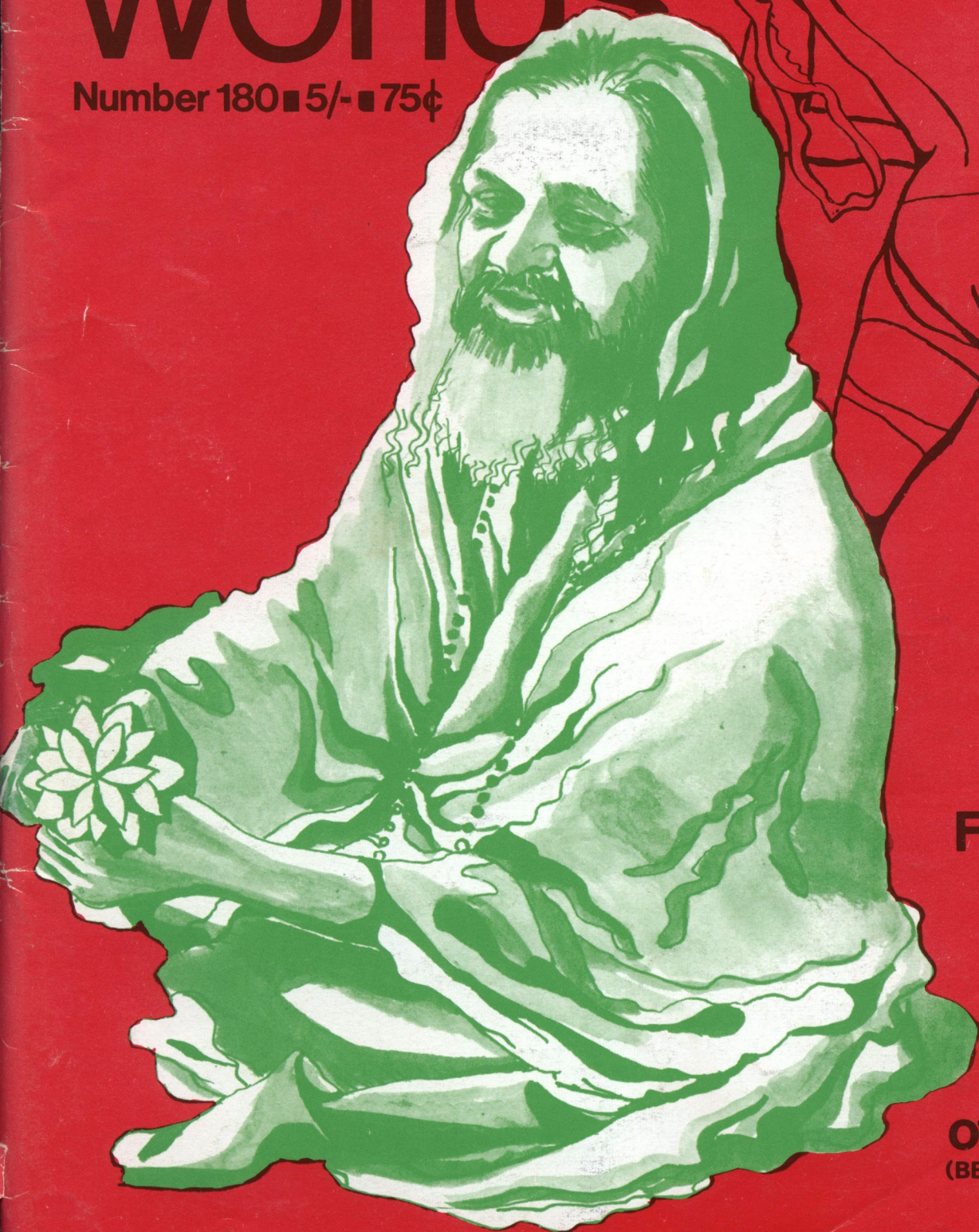


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"The Eye
of the Lens"**
(BEGINS ON PAGE FIVE)

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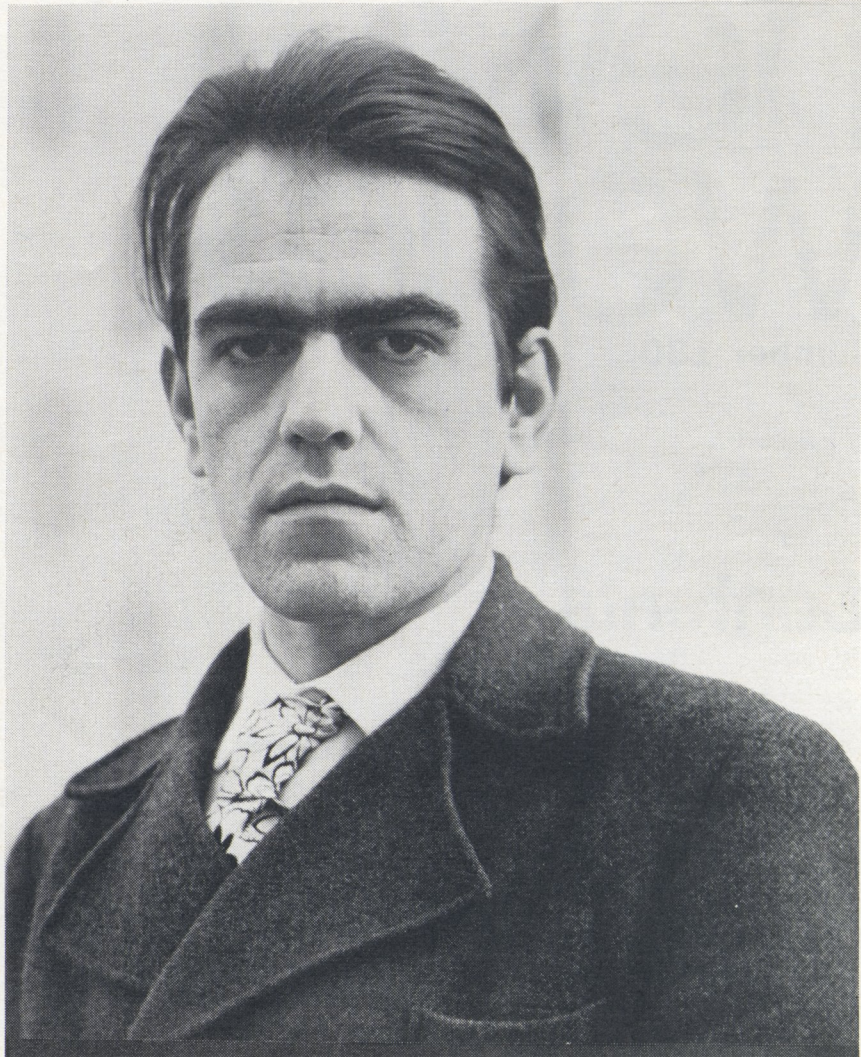
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LEAD-IN

WE'VE SOME EXCELLENT fiction for you this month, coupled with poetry, graphics and features which, we hope, will complement one another to produce that particular synthesis of fiction, art and science we are aiming for in NEW WORLDS. **Langdon Jones's** *Eye of the Lens* group of stories were initially scheduled to appear almost a year ago, but the difficulties outlined below delayed matters, involved Jones in an extensive rewrite of the two latter pieces and the stories only recently became available for publication. Jones has had bad luck — *The Time Machine* was announced for our August 1967 issue, reached proof stage and then was "banned" by the printer. Luckily the story has been bought by Damon Knight for one of his *Orbit* collections, but will not appear in this country for a year or two yet. Jones made his debut in NEW WORLDS 143 with a little horror story called *Stormwater Tunnel*, but his main impact was made in issue No. 144 with the then controversial story *I Remember, Anita* . . . He worked for some years as Associate Editor of NEW WORLDS and recently resigned in order to give himself more time to write. He has been too long absent from the magazine and in future we are bound to see more frequent appearances by him.

Of this group he says: "According to Anton Ehrenzweig the most important aspect of any work of art



Jones : An unprecedented level of decadence—see page 5

is in the unconscious pattern that runs through it. If this structure is not communicated, then the painting, or story, or piece of music is not a success. Thus the surface flow of the work may be greatly disrupted with no adverse effect on the degree of communication, which may in fact be greatly increased.

"In literature we have for too long had the opportunity of seeing only works with a strong and rigid surface formation, and it has been more and more difficult for the writer to put over his real meanings. Both music and painting have a steady tradition of development of techniques that has been lacking in literature; only recently has this situation begun to change. Even

today, any writer who does not wish to use stereotyped techniques is forced to develop his own. It is clear that this revolution is urgently needed; literature has reached, generally, an unprecedented level of decadence. In the average novel today, a very great part of the total wordage is completely superfluous. It is perhaps not surprising that many of the bright new British writers who have been publicised lately are uniformly bad. It is significant that the better British writers have experimented, even if only to a minor extent, with unusual forms or techniques. It is also significant that many of these better writers have come from inside the field of speculative fiction, and that many

of those from the 'mainstream' of fiction, like Colin Spencer, have utilised the images and techniques of this field.

"The above is intended to show the background against which these stories have been written. While they have not perhaps reached the level of surface disruption of the Dadaist phonetic poems, they are far from being examples of the normal linear narrative. As they represent a success for me, in that they are the first stories I have produced which say anything worth saying, I am glad to have been asked to write about them, and thus to explain their function to the reader who may not yet be accustomed to this kind of story.

"This trilogy of stories represents a view of the world, both internal and external. Perhaps if I were beginning them now I would be a little less pessimistic, but perhaps in this I would be wrong.

"On this level, their form is very simple. *The Hall of Machines* is obviously completely internal, but general. The *Machines of Death* are the responsibility of us all. The sym-

bol of male creation, *The Mother*, is a part of every man. *The Coming of the Sun* is partly internal (but this time in a personal sense) and partly external. And *The Eye of the Lens* is wholly external. The last two stories show up many of the ways in which people destroy themselves through conditioning and preconception, even today. The great tragedy of humanity is that the defences people erect against the stresses and unhappiness of their lives tend to lessen their own dignity and humanity, and to set up a self-perpetuating system that makes their position worse and worse. I believe that the greatest advance in all medicine will take place when psychologists discover a method of channelling harmful neurosis into forms which will not affect people's life generally, so that they are able to occupy a certain small amount of their time in neurotic activity, knowing it to be so, and living the rest of their lives in freedom.

"But these aspects of the stories are far from essential to the reader — they should merely be read, and not searched for symbolism. It is

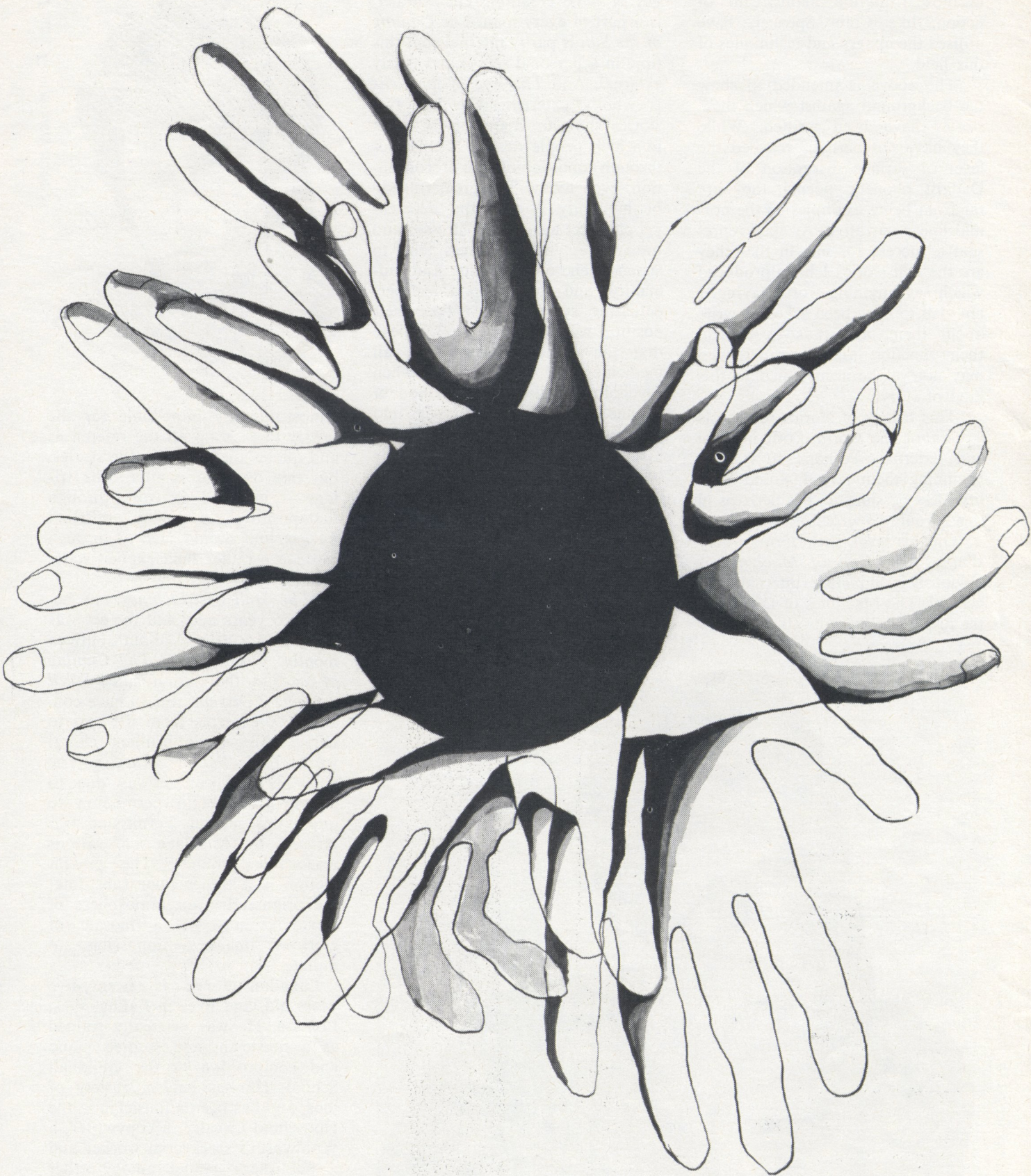


almost literally impossible for the reader to pick up all the references and quotes that occur in the stories, but this does not matter. The trilogy is intended to work through juxtaposition of many different images, and should succeed through resonance rather than explicit statement.

