events. At the beginning of our own century, we have seen inflated time come into common currency—we talk happily of megaseconds and gigaseconds, and find it convenient to think of the solar system as entering into existence some 150,000 teraseconds ago. The greatest novelist of our age, Marston Orston, created in "Fullbright" a deliberately unfinished novel of over four million words that solely concerns the actions of a young girl rising to open her bedroom window. The groupages of our time-dwelling friend Borrow will, I feel sure, prove equally momentous.

All these things are symptoms of the overmind's increasingly desperate efforts, swinging one way and another, to maintain its lying command over the undermind. My findings completely finish its dominance. I happen to come along as an instrument of its downfall; I am merely the culmination of a process that, with hindsight, we can see has been going on a long time. The fourth century Saint Augustine has a famous passage in his "Confessions", "In to, anime meus—It is in you, my mind, that I measure time. I do not measure the things themselves whose passage produced the impress; it is the impress that I measure when I measure time. Thus either that is what time is, or I am not measuring time at all." Augustine almost hit on the truth, and genius—always most closely in contact with its undermind—has often seemed to suspect the truth.

But you see I tell you all this in the old terms, in the way in which we have been accustomed all our lives. Now I'm going to paraphrase it in its true terms, according to our proper time concept, as our children will learn it.

AFTER WENLOCK AND Silverstone's day, the true nature of time was lost, and it was believed to run backwards. Because the true as yet lay only just under the surface, this was a time of great unrest, with the scientists occupying their thought with inflated time scales, while a novelist of the period, Marston Orston, filled a four-million word novel with an account of a

girl getting up to open her bedroom window. Earlier novelists, too, such as Proust and Mann, and painters like Picasso, manifested the time-distortion that was being digested by society. Many members of that society, unable to agree that time flowed backwards, became mentally ill, often with schizophrenia.

"Society coped with the problem by slowing down its pace and abandoning fast modes of transport such as the aeroplane and automobile. At the beginning of a more leisurely age stands the psychoanalyst Freud, who clearly grasped much of the temporal disturbance, although he never fathomed its cause. After him, the idea of the undermind becomes hazy indeed.

"Over the centuries, the human population itself drops, and the disturbing truths of the undermind are almost buried, although occasional geniuses suspect them, so that the fourth century Augustine almost comes within an ace of the reality."

Well, my friends, such is the matter briefly. I've given it to you without much of a how and certainly no 'why', but I know it is appalling and indigestible stuff. Before we go any further, perhaps you would like to ask me some questions."

SILVERSTONE HAD RISEN to address his four companions, who had as instinctively settled themselves down among the cryptic grey forms, looking upwards into his face as they listened. When he fell silent, they all dropped their gaze to the ambiguous rock.

Howes was first to speak. He gave a husky stage laugh and said, "So we rescued you so that you could tell the world that we've had time back to front all these years."

"Correct. Both Bolt and Gleason want me out of the way."

"Well, it's certainly a theory to overthrow just about any government you care to name." And he laughed again. Bush thought that this remark of Howes showed a certain coarse limitation of his mind. But, as interpreters of Silverstone's discovery, he and Borrow would have to overcome precisely that sort of limitation. His mind ran lightly over the new prospects; they were not alien to him, and he realised with a tremor that in his own thinking the prospect of time and life flowing backward had not been without a place. He would have to put himself intellectually on the professor's side, to help him gain the credence and comprehension of the others.

"If the so-called future is actually the past, while the past becomes our future, professor," he said, "this seems to give *you* a pivotal function. Instead of regarding you as the great discoverer of the true nature of the undermind, we should rather regard you as the great forgetter, shouldn't we?"

"That's so—although it might be more exact to say that with our generation the overmind clamps down with all its time-distorting properties, and I am the last to suffer from its effects."

Borrow spoke. "Yes, I see. I think I see. And our

generation bears the brunt of the distortion! Here we are, the *last* generation with proper mental control, scattered—how appropriately!—throughout time!"

"Precisely. We are the himalayan generation, the great hump over which the human race goes down to a future that we already know, the increasing simplification of human society and the human mind, until first individuality and then humanity itself is lost into the amorphous being of the early—sorry, late!—primates, tarsiers and so on."

But that was too much for them to digest. Realising this, Silverstone turned to Ann and said, "You don't say anything, Ann. How do you feel about all this?"

"I just can't believe any of it, Prof! Someone's mad around here. What are we all doing in this God-forsaken hole, listening to this crazy. . . . You're trying to tell me I'm sitting here getting *younger* rather than older?"

Silverstone smiled. "Thank heaven it happens we have a woman with us, ready to grasp the personal applications at once. Ann, I assure you that you *are* growing younger, as we all are, although the revolution in thought is so great that only succeeding generations will be able to appreciate it fully. I believe you will understand all the implications much more easily if we talk about the cosmic scale first, and look at the wider universe as we can now see it through the eyes of truth, before we descend to the human scale. Are you ready for a little more exposition?"

"I'd like a drink and something to eat first," Howes said.

The coarse military mind again. Eagerly, Bush said, "I second that!"

Ann jumped to her feet. "Let me have your packs, all of you, and I'll cook us a proper meal, or the best that can be managed here. It'll keep me sane while you talk!"

"And it will afford us all relief from the twin horrors of this place and my revelations," Silverstone said. He came and sat between Borrow and Bush.

"You don't reject it all, do you?" he asked.

"The time is out of joint!" Bush quoted. "How *can* we reject it? It doesn't even seem to me a cursed spite that we should put it right. A lot of people may now be able to make sense of their lives."

Silverstone gripped his arm in fierce approval, nodding violently.

"The split second in time, the attosecond—it's always obsessed painters, much more than anyone else," Borrow said. "If you regard the mind's distortion of time flow as sick, then the frozen time represented by the attosecond is the nearest a deluded mind can come to health. And that's what painters have mainly concentrated on: frozen time, the arrow on the point of entering St. Sebastian's side, the man with the glass halfway to his mouth, the nude trapped forever with one foot inserted in her panties."

"The Amazon ever about to spear the tigress," Bush said.

"Degas' ballerinas, caught in the attitudes of the attosecond," Silverstone agreed. "And you get hints of the impending change in the painters of Freud's childhood, the anecdotal or what-happened-next school."

Bush did not want to talk about art; he needed to soak in the widest possible implications. Suddenly, he was sure of himself, almost reborn; he realised the awful uncertainties of character under which he had always laboured, half-unaware, the fears and anxieties that had ticked away inside him like death watch beetles. They had gone; he hoped it was permanently. But whether permanently or not, they had left him clear to face this extraordinary and terrifying new thing. Hedged by a thousand imagined evils, this unimaginable evil, springing from the human mind and seeming to embrace the known universe, left him undismayed; yet looking about him, he saw he was the only one to stand ready for the new thing, because the others were all exhibiting symptoms of misoneism.

Ann, having piled all their packs beside Bush, was cooking dishes over three of their cookers and adjusting their air-leaker attachments, stirring and sipping—clearly taking refuge in small female things. Howes had his face turned from the group, marching about and scowling, maybe plotting the overthrow of Gleason—so much simpler than the overthrow of all human thinking. Borrow: already he had pulled a notebook from a pocket in his old-fashioned two-piece, and was sketching something; the trap of using art as a refuge rather than strongpoint was open before him.

Even Silverstone! Even he—*now* he was keyed to go ahead: but who could say if his strange retreat, his dwindling, to become a member of Lenny's scruffy tersher gang, had not been as much a retreat from the demon idea he had conjured up as from the assassins of 2093?

ALL THIS CAME to Bush between the space of one breath and the next. He gestured towards the Dark Woman who stood some distance away, slightly above them on her own generalised mind-travel floor, and said to Silverstone, "I like what you say about our being the himalayan generation. There stands someone from the other side of the himalayas—from what in fact we must now call our past, or our race's past. I fancy she will be of help to us again, if we need her, just as she was at the Palace."

"The past has taken an interest in me for a long while," Silverstone agreed. "I have had a man watching over me since I was adolescent; he was one of the men who intervened to save us from those brigands in Buckingham Palace."

"We are their descendants. . . . We can mind only into the future, not the past. I wonder how long that past is?" He was thinking aloud now. "My father was fond of the clock metaphor to express man's littleness in time. You know—the fossil record begins at ninety-three, or whatever it is, and mankind sneaks on to the dial at five seconds to midday. Now we look at it the

other way, don't we? What was reckoned to be memory becomes precognition—and in five seconds more by that clock, mankind will be extinct, devolved, if you like—"

"Evolved into simpler creatures."

"Okay. But we don't know what happens on the other side of the clock; what you say is the past. So there's no such thing as what we called memory?"

"Oh yes. Memory's not quite what we think it was, but it's there. For instance, the direction-finding we do in mind-travel: ever wonder how we manage to surface where on the globe and in time we need to be?"

"Often!"

"You are relying on memory," Silverstone said. "For all I know, it may be inherited memory. Our archetype dreams of falling are probably distorted memories of our predecessors' mind-travels—some of which could have been so long they would make our excursion into the Cryptozoic look like a walk round a room! I fancy our true predecessors have had mind-travel for myriads of years. Your five seconds on the clock is as nothing compared to what the history of the human race may have been. You realise that, Bush?"

Bush was looking at the Dark Woman. "I am realising it," he said. He raised his finger and pointed silently. Silverstone and Borrow looked in the direction he indicated. No longer did the Dark Woman stand there alone. The Cryptozoic was full of human shadows—shadows not from the future but the long and enigmatic past, hundreds upon hundreds of shadows of people, some more clearly defined than others, all overlapping, all silent, standing, waiting, looking.

"It's a moment—an historic moment—a moment—" Borrow stuttered.

But Bush had seen what Howes was up to. He triggered to his feet, pulled a light-gun from his pocket as he jumped up, confronted Howes with it.

"Drop that ampule, Howes! This gun will work—I took it out of your pack a minute ago in case you tried some soldierly trick!"

Howes said, "You're wasting time here, Bush! My job's to overturn the rebel government, not all human society. Now I've heard what's cooking, I want no part of it. I'm going back to the present—2093."

"You're staying here and listening! Drop that ampule!"

Partly concealed behind Ann, who had now straightened from her cookers to see what was happening, Howes had pulled a CSD ampule from his pocket and surreptitiously rolled up his sleeve. Now he stood frozen and glared into Bush's eyes.

Whatever he read there did not reassure him. Slowly, he opened his fingers and let the little snouted pellet fall. Bush crushed it into the floor.

"Let's have the rest of your supply! What Silverstone is saying is more monumental than a planet full of Gleasons. If we're going back, we're going back understanding the situation we're supposed to be tack-

ling. Right, professor?"

"Right, Eddie, thank you. Captain Howes, I really must ask you to be patient and hear me out."

Howes tossed a newly opened pack of ampules across to Bush.

"I can be patient, professor," he said. He squatted down on his haunches and glared at Bush. Bush stood where he was, relaxing only slightly. Ann broke the tension by offering them all soup.

They glared at Bush, as if awaiting a sign to start. Accepting a spoon from Ann, he nodded at Silverstone.

"We'd be pleased to hear your new view of the cosmos, professor," he said.

VII. When the Dead Come to Life

NOT BEING A physical scientist, I cannot go too technically into this side of the matter (Silverstone said)—which I imagine will be a relief to all four of you. Nor have I or my associates had the chance as yet to begin any research into this side of the matter. Once we have overthrown the present totalitarian government, and scientific institutes are unshackled again, clearly all the old properties of the cosmos will be reinvestigated in the light of this staggering new knowledge.

All I want to do now is give you one or two examples of the new way we must look at things on the macro-cosmic scale.

You realise that what man has pieced together concerning what he thought of as his past in fact concerns the future. So we know the earth will gradually become molten and then break apart to become gas and interstellar dust dispersing from round the ageing sun.