"*The Hall of Machines* was begun two years ago, and the set was completed after about fifteen months. Originally in *The Coming of the Sun*, the section called *Soleil de Sang d'Oiseaux* was to have consisted of excerpts from the text to Olivier Messiaen's brilliant choral work, *Trois Petites Liturgies*. The delay in publication was due to attempts to obtain permission to quote this section. Permission was refused by Messiaen on various reasonable grounds. The present section is a rather poor substitute; the original has an atmosphere of fervid serenity — a mosaic of glorious imagery, impossible to imitate."

Langdon Jones is twenty-five years old, and lives in Ealing, West London. He was originally trained as a musician, and studied piano and composition at the Guildhall School. He has held a variety of jobs, and has been a musician in the Household Cavalry, a copywriter, a Woolworth's stockroom worker and a publisher's reader among other things.





LANGDON JONES:

THE EYE

OF THE LENS

There is a vast circle of naked people on the plain. Their heads are downcast, and they tramp slowly round . . . as one man feels the bite of the lash on his flesh, his own whip is whistling down, striking the person in front a fraction of a second later . . . a wave of energy . . . a wave of pain which circles eternally.

The Hall of Machines

MANY great thinkers have attempted to analyse the nature of the hall. However, all their different approaches have been characterised by a lack of agreement and often blatant contradiction of fact. The appearance of the hall is generally well-known, but as soon as we try to unearth specific detail we realise that all is conjecture.

The hall is vast. We would expect the descriptions of its contents to vary—one person could not be expected to cover the whole area of its interior. However, there has been a great deal of superstitious rumour concerning its contents, and it is often difficult to separate the true from the wholly fallacious.

There has been much conjecture concerning the size of the hall, but no results have actually been confirmed by any kind of measurement. It has been postulated by at least one writer that the hall is in fact infinite in extent. Others, no doubt influenced by exaggerated reports, have maintained that the hall covers a variable area, its size altering by a factor of at least fifty. Other evidence, however, suggests that both of these ideas bear, in all probability, little relationship to the facts.

During the last few years I have found it a rewarding task to research all the material I could find that related in any way to the hall. The task has been difficult, but illuminating. I have now in my files a vast amount of information in the form of books, articles, newspaper cuttings, recorded tapes and cine film as well as a large number of transcribed interviews, on a subject which I have found to become daily more fascinating. My research has become, to a degree, obsessional. I now find that my normal routine has been disturbed to quite a large extent over the

last three years. I have devoted a complete room to this work, my ultimate intention being to shape the material into a comprehensive book. All over the wall are pinned the relevant newspaper cuttings, their arrangement depending on whichever aspect of the hall I am currently researching; set in the middle of the room is my cine projector (frequently I watch the five hours of film I have accumulated at one sitting), and beside it is the tape recorder. On tape I have, apart from interviews and commentaries, at least an hour of the recorded sounds of some of the machines actually in operation. I have taken these sounds down, as accurately as possible, into musical notation. I have permuted the resultant patterns of notes and have found interesting relationships between the basic shapes, but, as yet, nothing more concrete.

I now spend a large proportion of my day in carrying out this research. I sit for hours, cutting out newspaper articles or developing film in the darkroom I have constructed. And so, with scissors, photographic chemicals, music paper, paste, tape recorder and projector, I have built up a picture that is far from complete, but which is remarkable in its specific detail.

I now present some of the more striking of the descriptions I have unearthed. They are not delivered in a planned order, but have been assembled to give, rather than a dry academic account, a series of interesting impressions. I believe that one of the most fascinating aspects of the hall is in the diverse impressions it creates within the minds of the observers.

When my book is complete (which will not be for some years—it will run to at least five large volumes) I shall have sufficient confidence in the correctness of my results, and also the scope, to present them in detail. Until then, these extracts are intended only to communicate the atmosphere of the hall as it appeared to some people.

THE WATER MACHINE

THE TROUGHS AND gulleys of the Water Machine extend over a very large area of this section of the hall, and although it is enclosed by false "walls" of board, it still gives a sprawling impression. All about are convex metal surfaces; the floor is intersected by runnels and gulleys. The Water Machine is constructed primarily of cast-iron, but certain of its parts are made of a lighter metal; probably an alloy, such as aluminium. The machine consists of a complexity of large components which stretch probably twenty feet in height, and the whole mass is supported by a surprisingly small number of slim metal struts.

Water is being pumped in from a large pipe at the very top of the machine. It is conducted by a series of ingenious mechanical movements through a series of gulleys and out of this part of the hall. I thought it likely that the water was moving in a large enclosed cycle, and dropped into a nearby channel a small piece of white paper. As I suspected, within about three minutes, the paper came floating past my feet again.

The noise of the water is almost deafening at times. Constantly there is the hissing of the jet at the top of the machine and a rushing of the liquid as it bubbles its way through its course; also there is the loud creaking of the metal parts as they operate. Every few seconds there is an enormous crash as a metal part is activated, and the water momentarily redoubles its volume.

Water drips constantly from the supporting members, gathers on the floor and runs down the slope towards the many drains: concrete channels sweep in graceful lines about my feet: cast-iron conduits curve in black roundness, globules of condensation running along their undersides.

Situated at the top of the machine is the vast silver belly of the top water-container, spatulate and curved, like a vast silver spoon. The lead-in pipe, about six inches in diameter, is pointing into this tank, and a great jet of water, like a column of glass, is sluicing into its interior.

After a while, the container begins to groan, loudly. Suddenly the critical balance is attained. The groaning reaches a climax under the enormous weight of water, and the tank begins to shudder under a volume of liquid that it is incapable of supporting. Overspill slops to the floor and runs down to the square drains. Slowly, inch by inch, the tank begins to tip its vast bulk. Water spills over its thick pouring lip and falls in a glistening ribbon into a reservoir a couple of yards below. The tank begins to accelerate its rate of movement, and more water gushes down. Faster moves the container, and then, with a crash, it inverts itself. A solid mass of water falls into the reservoir, and the ground shudders with the impact. The container, meanwhile, is pulled back to a creaking vertical by a counterweight.

Water leaks from the reservoir, jetting out with great force from a circle of six holes at its convex base. These six separate streams are all conducted by diverse methods to the ground. One of the streams gushes into a smaller version of the water-barrel. Another enters one of the hinged containers set between the double rim of a large wheel, its weight causing the wheel to rotate slowly; after a quarter-revolution the container will snag on a projection and tip up, letting the water escape into one of the channels. Another stream strikes a sprung phlange which bounces constantly in and out of the flow, the other end of the phlange operating a mechanism like the escapement of a clock.

All the streams eventually reach the dark channels of wet concrete set in the floor, and are then conducted away from sight through holes set in the surrounding "walls".

Behind the wall can be heard the sound of great pumps.

Up above, I know, a fountain is playing.

MACHINES OF MOVEMENT

I WAS PASSING through rather an enclosed part of the hall; its spaciousness not apparent owing to the large bulk of the partitions enclosing various machines, when I passed a small wooden doorway set into one of the partitions. On the door was a plaque, printed black on white. It said

INTERLOCKING MACHINE ROOM

On entering the room I found it to be full of giant metal crabs.

Great struts of thin metal rod criss-cross from ceiling to floor, making it impossible to see very far into the room. The very air shudders with the vibration of these machines. Although the constructions vary considerably, one from the other, a large number of them have the same basic shape. Their nucleus is a mass of rods and other interlocking members, and they stand about ten feet high. The arrangement of these rods is infinitely complex. At their apex they are thickly composed, and are surrounded by other parts which join them and permit their motion. They branch out, and at floor level each machine covers a considerable area.

All of the legs of these machines are connected by free-moving joints to the legs of the other units, and a movement of one causes an adjustment to the position of the other. The whole room is in motion, and the machines twitch each other with an action that appears almost lascivious in nature.

A rod near me is moved by the action of a neighbour's leg. This movement is communicated at the top of the unit to another of the legs, and it, in turn, imparts motion to a machine further away. As these machines work, a constant metallic clattering fills the air, as if the room is filled with typewriters.

The machines are slick and oiled; their movement is

smooth, but gives an impression of great nervousness. All over this chamber are various other parts, all of which seem affected in some way by the movement of the rods. On the wall, near me, is fixed a plaque with a jointed arm extending from it. Taut wires radiate from either extremity into the skeletal grey. One end is angled up, the other down. As the wire of the higher end is pulled by some motion in the mass of interlocking parts, the arm reverses its position jerkily.

Perhaps, a million years ago, these machines were constructed in a delicate static balance, a frozen wave; and with the locking of the final link in the circuit, the fixing of the last jointed leg against leg, the balance was tripped. A motion would have run its path, twisting and turning about the machines, splitting itself, dividing again, until today this movement still ran about the constructions, diffused and unpredictable. A million strands of current, still splitting. And perhaps the machines had been so carefully designed that in another million years all the currents would begin to amalgamate, becoming less and less complex, until they finally became two, meeting in opposition and deadlock, all movement ceasing.

The mind drowns among the interlocking machines. Perhaps the reason is in the similarity of this abstract maze to that pattern formed by the neural current. Perhaps these patterns of motion parallel too closely the patterns of electricity that we call personality, and the one is disturbed by the other. Conversely, perhaps the very existence of a human mind in the room causes little eddies and whirls in the motion of the machines.

I was unable to stay in the interlocking machine room for more than a minute or two before the psychological effects became more than I could bear.

THE CLOCK

A LARGE NUMBER of the machines in the hall are partitioned off by boards, so that one often feels that one is walking in a constricted space, and loses completely the feeling of immensity that one often experiences in the hall. It was in such a place that I found, set against one "wall", the mechanism of an enormous clock. It was all of shining brass, and it stood no less than ten feet high. It was facing the wall, the dial and hands (if, in fact, any such existed) being completely invisible. The clock was triangular in shape, and was supported by a framework of sturdy brass, front and back, that curved down to provide four feet. There was no plate at the back of the clock, its arbors being seated in strips of brass that curved in beautiful shapes from the main framework.

Despite the largeness of the clock, it was built to delicate proportions. The wheels were all narrow-rimmed, and the pallets that engaged the escape wheel were long and curved, like the fingernails of a woman. It was as if the mechanism of an ordinary domestic clock had been magnified to a great degree; there was none of the

solidity and cumbersomeness of the turret clock here. I discovered to my surprise that this clock was powered, as most domestic clocks, by a spring. However, this spring was immense, and must have exerted a tremendous pressure to operate the mechanism.

Although the whole movement was surmounted by the escape wheel and anchor, which perched on the apex of the triangle, the pendulum was disproportionately short, stretching down little more than six feet. The slow tick of this enormous clock was lacking in the lower partials, and as a consequence was not disturbing.

As the clock was so large, motion could be seen among the wheels, which moved, each to a varying degree, with each tick of the clock. This was a fascinating sight, and I stayed watching the clock for a considerable period of time.

I wish that I could have seen the clock illuminated by strong morning sunlight from a window.

MACHINES OF DEATH—1

THERE IS DARKNESS in this part of the hall. Stray light illuminates black, pitted metal. I can see little of the machine of death; it is to my right, and is a bleak high wall of metal. The end of a thick chain extrudes here, turns, and plunges back into the metal wall. The chain is a foot wide and four inches thick. The only other feature of this machine is a waste-pipe which is sticking out from the wall. Underneath this pipe is a channel set into the floor, which conducts the waste to a nearby drain. The all-pervasive stink of this drain makes breathing difficult.

The pipe is pouring blood into the channel.

MACHINES OF DEATH—2

THIS MACHINE IS very large, sprawling and complicated. It appears to be completely functionless. It is possible that it was constructed to be entirely symbolic in nature, or alternatively that the things—creatures—upon which it operated are here no longer.

It consists of a vast network of girders, all of which are vibrating with a strange jogging motion. The only parts of the machine not affected by this movement are the two great supports at either end. The supports are each a framework of girders, and they contain various driving chains and gearing devices. At the top of each of these frames is a long jointed arm, of tremendous proportion. These arms also carry chains and gears. At the end of each arm is an enormous blade, made of a silver metal that catches the small amount of light. The blades have complete mobility, and appear to be fixed on the arms by some kind of ball-joint.

The motion of the arms and the blades is difficult to observe in detail and even more difficult to describe. Analysing the action in words tends to give an impression of slowness, when in fact, considering the bulk of the parts, it is very swift indeed.

The arms rest close to their supports, their joints extending downwards like elbows, the blades upright. Keeping the blades in the same position, they move together across the thirty-yard space. When they are only about a yard apart, the arms are almost fully extended, and the motion stops for an instant. Then abruptly the blades begin to move independently. They execute, in the space of only a few seconds, a complicated system of movements — thrusts — parries — arabesques — the motion of each blade being the mirror of the other. Then again comes the pause, and the arms bend again, carrying the blades back to the supports.

The action of these blades certainly suggests physical mutilation, and I found, as I watched, that I was wondering whether in fact the machine was still complete. Was there once a feeding mechanism that carried the bodies over to the knives to be sculptured within a few seconds to a raw, twitching mass?

Despite the unpleasant feelings that the machine arouses, I found it a fascinating experience to watch the blades, and also the complex system of vibrating girders beneath them. It is strange to see such large objects in such rapid motion; the throbbing of the floor testified to the weight of the mechanism, which must have been in the hundreds of tons.

On the occasion that I observed the machine, there were two other people there as well; a man and a woman. At first I thought that they were part of the machine, but my attention was caught by the fact that their own vibrating motion was slightly lagging behind that of the machine as their soft bodies absorbed their impetus.

They were both naked, and they were on one of the girders directly below the high knives. The man was lying on his back, stretched along the girder, and the woman was squatting astride his hips. The jogging of the girder was throwing their bodies up and down in a mechanical travesty of copulation. The man was grasping the woman's thighs tightly, and her face, turned towards me, with her bottom lip between her teeth, was florid and beaded with sweat. I could see her nostrils contracting with each gasped breath she took.

A drop of oil fell from the knives as they clashed above, and dropped unnoticed on to her shoulder. As it ran down the pale flesh of her arm, it looked like a single drop of ancient blood.

MACHINES OF DEATH—3*

THE MACHINE SITS in distance unheard. I walk on dry sin, on the shit of us all, a man by my side who points out all his bones. The well has now dried

* This machine consists of a flat surface of metal with a circular metal door which leads to a small chamber, called the "compressor", or "pot". Apart from this the wall is featureless except for a switch by the side of the door. This area seems to be the most dismal place in the entire hall.

and all that remains is a glowing, radioactive silt. The universe is shaped like a whirlpool, and the vortex is here. Here is the end of all time, the end of all space. The ultimate nil. I have eaten my fill; here is my place; there is no single way left to climb, and the rest is just fear. This cul-de-sac is arid and death-cool. It is bleakness, a focus-point built by man and his pains. The door must be tried; I pull and it groans, and opens up wide. The chamber is small, but light is let in to show me a word—
Auschwitz!

THE MOTHER

THIS MACHINE IS standing in isolation; it is surrounded by space on all sides. It is extremely large, standing almost a hundred feet high, and it is shaped like an elongated onion, tapering at the top to a high spire. From one side of the machine, from about ten feet up, a flaccid rubbery tube hangs down and outward to ground level.

The onion-belly of the Mother is completely featureless, and light catches its curves; the tube is of a dull red consistency.

There are sounds coming from inside the metal body, soft but constant. But then, abruptly, they stop, and all is silent.

At the top of the tube, a bulge becomes apparent, swelling outward all the time. Slowly, this bulge begins to travel inside the tube, away from the machine and down to the ground. While all this is going on, one obtains an impression of supreme effort, and, strangely, pain. Perhaps it is because the whole process is so slow. The object creeping down the tube will eventually reach the end and emerge into the light; one realises this, and feels an almost claustrophobic impatience with the slowness of the event. There is a feeling too of compression and relaxation, and one finds one's own muscles clenching in time to the imagined contractions.

Eventually the bulge reaches the end of the tube at ground level. This is where the real struggle begins. One becomes aware that the end of the tube is beginning to dilate, slowly and rhythmically. The belly of the machine is as smooth and unevocative of any emotion as ever, but it is impossible for the observer not to feel that agonies are now being endured. One realises that the process is completely irreversible; that there is no way of forcing the bulge back up the tube and inside the metal shell again.

Wider and wider grows the aperture at the end of the tube, affording one an occasional glimpse of shiny moisture within. A glint of metal is now and then apparent.

The tube dilates to its fullest extent, and a metal form is suddenly revealed, covered in dripping brown fluid. The rubber slides over its surface, releasing it more and more by the second. Abruptly it bursts free in a wash of amniotic oil.

All is still.

The oil begins to drain away, and the new machine stands there motionlessly as the liquid drains from its surfaces. It is a small mechanism on caterpillar tracks, with various appendages at its front end which seem to be designed for working metal, or stone.

With a whirr, it jerks into action, and it moves softly away from the great Mother. There is a click from the parent machine, and the noises inside begin again.

I have watched this mechanism for long periods, and it appears to create only two kinds of machine. They are both on the same basic design, but one appears to be made for erection, the other for demolition.

The Mother has probably been working thus for hundreds of years.

ELECTRONICS

ELECTRIC MACHINES STARE at me with warm green eyes. I see nothing but bright plastic surfaces, inset with pieces of glass. These are still machines, active but unmoving, and in my ears is the faint hum of their life. The only movement here which indicates that the machines are in operation is the kicking of meters and the occasional jog of an empty tape spool.

Their function is not apparent; they work here at nameless tasks, performing them all with electronic precision and smoothness.

There are wires all over the room, and their bright, primary colours contrast strikingly with the overall pastel tones of the plastic bodies.

Sonata in the style of machines

In a small chamber to the rear of the room of electric machines, there are some more of a different kind. The door to this small room is of wood, with a square glass set into it. The room appears to have remained undisturbed for many years.

They line three walls of the chamber, and are covered with switches and meters. They hum in strange configurations of sound, and appear to be making electric music together.

DEATH OF MACHINES—1

IN THIS PART of the hall, all is still. Spiked mounds of time rise round me, their hulks encrusted with brown decay. The floor is totally covered by a soft carpet of rust, and its acrid odour stings the nostrils. A piece detaches itself from one of the tall machines and drifts to the floor, a flake of time. Many such flakes have fallen here in this part of the hall.

Time burns fire in my eyes, and I turn my head, looking for escape. But everywhere I see seconds and hours frozen into these red shapes. Here is a wheel, its rim completely eaten through; there a piston, its moveable parts now fixed in a mechanical *rigor mortis*. A reel of wire has been thrown into a corner, ages in the

past, and all that remain are its circular traces in the dust.

My feet have left prints in the rust-carpet.

DEATH OF MACHINES—2

IHAD COME into the hall with my girl, and we had spent a long time wandering about, hand in hand, when we suddenly came on the remains of a machine.

It stood about six feet in height, and I could see that at one time it had been of great complexity. For some reason my girl was not very interested, and went off to see something else, but I found that this particular machine made me feel very sad. It appeared to be entirely composed of needles of metal, arranged in a thick pattern. The largest of these needles was about three inches long, and there appeared to be no way for the machine to hold together. My guess is that when it was made, the needles were fitted in such a way that the whole thing struck an internal balance. The machine was now little more than a gossamer web of rust; it must have had tremendous stability to have remained standing for such a long time.

It was fascinating to look closely at its construction, to see the red lines fitting together so densely. It was like looking into a labyrinth; a system of blood-red caves. With every movement of my head a whole new landscape was presented to me. I called my girl over, and we stood hand in hand, looking at the dead machine.

I think that it must have been our body heat, for neither of us made an excessive movement, but at that moment the entire construction creaked, and sank a few inches. Then there was a sigh, and the whole thing dissolved into dust about our feet.

Both of us felt very subdued when we left the hall.

I hope that the above information has enabled my readers to gain an impression of this very exciting hall. There is little that I can add, except the following point.

You will remember from one of the accounts I have printed here, the one giving details of the creation of new machines, the following passages: "It is a small mechanism on caterpillar tracks, with various appendages at its front end which seem to be designed for working metal, or stone." "... it appears to create only two kinds of machine ... one appears to be made for erection, the other for demolition." These two passages, together with some other material that I have not published here suggest an interesting point.

I believe that the hall has been, from the time of its creation, described in another account, in which the writer stood by one of the outer walls of the hall. He watched one set of machines building a wall about six inches further out than the old one, which was being torn down by the other mechanisms. This seems to be a process which is going on all the time, all over the hall; a new wall is built, slightly further out, and this in its turn will

be demolished as another is put up.

I believe that the hall has been, from the time of its creation and always will be, increasing in size!

However, only more research will be able to establish this radical idea as an incontrovertible fact.

The Coming of the Sun

Cellar Fire

RUDOLF OPENED THE cellar door, spilling light into the dim chamber. He walked carefully down the wooden steps, the yellow light shining on his bald scalp. He coughed as fumes from the dormant paraffin-fired boiler caught at his throat, and as he reached the bottom of the steps he muttered slow obscenities.

Normally Michael would come down here with him to supervise this preparing of the boiler, but Michael couldn't make it this time. He was in hospital after being attacked by someone. Rudolf smiled to himself and a silver line coursed down his chin.

Rudolf was tall, but stooped. All his movements were slow and deliberate and accompanied by gruntings and pantings as if each one cost him supreme effort or pleasure. A pink scar traced a smooth curve over the surface of his shaven head, as if following the sutures of the skull beneath. He was dressed in a formless garment of rough grey cloth. In his mind there was very little, save for a general hatred of a world that had done him some unspecified wrong. His hatred was generalised, directed towards tables, chairs, walls, as well as people.

His life was here. His past was now far buried, and his half-formed thoughts swirled about his skull like mist rising on a marsh.

He shuffled across the room to the cans of paraffin. "Bastards . . ." he muttered to the cans, as he bent to pick one up. If he was capable of liking any place, then he liked it here in the cellar. He liked the wet brick walls, the dark corners; he liked the cobwebs and the wooden boxes stacked in the far corner; he liked the silence and the electric light bulb which swung on its flex, swaying the room back and forth beneath his feet. He liked the smells of the cellar, the smells of mustiness and decay.

He moved to the boiler with his can of paraffin swaying in his hand, and lowered the can to the floor. He unscrewed the fuel cap on the pump and inserted the funnel. Bending down slowly, he lifted and tilted the can, watching the blue liquid bubbling down the vortex

of the funnel. When the can was empty he threw it, smiling, into the corner, enjoying the clanging sound it made. Michael wouldn't have allowed him to throw the can. He primed the boiler, and when the pressure was up, pressed the green button. A glow came into life behind a small square of glass and a chugging sound began. There was a flash, a bang, and the boiler fired, a jet of flame appearing behind the glass. He enjoyed looking at the fire; that was why he had come down here without supervision, to press his nose, as he was doing now, against the glass and to watch the potent flare jetting and roaring.

After a while he became tired of looking at the flame, and turned once again to the collection of cans in the corner. He shuffled across, his ragged clothes trailing on the dirty floor. He unscrewed the cap of one of the cans, and drew in, his nose pressed into the can, the oily softness of the paraffin's odour. Then he raised the can slowly above his head, in both hands, and inverted it so that the liquid fell in a broken stream, splashing on to the floor, soaking the bottoms of his trouser legs. He felt an unusual excitement, and breathed in deeply.

When the can was empty, the floor was swimming with liquid. He looked at the other cans; they reminded him of policemen. He didn't like policemen; a vague freak of memory told him that policemen didn't believe in Jesus. He went to the other cans and, one by one, he twisted off the caps, and threw them about the room. There were about thirty cans, and they stood at his feet, their round mouths open in surprise. He was like a king, and they stood at his feet like subjects. He felt happy.

He kicked at them, and one fell over, bubbling away its life.

"Bastards. . . ."

He picked up one of the cans and swung it round, creating a transient parabola of blueness that sparkled in the light and then sprayed both him and the room. His skull was throbbing, and something began to grow in his throat; he had to gasp for breath. His big hands clenched and unclenched at his sides, and the breath whistled through his teeth. He picked up another of the cans, held it upside-down and deliberately sprayed his feet. He threw its corpse away, and as it bounced into the corner shouted, "Clatter!"

He had no memory of feeling like this before. Actually he had, many times in childhood, and he had last felt it in a wood-yard between the thighs of an anonymous woman.

He picked up another can, emptied and killed it, and threw it away. Another. Another. He strode among the cans, kicking, pushing aside, growing in stature all the time. The smell of paraffin was strong in the air now, and he gloried in the odour, filling his chest with its stickiness.

When all the cans had been emptied, he stood with his feet in the paraffin, beating his chest with a large hand, his scar bright red and appearing to glow in the



dim cellar light.

An idea began to grow in his mind. He found that he was shaking with excitement. A stirring began in his groin, and he put out long and clumsy arms, wanting to embrace anything. He walked over to the boiler and picked up a metal rod that had been standing nearby. His throat was nearly blocked now, and his body was constantly shaken by small shudders.

He plunged down the rod and smashed the thick glass. The flame was free, to breathe!

For a while he watched the flame, smiling at it, then he abruptly bent down and ripped a strip of cloth from his trouser leg. He dipped it into the paraffin until it was soaked. He suddenly found tears filling his eyes. He lowered the cloth on to the roaring flame, and through the tears saw it burst with dancing fire that was reflected a million times to become a universe of light.

He wiped his eyes and, while he could still see, threw the flaming cloth into the centre of the floor. For a while, nothing happened, but suddenly the fire widened and widened, from a drop, to a pool, to a lake, to a sea of fire. He felt a rising and a swelling, and as the fire grew, so did he. Fumes were in the air, and the cellar was lit with a brightness that it had never known before. It was hot, and as the fire came closer to him, hotter.

At the end he stood there, arms and legs outstretched, erect and potent, shouting with happiness at the flame, his friend and creation.

Finally he knew the glorious pain of self-immolation.

In the Lounge

LIGHT COMES THROUGH the french windows and splashes warmly across the parquet floor, reflecting into the far corners of the room. Near the window is a grand piano, and a man sits at it, dressed in rough grey clothing. On his face is a look of complete involvement in what he is playing; his eyes are half-closed and he sways his head from side to side. His hands rise and fall, jerkily and mechanically, and he plays a constant series of random and dissonant chords.

Also in the room, sitting in armchairs facing each other, are two people: a man and a woman.

JOHN: Are you sure you feel all right this morning, Mary?

MARY: Yes thanks, John, fine; it's just that poor Robert sitting there makes me feel a bit depressed. (They both glance at the pianist.)

JOHN (to the pianist): Good morning, Eusebius!

PIANIST (turning quickly and speaking swiftly and angrily): *Florestan!*

MARY (shivering): Oh! I hate this place!

JOHN: Well, I don't think you're alone in that. I think we all hate it—even the ones who don't know anything.

MARY: Yes. So many of them don't understand, but you can sense that they feel fear, just the same as us.

(She glances at the piano again.)

One, two, three, four. . . . I wonder how many chords he plays each day? I wonder whether he enjoys it, or whether each note is a torment.

JOHN: And there's Colin, every day, curled up in the bathroom, his hairy legs in front of him like a trembling shield. It's like living constantly in some kind of disaster area.

MARY: Yes, a moment after the disaster has occurred; there is the same feeling here of mute horror, just like the first few seconds after an accident.

JOHN: The Hindenberg falls in smoking ruins by breakfast time; at lunch the Titanic meets its end, and Christ is crucified by dinner time.