We can see, too, that this event will take place in a shrinking universe. The Doppler effect is one piece of evidence for the fact that the distant stars and island galaxies are hurtling towards us, and towards the time when the whole universe rolls into a *primaeval*—an ultimate atom. Such will be the end of the universe. So we have the answer to questions previously hidden from us—while of course we no longer know what we thought we knew, such as how the Earth began—not to mention how life began.

You will see from this that all the basic tenets of our thought, painfully acquired over the millennia, are thus stood on their ear. Every natural law is reversed or shattered. We observed wrong, and we did not know what we were doing. All our celebrated scientific accuracy and detachment was one hundred and eighty degrees out of true. The celebrated Second Law of Thermodynamics, for example—we now begin to see that heat in fact passes from cooler bodies to hotter: suns are collectors of heat, rather than disseminators. Even the nature of heat thus appears changed. Energy accumulates from less organised to more highly organised bodies: piles of rust can integrate into iron rods.

Some of our painfully acquired scientific laws will still stand. I can't see why Boyle's Law, about the

volume of a gas varying inversely as the pressure when temperature is constant, should not remain intact. What can be made of relativity, I don't know. But classical mechanics are invalidated; think of Newton's first law of motion, about an object continuing in a state of rest or of uniform motion in a straight line unless acted on by a second force! Imagine what the true state of affairs is! A football is lying in a field; suddenly it starts rolling, gains speed, shoots to the boot of a footballer!

SILVERSTONE WAS INTERRUPTED by Captain Howes saying "You're mad!"

"Yes, I believed I was mad at first. Wenlock believed I was mad when I first tried to tell him something of my thought—that was when we quarrelled. Now I believe I am not mad. The madness is in the human generations of history."

Howes clamped a hand in disbelief over his bald head. He said, "You're asking me to believe that from now on a beam of lasered light could shoot out of some wretch's body and into my light-gun when I press the button? You are mad! How could you ever kill anyone in such a universe?"

"I don't see that either, I must admit," Borrow said.

"It's extremely difficult to see, agreed," Silverstone said. "We live in a generation that is to be consumed with paradox, because we happen to be at revelation point. But you see, you are wrong, Captain, when you say that the light will shoot out of a body into your gun *from now on*. I must impress on you that nothing has changed in the external world at all; it obeys the same eternal natural laws it always has done and always will do. It is only our perception that has suddenly changed, is suddenly clear. What has always happened is that light has flashed from bodies into your gun; then you have pressed the button and had the intention to do so."

"It's mad! It's utter madness! Bush—you can hear him! You know he's raving and things just don't happen like that!"

Bush said, "No, I begin to see it as the professor explains it. The action happens as he says; it sounds like madness only because the perceptions of the overmind are so twisted that Newton got—will eventually get, that is—his law reversed. Entropy works in the opposite direction to what we expected. It also sounds crazy because we had cause and effect twisted up, for the same reason. The lawyers in the law courts had their *post* and *propter hoc*s the wrong way round."

Howes made a wide angry gesture of hopelessness. "Okay—then if it happens the way you and Silverstone say, *why don't we see it that way?*"

Sighing, the professor said, "We have explained that. Our perceptions have been strained through a distorting lens of mind, so that we saw things backward, just as the lens of the eye actually sees everything upside down." He turned to Borrow, who was gnawing some beef twigs Ann had passed round. "Are you grasping

all this, my friend?"

"I find this shooting business easier to grasp than the idea of the universe closing in on us. Suppose you divide the shooting up into a series of scenes like a comic strip, and number them. The first shows a dead body, horizontal; the second, body half off ground; third, body almost upright, ray coming from it; fourth, ray going back into gun; fifth, gun button being pressed; sixth, resolution forming in gun-owner's mind. Those six scenes all exist in space-time—and with our experience of mind-travel, we know they always exist, can be revisited over and over like any other event in history. Okay; they lie there like six pictures of a strip on a page. They can be read from one to six or from six to one, although only one way is the right way. Just happens we always read them the wrong way. Am I right, professor?"

"Yes, yes, a good analogy. We experienced them the wrong way, since our very memories were distorted. Do you see it more clearly now, Captain?"

Howes scratched the back of his neck and shrugged. "Give me another cup of coffee, will you, Ann?"

They had reached some sort of a pause. Silverstone and Bush looked rather hopelessly at each other. Perhaps because of tiredness, Bush's first spurt of intellectual excitement had worn thin. He had hardly touched his food. He stared grimly at the massed ranks of shadowy people about them, in the illusions of mind-travel, seeming to stand half in the ambiguously shaped rocks.

"Ann—I'd like another cup of coffee!" Howes repeated sharply.

She was sitting with her knees drawn up, her rations lying beside her, staring into the grey rock ahead of her, a totally blank expression on her face. In alarm, Bush leant over and shook her shoulder gently.

"Are you all right, Ann?"

By dragging degrees, her head came round and she stared at him.

"Are you going to point your gun at me again, Eddie, and demonstrate the new system? I think you're all in a dream—this awful place has hypnotised you. Can't you realise that what you are saying is just tearing human life up by the roots and—laughing at it? Well, I don't want to hear a word more! I've heard enough, and I want to go back—back to the Jurassic or *anywhere*, rather than hear you men talk this frightening stuff in this frightening dump! It's like a terrible dream! I'm going back—or forward—or wherever the hell you think it is!"

"No!" Silverstone jumped up. He could see she was on the verge of hysterics. Anxiously, he took her hands.

"Ann, I can't let you leave! I need—we all need a woman's commonsense on this. Don't you see? We're—sort of disciples, a band of disciples. We must go back to 2093 when we've got things clear and *explain* to other people—"

"Well, you won't catch me explaining, Norman! I'm not your kind and you know it—I'm just an ordinary

person."

"We are all ordinary persons, and all ordinary persons are going to have to face the truth."

"Why? I've passed thirty-two years happy enough with a lie!"

"Happy, Ann? Really happy? Not frightened at heart, aware as several generations ahead to the twentieth century have been that some immense and awful revelation was about to burst? People have to know the truth!"

"Leave her to me, Professor," Bush said. He put his arm round her.

"Please stay and listen, Ann! We do need you here. You'll be okay. I know how tough you are. You can take all this."

She almost managed to smile at him. "I'm tough, am I? You men are all the same, whichever way round things are! You so love something new, theories, all that stuff! Look, all this that you were saying about bolts going back into guns, all explained in six scenes—"

"Roger made that pretty clear."

"God, clear!" She laughed scornfully. "Do you realise what you were talking about? You were talking about the dead coming to life again—lying bleeding on the ground, perhaps, and the blood sucking back into the veins, and then the chap getting up and walking away as if nothing had happened!"

"Christ!" Bush and Borrow said together.

The girl jumped up. "Okay, then—take Christ! You're talking about him hanging on the cross, getting the spear through his side, coming to life, having the Romans pulling—hammering—the nails from his hands, getting down, letting him go back to his disciples. . . . Aren't you?"

Silverstone clapped his hands.

"She's got it! She's got it first! I was going to postpone the new concept of animal and human existence until later but—"

"To hell with that!" she said. She stood there with her back to the grey rocks, defying them all. "To hell with new concepts! You were talking about dead men coming alive and you didn't even realise it, you were so wrapped up in theories! I tell you, you're *mad*!"

"In that sense, perhaps we are," Silverstone admitted, pulling his self-mocking-bird face. "Ann, I apologise. We have tried to remain detached. It's a man's way of going about things. The shooting was just an example Captain Howes gave us. Let's deal with human life now and I promise you it will not be too terrible when you understand fully."

"The dead walk!" She folded her arms and stared at him as if she had never seen a man before. "Okay, Professor Norman Silverstone, go ahead and scare me!"

"AS ANN REALISES—as I realise—with the collapse of the overmind, the naked and true undermind's view of life is somewhat startling, even horrifying, at first sight," Silverstone said.

"The sun rises in the East and sets in the West. It acts like the governor of all organic and mortal life that, with their circadian rhythms, come under its sway. Shortly after the beginning of the year, the dead leaves stir, turn gold, rise from the ground in shoals, and coat the beech trees; the beeches then turn them green and by the eighth month suck them back into themselves in the form of buds; all this time, the trees have been pouring out nourishment into the soil; now they stand bare throughout March, February, January and December, until their next ingestion of leaves gives them strength to grow smaller again. As with the beech, so of course with the other trees. Acorns from giant oak trees grow.

"And as with the trees, so with animals and human-kind. Some of the major religions of the world—which after all obtain their power from the undermind—must have guessed the true way of things; their claim that we shall all rise again from the grave is nothing less than the literal truth. At the same time, the mediaeval notion of spontaneous generation is also fulfilled. In the mouldering bones of the grave, organisation stirs; worms put flesh on to bones; something more and more like a human is built; the coffin is filled, needing only the mourners to come and haul it from the ground, take it home, absorb the moisture from their handkerchiefs, and clutch each other just before the first breath enters the body. Or, if the body was cremated, then flames will reconstitute the ashes into flesh.

"Human life bursts in upon the world in countless ways! Bodies rise again from the sea bed during storms and are washed back on to ships that also emerge from the waves. Before road accidents, you will see ambulances rush backwards with broken limbs that are strewn over the road to join themselves into a living being, jerking into a car that deconcerts away from another car. Wreckage that has possibly rusted for years on a remote mountainside will grow gleaming, lurch abruptly into form and roar flaming backwards into the sky, its passengers suddenly snapping into frenzied life; they will suffer apprehensions, but all will be well, for the fire will die out and the plane take itself back to a civilised airfield.

"In these and many other ways, population increases. But the special ceremony whereby human life is increased is war. From wrecked buildings, from bomb craters, from splintered forests, from gutted tanks and sunken subs and muddy battlefields, the dead rise up and live and their wounds heal, and they grow younger. War is the great harvester of birth over the planet.

"SO MUCH FOR birth. What of death? We know the future, that the human race is dwindling towards its union with animal kind, that the end of the earth is so near, geologically speaking, that everything is tending towards the less and the mindless. So marvelously is everything planned, that humanity follows that same pattern, in the general and in the individual. Every

human being—and of course this applies to the animals as well—grows younger and smaller, with most of his faculties reaching maturity just before he loses the abilities of puberty. He then grows through boyhood, probably attending school to forget the knowledge he will no longer need. The decline into helplessness is comparatively swift and merciful; it is possible that at the age called twelve—twelve years to the womb, that is—the human is probably as mentally alert as he will ever be: and he needs all his alertness, for there is the complicated business of unlearning the language to go through. For most, this is a happy period to which they gladly surrender at the end of their life. They can lie back in their mothers' arms and babble without care. They hardly know it when the time comes for them to return to the womb, that grave of the human race.

"Perhaps I should add here—you'll forgive me, Ann—that the mother often experiences first pain and then discomfort over this process; it is a month or two before the child's struggles die away completely and he merges fully with the life of her body. But things do improve for her, and when the child has dwindled to a speck, her husband or lover penetrates her and syphons off the residual matter. The process is complete and they often fall in love before parting forever.

"Any questions?"

BUSH, HOWES AND BORROW all looked at Ann. She was still standing against one of the monstrous grey Cryptozoic boulders, staring at Silverstone. They had taken the retrograde progression of the universe with some aplomb; the backward flow of human life had knocked them cold.

"You dress it up to sound almost pretty," she said. "You steered away from the nasty side, didn't you? What about being sick, and eating—and all that?"

"You can think through the process for yourself," Silverstone said steadily. "Eating and elimination are merely the reverse of what the overmind has assured us was the case. It may seem revolting, but that is because it is new—"

"Yes, but—you're saying the food comes out of our mouths on to our plates, and is eventually decooked and sent back to the butcher and the slaughterer to be made into animals—aren't you?"