MARY: Oh, I wish I could *leave!*

JOHN: How can we? There's no way out for us past the eyes of authority. Two mistakes have been made, we are forgotten, and here we shall remain until we're too old to care any more. . . .

MARY: Oh, please don't! The whole thing depresses me so much. Let's go out somewhere; would you like a walk in the garden?

JOHN (preoccupied): Yes . . . yes . . . in a while.

(MARY suddenly inclines her head and sniffs at the air.)

MARY: John—can you smell something?

JOHN (vaguely): What?

MARY: It's almost . . . as if something's . . . burning.

JOHN: I saw . . . two dogs once . . .

MARY: John—I'm sure there's something burning! I think we should get out!

JOHN: . . . two dogs in the street . . .

MARY: Perhaps it's just a bonfire.

JOHN: . . . not doing anybody any harm. . . .

A Scene in the Street

THE SCENE IS a medium-sized suburban shopping centre. Fairly heavy traffic is moving past, but there are not many people on the pavements. Outside one of the shops, a grocer's, the shopkeeper is talking to two women shoppers.

There are two dogs padding about the pavement, sniffing each other. The shopkeeper looks disapprovingly at the dogs, and then turns his bright attention back to the women. One of the dogs makes an attempt to mount the other, but then drops back to all fours again, and they continue to move about from one side of the pavement to the other.

The grocer is a tall man, and he prides himself on his friendliness towards his customers. He had a hard time when he was younger, trying to establish himself, but now he is the owner of a thriving shop, and is able to spare the time to chat to his young housewives. Also he is not sure about one of the women to whom he is talking. She has only been here for a short time, and she seems to be exceptionally friendly. He wonders if, one day, she might be good for a turn. He is beginning

to develop a paunch, but is rather proud of it, and likes to rest his hands on it.

The smaller of the dogs again mounts the other, and they begin to copulate there on the pavement. The grocer and the housewives see this copulation out of the corners of their eyes, but the housewives carry on talking brightly. The grocer, however, is annoyed. He sees the behaviour of the dogs as an annoyance, almost as an insult. The ladies are, for a moment, talking to each other.

The grocer seizes his opportunity, walks over, and gives the dogs a kick.

However, his boot strikes only the male dog. The animal is spun round so that he is facing away from the female, but is still in her. As the grocer walks back, the dog screams in agony. Its twisted penis is still congested with blood, which now cannot escape. A permanent erection now binds him fast to the female in an agonising union. The female dog is frightened and begins to run, dragging the male backwards.

The grocer and the ladies, embarrassed, try not to notice, and carry on their conversation.

The screams of the trapped dog become even more pitiful as the creature is dragged away swiftly by the female. The level of sound in the street drops as people become aware of the suffering dogs. People turn to watch as the creatures disappear down the street.

The grocer is very embarrassed, and more than a little angry.

In the Courtyard

HE FOUND HIMSELF alone in a dark courtyard. He had been there for a long, long time. He remembered sunlight and contentment, but now his world was filled with his desire for escape.

To his right, curving down to the dark tarmac of the yard was a wind-vent, its black throat yawning in air noisily. It was a silver structure, square in outline, and he kept away from its mouth. The yard was in shadow, made even blacker by the sunlight above. The sun never reached down here. On three sides black buildings rose in the air, and loomed beside and behind him, but on the fourth, a long way above, sunlight broke across the wall like glass, and splintered a rude balcony with light. At the balcony was a door, and he knew that behind the door was a small chamber, big enough to accommodate the small staircase that led through the manhole to the grassy field above.

All around the courtyard were the corpses of small animals, and in the far corner lay a crazed donkey, a silver spoon buried in its neck, ready for someone to come along to scoop out a mouthful of melting flesh. All about the donkey were flies, feeding off its craziness, and it gave to the world its foetid odour without shame or pride.

Fire escapes jutted blackly above him. He clawed

back the life bulging in his throat. A shaft of black brick, a basic buttress, sloped from one side of the courtyard to the other. In this enclosed place it was like a beam from some black and dusty sun. He leaned against a wall, and brick crumbled under his twitching fingers. In front of him was a steel ladder that reached up to the balcony, but he was scared to climb. There was everything to lose.

But now the odour of burning oil reached his nostrils, and fear for his life came to him. He must leave!

He grasped the rungs of the ladder and began to climb. But he could not; his feet would not respond to him. He fell back, almost screaming.

There was a movement above him on the balcony. It was a slim Jewish girl. She was shouting something down to him, but he couldn't hear what she was saying.

"I can't hear you!" he called, but she indicated her ears and shook her head sadly. He realised that she was deaf. She reached down to him with an imploring expression on her face. He realised what he must do. He began to climb the ladder again, but found it now a little easier. As he climbed towards her, so she strained her hands down to him. As their flesh closed in contact he felt a wild crackling strength coursing into him. He climbed over the railing and on to the balcony, she helping him. Once over, he stood and looked into her large, dark eyes, still holding her hands.

"You saved me," he said.

"No, you helped me as well. And I haven't saved you; you can't beat geometry."

"I couldn't hear you, down there."

"I know. I've been in a very similar place."

He looked back over his shoulder. The yard, from up here, was much smaller than he remembered it. The donkey, far below, twitched his tail with mad contempt.

"I shall never go back there," he said. "And I shall never leave you."

She smiled. "You will. The answer is written in the very curves of space, the geometry of time. Kiss me."

The power from her was welling through him, and his body floated with the breeze that blew about. He took her in his arms, and pressed his lips gently against hers. She was warm in his arms and his mouth; he closed his eyes, and let his body sing the song they had begun.

And then she was gone.

There was nothing. He turned wildly, his arms flailing the air. As he turned he slipped, and fell back into the yard. But he fell slowly, descending like a feather into darkness. He sprawled on the cold tarmac, sobbing into the dust.

He got up on his knees and stared at the balcony which swam in his gaze. There was another woman there, and as he watched her hair changed colour, her features flowed like treacle into new combinations of line and form. Sometimes she seemed old, sometimes she was young and fresh. Each time she reached down

to him, but he could not hear what she was saying; he couldn't reach up to touch her hands. Sometimes she was too weak to lift him; sometimes she just looked at the sky; sometimes she reached for someone else whom he could not see. Once she was sad and beautiful, and he rushed for the ladder, but she didn't see him, and was lost in contemplation of her own feet.

"I remember a neater arrangement than this!" he called to her.

Time danced like fireflies across his brow. He sensed the years falling, brown skeletal leaves of age, and he put out his hand to brush them as they fell.

And all the time he could feel the ground shaking and the angry fire nearing him for its revenge. . . .

Finally her features changed again. Above him stood a girl with blue eyes and with pale musicians moving in a procession through her mind.

"Help me!" he called to her. "I NEED YOU!" just realising that he did.

Her mouth began to move anxiously, but a second after her lips moved, a cracked voice spoke a foreign tongue into his ears. The sounds she made brought agony to him.

"Go!" he shouted. "Go away!" He ran to the other side of the courtyard to escape the pain she was causing him. She began to grow transparent, fading into nothing. Just before she disappeared he realised that he could understand what she was saying.

But now all was bright; the fire was coming to claim him.

In the Lounge

All is unchanged. JOHN and MARY still sit in their facing chairs. ROBERT still plays the piano like an automaton. There is a strong smell of smoke in the air.

JOHN: The strange thing about this place is that no one really knows anything about anybody else. None of us has past lives. We are all here, living in the immediate present with nothing at all behind us. Perhaps we were all created here; perhaps there is nothing outside at all. Perhaps this whole place is the only thing in the universe, and that what we see from our windows is nothing but a backdrop painted to deceive us. I often worry about this, you know. In fact the other day I put my arm through the bars over my window, right up to the shoulder, but I didn't touch anything.

MARY: I had a terrible dream last night.

JOHN: Mary—I'm sure I can smell smoke.

MARY: I dreamed I had a husband. . . . I dreamed a past life for myself.

JOHN: I'll swear there's something on fire.

MARY: I dreamed a complete past. . . . I dreamed love and pain and death and friends and enemies.

JOHN: I think we should see what is burning.

MARY: I dreamed that I fed from my husband. When

he loved me I would draw sweetness and strength from his body. He would enter my body with his, and my soul with his. He would move inside me, shaking me, and my body would respond, and twist and turn to receive the power and the love of him. This was my dream: He is loving me. *This is me!* I feel, *this responsive, mindless creature is me!* *Everything else is false.* I cling to him, my fingers pressing into his back. My head is moving from side to side, but all I can feel is him in me and my body responding to his power. He penetrates my bowels, my chest, my eyes; he is everywhere in me, there is nothing but him. I call his name out into the world, but the world is him, and he is moving in me. Our bodies stiffen in one. I strain up to him, and his body gasps rigidly down to me. And then there is nothing but the soundless explosion to which I abandon myself.

And then we are both quiet. His face is on the pillow by my shoulder, and his weight presses me down.

I didn't tell you about my husband, did I? He is a very big man. When he was younger, he was powerful and muscled. He is still strong, but now the flesh of middle-age swells his belly. He is heavy on me as we lie there, but I do not care. Nothing matters but the strength I have drawn from him. He is quieter than usual, and so am I. I lie, staring up peacefully at the ceiling, illuminated by the bedside light. I stroke his shoulder, and decide eventually that he has gone to sleep. I will give him a few minutes before I wake him. His weight is now uncomfortable, but I vow to endure it for a while until I am forced to disturb him.

(MARY's voice is gradually getting higher, and a light of hysteria is coming into her eyes.)

His shoulders feel cold, and I pull up the blankets to cover them. And then . . . and then I try to wake him. I push his shoulder gently, but he does not wake. I smile indulgently, and push again a little harder. The flesh gives under my hand, but he does not respond. I call his name . . . again . . . and then I smell it. The smell of death.

(The last part of MARY's story is screamed out.)

I smelt the death of him in that bed. Have you ever read in the papers, 'He died in his sleep'? I was pinned under him. I tried desperately to get him away from me. I hit his shoulder again and again, but I could not get a response from him. I tried to escape from under him . . . he was still in me . . . but I could not. I cried and screamed and tried to force life back in. I held his face up, and saw his dead eyes. His eyes stared at me like a dead fish's eyes. His face was distorted in a terrible twisted smile.

I tried to push his head away, but it fell back on to my shoulder, giving me a dead man's kiss—cold saliva on my flesh. I remember that I felt now nothing but a terrible revulsion for him. I must try to escape. . . . I must unjoin myself from him. I remember that I twisted and turned, moving my hips as if I were loving

this crushing body. I strained myself, careless of myself, saying something, I forget what. And at last his dead prick no longer touched my body. I couldn't get from underneath him. . . . I put my hands under his corpse and tried to lift it off . . . but even with the strength of panic I couldn't do it. Time went past. His flesh cooled. I cursed him, I jerked and twitched under him. . . . I remember spittle drooling all over my face, and I remember calling and crying and punching and groaning . . . but his weight pinned me flat on the bed. And I remember that at last someone heard my screams and came . . . and they brought me here! **HERE! THEY BROUGHT ME HERE!**

(MARY begins to scream and writhe in her chair. JOHN is not looking at her, but is talking quietly to himself. The pianist continues to play his chords.)

The Burning Clock

IT IS AN American wall-clock. Its case is made of wood, square, with two supporting columns that rise from the bottom to the top. A large arch of glass is in front, and two side panels form gothic curves. The face and mechanism is supported behind the front arch, at the top, and the pendulum, with a large, flat brass bob, hangs almost to the bottom of the case.

Flames have just caught at the bottom of the case, and the watching man leans closer to see better. The wood at the bottom of the right-hand column is beginning to char. The flames have caught quickly, and begin to reach up the sides of the clock. The fire also burns at the base of the clock, and a discoloured patch can be seen on the "floor" through the front glass. He looks at the burning column on the right. Varnish has peeled off all the way up, and the whole column is now burning fiercely. There is a crack, and the side glass splinters. The back of the clock has now caught fire.

Suddenly a flame appears inside the clock, as the base-board burns completely through. The flames engulf the pendulum bob as it swings gently to and fro. Now flames are rising inside the clock and, for a while, the clock resembles a glass case of fire. Then the fire outside the clock gains a better hold, and abruptly the front glass cracks. Half of the glass falls to the floor and shatters; the other half clings to the blackening wood. Now the bob can only be seen as it emerges from the fire at the extreme ends of its swing; it can be seen now that parts of the pendulum are glowing red. Although the hands, which he can just distinguish in the flare, are not pointing to the hour or the half, the clock begins to strike. The clock strikes twelve, and then goes on.

The base-board falls to the floor, trailing smoke behind it, and smoulders there. The striking of the clock is becoming erratic; the strokes are irregular, and slowing. The front part of the clock swings open on its hinges, the warping of the frame freeing it, and the remainder of the glass crashes down. The flames are concentrated at the top of the clock now; the pendulum

is a glowing shaft of red. The clock's striking mechanism seizes, and the sound stops. The pendulum is now moving under its own momentum, and its arc is diminishing; the clock is now like a burning skeleton.

Metal drips down from the interior of the clock mechanism in bright, hurried drops. The clock is now completely still, only the flames dancing over its surface. He moves round to the side of the clock, and sees its cogs, warped and glowing. The sight disturbs him. It is as if the flames are the only moving things in a petrified universe. Great calcified images loom in his mind, and he presses the back of his hand to his teeth to subdue his fear.

But then he sees that the clock has not burned at all; it is just that the intense heat has caused it to stop.

Three Catatonic Stories

A MAN RUNS across the room, fear glinting in his eyes. In the corner, curled up like a slug, is the naked body of a man called Colin. Beside him is a sheet of paper. The man picks up the paper and reads:

1. A man is sitting at a table. The surface in front of him is supporting a large block of gold, on a red silk cushion. Lying on the table beside the nugget is a sharp silver knife. The man licks his lips and rolls up his sleeves with delicacy. Then he puts out his hands, grasping the knife with one and holding the block with thumb and forefinger of the other. The gold is pure, and much softer than gold usually is. Its outside surface has a dull gleam. The man picks up the knife, and brings it deliberately to a point above the block. He lowers it to the dull golden surface and carefully draws it across, scoring a straight bright line across the top. For a few seconds he holds the knife poised, regarding his work critically. Then he brings down the knife again and draws it across once more, but this time with more pressure, slicing through the gold as if it were butter and exposing the bright gleam of its inner surface.

He neatly bisects the block, and, with the knife, moves the two pieces apart. This is the moment of consummation. A few heavy seconds pass. Then he puts down the knife, with gold adhering to its blade, and picks up one of the sections of the golden block. His lips are full and wet; he parts them and pushes in the gold. He licks the moist gold from his fingers.

FIRE

2. There is a plain. It is dark in colour and absolutely flat, like the polished top of a table. There is an impression of depth about the plain, and it gleams faintly.

In the centre of the plain, standing like a passion translated into stone, is a cathedral. At this distance the cathedral cannot be seen in detail, but its general shape,

the light on its windows, can just be made out.

A man is riding a motor cycle across the plain, at high speed. The plain is intensely cold, and the temperature is dropping by the minute. The man is trying to reach the cathedral before the cold is enough to cause his consciousness to fail and make him plunge to the ground. The roar of his engine echoes from unseen obstacles. He rockets across the ground, nearing the cathedral swiftly. Soon the shape of the building is towering over him, and he throttles down, gradually slowing. He overshoots the cathedral and circles it, its features flashing past him in a jumble of grey stonework.

On his second circuit he turns in and travels through the door, right into the nave. Inside, the cathedral is very spacious and warm. Light comes in and makes the stone warm and sensual with its stained-glass colours. About three-quarters down the cathedral nave is the altar. The rest of the floor space is empty, save for a few benches cluttered in the centre.

The man turns his motor cycle to the right, and travels slowly down one side of the nave. The sound of the engine comes booming back at him from the high roof. He circles the nave, the light turning his flesh into a shifting sequence of colour and texture. As he twists the throttle control his engine noise becomes higher and rises to a recognisable note. The engine backfires, and the tremendous report echoes into a continuous sound. The stonework throws back throbbing reflections of the engine noise; it is as if all the sound he has made since entering the door is still winging about from one side of the building to the other. The air brushes his face, and he speeds up, dipping his machine at the corners. The note of his engine rises still more.

And abruptly there is something else in the air. A disturbance shudders in the nave. A response—a conflict. Still faster he travels, flinging his motor cycle round the nave. The note of the engine rises in a roar.

And suddenly he has it.

His engine note hits one of the harmonics of the basic resonance frequency of the cathedral, and all the air in the building begins to vibrate in a sympathetic resonance.

As he speeds round, he coaxes the sound from the depths. The air shudders deeply, louder and louder, until the cathedral-note has been completely evoked, and the deep shuddering is almost unbearable. Now he knows he will never leave the cathedral. As he cycles round, holding the throttle steady, he begins to laugh, an activity that is noiseless in the great mass of vibrating air, his motor cycle sound lost in the giant organ note of the building.

On the plain, the cathedral sounds.

FIRE BRIGHT

3. A man is born, whose body is constructed in such

a way that positive space exerts a tremendous pressure on his cellular structure. He may only obtain a lessening of these sensations by standing in front of large mirrors, when positive space is balanced to a degree by the residual pressure from negative space. By placing two mirrors, one each side of him, both facing inwards, the balancing of tensions affords him exquisite relief.

One day the pressures become intolerable, and he tries to escape them by leaping into a full-length mirror. He becomes trapped, merged with his “negative” image. He is forced to hang motionless, caught in the interstices of positive and negative space, at the point where the two intersect. He doesn’t have the strength to move himself; the power-weight ratio permits him only to move one finger. This he does often, projecting it into normal or negative space, but each time the finger is two-dimensional, and the stresses are immense.

He hangs, trapped in a glacier of force.

FIRE BURN BRIGHT

The man puts down the paper and turns to the foetus beside him, but now in his eyes there is an expression of lost despair. He speaks without conviction. “You must come with me—we must escape.” The door at the end of the room blossoms into orange light. “. . . must come with me . . .” says the foetus, “. . . must escape . . .” A faint hint of urgency and panic comes into the man’s voice. “Come . . . quickly!” “Come . . . quickly!” Tongues roar into the room. The man turns, ignoring the hunched form on the floor, and begins to scream, in a high, childish voice. He drops to his hands and knees and begins to wail like a baby, beating his fists on the parquet flooring. It is very warm in the room.

Black Wave, Take Me Away With You

FLAT AND POLISHED tables of black glass—head of flutes shrilling like Cocteau’s opium pipes—wide grey façade “Charing Cross Hotel” through rain going in distance and past—sun drips blood into a sea of tears making the green one red . . . weave your bandages of gold—flat façade, wide and grey filled out with deperspectived spaces—bully shouldered perverts take each other sexually, and us—men sob in the lavatory—paraschizophrenic moves walls and time by psychokinesis—Eusebius plucks dead chords from the piano, crying—the walls weep with memories of you—time-men lurk round corners waiting for more time to destroy—locked in the wash-room, naked people cry out as ice-water jets their flesh, fiercely—dirty old men communicate telepathically with God—my own legs tremble before me with beautiful fear—rimed with blue glory they await the coming of the sun. . . . Smoke comes from the sky like a scent of lemons—I am coming—I am coming. . . .

Soleil de Sang, d'Oiseaux

It is quiet in this house behind my windows
My Jesus, my universe of silence and bells
There is only more windows; layers of glass
Throw to me the lance of love, my Love
And I can look out through the layers of glass
Make of yourself a cauldron for my heart
See the slow flower-garden and the ghosts of love

Give me the red and the green of your love
Inside this house it is very quiet
Rainbow of love, desert of love
Like a cave and I am here
Your golden pillars are singing to me
I am here in a cave in a house behind glass

They slowly swing, the bells of the depths
And I am falling apart and dying
Do not wake me: it is the time of the bird!

Events In Hell

TIME SINKS WELLS into my brain—sutures hum with electrical circuits—Russian death machines swing wide barrels and project electrical rays into my eyes—faces, fatty, broken and degenerate strain at the sun's glory—fantasies of life crackle among dendrides—an old man masturbates his death-tool and spits white glory at the sun—morons concentrate on the intellectual promise of a piece of wood—my head is a gramophone horn sounding music-hall songs out to the stars.

Dead Book Images Spin In My Mind Like Snow

BOOK JACKETS FALL spinning to my floor—God rises in me like a vapour from snow—the sound of my voice echoes in levels of light—a rainbow of love to the vision of your face—Give me the thirst of your love; the tumescence of your love.
Motor cycles ride across the plain of snow—black mosquito squadrons of desire—The snow lies on my soul like the seal of your name—Send your motor-cycles to me—Give me the red and the green of your love—my man, my woman, my child, my God.
Levels of consciousness hide your bells in light—Sound waves of glory put my soul to flight—The sun of blood is trembling on the bleeding snow—The colours of your love flux in a brilliant flow—Your core of acquiescence swells in me—Dead images are floating on the sea.
Book jackets are trampled by jack boots—a dead web stretches across the swelling surfaces of dead water—the smiling, deep surfaces—they welcome the laxness of my new body—they hide their bowels in night—they clasp soft hands under me and receive my weakness—I see your light far above me, your sun, your blood—but I feel the warmth of their embrace, the kiss of their foul

water-skin touches my lips—Your snow is burying me, and your sun is burning my flesh—My ears are blinded by the melody of your light—Their web is enfolding me, and I can't escape its mesh—My body is sighing in a velvet field of white—I am dying for you—your bells, your colours, your heart—your heart is red and it pulses like the sun—the clangour of your sunlight strikes my eyes like metal—book images stir dust in my brain—I die for your colours, your name.

Catatonic Sun, Fill My Valleys

Sun-mist, you are in me
Sun-fire, my foetus fills me with heat
Sun-death, your touch rests on my body
Sun, you are drying my leaves—my foliage moves under your hand
Sun, you are piercing my womb
Sun, my mouth is full of you
Sun, you are burning away my heart

Red Piano

ACROSS THE ROOM the red piano is playing—piano of pain—Florestan plays desert chords, and the flame-piano answers with cracks like a cannon. Strings curl over him like a benediction.

This Is Sun

This is sun
Sun is blood
And the bone, gouged and crackling
Sun is the laughing of a pretty woman
and the voice of a great multitude
Sun is semen
Ejaculated in a spurt of blood
Sun is dust and the memory of old wounds
Sun is water in the softness of flood
Sun of the waters, here am I
I await you
This is Sun

Sun!

We are here sun sun glorious we wait for your rays to lick us with tongues sun we call on you bring your anger to bear on our flesh clean us with your venom sun magic sun-spear of deadly passion sun take us in to your burning embrace sun potent sun glorious to join sun sun sun for the end of burning the concerted rush to your condensed sun-energy bloom for us sun unfold sun like a glowing rose and wrap us in your burning petals. . . .

AHHH! P R A Y

BURST!

r e a c h

e r o s

a s c h

s i s e m e n

t a b u l a t e !

veni,

veni

creator

spiritus!

g l o r y

It was impossible for many
to escape

Of

those

not

locked

in

padded

cells,

in

the

general

panic,

none

were

able

to

get

free...

There were no survivors

The Eye of the Lens

The Film

THE FILM IS shot on Agfacolour 16 mm. stock on a Bell & Howell camera. It is shot at 24 frames per second, and lasts for fifteen minutes, thirty-two seconds. The film has an optical sound track, and is ideally projected with a screen width of eight feet.

At certain points in the film colour filters have been used. The filters are very light, and serve only to give a predominance to a particular colour, rather than the effect of a dense wash. At other points the same effect is achieved by the selection of particular objects in the field of vision. Thus objects of the chosen colour appear on the screen either isolated or as predominant elements.

The Cast

- A girl.
- A florist.
- A holy man.

Throughout the film, the girl wears a white, pleated dress, caught at the waist by a length of gold chain, the end of which hangs down her thigh.

She is slender, and moves with a light grace. Her hair is long and dark; it is parted at the centre, drawn back, and hangs down between her shoulder-blades. Her neck is long, and her face has, despite its appearance of fragility, a strong bone structure. In bare feet she stands at five feet seven, and she has brown eyes.

Her teeth have been extensively filled, and when she laughs one may see the glint of silver in her mouth. Her body hair is rather slight, and on her legs there is an almost invisible covering of sparse, dark hair. She sometimes tries to be cool and off-hand, but she never succeeds with any conviction.

Her skin is more brown than one would expect of a girl with such a delicate appearance, but at her neck one is able to see tracteries of veins beneath the skin.

Although she has a nervous temperament, she is capable of deep serenity and objectivity, and this is the mood she most often projects throughout the film.

She is deeply ashamed of her breasts, slight, with long, light nipples. Without realising that this would spoil the proportions of her body, she feels that her breasts should be much larger than they are. This shame diffuses over her whole being, and she is quite genuinely convinced that she is rather unpleasantly ugly.

The florist and the holy man are played by the same actor. In the case of the holy man, he wears a short russet beard.

There is a large cast of extras, and the voice on the sound track is that of a man.

The Images

THE SOUND TRACK is silent, save for the hissing that comes through the loudspeakers. The screen is dark. Fade in. The girl enters from the left. She walks ankle-deep through a forest of broken icons. Gods with upturned faces, blind eyes staring heavenward. Arms are broken off and stretch up from the sea of figures, hands stretching out in supplicant tension. The sun shines brightly, and casts deep shadows among the bodies of the figurines. The screen is in parts intolerably bright and absolutely black.

SOUND TRACK: "Love me red—love me green—my serenity of soul fills all the places of earth—it calms the tempest and quietens the wild beast.

Love me red with bloody arrows and anoint my feet with oil—let me plunge my arms into your wounds and cleanse myself in the bubbling red stream. Give me the red of your tortured eyes, the red of your bloody limbs—I will take the red and build it into strength for my arms—into wrath to fight the hatred of my life.

Love me green—green of palm-leaf, of glory, that I might some day rise to your feet and sing praises to your name.

Love me gold—gold of riches, that I might spread your word throughout the land—that I might raise temples in your name and spread your teachings to the ends of the earth.

Love me brown—the brown of leather, that I might fashion whips for my flesh—to suffer the mortification of your love—to live in the glory of fearful pain to the end of my days.

Give me all the colours of your being, that I might form them into the pure white of resurrection and eternal life."

The girl clearly has been hearing the voice on the sound track, and she stands for a moment, looking reflective, and then moves on. She passes out of the frame, kicking the statuettes idly as she walks. The picture remains for a few seconds, the idols looking, in the strong sunlight, like a field of motionless grey corn.

Fade out, with a silent sound track.

The Sandstone Bust

THE GIRL IS walking through the desert. The sand is lit brightly by the sun, almost white, and her footprints are softened by the shifting of the sand. The rounded contours of the desert stretch to the horizon.

She passes an upturned bicycle, half buried in sand, like the bones of a graceful creature. Its front wheel is twisted towards her, and as she passes it appears to be watching her with little interest and with patience born of decay. She goes past the bicycle at a considerable distance. The camera lifts as she passes, and the helicopter comes into view, its belly sunk deep into the sand. The fractured vanes move slightly in the breeze. Although, apart from this corpse-like movement, the helicopter is quite still, the canted mechanism appears as if it is trying to struggle up from the sand to fly away. It is like a photograph of a wounded creature. It is almost as though the film has seized in the projector, and if it started again the helicopter would hump and flap dreadfully on the desert sand.

The girls looks at the helicopter as she passes, and then turns her head back to the front, stopping abruptly as she comes face to face with something else.

It is a bust, made of sandstone, and it stands on a waist-high pedestal. Although it is the likeness of a man, the features are so rough as to be almost unrecognisable. The sandstone bust has about it a tremendous sense of time, and it is clear that the roughness is caused by erosion.