"I am. And I'm also saying that when you have lived with the idea for a year or two, as I have, you will find it no more objectionable than the idea of chopping up animals and cooking and eating them."

Gesturing impatiently, as if she found his argument mere sophistry, she turned to Bush, who was standing next to her. He noted how their every movement was followed by the shadowy throng round about them, and hated the audience heartily.

"You can take all this, Eddie, can't you?"

"Yes. Yes, I can take it—perhaps because I'm partly anaesthetised by the beauty of the strange effects: waterfalls shooting uphill, milkers squirting milk into a cow's udders, a cup of cold coffee heating itself to

boiling. It's like being a child again, when a cup of milk working its way from boiling to cold, and the skin forming, held the same fascination. Which way is a waterfall more magical, or more subject to natural law—with its waters flowing up or down? What I don't understand—you can tell us, Professor—is when we can sheer off our overminds and see things for ourselves with time flowing in the opposite direction—see instead of talking.”

Silverstone shook his head. “I don't think that moment will come. Not for us, the himalayan generation. I hoped it would come to me but it hasn't. Our brains are too loaded with what we must call the inhibitions of the future. But the next generation, your sons, will be free of the overmind, if we put over the message to everyone clearly and soon enough.”

FOR A LONG while, Howes had been standing moodily apart from them, almost as if he were not listening. Now he turned and said, “You explain well, Silverstone, but you have not given us one concrete shred of proof for all this.”

“On the contrary, I have quoted proof from the arts and sciences. When we have overturned our enemies, and astronomers can resume their studies, they will soon give you proof that the doppler effect is in fact evidence for a shrinking universe. Proofs will soon surround you. Proof *does* surround you, but you will not take these dreary rocks for evidence that the end of the world is at hand.”

Howes shook his head. “I don't want to believe! Supposing I manage to confront Gleason and kill him? He then lives again?”

“Think it out, man! We hope you *have* reached Gleason and killed him! Now, in 2093, he has his moment of power—but we know he will be out of power, the economic disorders will vanish, and soon nobody will have heard of him—he will be an insignificant major soldiering in Mongolia. And if you mind back to, say, the year 2000, not one whisper of his name would remain.”

“If I have killed him, why don't I remember doing so?”

“Think it out for yourself, Captain! Until now, you believed you had a good memory but next to no pre-cognitive faculty. Now you see the reverse is true, and there seems a logical reason for it. Beyond the himalayan divide we have spoken of, human life will be organised towards forgetting; a bad memory will be a positive asset; while I think you will agree an ability to see clearly into the future would be useful at any time.”

Howes looked at the others and said, as if trying to win their support, “See how the professor fancies himself as the prophet, bringing great things to his people!”

“Wrong! Utterly wrong, Captain!” Silverstone said. “I see only that we are the end of a great era when people saw the truth. For some reason, we and those that come after us all the way to the Stone Age will

be utterly deluded. I—I am merely the last man ever to remember the truth, for me there is the special terror of knowing that I shall be outcast and persecuted until I forget what everyone else has forgotten, that I shall be reduced to agreeing to Wenlock's false theory of mind, and spend my young manhood partly believing poor old Freud and his camp-followers!”

For a moment, he did indeed look a tragic figure, suddenly overcome with the magnitude of what he was saying, so that he could say no more. It was clear now where the look of the self-mocking-bird came from.

Ann and Bush tried to cheer him up. Howes took the chance to speak to Borrow.

“It's getting dark. We ought to be away from this damned horror spot—if I have much more of these riddles and these phantom people looking on, I really shall be a nut case! What do you make of all this, Borrow? You started by riding with it, I know, but you have been a bit silent lately—I thought that possibly you had had second thoughts.”

“Not exactly that. I think I accept what Norman says, though it's going to take living with for full acceptance, obviously. My thought is ‘Why?’ *Why* did this overmind come down over the true brain like a pair of dark glasses and obscure everything? Why?”

“Ha! Silverstone hasn't managed to explain that! Silverstone!”

They turned to Norman Silverstone. Behind him, the great circle of shades they were learning to think of as minders from the past was unbroken, overlapping like the countless images in a crazy photograph. But in front of them—Bush caught a movement that did not belong among the ghosts. A figure was emerging from the corner of one of the elephantine rocks.

HE RECOGNISED IT. Wildly incongruous in the Cryptozoic, if incongruity existed any more, the man stepping from the rock still wore the grey silk coat and fawn topper he had sported as disguise in Buckingham Palace. Bush identified him at once. It was Grazley, the skilled assassin.

Grazley was at his trade now. His heavy mouth was set, he had a gun raised.

Bush still had ready the gun he had taken from Howes' pack, in case any sort of trouble occurred. He swung it up reflexively.

“Down!” he yelled.

He fired. Even as he did so, he knew he was too late. The air beyond his left cheek was briefly vivid as the lasered beam pulsed from Grazley's gun.

He had missed Grazley. He fired again. The killer was fading, minding, clearly still under the influence of CSD. Bush's pulse of light burnt into his left shoulder. Grazley spun slowly and fell, not changing his rigid attitude; but, before he could hit the floor, he had vanished, presumably to drift unconscious like a derelict ship throughout the eons of mind-travel, sliding down the entropy slope through the unplumbed geochrons of the Cryptozoic towards the dissolution of the

earth.

Dismissing Grazley from his mind, Bush turned, to see Silverstone dying in Ann's care. His jacket still smouldered, and a charred patch spread across his chest. There was no hope for him.

Howes was raving like a madman. "I'll be shot for this! You idiots! Bush, this is your fault, you stole my gun—how could I guard Silverstone properly? Now what'll we do? To think Grazley got back here! In one way, it was the logical place to look—Silverstone ought to have seen that! He signed his own death warrant!"

"You let Grazley live in the Palace—you alone are to blame, Howes!" Bush said.

He stood looking down at Silverstone and reflected on what a wonderful man he had been, wonderful and unknown. The professor's eyes were staring now, and he had ceased to breathe, although Ann still helplessly held his shoulders. Borrow tugged at Bush's sleeve.

"Eddie, we've got another visitor!"

"Huh?" He looked up heavily, unwilling to face anything more.

The Dark Woman had stepped from the vast shadowy crowd. Now she was close to them, standing next to Borrow. She raised her hand with an imperious gesture, and quickly took on substance, until she was as real and solid as they. The look that she cast on Bush was both loving and searching, so that he shied from its intimacy.

"You can materialise into our continuum?" he said. "Then why didn't you stop Grazley? There must be thousands of you here—why the hell didn't you intervene if you could?"

She spoke, gesturing down at the still body of Silverstone. "We assembled here to attend the birth of a great man."

VIII. Walkers of the Cryptozoic

SHE WAS A fine woman, seen close to. Bush estimated her to be no more than twenty-five, with blemishless brown skin, clear grey-blue eyes and midnight black hair. Her fingers and carriage were good, while her sumptuous long legs were well displayed by her short tunic-skirt. But it was her commanding presence that particularly impressed, even subdued, them.

As Bush stared at her, she grasped his hand and smiled at him. "We have known each other for a long while, Eddie Bush! My name is Wygelia Say. At this moment only, just before the birth of Norman Silverstone, we have Central Authority's permission to speak with you and your friends."

Although she spoke in English, it was not entirely easy to understand what she said, so curious was her intonation.

Disarmed though he was, Bush could not help asking, "Why did you let Silverstone die like that if you could intervene? You must have known the killer was coming?"

"We think differently from you, my friend. There is human intervention, but there is also fate."

"But he was necessary!"

"You four have his ideas now. Shall I tell you what has happened in what you think of as your future? You have returned to 2093, as you call it—we use a different system of dating—and have announced the birth of Silverstone. Everyone is upset. Wenlock escapes with your aid. You seize a broadcasting station and start to tell people the truth. Revolutions begin—"

She was interrupted by Howes, who came pushing angrily forward.

"You can't talk your way out of this, young lady! If you allowed Silverstone—"

He stopped in mid-sentence. A look of puzzlement filtered slowly on to his face. Wygelia had lifted a hand in a sign towards him and uttered a few words that echoed in Bush's brain.

"What did you say?"

"It's just a special phrase—a spell, it might be called a few centuries after your day. A degenerate version of it will be incorporated in the Wenlock discipline a few years from now. It will fill the motor areas of David Howes' brain for a few minutes, although the time will seem only a split second to him."

She turned calmly and gracefully, smiling at Borrow and Ann and introducing herself to them. Meanwhile, a change was taking place in the scene about them. The shades of dusk were creeping in; and, at the same time, the multitudes of minders from the past were gathering to watch the birth of Silverstone—though to Bush, still saddled with his overmind, it seemed as if they were now departing, leaving the huge landscape occupied only with its own bemusing structures.

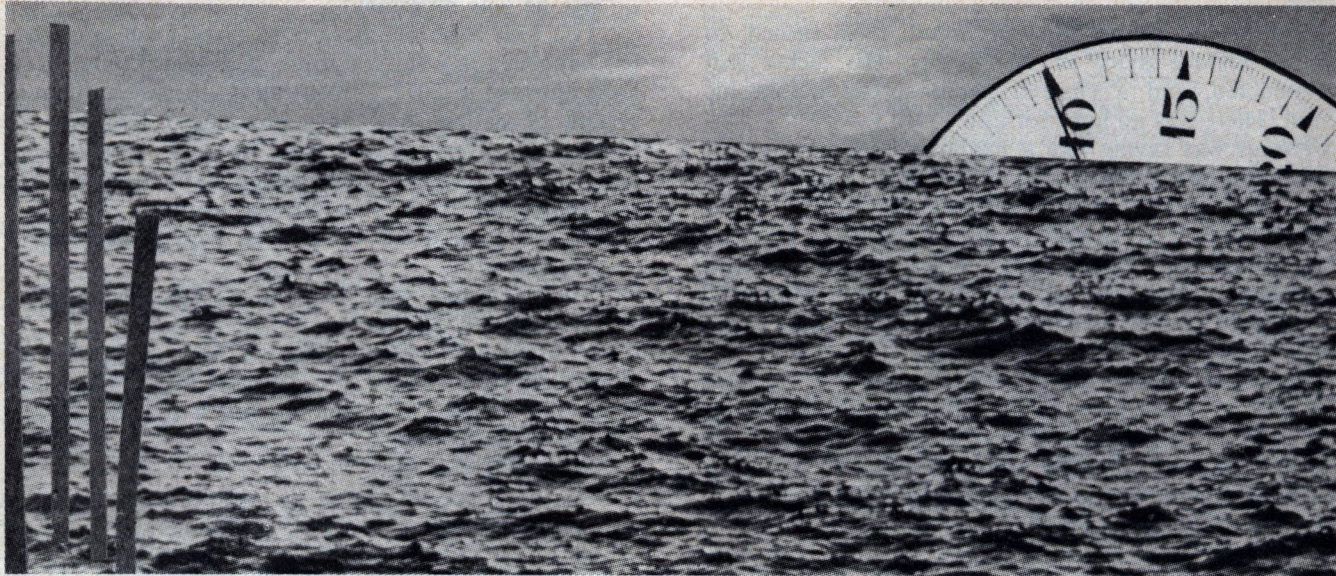
Bush moved some way apart from the others, wishing to think things out for himself. As he stood there, the great crowd dispersed. The view became empty, seeming vacant alike of scale and meaning.

At length, Ann called to him and he went back to the group. Ann and Borrow looked decidedly more cheerful; Wygelia was good for morale and had clearly said something encouraging to them. Even Howes, now recovering from his trance, looked happier than he had done for a long while.

"Wygelia's a darling," Ann said, taking Bush's arm. "She told me that for us to understand her, she had been trained for years to speak backwards! Now I really do believe that all Norman Silverstone told us was gospel truth!"

FOUR MEN FROM the past had materialised beside Wygelia, each dressed in a similar uniform. They carried a bier on which the body of Silverstone had been reverently laid, and now stood with it between them, awaiting a signal from Wygelia.