All the parts of the bust have been carefully labelled, and stencilled letters of dark green paint, spelling FOREHEAD, CHEEK, RIGHT EAR, LEFT EAR, add to the general grotesqueness of the figure. The face, with its disfiguring words, has an expression of such comic sadness that it could never be considered frightening. She tries to rock the statue on its pedestal, but it seems to be firmly bolted into place. She rubs the surface of the bust, and sandstone can be seen crumbling into her hand. Now we see the statue closely it looks very old indeed, as if it has been in this desert for an immense period of time.

She takes out a handkerchief from her handbag, dampens part of it, and tries to rub off part of the "N" in the word "NOSE", and, after considerable effort, the green begins to fade. She runs her fingers over the forehead, and smiles at the "MOUTH" and "CHIN" notices.

She appears to be delighted with the statue.

Slow cello music is now on the sound track.

It is now obvious that the bust is severely eroded. Although quite clearly signposted, the right and left nipples are no longer distinguishable, and the right arm-pit is badly chipped. The girl walks behind the statue, and the next shot is from this position, with the girl walking across the frame, round to the front again. From here the bust is even less like a person, and it

seems also to lose all its identity as an object, and to fuse into the contours of the desert.

The cello music becomes grotesque and poignant.

From the front again. The girl is peering closely at the statue's face. A dark mark is running across the letters of the "LEFT EYE" notice, making it difficult to read. It can be seen that the mark is in fact moisture, black against the dry stone. She puts out her finger to the dampness, and then touches her tongue to finger-tip. The wet area seems to be increasing in size, and the girl begins to look a little apprehensive.

Then she drops her handbag and stares with a profound horror, as a drop of water comes from the left eye and merges with the general wetness. Now an identical darkness is spreading across the other cheek. Another drop comes from the left eye and courses its way down to the chin, leaving a trail that glistens in the sunlight. There is no movement, no sound other than the wide sweeps of the cello melody. The only motion is of the little drops that roll down the figure's rough cheeks.

She steps back appalled. She seems to be incapable of action.

A drop comes from the right eye, and rolls down the craggy face.

She stands with her mouth open, her hands clenching at her sides, staring helplessly at the old, old statue that is now weeping before her. The tears of the statue somehow make real the weight of centuries that have passed in this place. She buries her face in her hands, and looks at the bust no longer.

After about half a minute she takes her hands away. A certain calmness has spread over her. She slowly picks up her handbag and feels into it, bringing out a large notebook. She tears out a page and fashions the paper into a rectangular shape with one end coming to a point. She takes out a fountain pen and writes a single word on the paper. She fixes the notice to the cheek with a pin, in such a way that the arrow-head is indicating the water which is now streaming down the face.

The notice says, simply, "TEARS".

She turns, and swiftly walks away across the desert.

The Florists

NOW THE CELLO has stopped. All that can be heard is the ironic funeral march from the first symphony of Mahler. The girl is walking across the desert towards a hill, the only feature in the otherwise gently sloping terrain, apart from a black plume of smoke which is rising distantly in the air. As she gets nearer to this oily cloud of smoke, scurrying human activity can be seen on the ground beneath. Occasionally a gout of bright flame bursts along the ground, and more smoke is added to the cloud, rising swiftly in the air. Now the camera, in a tracking shot, reveals a close-up

of the girl's face as she walks along. At first lines of concentration furrow her forehead as she tries to make out what is going on, then the concentration is replaced by bewilderment, and then, a little later, by anger. Now the camera is static, and we see the whole scene as the girl walks up.

Men in shirt sleeves are rushing about, their faces grimy and shining with sweat. They look bewildered and panic-stricken, but this is obviously their normal state of mind. On their backs they carry the large chemical tanks of flamethrowers, and the straps have rubbed into their shoulders for so long that they are obviously in great pain. All around the ground is seared and black. It appears that nothing could possibly grow in such a devastated place, but straggly vegetation is visibly thrusting itself up through the soil. Every moment one of the strange plants is beginning to bloom. A bud appears, almost instantaneously, and begins to open. Lush, coloured petals are visible, promising future beauty. But as soon as one of the men sees this he moves up and immerses the plant in a bath of flame from the nozzle of the weapon he is carrying. All that is left when the fire dies away is charred black soil. But after only a few seconds, pushing up through this inhospitable earth, can be seen a new plant.

The girl clearly doesn't like this place, but when one of the men comes close to her, a fevered expression on his face, she lightly touches his arm.

GIRL: What is this? What are you doing?

MAN: Killing them.

GIRL: But—why?

MAN: To stop them from growing.

(The man turns away to spread a carpet of flame, and then turns back to the girl.)

The only way is to kill them. If we weren't doing this good work they'd be spreading all over the desert.

GIRL: But why do you want to stop them?

MAN: We don't want these—these filthy blossoms all over the desert. For one thing they'd encourage laxness—all our men would be too lazy to do any useful work, like they're doing now.

GIRL: But the only reason they're working is to kill the flowers.

MAN: And besides which, we're used to the desert. When I see those disgusting petals coming out I feel a strange—tension inside me. What would happen if I gave way to that, and watched them evolving all the way? And anyway, why are you so interested? I don't like the kind of talk you're giving me.

GIRL: It's just that I can't understand you. You're killing something that's beautiful and alive, something that can grow and give you pleasure. . . .

The man looks at the girl with a disgusted expression on his face, and quite deliberately spits at the ground by her feet. Then he turns back to his work. But just before his face goes out of frame his expression can be seen to change from one of disgust to an infinite sadness. The music fades.



The Flagellants

THE GIRL IS now standing on one of the foothills of the large natural mound in the desert. She stands with her back to the camera, watching an extraordinary scene taking place about fifty feet below on the sand. There is a vast circle of naked people on the plain. Their heads are downcast, and they tramp slowly round, their eyes to the ground, like prisoners exercising in a large yard. As they slowly move, each person brings down the lash of a large whip on to the back of the person before him. This whipping is so arranged that as one man feels the bite of the lash on his flesh, his own whip is whistling down, striking the person in front a fraction of a second later, the lash of this man about to contact the back of the man before him. Thus, from a distance, this movement can be seen to form a wave of energy, which ripples quickly round the circle, much faster than the people are walking, a wave of pain which circles eternally.

The Eye

THE GIRL IS walking through a complex of corridors, green walls rapidly moving across the screen. The floors are of black polished marble, and the sounds of her steps are echoed by the walls. She turns right, down another identical corridor, and quickly left again. All the corridors are the same, and the wooden doors have to distinguish them only small silver numbers set above them, but the individual figures cannot be seen. The sounds of her shoes are now very loud on the sound track, and the echoes build up in feedback, echoes of echoes, until there is nothing but a continuous hollow sound, the resonance of the corridors forming a throbbing note, punctuated by the clicking of the shoes, which, all the time, are adding still more sound to the whole.

She suddenly turns and opens one of the doors. We see her from inside the room as she slams the door shut and leans against it. The slam of the door terminates the sound on the optical track, and there is now no noise at all, nothing but an unnatural silence.

On a table in the middle of the room is a cine projector. The girl switches off the room light, and goes across to this table. Light filters into the room through the drawn venetian blinds, and a large white screen can be seen dimly at the end of the room. The girl switches on the projector, and the screen is filled with light. We see, projected on to the screen, a picture of a girl, walking hurriedly down a series of green corridors, the floors of which are of black polished marble. She turns right and then quickly left again, moving rapidly past many wooden doors with small silver figures above them. She

opens one of the doors, and can then be seen from inside the room as she slams the door and leans against it. On a table in the middle of the room is a cine projector. The girl switches off the light, and goes across to the projector. A large white screen can be seen dimly at the end of the room. She bends down and presses a switch on the side of the projector.

On the screen is projected the gigantic image of a human eye. The iris is a light watery blue, and the eye itself, separated as it is from the rest of the face, expresses nothing at all. It is just a blue eye, watching all the time.

On the film in the room, the camera begins to approach the eye, and the silhouetted shape of the girl disappears on one side of the screen. Now on that film there is nothing but the blue eye. The girl turns off the projector, and the picture dies. She turns to face the camera, which tracks in, closer and closer, until now only her face can be seen, now only the brow, eye and cheek, and now just her staring eye.

The Switched-on Psychedelic Auto-destructive Cathedral

THE INSIDE OF the cathedral batters the eyes and the ears. Everywhere there is colour; the pastel mosaics of the altar, tapestries, stone-work; and bright garish colours, the lights, the revolving stained-glass windows, the projected beams staining the clouds of steam. A notice in pseudo-gothic script, painted in dayglo colours says 'PSYCHEDELIC FREAK-OUT — TONITE!' In the nave of the cathedral, in front of the altar, are enormous steam engines. Great pistons, their brass-work reflecting back the iridescent greens and reds of the projector, operate powerfully, flashing and gleaming. Wheels are turning, and great clouds of steam are rising to the cathedral ceiling, almost invisible due to the sea of colour below. These steam engines drive the windows and the other moving parts of the cathedral. The windows are circular, and are of stained glass. They are built in two layers, each with a bright mosaic pattern. The inner of each pair of windows is set in a ball-race and revolves slowly, the colours of both windows combining and separating, forming new colours, and the patterns of the mosaics working together, forming moving lines and swirling shapes. A projector is throwing incandescent colours on to a large screen set behind the altar, which there form swiftly alternating patterns of red, green, blue, blinding white, purple, bright yellow, mauve, orange, in hundreds of shades. Set all round the cathedral, stroboscopic lights are flashing, all out of synchronisation, and here and there, among the large number of people in the nave, one or two figures are on the floor, writhing in the throes of *grand mal*.

The cathedral is full of sound. Electronic noises are booming through stereophonic loudspeakers set in a ring round the nave, and the sounds chase each other in circles; three cardinals play electric guitars, and a trio of women, their long hair streaming, scream loudly and trace with their hands the shapes of space. The steam engines cannot be heard. A man is standing at the altar with a microphone, brandishing a crucifix. "Turn on!" he shrieks. "Tune in! Drop out!" The robes of the cardinals swirl as their synchronised arms smash down, electronic chords bursting from the loudspeakers.

The girl, her dress now a rainbow-dress, gleaming in the lights of the cathedral, turns and goes through the door. Outside, we see her emerge. Here it is as it was before; there is the desert and the sun, and only faintly can be heard the sounds of the cathedral. She walks hurriedly away. For a long time can be seen nothing but her feet, treading swiftly over the desert sand. When she is a long way from the building, there is a loud crack, and she turns to look. The cathedral appears for a moment to shake, and, abruptly, there is no longer a cathedral, but a vast moving mass, pouring to the ground like a waterfall, surrounded by clouds of dust which obscure the end. On the sound track there is an enormous rumbling crash, and when it has died, and when the dust has settled, there is nothing but a pile of rubble in the desert and a silence that seems infinite. She turns and walks out of frame, leaving, for a moment, the camera trained on the pile of debris, which looks as if it has been there for a million years.

The Crucifixion

THE GIRL IS again walking across the white sand of the desert. The camera pans to follow her as she walks past. On the sound track is the noise of a strong wind. As she stops and looks up, into the picture comes the base of a black marble construction. It is very large and is oval in shape; only part of it is in the field of view. It consists of oval slabs, each a little smaller than the one below it, forming an oval staircase. The marble gleams in sunlight.

Looking down from the top of the edifice. The girl can be seen climbing the staircase. A black shadow falls across her, but its outlines cannot be seen clearly. As she climbs the camera zooms back, so that we see that the black construction is much larger than it had appeared. As more and more comes into our field of view, we are able to see more clearly the shape of the shadow. Abruptly we see that the shadow is in the form of a cross.

She reaches the top of the construction, walks forward, and stops. There is blood running down the base of the cross and forming a small pool beneath it.

From the side. Her face is in frame, at the bottom left. On the right is the cross, with two bent legs, nailed by

the feet, at the top of the frame.

GIRL: Oh! What have they done to you?

The man on the cross can now be seen entirely. The upper half of his body is sagging away from the cross, only the great nails driven through his wrists holding his weight. Congealed blood lines his arms. His head is hanging forward, and he regards the girl from under his brows, with the great burning eyes. His flesh is very white, and his whole body hangs like that of a corpse.

GIRL: Oh! You're in such pain!

MAN (irritably): Of course I'm in pain.

GIRL (almost crying): I must get you down.

MAN: No, you must not. For my name is Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and it is ordained that I die in this way.

GIRL: But I can't let you suffer like this!

JESUS CHRIST (irritably): My dear girl, this is bad enough, without you adding to my misery with your witless comments. If you knew how much this hurt you'd have more consideration than to make me worry about anything else. Now leave me alone, and don't attempt to get me down.

GIRL: Well—do you mind if I talk? Perhaps I will be able to ease your last hours. And I—I want to talk to you.

JESUS CHRIST: It's immaterial to me; I'll be joining my Father soon, and I don't give a damn about anything else.

GIRL: Well, what I need really—I know it's not fair to ask you at a time like this, but—well—I need help, you see.

JESUS CHRIST: That's my job.

GIRL: You see, I've seen so much today, and—well—I just wonder about the things I've seen; I suppose I feel a little confused about it all.

JESUS CHRIST: Don't be confused, my child, for you are like a lamb, and I am your shepherd. Just follow me, take the path I show you, and I will lead you to my heavenly fold.

GIRL: Yes, I appreciate that, but I want to find my own way around. It can't be wrong, I guess, because you made me like this. I don't really want to be led anywhere. I've made mistakes, but I've seen a lot of people today who've made far worse ones than me. I don't want to contradict, but with all respect, I'm not a sheep.

JESUS CHRIST: But my child, you are a sheep. For my Father is in control of the whole universe. He knows all the secrets of the proton, the quasar, and all the millions of things of which humans are not even aware. My Father is all.

GIRL: Well, why am I unhappy?

JESUS CHRIST: Because you have sinned. You are black and steeped in the foul brew of fleshly wickedness. You choose the easy path of earthly pleasure, and your soul drips with evil poison, one drop of which will be enough to send it screaming to eternal damnation. And you probably play with yourself.