"You have made one more journey after you returned to 2093," she told Bush. "No, I have that mixed—excuse me, it is still difficult to put things as you see them. You still have one more journey to make before you return to 2093. Yes! Because our birth and death signify somewhat differently to you, the ceremonies con-



cerning them vary on either side of what our friend Silverstone rightly called the himalayan generation. We want you to come with us and witness, as his first companions, the birth of his body—what you will think of as his funeral, although with us it is a glad occasion.” She sensed a protest in them and quickly added, “And at the same time, I will clear up any questions you may ask. Some I can answer that Silverstone will not be able to.”

“We’d be glad to come,” Bush said.

“Are you taking us into your world—the past?” Borrow asked.

She shook her head. “That is not possible; nor, if it were possible, would it be permissible. In any case, we have a more suitable birthplace for Silverstone.”

They prepared to inject themselves with CSD but Wygelia waved the notion away. The Wenlock discipline needed such material aids; in her day they had more effective disciplines—of which Wenlock’s was really a degenerate memory.

She spoke to them, making a curious sign over them, and they were conspiring, riding, mind-travelling, stretching their minds at her behest, moving rapidly towards what they had learnt to know as the beginning of the world.

More. They were in limbo, but thought could pass between them. Or, it was more accurate to say, they were in a limbo where they took on shapes of thought. What they thought, they momentarily were. Since they were in each other’s mental flow, they had no existence except as thought-shapes.

“All mind communicates,” came Wygelia’s thought, spraying out to them like a great shrub in blossom. “It is by drawing on a fraction of that vast power that we can mind-travel at all. Did you never wonder where the forces behind mind-travel lurked? Once, there was a time when the race of man always communicated

mind to mind, as we do at present; but now—I mean in my day, which is separated by only a few years from yours—humanity is past the full glory and sinking into the sunset: or the himalayas, to use that telling phrase.”

But the pallid metaphors of speech here became the thing itself, so that for a timeless moment they were embodied in the untiring myriad generations of men and women who trooped down into the dull cindery glow beyond the clouds over the highest mountains.

Ann’s thoughts came small and lonely, but alive, like dancing shoes on an empty dance floor. “Wygelia, you are part of the splendid reality Norman Silverstone only glimpsed!” Behind the dancing shoes trailed streamers, speaking of her admiration for the younger woman and her abilities; and behind the streamers, a silver boomerang, singing. “And I don’t even feel jealous of your special relationship with Eddie.”

Back came Wygelia’s thought, complex as a snowflake but spinning with her humour and coloured with her laughter and mischief: “You shouldn’t feel jealous—I am what you would call the grand-daughter of your union with Eddie!”

And they were all full of a concerto of shapes that expressed the mixed emotions, delight and some embarrassment and surprise—and here some little obsidian cubes of protest—originating from Ann and Bush, coalescing with a sort of nuptial sprightliness.

This whole amazing experience was rendered more amazing because Borrow was filling enormous multi-dimensional spaces with abstract thought, turning himself into replicated bars of mental energy that formed an enormous and transient art work; and at the same time, Howes was conducting a separate thought-exchange with Wygelia. His question, flowing like gravel, demanded to know where they were going; her answer, vivid and electric, meant: “You know we are already many thousands of millions of years beyond

your present. But those of us who walk the Cryptozoic have more space than that to exercise in. We are now far beyond Phanerozoic time, and into Decompositional time, where only chemicals battle with each other for existence. You will see that Silverstone comes from the last days of the world."

And back came Howes' tiny reflection, soft and enduring as a grain of pollen: "Then we shall die. . . ."

THEY WERE STANDING they scarcely knew where, after experiencing they scarcely knew what.

At once Howes, and then Borrow, Ann and Bush, clutched at their throats; no oxygen was seeping through their air-leakers. They were so many geochrons back towards the end—the beginning—of the world, that the gasses on which human life depended were now locked away in the groaning interior of the globe in non-volatile combinations.

"You are safe!" Wygelia cried, pointing at the four pall-bearers. Each had erected hollow rods like aerials from the cases on their backs; these rods now fumed fiercely like half-lit torches of tar. "We have our own means of supplying oxygen and nitrogen in these barren places," she said. "We are further protected from the conditions outside by a sphere of force operating within the entropy barrier, so we are free from all harm here."

As she reassured them, they could draw the air into their lungs and take time to view their surroundings.

The earth, sinking towards its end, was in a semi-molten state. The temperature beyond their protective sphere and beyond the entropy wall was several thousand degrees centigrade. It seemed to be the hour of dawn, but there had surely been no proper night on this deliquescing planet. All about them was a sea of ash, patched with streaks of broken light which radiated upwards. The sea heaved; the ash was but a thin crust, covering an unending gleet of molten rock.

Their little party, with the body of Silverstone central among them, stood on the generalised floor of mind-travel which roughly coincided with the surface of an enormous slab of rock perhaps half a mile wide. Like the sea, the rock had a slow uneasy motion; it floated like an iceberg on the magma; like an iceberg, it would dissolve and be gone.

Bush stared at the scene. No awe took him. He felt nothing. For the time being, he had filed away Wygelia's information that he would marry—had married Ann; by some trick of mentality, all he could recall now was little Joan Bush marrying, for obscure reasons, the man who managed what had once been her father's grocery shop. The image of her, the loving arm about her father, was close to him, perhaps prompted by this new revelation of a familial relationship. Something that had no closer name than longing rose in him; he could scarcely see that her life was any less important than earth's.

Turning to Wygelia, interrupting quite unconsciously her conversation with Ann, he said, "You followed me to many places. You knew the miners' village and Joan;

you saw what happened to Herbert."

She nodded. "You began to find your real self there—or by my terms you lost yourself."

"Am I right? By your terms, what happened in Breedale was less of a tragedy than by mine."

"In what respect?"

"You saw Herbert's end. Things grew more and more impossible for him. In the end, he could see only to cut his throat and run bleeding to die in the garden. His wife's end was as wretched. Joan—I believe she married for money rather than for love, which would be bound to bring her nothing but sorrow. That story could be multiplied thousands of times just in her generation, couldn't it?"

"Now, look at it all as it really was, without the occulting lens of the overmind! Joan would emerge from the loveless marriage and come home one day to find her father quiet in the weeds, soon to be born. Her mother would similarly come to life and her miserable pregnancy terminate in time. The man would arrive and return her little shop to her. They would all grow younger. The mine would work again, everyone would be employed. Gradually, the family would grow smaller, burdens lighter, hope greater. Joan, we presume, would sink into a happy babyhood and finally be taken into her mother, who would grow young and fair again. There'd be no tragedy and very much less distress.

"I realise now why that period I spent minding in Breedale was so vital to me. I saw how most human sin is the result of most human misery; it was misery and above all the misery of *uncertainty* that made me do the base acts in my life. Once rid of the overmind, you—everyone—can suffer no uncertainty, because you know the future. What happened to Joan, a loving creature who in the end denied love, is like a history of everyone under overmind.

"So tell me, what terrible affliction brought down the overmind on humanity? What happened on the Himalayas?"

Borrow said quietly, "I don't know what this particular experience of yours with Joan was, Eddie, but that was the question I was going to ask Silverstone—and Wygelia. *Why* all this, in heaven's name, from the Stone Age men to us?"

"You deserve an answer, and I will give it to you as simply as possible, trying to relate it in your terms," Wygelia said. She looked down at the composed face of Norman Silverstone on his bier before continuing, as if to gather strength.

"NOTHING HAS YET been said to you of the long past of the human race—the future as you learnt to see it. But you must know that that past has been extremely long—a dozen Cryptozoics placed on end, covering untold epochs. The growth of the overmind was a rapid thing, spread over only two or three generations.

"The overmind grew from the first serious mental

disturbances we had ever known—for we never had the history of tragedy and mental suffering and pain that you did, on your side of the himalayas. That disturbance was brought about by the realisation that the end of earth was drawing near. You cannot imagine the powers or the glories of our race; for though you are children of ours and we children of yours, and there is no break in the succession, yet we existed under different natural laws from you, as Silverstone explained, and created with them—well, many things you would find too miraculous to be credible, mind-travel on a formidable scale being but one of them. We were almost a perfect race—you would say ‘will be’.

“Can you imagine the bitterness such a people would experience to realise that in their great days the planet they lived on would die, and the system of which it was a part? *We* were not hardened as you to numberless sorrows, we did not know sorrow, and a mass-sickness—a revulsion from time that dragged us to brink of the catastrophe—overtook us all.

“We think it was an evolutionary sickness. Our next generation, or in some cases the next generation but one, was born (died, as you would say) with the upper part of the mind reversed in temporal polarity, so that they perceive as you perceive, because they are you.

“And we can see now that this reversal is the greatest mercy, that—”

“Wait, Wygelia!” Bush said. “*How* can you call it a mercy when you admit that if we—if the people at Breedale—could see their lives right way round they would be happier? And so back through recorded history, through all the ancient civilisations!”

She answered him firmly, without hesitation. “I call it merciful because you have had the distraction of all your smaller pains to hide the larger pain from you.”

“You can’t say that! Think of Herbert Bush bursting into the garden with his throat choking blood! What more pain than that?”

“Why, the pain of being fully aware of your glorious faculties slipping away one by one, generation by generation. Of seeing the engineers constructing ever cruder engines; the governments losing their enlightenment in favour of slavery; the builders pulling down comfortable houses, building less convenient ones; the chemists degenerating into old men looking for a metal to transmute into gold; the surgeons abandoning their elaborate equipment to take up hacksaws; the citizens forgetting their scruples to run to a public hanging—this all happens only a pathetic few generations after you four fade back into your mothers. Could you bear that? It’s the senescence of an entire species! Could you bear to see the last rudiments of agriculture lost before a grubby nomadism? Could you bear to see huts exchanged for poor caves? Could you bear to see the human eye grow dull as intelligence left it?

“And then everything else begins to senesce, even the plants, even the reptiles and amphibians. With mind-travel, you have been able to see them climb out on to the land and populate it. However cynical you

were, you must have taken hope and reassurance from it! But suppose you saw that process through our clear eyes! Would you not love the lumbering Permian amphibians, however crude, however incomplete, as tokens of the grandeur that had once been on earth? And when those amphibians lumbered backwards into the mud and swamp and dwindled into finny things, would you not weep? Would you not weep when the last green pseudo-seaweed slipped back off the rocks into the warm sea for the last time? When the trilobites vanished? When life died into mud?

“That terrible process, the senescence of earth, could never be reversed! Mankind has to go the hard way into the scuttling mindless world of the jungle, the jungle on the ineluctable tide of time has to shrink back into seaweeds, and all that was dissolved into the fire and ash we see about us. No escape—no hope of escape! But the overmind fell like a vizor and protected mankind from realising the full horror of his ultimate decay.”

IX. God of Galaxies

THEY BURIED SILVERSTONE then: or, as they had begun to see it should be, they received his body from nature—and this mucilaginous world of flowing rock was the wildest face of nature any of them would ever gaze upon.

The force sphere was manipulated by Wygelia. The bier bearing the professor’s body was set down and the sphere then distorted, so that the bier was borne into a long extension of it; the extension closed in on itself and broke off, in a manner reminiscent of a bubble of glass being blown. With the body inside it, this bubble drifted down from the mass of floating rock. It hovered over the ocean of heaving ash and then touched it. At once, a great jet, a block of liquid flame, rose high into the heavy air. The bubble flashed and disappeared. It was all over except for a great line of light that split across the glutinous waste and disappeared.

In a moved voice, Howes said, “We should have had a bugle. We should have sounded ‘Last Post’.”

“Reveille,” Borrow corrected him.