GIRL: I think you are very rude, and you're not at all as I imagined you to be. Not only that, you seem very stupid, and you know nothing about me, what I am, and yet you criticise me. You seem to me a very shallow person.

JESUS CHRIST (angrily): What do you mean? If I weren't nailed up here I'd come down and— What do you mean?

GIRL: I know more about you than you do of me. I know that you are a man full of compulsive rituals, neurotic, almost insane. You wouldn't even let me get you down from the cross because it would upset your precious ceremonies. They say you are kind, but I don't find you to be.

JESUS CHRIST (somewhat nervously): Come now, my child—

GIRL (dramatically): You claim omnipotence for your Father. Well then, in making that claim you are also claiming for him credit for all the crimes of the universe! I charge your Father with creating starvation. I charge him with cruelty, with disease, with disaster. I charge the God of Love with being the God of Syphilis. I charge the God of Life with being the God of Death!

JESUS CHRIST: You are on earth, my child, as a test. Only when you have been weeded, the good from the bad, can my Father know who to take with him into eternal life.

GIRL: So, your Father chooses to test us by suffering? He cannot find another way?

JESUS CHRIST: You cannot understand my Father's motives, my stupid child. His ways are mysterious to such as you.

GIRL: But there's no mystery. I am unhappy, and I've seen people today so unhappy that they didn't even know it, frightened and lonely people; what have they done that they should be so punished?

(Dark clouds are banking up very rapidly behind the cross. The girl puts one hand on her hip, and points at Jesus in a very melodramatic manner.)

So I judge your Father, and I find him guilty. I pronounce your Father evil! He knows the universe, you claim, the secrets of eternity, yet he cannot understand the sadness in a young girl's heart!

It has become very dark. Jesus Christ suddenly convulses and vomits, fluid pouring down the front of his body. He begins to twitch on the cross, the muscles knotting and relaxing. His convulsions make him hic-cough violently for a long time. Dark clouds are now filling the sky, but the girl can still be seen, pointing at the tortured hanging figure. A flash of lightning suddenly strikes the cross with an enormous explosion.

The cross rips like a curtain, and in the flash pieces of wood can be seen flying everywhere. Smoke rises faintly in the air. It darkens rapidly. Now nothing can be seen but the faint whiteness of the girl's dress, and the rain which is now falling from heaven.

The Enchanted Flower-field

IT IS SUNNY, and on the sound track the calls of hundreds of birds can be heard. In front of the camera is a moving mass of colours. This is the flower-field. Gigantic blossoms are spread in profusion to the horizon. The girl enters the frame from the side, and stands for a moment looking at the flowers. Their blossoms are composed of large fleshy petals, red, white, mauve, purple, orange, sky-blue, bright yellow, every conceivable colour lifted to the sun in folds of scented flesh. The flower-field is like a thick musky carpet, and the girl takes a deep breath, as if the air is heady with the perfumes of the flowers. Round about the bases of these enormous blossoms, green leaves are intertwined, and large bees are bumbling about from flower to flower.

The girl steps forward, into the field, an expression of happy wonderment on her face. She looks at the moment like a child, but the colours of the flowers have changed her face into a thing of radiance. The reds and yellows are reflected in the surface of her skin, and her face is now the face of a Madonna. At once she is waist-deep in the flowers. It is as if they strain to meet her. She puts out her hand, and touches the blooms, and they respond to her touch, the large flat petals stiffening, opening the cups of their flowers to her hand. She smiles happily, and begins to sink down among the flowers. The sensual blooms sway towards her and away, unimaginably beautiful. There is a humming in the air, like the humming of approaching unconsciousness. The girl disappears into the midst of the field, and now only the colours of the swaying flowers can be seen, forming bright shapes all over the screen.

But a sudden sense of unreality comes over the whole scene, and then, abruptly, the whole of the flower-field fades away. There is just left the girl, sitting on the sand of the desert. She looks about herself, terrified and unhappy. The picture becomes dimmer; this is the end of the film. But as the picture fades, we notice little green shoots appearing all over the ground, and we know that it will not be long before the flower-field is back, with all its radiant glory.

Fade out.

Polite applause.

much to drink for the pain, leaning against Mr. Perlou's dark suit and smiling at the sky where, even though it's raining, it's not dark yet.

They have just passed a shop with yellow flowers. Everyone is looking. Lib, looked at by a man selling yellow flowers and by two other men and by a lady across the street and by four young men and another lady. Going down the next block, right foot, right foot, right foot getting tired now. Sometimes he carries her over the puddles or lifts her over the curb. The clouds are pink, all the neon signs turned on by now and Mr. Perlou only stumbling a little and giggling, has become already more than a dark suit and a round face, though he wears a dark suit and has a round face.

Right footing, right footing, Lib thinks this is an experience to be remembered but has forgotten the number of her new apartment, tries her key in doors along the way. She is wondering what he is giggling about unless, she thinks, he has had too much to drink as she has. Then I understand him very well and, with heart beat in toe or toes, there is this wonderful rhythm to everything we do and a faint smell of beer. No wonder he's gay, and, in spite of what Mother says, does anyone still care where home is, does anyone care when it's almost always twilight and Jack has gone and there is a child waiting upstairs? Still, try the key in the door and it finally fits. Stairs look steeper than usual. Mr. Perlou wipes his forehead with a blue-rimmed handkerchief and then blows his nose on it. Now they must go up. "In a wife I would desire what in whores is always found," he quotes. She wonders, is he laughing at her?

Now they must go up, and she, thinking, is he laughing at me? Wondering does he know more than just this much so far? Has it been, perhaps, on purpose from the start? Chair on her toe? Rain? Man selling yellow flowers? Or is *she* the one who is guilty of it? Guilty of having Jack go and guilty enough to have put her foot under his chair? and would do it again in order to reach, at last, this state of one sort of almost perfection, going upstairs, dizzy, in Mr. Perlou's arms, head hanging back and down? Toe up? Pain? Beat of blood and smell of beer, and perhaps the neighbours looking down on her from their landings or peeking out from their doors?

And now they must go up. First he holds her under her arm and one hand at her waist. Standing under the light, she thinks, I, the one-legged acrobat of the stairway, holding my skirt down with my left hand and grabbing Mr. Perlou by the lapel with my right hand, the light shining on the guilty and I may have done it all on purpose. Instead of another drink, I could have said: "Excuse me." But I, too, must be smiling. It's the first eight steps up and now the hand at my waist has moved to just under my breast and we step on step nine and I think how often I used to take them two or even three at a time, loping upstairs, loping downstairs,

so step nine, the beginning of my new view of the world, thinking: toe, toe or toes, and I have had an insight into the relationship of pain to life and pain to forward movement. I will remember this in my sleep sometimes, head hanging down, toes up, and when we have gone on farther, I will remember that on the first flight of stairs he had his hand on my waist.

Oh, even though it's daylight till after nine the lights are on in the hall and not a single light-bulb is burned out all the way upstairs. The wallpaper has yellow stripes and Lib looks out between the balusters from nine steps up thinking: Gregory, Gerard, Harold, Hilary, Ralph, but Mr. Perlou isn't Gregory and has only put his fingers down the neck of her dress once so far. The wallpaper, reminding her of her mother, also reminds her of this very night. Lib, remembering that she will remember this night and lights and Mr. Perlou, Lou, Lou. If you touch me, Lou, I will be the nipple under your finger, I, the leg against your knee, I, the tongue in your ear, thinking: As parrot to carrot, as motion to ocean, as position to fruition, so Lib to Mr. Perlou. Lib to Lou.

In the space between our faces one can put two fingers or one finger, but not three.

She thinks: I will say, "I was happy that day that Jack left and a chair crushed my middle toe or toes, and that morning I tried to write a poem," hoping for an insight and now she has an insight but no poem or perhaps a poem, but all one can hope for is one insight a day. She is thinking: But art is not long. History is long. Art is as short as life and for our time. She is thinking: What if Lib and Lou lived together on the top floor? Looking out the window? Waving to each other? Upstairs? Downstairs? Raincoats in hallways? And now, going upstairs almost as though it could have some meaning other than going upstairs, but not quite, and thinking: toe, toe or toes.

Now he lifts her by one breast and one knee. What if she were wearing an orange dress and a hat like a basket of flowers instead of these old things belonging to Jack? Sometimes unimportant things are important and already, from one or two toes, she has come to understand pain and its place in life, life like an earache as parrot to carrot, toes to heroes, as Lib to Lou and Lou to kangaroo.

They have passed a forest of balusters, a hundred yellow stripes and over forty steps, Lib, not daring to take off her shoe, not till the top, people looking out and down at them and some people looking up at them now, at Lib, the guilty acrobat of the stairway under the lights like daylight or brighter and not a single bulb burned out all the way to the top and his hand is on her breast. "On your way up, are you?" "Yes." "Bad weather, lately." "What will the weather be tomorrow, I wonder?"

Now the hand on her knee has moved to her thigh. "Tell me all your secrets, Mr. Perlou." And as see to secret, she tells him something intimate. "My mother

was a very beautiful woman, wearing an orange dress and a hat that I could never wear and so I have this sweatshirt that once belonged to a man named Jack, the little god of this staircase.” “Listen, Mr Perlou,” she says, “this is my secret,” and she blows into his ear. “You have quoted: ‘In a wife I would desire what in whores is always found’, well, I’ve tried, but no one has loved me and I’m still guilty of it. Not even . . .” thinks: Gregory, Gerard, Harold Hilary, Ralph.

And if we should go down instead of up? Down the banister, head back, rain hat flying off, the pain in toe or toes, maybe forgotten for a moment? and forgetting that a child waits upstairs? (Has it been left alone too long?)

At the fourth flight he lifts her by her breast and her crotch. Someone is practising the flute on this floor and the flute player has the door open and watches them over his music stand while he plays unaccompanied Baroque. Actually they have heard the music since her key turned in the door. From the first step they have gone up in time to his toe tapping.

“But DO you have a wife, Mr. Perlou?” she asks. “Do you already have a wife? One that fits your requirements as you have quoted from William Blake who also wrote about the little lamb?”

The flute player watches with disapproving eyes over his music stand as Mr. Perlou doesn’t answer her question. He looks as though he doesn’t believe her neck should be under Mr. Perlou’s chin, nor her skirt

up around her waist. She is wondering if everyone watching feels the same way.

What if they should go down? (But they continue to go up.) Everyone still out watching them under those lights as they go down (but they still go up). “Ah, going down again, we see.” “Yes, going down for a change.” “We see that even going down is difficult when someone has done something to their foot, though we don’t know what it is. Unless, Mr. Perlou, you should put her on the banister.” But still he could keep his grip on her breast and she, her shoulder under his chin. They could go down the banister like that together, with her head hanging back and his other hand still at her crotch, sailing down, coasting down, gathering speed and swinging their legs out at the corners, having time to giggle again and then, for a moment at least, she would forget the pain, thinking: Gregory, Gerard, Harold, Hilary, Ralph, the beat of blood, the smell of beer and perhaps the flute player would play faster and some of the lightbulbs might be burned out by then and what would there be to be guilty of, going down like big bugs making love as they fly? and singing: “Oh, sometimes it’s daylight till nine or later.” “Goodbye everybody.” Waving to them. Nothing but faces on the way down. Blurring out. “Goodbye.” Get out the orange Kleenex. Wave. Oh, we are fed up, too. “Bye, bye, bye, bye.”

But still they go up.

And the child is waiting, listening to them come.

DAVID LUNDE: THE INTERROGATION

Place the man
in the chair, direct
the light at his vision, ask
the question.

The man stiff in the hard chair,
sweat on his face like pearls.
Now in the white light
he sees nothing; now the light
is his reality; now
you will sweat it out of him.

The words come slow, broken
like fingernails. The light
projects their shadows on the air.
Slowly the air gets darker, slowly
you will break him into his vision.

Outside the megaphone of light
you sit like a shadow
mouthing the question. The words
pour from him; the shadows
draw substance from his harsh sweat,
they stand beside you
claiming acquaintance. The man
escapes into his truth, his lies:
is that truth, is that
not truth. The darkness
pours from us.

You retreat from the chair,
from the voice of the question,
you become the black angels of his vision.
Your light like a dwarf sun
dies: you are the smallest of his lies.

David Lunde

BUG JACK BARRON

PART 3-BY
NORMAN
SPINRAD

JACK BARRON—founder member of the radical Social Justice Coalition which is now about as strong as the super-reactionary Republican Party. But Barron has sold out the SJC, now panders controversy on a powerful TV show, “Bug Jack Barron”, where individual’s grievances are given a coast-to-coast airing. The show appears fearless, knocking the establishment hard, but it really never goes far enough to rock the boat. Barron knows it, is careful. He’s estranged from his hippie wife **SARA WESTERFIELD** who hates to hear his name mentioned, loves and remembers the idealist he once was.

BENEDICT HOWARDS is a man of even greater power than Barron. He owns the Foundation for Human Immortality: leave the Foundation \$50,000, and on death you’re frozen and stored, to be resuscitated only when the secret of immortality has been discovered. That moment may be fast approaching. Howard is given a treatment. Maybe Howards has forever.

On the day of Howards’ greatest triumph, Barron comes up against the Foundation. A Negro claims (wrongly, as Barron is aware) that the Foundation practices colour prejudice. On the show Barron tries to contact Howards, but Howards has no intention of being disturbed and Barron, angry, hits harder than he would have done normally, bringing in people he knows hate Howards, like his old friend and co-founder of the SJC **LUKAS GREENE**, now the Negro Governor of Mississippi.

Barron tries to put things right for himself with Howards and contacts Senator **TEDDY HENNERING**, co-sponsor of the Freezer Utility Bill, which would grant Howards’ Foundation a Freezing monopoly. To even the balance, Barron gives Hennering a chance to speak

at length on the show, but Hennering appears strangely agitated and inexplicably throws away the chance. Barron is disconcerted, realises he has made an unwanted enemy in Howards—an enemy he can’t afford to have. Little more than a year to go till the Democratic Convention. President Bobby had his run. Will Teddy the Pretender get the nomination? Howards has his own plans—great big plans he won’t let Barron scotch.