There seemed nothing more to say. They stood gazing out over the fantastic scene. It was full day now. A strong wind was moving, calling sparks from the waste; a few more millennia and all would be fire, their island would melt like a candle in a furnace. The wind was breaking up the cloud, which had lain across the entire sky like slate strata and seemingly as solid. The strata tore away in mighty patches more reminiscent of islands than clouds, and revealed the sun.

The sun blazed; yet it was dark and blotched. It trailed streamers of fire. It was an augur of the final inferno to come.

“Well, we’ll be getting back to 2093 now, Wygelia,” Howes said, forcing a conversational officer’s voice. “Just one thing I’d like to ask before we go. We’re

going back to trouble. How do I—er, meet my—birth?”

“You meet it triumphantly, Captain. Bravely and far from uselessly. That’s all you should know. And you fully understand now?”

“Haven’t any option, have I? And I know what I’m going to do when we return, what my strategy will be. I shall report to my own revolutionary force first, of course. Then I shall give myself up to the Action Party. They’ll take me before Gleason. And I’ll tell him—all this, about the overmind.”

“Will you convert him?” Borrow asked.

“I’ll see that I shake him. Or, given the chance, I’ll kill him.”

“I suppose after all this we’d better get in some action, too,” Ann said. “I won’t know how to start explaining, though.”

“Here’s a bit of proof nobody has mentioned so far,” Bush said. “Perhaps I take it from my own life, perhaps from Breedale—more likely from everywhere. You and I talked about incest, Ann. That’s the point where the join between overmind and undermind is weakest—naturally, because it is the point where life and death, birth and death, become confused. The ban against incest—we said no animal allows such a ban; it was invented to stop us looking back to our parents, because the undermind knew all along that that way was death, not life. In the past, you don’t have any ban against incest, do you, Wygelia?”

She shook her dark head. “No. Nor do we have incest, since we all return anyway to our parents.”

Howes shook his head. “I think I’ll stick to gunpoint for my conversions.”

“I’m not a soldier,” Borrow said firmly. “But I will certainly be happy to do what Silverstone charged me with. Give me a chance to collect Ver from Amniote Egg and I will begin interpretive montages straight away. I can explain the situation in arty circles—they’ll soon disseminate it.”

“Are you coming with us to 2093?” Bush asked Wygelia.

She shook her dark head, smiling sadly.

“I have done all Central Authority asked of me. My mission is done and I am not permitted to do more. But I shall see you and Ann again when I am a child. Before I leave you, the four men here and I will accompany you in mind-travel to the threshold of 2093.”

They were mind-travelling again, drawing back from the end of the world that they had long regarded as the beginning.

Both Ann and Bush floated a question to Wygelia together.

Bush, a million spirals, mainly mauve rattling: “If—the long past of the race—humanity—was so great, why remain on this one planet to die? Why not escape to other worlds?”

Ann, interlocking yellow circles: “Tell us—give us just a glimpse of that great past.”

Wygelia warned them she would answer both questions at once.

SHE RELEASED A great white castle. It floated at them and through, being transformed by their minds’ touch as it went, and crossed a dizzying space. It had many rooms. Its walls interlocked and interpenetrated. It was an elaborate structuring of universe-history, a popularisation which they might vaguely comprehend, formulated by a mastermind. It was also the supreme art-work. This, Bush and Borrow would spend the rest of their lives searching for, forgetting, trying to recreate, handing something of the paradoxical glory of it down to other artists such as Picasso and Turner.

Some of its meaning they grasped as they swam like fish through its elucidations.

Long past, immeasurably long past, the human race had been born into creation at a myriad points at once. It was as diffuse as gas, It was pure intellect. It was omnipotent.

It was God.

It had been God and it had created the universe. It had then been governed by its own laws. In the course of untold eons, it entered more fully into its own creation. It had become planet-bound and occupied many millions of planets. Gradually, over countless forgotten eons, it had drawn in upon itself, like a large family returning to the same roof in the afternoon, when work is done. To grow together had meant the shedding of abilities; that had not mattered. Other abilities remained. Soon the planets became drained of human life, whole galaxies were evacuated. But the galaxies were themselves gathering together, rushing closer.

The long, long process. . . . Nothing now left in the race expressed it. Finally, all that remained of the shining multitude was congregated on earth. The great symphony of creation was reached, a conclusion long since arranged.

“It’s a consolation—we have legends of the truth in our religions,” Bush thought.

“Memories!” Wygelia corrected. From the tenor of her thoughts they took consolation for their fallen state.

The great castle had permeated them for longer than they had suspected. She was guiding them in to surface, she would set them miraculously in a safe place, close to one of the anti-Action strongholds.

THEY SURFACED. WYGELIA had gone, the four pall-bearers had gone. Howes was already looking alert and ready for action. Ann and Bush turned and looked at each other, softly, yet challengingly.

“You’ve still damned well got to persuade me!” she said.

“I’ll persuade you,” Bush said. “But first I’m going to find Wenlock and give him the word.”

“Good idea,” Howes said. “Come with me to the rebel hideout—they’ll give you the name of the mental institution where Wenlock’s being held.”

Turning, they followed him through the ruins of their own trans-himalayan age.

A NURSE was walking along the grey corridor. James Bush, L.D.S., jerked his head up and came fully awake. Looking at his watch, he saw that he had been sitting waiting on the uncomfortable metal seat for twenty minutes.

The nurse came up to him and said, "The Supervisor is still engaged, Mr. Bush. The Deputy Supervisor, Mr. Frankland, will see you if you will follow me."

She turned about and marched off in the direction she had come, so that the dentist had to rise hastily and follow. At the far end of the corridor, they climbed a flight of stairs, and the nurse showed him through a door on which the name ALBERT FRANKLAND was painted.

A plump untidy man with rimless spectacles and a fussy manner rose from behind his desk and came forward to offer James a chair.

"I'm Mr. Frankland, the Deputy Supervisor of Carlfield Advanced Mental Disturbances Institution, Mr. Bush. We're very pleased to see you here, and of course if there is anything we can do to help, you have only to ask."

The words released the sense of grievance that had been building up in James. "I want to see my son! That's all! It's simple enough, isn't it? Yet this is the fourth time I've come here in two weeks, only to be sent away each time without any satisfaction! It costs money, you know, getting up here, and the travelling isn't easy nowadays."

Frankland was beaming and nodding and tapping a finger approvingly on the desk edge, as if he understood exactly what James was getting at. "You're implying an oblique criticism of the Party when you condemn public transport like that, I expect," he said conspiratorially.

His smile, from the other side of the desk, suddenly looked ugly. James drew back. More calmly, he said, "I'm asking to see my son Ted, that's all."

Looking hard at him, Frankland bit his lower lip. Finally, he said, "You know your son's suffering from a dangerous delusory madness, don't you?"

"I don't know anything. I can't learn anything! Why can't I even see him?"

Frankland started picking his nails, looked down to see what his hands were doing, and then shot a glance at James under his brows. "To tell you the truth, he's under sedation. That's why you can't see him. The last time you came to this Institution, he had escaped from his cell on the previous day and ran about the corridors causing quite a bit of damage and attacking a female nurse and a male orderly. In his delusory state, he believed he was in Buckingham Palace."

"Buckingham Palace!"

"Buckingham Palace. What do you make of that? Too much mind-travel, that's the basic trouble, coming on top of, er—hereditary weaknesses. He spent too long in mind-travel. Of course, we're still in the early days of mind-travel, but we are beginning to understand that

the peculiar anosmic conditions pertaining to it can help to fragment the mind. Anosmic, meaning without sense of smell—the olfactory centres of the brain are the most ancient ones. Your son started to believe he could mind into human-inhabited ages, and a long series of delusions followed which we are hoping to record and study, to help with future cases."

"Look, Mr. Frankland, I don't want to hear about future cases—I just want to hear about Ted! You say mind-travel upset him? He seemed all right to me when he came home after being two-and-a-half years away, after his mother died."

"We aren't always good judges of another's mental health, Mr. Bush. Your son at that time was ready to be pushed into madness by any sudden shock. He was already suffering from an aggravated form of anomia."

"No sense of smell?"

"That's anosmia, Mr. Bush. I'm speaking now of a far more serious state, anomia. It looks like being the great mental disease that is going to dog mind-travellers. An anomic individual is quite isolated; he feels cut off from society and all its broad social values; he becomes normless and disgusted with life as it is. In mind-travel, seeing a world about him he is powerless to influence in any way, the anomic individual thinks of life as being without goal or meaning. He tends to turn back into his own past, to turn back the clock, to regress into a catatonic womb-state."

"You're blinding me by science, Mr. Frankland," said James, aggrievedly. "As I say, Ted seemed okay when he came home that time."

"And the outside world conspired to give your son that requisite extra push," Frankland continued, nodding slightly to James as an indication that he reckoned it kinder to ignore his interruption. "That push, of course, was the death of his mother. We know he had an incestuous fixation for her, and the discovery that she had finally eluded his desires sent your son off on a startling manic trajectory that was a masked attempt to turn back to the womb."

"It doesn't sound like Ted at all."

Frankland rose. "Since you don't seem disposed to believe me, I will give you a little proof."

HE WALKED OVER to a portable tape-recorder, selected a tape from a nearby rack, set it on the spindle, and switched on.

"We have recorded a great deal of what your son has said in his hallucinatory periods. Here's a fragment from very early in his treatment, when he was first brought here. I should explain that he collapsed while waiting to be interviewed by Mr. Howells, his superior at the Wenlock Institute. For reasons we do not yet understand, he was convinced that our great Head of State, General Peregrine Bolt, was imposing an evil regime on the country. This sort of case always regards itself as persecuted. Later, in his mind, he supplanted General Bolt by a figure he could more satisfactorily

regard as evil, an Admiral Gleason; but at the time of this recording, he was not too deeply sunk in his delusions. At least he still believed himself to be in this age, and had some sort of conversation with his doctor and some students, as you'll hear."

He switched the recorder on. Muffled noises, a groan. An indistinct mutter, resolving itself into a name: Howes. A precise voice, neutral in tone, commenting. "The patient when reporting to the institute believed his superior, Howells, to be a man named Franklin. Franklin is a distortion of my name, Frankland; the patient was brought before me when he collapsed. The name Howells occurs, again slightly distorted, as one of the participants—a captain—in the patient's military imaginings. Your son was caught in a distorted subjective world when we recorded this."

The muttering voice on the tape came suddenly to clarity and was recognisable as Eddie Bush's; he asked: "I'm not dying, am I?"

It sounded as if there were several students about him, talking to each other in low tones.

"He can't understand a thing you say."

"He's tuned only to his own needs."

"He imagines himself in another place, perhaps another time."

"Hasn't he committed incest?"

Again came Bush's voice, now very loud. "Where do you fellows think I am?"

And again the other voices, mainly admonitory.

"Quietly!"

"You'll wake the others in the ward up."

"You're suffering from anomia, with auditory hallucinations."

"But the window's open," Bush replied, as if the mysterious remark explained everything. "Where is this, anyway?"

"You're in Carlfield Mental Hospital."

"We're looking after you."

"We believe you are an anomia case."

"Your meeting's scrambled," Bush said.

FRANKLAND SWITCHED OFF the recorder, pursing his lips, shaking his head.

"Very sad case, Mr. Bush. At the time of that recording, your son believed himself to be in some kind of a barrack room; he was unable to accept that he was in a hospital ward. From that time on, he retreated further and further from reality into his own imaginings. At one point, he became violent and attacked a specialist with a metal crutch. We had to place him in isolation for a while, in the new Motherbeer Wing here—"

James broke in on the recital, crying, "Ted's all I have! Of course, he was never a religious boy, but he was a good boy! He'd never meant to be violent. . . . Never. . . ."

"You have my sympathies. Of course, we are doing what we can for him. . . ."

"Poor old Ted! At least you can let me see him!"

"That would not be advisable. He believes you to be dead."

"Dead!"

"Yes, dead. He believes he entered into a deal with army authorities who agreed to supply you with drink, significantly called Black Wombat, with which you drank yourself to death. Your son thus managed—mentally, of course—to murder you and lay the guilt at someone else's door."

James shook his head, almost in imitation of Frankland. "Anomia. . . . I don't understand at all, I really don't. Such a quiet boy, a good artist. . . ."

"Yes, they're always the type who go, I'm afraid," Frankland said, looking at his wrist-watch. "To tell you the truth, we hope art therapy may aid him a little. Art enters into his hallucinatory states. So do most strands of his life. I would not agree with you that your son is not religious. One aspect of his case presents itself as what the layman would probably term religious mania. You see, the search for perfection, for an end to unhappiness, is very strong in him. At one time—this was when he was in solitary confinement—I mean, in Motherbeer—he attempted to construct an ideal family unit in which he could find peace. We have the tapes of that period of his illness; they are very harrowing. In that hypothetical family unit, your son plays the father rôle, thus symbolically usurping your part. The father was, significantly, an out-of-work miner. Members of the nursing staff were pressed into other rôles of his fantasy."

"What happened?"

"Your son was unable to sustain the illusion of peace for long; the pressure was on him to slip back to a state of more open terror, to a paradigm of hunters and hunted, kill or be killed. So the family unit construct was brutally dissolved in self-hate: he ended with a symbolic suicide, which heralded a complete abdication of reason and a return to the womb state which is the ultimate goal of incest-fixated natures. He ceased to relate. You invited these details, Mr. Bush."

"Ceased to relate. . . . But it doesn't sound like my boy. Of course, I know he was involved with women. . . ."

Frankland permitted himself a short growl of laughter.

"Involved with women! Yes. Your son, Mr. Bush—your son knows only one woman, his mother, and all other females he meets are identified with her. Hence, he never seeks or finds permanence with any of them, for fear they might dominate him."

"His obsessive-compulsive tendencies have collapsed into schizophrenia oriented about this psychic disturbance. He experiences his anima—his *anima*, or female actuating spirit, not to be confused with anomia or anosmia—as detached from himself, as a separate entity. This entity he called his Dark Woman. She originally fulfilled the classic function of animae by watching over him."

"Dark Woman? Never heard of her!"

"Now, in the later stages of your son's illness, the Dark Woman becomes transformed into yet another replication of the incest-figure, a female at once mother and daughter, this signifying the accelerating mental deterioration of the subject."

JAMES BUSH LOOKED about the hateful room without particularly wishing to see it. The chilly words, which he did not fully understand or fully believe, drove him back into himself. He needed escape as much as he needed to see Ted; and of escapes, he could not say which he most needed, a good long prayer session or a good deep drink. Frankland's voice droned on, not always without a certain relish in its tone.

"On his last mind into the Devonian, when this tragic illness was brewing, he had intercourse with a young woman called Ann. She also became involved in your son's fantasies. That wasn't too successful, either. He believes she is now watching this institution, and will soon lead an attempt to rescue him. Significantly, he pictures her as a scruffy, dirty undeveloped girl. 'Lank-haired whore!' he called her once. Very significantly, he killed her off at one point and then resurrected her. Very tragic, a brilliant mind! 'What a brilliant mind is here o'erthrown!' as the poet has it. But I really mustn't take up any more of your time. . . ." He rose, and inclined his head.

"Mr. Frankland, you've been very kind." James said desperately. "Let me just have a peep at the poor lad. He's all I have, you know!"

"Oh, indeed!" Frankland looked surprised and lent forward over the desk, putting on his conspiratorial air again. "I understand you had connections with a Mrs. Annivale, a widow?"

"Well, yes I—there is a lady of that name lives next door to me."

Somewhat excessive nodding. "The mind plays strange tricks with names. And, of course, there are strange coincidences to be accounted for. Ann, Annivale, anomia. . . . Do you know what an amnion is?"

"No. Can't I just *peep* in?"

"He'd be upset if he saw you. I told you, now, Mr. Bush, he believes you to be dead."

"How could he see me if he was under sedation?"

"He is working on his latest groupage. We give him materials to keep him quiet. It absorbs all his time, but he might turn and notice you and become upset."

"You said he was under sedation."

"No, no, that was yesterday. I said he was under sedation yesterday. And now, Mr. Bush, really. . . ."

James could see the interview was at an end. He made one last desperate effort. "Why don't you let me take him away from here? I'll look after him—he won't come to any harm! I mean—what are you *doing* for him here? What hope is there of a cure?"

Looking extremely grave, Frankland prodded the top button of James' mackintosh with an extended finger

and said, "You laymen always underestimate the gravity of extreme mental illness. Sometimes the mind seems to be thrown into civil war. Your son believes that time is flowing backwards! He does not belong in your universe any more, Mr. Bush, and he needs official restraint. Our duty is to keep him quiet. Now, I'll see you as far as the hall, if I may."

He was nudging James to the door, opening it. In the corridor, a scuffle was going on. A lean man clad in grey pyjamas stood in a doorway a little way off, struggling to get away from two female nurses. He was calling for the supervisor.

"Doctor Wenlock, you must come back to bed!" one of the nurses said, tugging at his arm.

"Excuse me!" Frankland exclaimed, and ran down the corridor towards the struggling group. Before he got there, a burly orderly in a white overall emerged from inside the room, put a hand over the patient's face and dragged him ruthlessly back out of sight. The door slammed. The incident was over in a few seconds.

Frankland returned, red in the face. "I have other work to do, Mr. Bush—work of a rather pressing nature. No doubt you can find your own way out."

There was nothing for it but to go.

THE CARLFIELD INSTITUTION stood in ample grounds, bounded by a high wall. The dentist knew he could catch a bus fairly close to the front gates. With only two changes of bus, he could be home, but the connections were bad and few buses ran. It was raining steadily.

He had no hat. He wound his scarf over his head and pulled up the collar of his thin mack before setting off bravely down the drive. It would be good to get home and have a drink.

Frankland had defeated him, of course. Next time he came, he would demand to see one of Ted's groupages that he was supposed to be working on. It was all very distressing.

Ceased to relate, indeed! He and Ted would always be related, whatever happened to the boy. Of course, the blame for this could partly be laid at Lavinia's door; no, that wasn't fair; it was to do with the time they were living in. James began to pray as the rain whipped him.

The drive was a long one. He could feel his legs getting wet through his trousers. He'd have to have a mustard bath when he got home, if there was enough mustard left, otherwise he'd be laid up. What misery it was, growing old, and at times like these! Oh Lord, in thy infinite mercy look down. . . .

They checked his pass at the gate and he walked through into the undistinguished street. Head down as moved towards the bus stop, he never noticed the slight-figured girl standing watching under a tree, water dripping from her lank fair hair. She could have touched him as he passed.

Oh Lord, in thy infinite mercy. . . .

THE END

Books & Comment

A Literature of Acceptance



result of planetary colonisation or an atomic war) where men were men and women were women and the "individual" could live wild and easy (the ASTOUNDING school of the 'forties and 'fifties—Heinlein, van Vogt and, to a certain degree, Blish and Asimov), and sometimes they assumed that such a world could be created by the application of technology, with peasant-robots and engineer-barons.

To me there are distinct likenesses between Scott, Radcliffe and Lewis and Ayn Rand, Heinlein and Tolkien—all offer escape into a simpler world, most offer simple ideas of how to create such a heaven on earth. It might strengthen my case to mention that the three authors are all objects of cult worship amongst the West Coast opters out, and this popularity I find almost inevitable. The saving grace of a writer like Asimov in his hey-day was that he at least saw the problem as being more complicated and the solutions as necessarily more sophisticated. But it was the later school that grew up around GALAXY—Bester, Pohl and Kornbluth, Budrys, Sheekley et al—which began to engage itself more fully with attempting to isolate the causes of its society's ills and produce a fiction far less reactive than that which had preceded it. Even in the best of these, however, one finds a certain note of hysterical paranoia, a tendency to go for fashionable answers, a nostalgia that harked back to the "golden age" of America's agricultural period, a certain tendency to indulge in little witch-hunts of their own while condemning others. Yet they often came closer to discovering the causes of their discomfort while elsewhere McCarthy screamed of Commie plots and Packard and McLuhan yelled that the admen were out to destroy our minds.

WHAT IS ACTUALLY happening, of course, is that the West (the U.S.A. in particular) is feeling the effects of a new industrial revolution, possibly even harder to take than the last, as society changes from an economy based on trading and processing of natural resources to meet actual needs into a "consumer" economy based on created demand. There is no stopping it, either, as we now realise. The economic structure is far too com-

IT HAS NEVER seemed coincidental to me that sf appears to flourish at times of stress in the West; for better or worse it has been, through much of its existence, primarily a literature of paranoia. The last "boom" came at the time of the Korean War and McCarthyism; the present one exists side by side with the Vietnam War and race riots. Flying saucer sightings (always a lovely sign of national paranoia) were multitude in the early fifties; flying saucer sightings are proliferating again in the U.S. as the Vietnam War escalates. The T.V. series *The Invaders* enjoyed an enormous popularity when it came out in the U.S. last year and the film *War of the Worlds* (with, consciously or unconsciously, the Martians clearly equated with the Russians) had a similar popularity in the 'fifties.

Whatever the economic, social and psychological reasons for the wars, witch-hunts and riots, there does seem to be a resemblance in atmosphere to that of the late 18th and early 19th centuries—a time of revolutions and wars accompanying or resulting from the full impact on people's lives of the Industrial Revolution. The popular fiction that flourished then was the Gothic horror novel and the Gothic historical romance. The former reflected the buried fears of the time, while the latter offered an escape from the object of those fears (essentially the new industries and their workers). Like all great paranoid fiction, the best of it had a crude power of its own, as had some of the pulp fantasy and sf of the 'thirties and 'forties (Lovecraft, R. E. Howard, Hubbard and van Vogt spring to mind). Where Gothic fiction offered "remedies" for the ills it felt, it was in a return to a better, simpler age of chivalry, a benevolent agricultural feudal society where every man (and woman) had his place and was content with his lot, for "order" prevailed. There is no need to detail why this society never did exist outside the pages of Arthurian legend. Similarly, in science fiction, authors often looked forward to a world of equal simplicity, basically an agricultural feudal society (the

plex in the West to be easily dismantled by simple acts of revolution or changes of government. This is the future for the next hundred years at least, unless an economic crisis occurs that brings down the structure and lets it fall into the hands of the present-day Right (which at present consists, as in pre-Hitler Germany, of a number of disaffected minorities, some activist, some passive, from Birchers to Flower Children) which would only need such a crisis to become a coherent political force. Foreign wars and the space race are at the moment preserving this economy. It is a sad fact that modern society is between the Scylla of Vietnam escalation and the Charybdis of a new depression and a rise of the Right. We are all of us conscious of some such dilemma, but most of us are by now aware that it cannot be resolved simply and that no amount of clock-rolling, whether backward or forward, is going to help. Before we begin to investigate it, we must accept the existence of the situation. This, it seems to me, is what authors are now beginning to do.

MY FEELING IS that just as a mood of pragmatism followed the mood of paranoia in the 19th century (reflected in art as well as in politics) so we are entering a more pragmatic mood, and just as the Gothic literature of fear and reaction developed techniques and subject matter that were used to great effect by serious writers (there would be no *Wuthering Heights*, possibly no *Bleak House*, without *The Old English Baron* and *The Mysteries of Udolfo*) so science fiction has developed—or is developing—techniques and subject matter that are beginning to be used to great effect by serious writers. The interesting thing is that many of the most serious writers are emerging from the field itself, and not all of them are of the younger generation, either. Writers like Leiber, Budrys and Sheckley seem on the brink of producing their best work, writers like Aldiss and Ballard are beginning already to produce extremely rewarding fiction. Then we have the so-called “new wave” writers—Moorcock, Disch, Sladek, Jones, Spinrad, Sallis, Carol Emshwiller, Platt and many more who are in

their individual ways experimenting like mad with the rich vein of material and possible techniques that have emerged from sf. And elsewhere the great artists of paranoia—Burroughs, Pynchon and even Mailer—whose intellectual strength and considerable talents have enabled them, in their noble madness, to home on the real issues at stake in modern society. Great days are ahead.

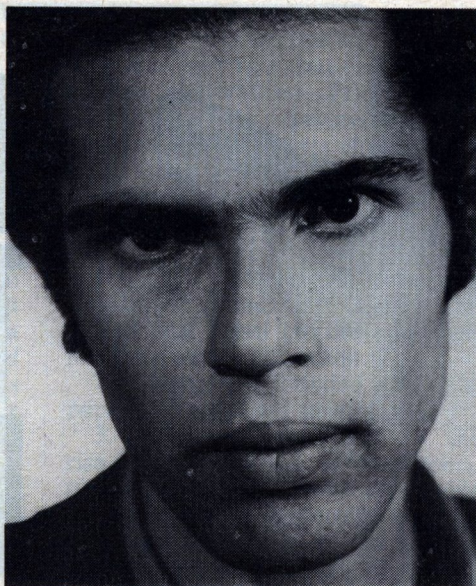
MEANWHILE, ESCAPIST sf and fantasy flourishes in profusion and represents, in the U.S.A. and parts of the Continent, at least, the most popular vein still. Serious, engaged sf has yet to convince its largest potential audience of its credentials. The work of Tolkien and Heinlein and Ayn Rand (crypto-Fascist fiction if ever there was) is still more popular than the work of Ballard, Burroughs and the others. As we learn to accept the facts of a so-called “artificial” economy, however, the reversal of this situation seems in sight and a truly popular but uncompromising literature may come about—our new Dickens may soon emerge.

It is an ironic fact that today the old Left and the new Right both seem to have much in common. Both are refusing to accept the facts of our economic and social life and it is left principally for painters and writers to try to bring them to light. The most interesting of these writers are producing what might almost be called a literature of acceptance, delighting in the changes and possibilities of modern society while still concerned with the need to find a new set of morals and ethical principles that will make that society a just one. They are well past the stage of reaction. However, it must sometimes be difficult for a reader used to the old didactic, almost journalistic, approach of good sf of the 'fifties to recognise the considerable merits of the new “subjective” school, one of whose most important exponents and greatest talents is J. G. Ballard. There is no whit less concern and sense of engagement in Ballard than there was in Wells (still the greatest of the didactic school). Far from dealing in straightforward philosophical ideas à la Kafka and Hesse, Ballard is involved with the detailed

physical and psychological reality of the immediate present and near future. If he leaves things out of his stories, it is for well-considered reasons (I'm reminded of the New York film critic discussing Kafka's *The Trial* who sneeringly condemned it “because you never do find out what the hell he's accused of”) and, certainly in his later work, if he puts things in it is for good reason, too. Ballard is perhaps the most disciplined of all the writers I have mentioned. In his new collection of short stories, *The Overloaded Man* (Panther, 3s. 6d.), we have, unfortunately, a poor representation of some of his early work—some of it clumsily written and consisting principally of raw subject matter that is worked in only the simplest and most obvious ways. This is certainly true of the first story, *Now: Zero*, about a man with the power to wish people to death, and is scarcely less true of some of the others (the famous *Track 12* about the man who drowns in a kiss). There is a powerful talent here, of course, and as horror stories the collection succeeds excellently (far surpassing Bradbury in this respect), but most of these stories lack the purpose and involvement and intellectual toughness of Ballard's current work and will doubtless disappoint some readers who have come to him via his trilogy and his recent stories in *NEW WORLDS* (*The Atrocity Exhibition*, etc.). The most worthwhile item in this collection—which, I hasten to add, is considerably better than almost anything else to hand this month—is Ballard's essay *The Coming of the Unconscious* which was first published in *NEW WORLDS* and makes explicit to the interested reader many of Ballard's concerns as a writer (though the article itself is about Surrealism) as does his later piece *Notes From Nowhere*, which was published in *NEW WORLDS* 167 (October, '66) and contains the statement “*Au revoir*, jewelled alligators and white hotels, hallucinatory forests, farewell”.

It was pleasant to receive a new edition of *Tiger, Tiger* by Alfred Bester (Penguin, 4s. 6d.) since this is the greatest of the baroque science fiction tales and represents (as perhaps *Melmoth the Wanderer* represented for the Gothic) the ultimate expression of the “they're all against

Delany: one of
the new writers.
(See below)



me" school of sf, with a clean, honest prose, marvellously wild invention, a beautifully constructed plot (even better than *The Count of Monte Cristo*) and an almost naïve idealism that is lacking in much later work that seeks to imitate it, but that has the burning power of faith in its own convictions.

Kit Reed is of that school of writers, sober, sophisticated and concerned, who emerged in 'fifties around GALAXY and FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. Her stories in this first collection of hers to be published here (*Mister da V. and Other Stories*, Faber, 21s.) display clever craftsmanship and cool intelligence and are eminently readable. Perhaps *Judas Bomb*, one of her best-known stories, is my favourite—about a society run by teenage gangs. The rationale of this story is pretty convincing, but not nearly as convincing as the prediction itself, for by 2000, if the present population curve continues, this society will almost certainly be run by teenage gangs of some description. It is odd how often good sf stories have hit on a sound instinctive prediction but have somehow failed to hit upon the actual causes of the events they predict. No matter.

The Seedling Stars by James Blish (Faber, 21s.) is the collection of stories about "seeding" or colonising the planets with people physically modified for different environments. The first written (and last in the book) *Surface Tension* remains the best. Blish has always

been surprised by its great appeal to his readers. It is about tiny people under the water battling against all sorts of horrors and problems in their efforts to reach the surface and explore it. This book is far better than those who have only read Blish's interminable 'Cities in Flight' stories might think him capable of producing. Here he seems to be mining an inventive vein much closer, as it were, to his heart.

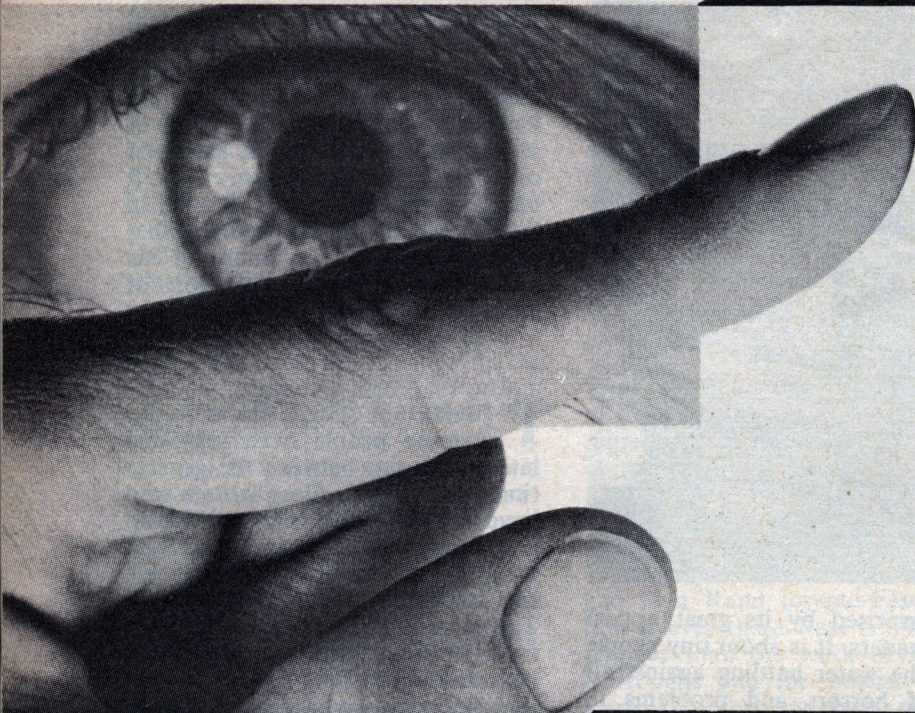
The last book I have before me is sadly the most disappointing in that it was written by a relative newcomer who does not seem ready yet to begin fulfilling his early promise. Perhaps he is over-producing and should slow down. The writer is Roger Zelazny, the book is *Lord of Light* (Doubleday, \$4.95) and it is Zelazny's first hard-bound publication in the U.S. It seems a shame, therefore, that this will be his introduction to a number of critics who, not knowing his earlier novels (*This Immortal* and *The Dream Master*), will not know that, in fact, Zelazny can be a disciplined and thoughtful writer. This stuff is self-indulgent, infantile, self-conscious, escapist, derivative fantasy fiction that lacks even the saving grace of Tolkien's relatively clean style. The book is pretty near unreadable, is based on Indian mythology, has a style derived, apparently, from that abominably decadent language Sanskrit, is patronising in tone (so that one cannot even think of it as a good children's book as one can, with an effort,

think of *Lord of the Rings*), is arid in idea and inspiration, and is altogether a very embarrassing book indeed. If science fiction has shifted itself from the ghetto, this kind of sf has turned itself into a gâteau. I can only hope that Zelazny (who I hear is planning a series of nine in this vein) will pull himself together before he wastes any more of his undoubted talents on this sort of stuff.

IF THERE IS a split in the sf ranks, as some people have suggested lately, it is not between the generations but between those writers who have become tired and self-indulgent purveyors of cheap opium and those who are still trying to tackle real issues (no matter how ineptly). The sooner everyone realises that fresh subject matter and techniques have to be found if they are to do their job properly, the better for all of us. The fancy journalism of Kurt Vonnegut (whose best novel, *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* has just appeared in paperback from Panther, 6s.) is much more palatable than fancy word-for-word's sake escapism, but is still only a poor substitute for the real thing—style and technique that derive naturally from the ideas and subject matter of the author and which produce work that stands totally on its own terms as *fiction*. Didacticism, however entertainingly done, often defeats true literary invention. But perhaps the day of the didactic, too, is nearly done in sf.

Next year should see a fine crop of new books appearing in Britain and the U.S.A., among them Disch's *Camp Concentration*, Moorcock's long-awaited *The Final Programme*, Spinrad's *Bug Jack Barron*, Aldiss's *Report on Probability A*, an as yet untitled Ballard book, Sladek's *The Reproductive System*, Delany's *Nova* and several more. All of them extremely individual works of fiction, all serious, all committed, all highly inventive and all indicating very definitely that the best is yet to come and that the new sf is producing not only quality and quantity, but a wide variety as well. And remember—you read most of them first in NEW WORLDS.

James Colvin.



MAC THE NAÏF

JOHN SLADEK REVIEWS MARSHALL Mc LUHAN

The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man

IN THE GREAT yawn that was 1951, it became fashionable to expose advertising as ruthless mind-manipulation aimed at parasitically exploiting the unsuspecting and subliminally harassed consumer, etc. *The Hucksters* had already made a wealthy splash, *The Hidden Persuaders* was on the way. Meanwhile there was nothing to do but like Ike and read this collection of articles.

Like the authors of other, similar books, Marshall McLuhan gets shocked at the Freudian content of ads, gets indignant at the stupidity of the public, takes a few swipes at other mass media and calls it a day. Unlike other authors, McLuhan is enough charmed by (respectful of, envious of) the success of advertising to try a few of its techniques himself. He will never outgrow this need to play ad-man, though he is obviously not suited for it.

To each essay is assigned a full-page photo of some ad or cartoon, and a column of his comments in bold-face type. These act like the pages in *Life*, i.e., you can get through the whole book during your fifteen-minute wait at the barber shop.

On an ad, "A earns \$25,000 a year . . . but he's heading for *failure*. . . . B earns \$100 a week . . . but he's heading for *success*" (if he buys insurance), McLuhan's comments are:

"You want to feel secure? Well, nothing recedes like success.

"This way to the American way of life?

"Is the future a 10,000-storey bureaucracy beside a suburban cottage?

"The Yanks are Kremlin?" (p. 38).

Whatever that means. Sometimes his incoherence bubbles up beautifully. He seems choked with rage over an ad showing a clean-looking woman wearing a flowery hat and sipping a glass of coke:

"Lead, kindly coke?

"Love that bottle because of your baby training?

"How about a shot of Abe Lincoln looking starry-eyed at a coke?" (P. 118.)

He even manages to top the tastelessness of a silly ad for water-tight grave vaults ("there's deep consolation. . . ."):

"How dry I am?

"I cried until they told me it was watertight.

"The more the burier, said Digby O'Dell?

"More stiffs are turning to the watertight brands?" (P. 14.)

McLuhan is a reader, though perhaps not really an appreciative reader, of *MAD* magazine. Bad taste ought to be funny. The total effect of this is like being at the movies with someone who keeps elbowing you in the ribs and repeating punch lines for you.

The articles themselves are only more of the same, with a halitosis of pomposity:

So Hollywood is like the ad agencies in constantly striving to enter and control the unconscious minds of a vast public, not in order to understand or to present these minds, as the serious novelist does, but in order to exploit them for profit. The novelist tries to get inside his characters in order to tell you what is happening on the invisible stage of their minds. The ad agencies and Hollywood, in their different ways, are always trying to get inside the public mind in order to impose their collective dreams on that inner stage. (P. 97.)

Get it?

A large crowd always craves some strong emotion to provide a sense of cohesive meaning and start moving the *undershaft of collective dynamism*. (P. 122.)

I have italicised the part I don't understand. Here's an even more puzzling example:

Quantum and relativity physics are not a fad. They have provided new facts about the world, new intelligibility, new insights into the universal fabric. Practically speaking, they mean that henceforth this planet is a single city. (P. 3.)

I find myself unable to make the quantum jump from quantum mechanics to the city at all. But what is clear is that here is a seminal McLuhan idea, *the global city*, which will appear in all his subsequent books. He will later attribute it to electronics, which at this point he has not really discovered.

This book is still wrapped up in mechanics, the car as sex symbol, corsets as machines, and other ideas gone stale, i.e., ready for popularisation. Yet there is already present the tone of his future works:

No longer is it possible for modern man, individually or collectively, to live in any exclusive segment of human experience or achieved social pattern. The modern mind, whether in its subconscious collective dream or in its intellectual citadel of vivid awareness, is a stage upon which is contained and reenacted the entire experience of the human race. There are no more remote and easy perspectives, either artistic or national. Everything is present in the foreground. That fact is stressed in current physics, jazz, newspapers and psychoanalysis. And it is not a question of preference or taste. This flood has already immersed us. (P. 87.)

The unmistakably messianic overtones are there already, as they are in Billy Graham's *Peace With God*: "Time is running out. The seconds are ticking away toward midnight. The human race is about to take the fatal plunge." (P. 13.) There is in each quotation an hysterical urgency, and a Noah-like insistence on the *inevitability* of what is being said. McLuhan is here impatient with details (nowhere does he elaborate on his notions of jazz, current physics and psychoanalysis in this book) just as he will later become impatient with English prose.

The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man

IN 1962, HERBERT Marshall McLuhan published this story of printing. It is print, his thesis goes, which created the ways of life and

thinking which persisted from the Renaissance to the late 19th century. The idea isn't new, but he has given it new elaborations. Printing, and its counterpart, perspective (for some reason he ignores *chiaroscuro*), have made medieval oral man into Renaissance-Reformation visual man. His main points are:

1. The phonetic alphabet, by translating sounds into sights, destroyed oral tribal culture and created the Greek civilization.
2. Rome was founded on roads, paper and mounted messengers.
3. Printing contributed to the rise of nationalism, schizophrenia, scientific curiosity (and repeatable experiments), the Industrial Revolution, mass production, the divorce of poetry from music, the divorce of art from science, the divorce of mathematics from writing, the drying up of architecture and sculpture, alienation, coherent and consistent prose . . . and it did all this before the telegraph, non-Euclidean geometrics, and non-Newtonian physics changed things once more, ushering in the modern age.

These ideas are merely sketched, not developed, because:

The present book develops a mosaic or field approach to its problems. Such a mosaic image of numerous data and quotations in evidence offers the only practical means of revealing causal operations in history. (Facing p. 1.)

It also enables him to use great chunks of other people's prose (65 per cent, by my reckoning), and break his own book into small enough sections so that each may be built around what is, in fact, someone else's work. The development of each section is thus in a direction skewed to all the rest; the book is truly a "galaxy" of 107 short, hardly-related monographs.

The first, for example, is an analysis of *King Lear* as a description of "left-wing Machiavelianism". Interesting as a literary essay, it has no place in a social science document. It is up to McLuhan to prove his theses about the 17th century, or to show how they might be proved, not to show us Shakespeare was able to hold and express certain beliefs.

The evidence promised on page zero is streaky, inter-larded with the semantic tangles of social scientists like Siegfried Giedon and the

shadowy ambiguities of aestheticians like Gyorgy Kepes:

And yet there was a medieval comfort. But it must be sought in another dimension, for it cannot be measured on the material scale. The satisfaction and delight that were medieval comfort have their source in the configuration of space. Comfort is the atmosphere with which man surrounds himself and in which he lives. Like the medieval Kingdom of God, it is something that eludes the grasp of hands. Medieval comfort is the comfort of space. (S. Giedon, *Mechanisation Takes Command*, p. 301.)

The image was "purified". But this purification overlooked the fact that the distortion and disintegration of the image as a plastic experience had not been due to represented meaningful signs as such but rather to the prevailing representation-concept which was static and limited, and consequently in contradiction to the dynamic plastic nature of the visual experience. (G. Kepes, *The Language of Vision*, p. 200.)

Such is not evidence, but scripture, quotable to any purpose.

Understanding Media, the Extensions of Man

PUBLISHED IN 1964, this is meant to carry on the narrative of the last book. You'll recall we left Western man just inventing the telegraph. The point here is to explain how we are shifting from a print to an electronic technology. The alphabet and print "detribalized" us, and now electronics are "retribalizing" us. McLuhan lines up the score-card as follows, if I may condense and clarify:

Audile-tactile world

Tribe, closed
Oral tradition
Song-poem
Pictograph
Hieroglyph
Roles, related to other members
Sacral texts, preserved by priests
Public life only

Complex mosaic of imagery;
no perspective
Science of causes
Associative time sense
Unique manufacture

Visual world

Open society, abstract structure
Written history
Book
Phonetic alphabet

Goals, specialist jobs related
to society
Profane books, available
to all
Public/private life split;
schizophrenia
Visual point of view;
perspective
Science of structures
Linear time sense
Mass production

And so on. Electronics is to form the *global village*, where everyone is in instantaneous contact.

"The Medium is the Message", his most famous slogan, simply means that media have effects greater than may be explained by their contents. It is probably the most important thing McLuhan has ever said, and certainly seems a truth so obvious, now that he has said it, that it seems incredible no one ever thought of it before.

"Hot Media" and "Cool Media" are evidently analogous to hot and cool jazz. People seem to have trouble remembering how he classifies media under these categories, and I suspect it is because the categories are archaic. There is no reason why new media should fit them, any more than there is reason to classify Ornette Coleman as "hot" or "cool".

McLuhan classifies as hot those media like radio and movies, print and photography, which he says require little attention or participation; and cool media include T.V. and the telephone and telegraph, which require more. But not only are the categories confusing, but it is never clear why he makes the split where he does. Is T.V. cool because it has a mosaic image that the eye must complete? Then surely a crystal set with earphones is cooler still. Is the telephone cool because its fidelity is low, or merely because of its use for two-person communication, which would imply more participation than radio listening? But what of the two-way radio? What of the television phone? What

about a broadcast telephone conversation? For whom are these hot or cool, and why? The details seem never to be filled in by McLuhan, who is busy drawing the bold outlines:

When IBM discovered that it was not in the business of making office equipment or business machines, but that it was in the business of processing information, then it began to navigate with clear vision. (p. 17.)

In paragraphs like this he provides substance, and a reason for the reader to find himself reading this book. Unfortunately much of its (380 pages of) prose is merely compulsive chatter:

In the chapter on the wheel it will be shown that transport without wheels had played a big role before the wheel, some of which was by sledge, over both snow and bogs. Much of it was by pack animal—woman being the first pack animal. Most wheel-less transport in the past, however, was by river and by sea, a fact that is today as richly expressed as ever in the location and form of the great cities of the world. Some writers have maintained that man's oldest beast of burden was woman. . . . (P. 103.)

This isn't even information.

The Medium is the Message, (Book version, 1967)

This is hardly worth reviewing. It is merely a condensation of *Understanding Media*, rife with the kinds of puns and slogans with which McLuhan replaces logic and metaphor:

"Art is anything you can get away with." (Pp. 132-136.)

As you may suspect, the layout of this book, with big Bauhaus headlines, typography games, interest-catching photos (porous close-up of a foot, multiplied noses, etc.), is the real point of the book. Quentin Fiore has become an extension of Marshall McLuhan for the purpose. The result is of slightly less interest than an old copy of *Horizon*. But it reads quick.

"When faced with a totally new situation, we tend always to attach ourselves to the objects, to the flavour of the most recent past." (P. 74.)

"We look at the present through

a rear-view mirror." (P. 75.)

"In the name of 'progress', our official culture is striving to force the new media to do the work of the old." (P. 81.)

"Our official culture is striving to force the new media to do the work of the old." (P. 94.)

Get it? Get it?

The Medium is the Message, (Record version, 1967)

This should be reviewed on tape, except that it isn't worth it. Just imagine the worst of Spike Jones; Kent Nordeen's *Word Jazz*; the *Sounds of Sebring*; *Victory at Sea*; and throw in an old radio quiz programme. This extension somehow just has that 1950 sound.

* *

There will be no pretense at summing all this up here. He's long-winded, unable to resist corny jokes, and certainly to paraphrase a current popular song, thinkin' ain't for him. His self-esteem is already at this level:

I am in the position of Louis Pasteur telling doctors that their greatest enemy was quite invisible. . . .
(*Understanding Media*, p. 26.)

and does not seem to be dropping. But in spite of all this, there are one or two ideas Marshall McLuhan has earmarked which are good ideas.

And that's the hell of it.

The Mechanical Bride (Routledge, Kegan Paul, 45s.)

The Gutenberg Galaxy (Routledge, Kegan Paul, 30s.)

Understanding Media (Sphere Books, 10s. 6d.)

The Medium is the Message (Allen Lane/The Penguin Press, 42s.)

The Medium is the Message (Record, Columbia, CL2701 — U.S.A.)

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We regret that from our November issue and without previous warning to readers we were forced by rising production costs to raise our price to 5s. We hope readers will bear with us and understand that without the price increase it would have been extremely difficult to continue publication at the present number of pages.

The Authors

NORMAN SPINRAD lives in Los Angeles and comes originally from New York. He is 26, the author of a number of short stories and television scripts, and his latest novel *The Men In The Jungle* was published by Doubleday this year (reviewed NW 174). He is currently working on a new novel which will be technically somewhat more experimental than *Bug Jack Barron* but in a similar idiom. He is probably one of the most talented new writers now working in the U.S.

JAMES COLVIN has written several short stories for NEW WORLDS and was until recently this magazine's regular book critic. Previous work includes *The Mountain* (17), *The Pleasure Garden of Felipe Sagittarius* (154).

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Dear Reader,

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The Editor and Publishers.