Howards comes to Barron’s office the day after the show. He threatens, cajoles—and finally offers a free Freeze contract if Barron will promote the Freeze Bill on his show. Barron knows there’s more here than shows, that Howards is bringing out the big guns too soon, that he’s running scared. And at last Howards tells him: Hennering has just died in an air crash! Howards has lost his front man. Now Teddy the Pretender has the Presidency in his pocket, but Howards thinks Barron can swing it back to his side.

Barron asks for a week to think it over. He calls and arranges to give Howard a taste of fire on his next show, so he’ll back off. Together, Barron and his producer plan a deathbed scene: old man dying on the screen, surrounded by his family, they’re all begging for a free Freeze. Then they put Bennie Howards on and let him try to answer *that*.

Meanwhile, Howards is working at his own plans. Barron is “the last piece in a pattern of power”. How can he force the piece into place? He learns of Barron’s estrangement from Sara Westerfield and suddenly *all* the pieces fall into a pattern. He has Sara brought to him; he confronts her with the images of her eventual death, knowing she only needs half an excuse to go

running back to Barron. Then he offers Sara a Freeze contract if she'll get Barron into bed with her. A simple deal: the minute Barron signs, she gets a contract of her own.

But Sara realises now what will happen. It will be her and Jack together again, forever. She'll give Barron to Bennie Howards, but it will be *her* Barron—turned-on, angry, love-filled, ready to fight again. The *old* Jack Barron . . . an apocalyptic angel to destroy Howards and all he stands for.

She looks up at Howards and wonders: how much does he know? What kind of man would try to turn love into a weapon of paranoid power?

CHAPTER SIX

"MARRY ME, CARRIE BABY," Jack Barron said in the warm, naked afterglow of all night long, as the morning sun through the bubble-skylight of the bedroom on the plastigrass greenery ivy-covered bedstead rubberplant patio off-pink flesh of Carrie Donaldson wrote an Adam and Eve scenario for the penthouse bedroom set.

Carrie Donaldson muttered unintelligible sarcasm into the pillow beside him. She always wakes up hard, Barron thought, can't stand a woman does the whole bleary, bruised, wilted-orchid schtick morning after; Sara used to wake up on the bounce, on *me*, all over, bang-bang, wake me up, not vice-versa. You asked for it, Miss Donaldson, keep on eye-body-lock-on-kook-Jack-Barron-network orders smart-ass chick.

He reached behind, fumbling through reptile-warm bedstead ivy, flipped a switch on the control console, waited for reaction as the glass wall-door to the patio slid aside, and a naked May morning twenty-third floor breeze rippled plastigrass tingled his toes goosefleshed the trim uncovered ass of Carrie Donaldson; she squealed, reflex-fetaled against him, looked up from the pillow hard-awake, said: "Fuck you, you goddamned sadist, I'm freezing!"

Barron turned a rheostat on the console to an intermediate position; electric heating coils built into the mattress began to send warmth up through their bodies, blood-temperature bed in crisp outdoor breezes, said: "I hope you don't mean that literally, that was quite a night, and I don't feel up to it. Let me catch my breath, anyway."

"About as serious as your proposal," she said, rolling over on her back away from him, small breasts foreshortened mounds bellyskin drumtight from protruding ribcage, juncture of long muscular legs still suffused with nitty-gritty redness, Barron noted with masculine me-Tarzan satisfaction. "I think I know how Benedict Howards must feel."

Barron arched an interrogative eyebrow.

"Thoroughly screwed," Carrie Donaldson said with punch-line deadpan flash-smile timing.

Barron uttered a short pro forma laugh. Good old Carrie, he thought, favourite all-business no-bullshit network watchdog All-American lay. He stared at her tight cool face, hard-edged, composed even under rat's nest morning-after long black hair, wondered what went on in that network-flunky head of hers. Too good a fuck to fake it, he thought, but where's the connection between her cunt and her head at, anyway? What's she really getting off me? No better balling than she'd get from anyone else could keep up with her one for one, he knew realistically, and all the emotion of an anaconda. Head filled with open-secret network orders, box with plenty of heat for anyone can cut it, and no gut-connection at all between. Just once, Miss Carrie Donaldson, I'd like to *really* fuck you, fuck with that so-called mind of yours, that is. But how do you mind-fuck network-programmed electric circuitry computer with sexy long black hair?

You bug me, Carrie, he thought, ball you week after week, lots of body action and nothing going on with your head at all. Network calculation *that* fine? Powers that be aware good old Jack Barron digs perpetual cool-head challenge without gut-involvement, stasis spice of sex-life? Or too much smarts for network big-wig monkeys?

"What's going on in that furry head of yours?" Carrie said, flicking at hairs dribbling around his ears with fingers cool against his earshells.

"Now *there's* a turnaround question if ever I—" Barron said, was interrupted by the chime of the bedroom vidphone extension. He twisted over on his back on one elbow to face the control console, punched the hold button, transferred the call to the living room complex, remote-activated the gas jets of the living room firepit, jumped out of bed, walked bare-ass into the living room, noted with wry amusement that Carrie, alerted to possible business function of call by network head-programming, was trailing, just as mother-naked, a few steps behind him.

Barron went to the wall complex, took the standard vidphone out of its niche next to the automatic vidphone recorder, sprawled on the deep-pile red carpeting, positioned the vidphone camera to show only his face, made the connection, impulsively turned on the recorder, and said, "Jack Barron here" as Carrie squatted down to his left, judiciously out of range of the vidphone camera.

BARRON STARTED AS THE vidphone screen showed the egg-bald skull, broad neo-slavic face of Gregory Morris, Republican fluke (squeaking in between powerful SJC and Democratic candidates), Governor of California, de facto head of the semi-vestigial Republican Party, saw that Carrie recognised Morris—cool secretary eyes a shade wider—recovered his cool as he added up the points Morris had just made for him with Carrie.

"Good morning, Mr. Barron," Morris said—confident voice of power, fake power, thought Barron,

without a hell of a lot to back it up. "And congratulations."

What the hell's this? Barron thought, sneaking a glance at Carrie, eyes ever wider, wet lips open, digging bossman spoiled-brat network-charge lover flapping jaws with real live Governor in the altogether, knowing that whatever the fuck Morris wanted, what he meant to Jack Barron was a way to play with Carrie's head at last, knowing just how and for what he would play this call, with Brackett Audience Count of exactly one, namely Carrie Donaldson.

"Congratulations for what, *Morris*?" he said, flunky-accenting the name, and yes, now Carrie's eyes were strictly eating him up.

"For your last show," Morris said. "A first-rate hatchet-job. You must've cost Howards' Freezer bill five votes in the Senate, maybe a dozen in the House. You're about to make history, Mr. Barron. That show impressed a lot of people, important people. You know that the Republican Party opposes the Utility Bill because it would stifle free enterprise in the—"

"*Horseshit!*" Barron said, digging effect of word on notorious prude Morris, effect of effect on Carrie as Morris pretended the breach of fartsy gentleman etiquette hadn't happened. "You oppose the Freezer Bill because there's big Foundation money behind various Democrats and you know you're permanently off Howard's gravy train, and you'd love to sell out too except Howards ain't buying. It's a little early in the day for mickey mousing, Morris. What's on your mind?"

"Very well, Mr. Barron," Morris said, seeming to swallow enormous distaste according to some pre-arranged plan. "I'll come right to the point. How would you like to be President of the United States?"

Barron froze around a smart-ass wisecrack reply that wouldn't take form behind his eyes, froze in déjà vu Berkeley attic other girl seated on other floor big eyes honey-blonde hair digging him watching Luke Greene, Woody Kaplan, Markowitz, the girl with the pigtail dark roomful of other eyes glowing, looking at him—birthplace of the Social Justice Coalition now controlled two Southern states twenty-eight Congressmen, pivotal must-buy force in New York, every Southern state, Illinois, California. Full circle from Baby Bolshevik messiah dreaming of power in Berkeley attic Sara worshipfully staring to leader of screwball third party to Jack Barron plugged into electronic circuitry hundred million Americans to listening to pathetic relic of '60s gibber impossible desperation-dreams of returning expiring (now kook third party itself) GOP to power.

"Do I get to choose Luke Green for my running mate?" Barron shot back a matching improbability.

"Conceivably," said Morris — Barron's turn to be jarred again at incomprehensible answer; the SJC and the Republicans were at opposite extremes of *everything* except for a mutual loathing for the monolithic, centre-dominating Democratic one party government

Party. Morris must really be round the bend, or. . . Or *what?*

Barron clocked Carrie, now totally absorbed in the dialogue he saw she saw as jockeying between two men of power, not private, for-her-benefit-only performance of *Bug Jack Barron*—at last a scene to swallow up network programming in that head of hers, blow secretary-network-watchdog cool. At least *Carrie's* buying Morris' load of bull, hook, line and sinker.

"Okay, Morris," Barron said, "so you've got a pitch to make; go ahead and make it."

"It's simple, Barron," Morris said (Barron could sense him shifting into set-spiel pattern), "the Republican Party has elected only *one* man President in the last 55 years, and we've *got* to win in '88 to continue to be taken seriously. And we can't afford to be choosy as to how. The only way we can conceivably win the election is as part of a coalition with the SJC behind a common Presidential candidate and on an over-riding common issue. The only common ground we have with the Social Justice Coalition is opposition to the Freezer Utility Bill—they want Public Freezing and we want competitive private Freezing, but we can both agree on opposing the Democratic position, which amounts to the Foundation position. The only man we can nominate who could also get the SJC nomination is you. You're a founder of the SJC, you've just knifed Benedict Howards, you're a close friend of Luke Greene . . . and you've got *Bug Jack Barron*. A hundred million people will see you every week from now till Election Day in '88. We can do with you what we did with Reagan, and do it in spades using the programme, and by the time you're nominated, you'll already have a bigger following than any Kennedy; we had someone like you in 1960, there wouldn't *be* any Kennedys. I'm dead serious, Barron. Play our game and we'll make you President of the United States."

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES—the words made weird acid music ("Hail to the Chief" with electric guitar beat, natch) even coming from a pathetic lunatic. Barron was vastly amused at the reflex-response in his own gut, recalling aural memories of the Inauguration of Bobby, more amused, pleased at pole-axed Carrie Donaldson staring at him, eyes as bright with little-girl wonder as Sara's had ever been in Berkeley days, didn't know you were balling the next President of the United States, eh baby? Jesus H. Christ on a Harley-Davidson!

Barron leaned back accidentally on purpose, kicked the vidphone tilting it sideways and up giving Morris a nice shot of Carrie's boobs, fumbled it enough, smiling, to show Morris he was speaking totally bare-ass Jack Barron, watched Morris blanch.

"Come on, man," Barron said, scratching his balls ostentatiously, "even the next President's gotta get laid once in a while." Let's just see how much crap this stuff-shirt fruitcake will really take.

Continued on page 42



**FUN PALACE
-NOT A
FREAKOUT
BY CHARLES
PLATT**



To satisfy their far-
 desires, these full-bodied
 super-passionate females
 deliberately seek perilous
 settings for their bedroom
 action, whether it's se-
 ducing the delivery boy
 while their husband is
 asleep in the next room or
 making love on a careening
 obsled. Why do they do it?
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 do they get from their
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 onally-known medical spe-
 alist now gives the shock-
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 Terrifying Toronado turned a casual 173 and John

is looking for a 200-rille mark when all the bugs
 have been eliminated. Front engine powers through
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 clutch which is engaged when the car leaves the
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OF INFINITY HE COMES,
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THE BLOCK-BUSTING
POWERS OF
**THE
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FLY TRAP**

OVER STIMULATION: You can see it in kids' comics. American cars. James Bond type movies and sadistic mens' magazines. Everywhere the ingredients are being intensified to the limit -- uglier monsters from outer space, whole galaxies annihilated, bigger breasts and tortures more sickening than ever before. All because the audience will go for anything that's wilder, sexier or more mind-blowing. Why this quest for raw stimulation? Why the obsession with quantity and intensity of experience?

2



For spine-tingling action try Comet's new Cyclone GT. Its new 390 4-barrel V delivers the kind of go that can shove you right back in your bucket seat. Whatever you want—action cars with 3-speed or 4-speed manual transmissions

attention to itself with its all-new tempting interior beauty. Meanwhile into one of those posh bucket seats . . . and you are on your way. It's "Goodby, boredom." Ho



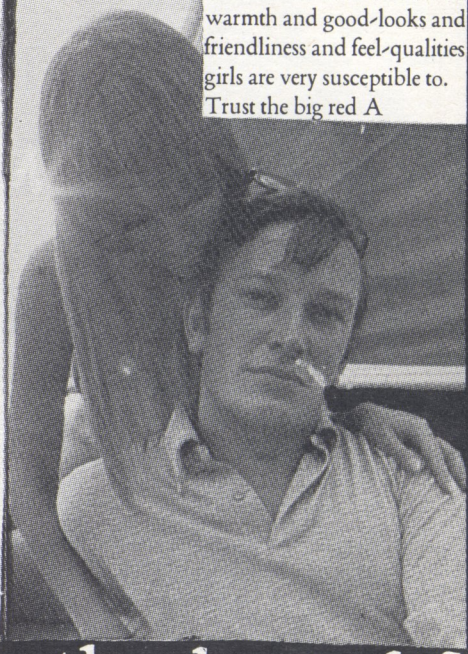
The subtle throb of power, sparkling embellishments on style, luxury in custom interiors, these are all a part of Electra 225, the ultimate in convertibles. Now, slide into foam-padded comfort. Peel back the top and feel the freedom of the great outside. Touch the array of controls to answer every command. Start it. Drive it. Now you know real roadability... true handling ease. Now you know how it feels to ride under the sun and stars, secure in the knowledge that the 360-hp engine and Super-Turbine transmission will respond to your needs, instantly. This is integrity in a fine automobile. This is cushioned comfort. This is romance on wheels... convertible living set to music. This is Electra 225. Wildcat... Serenade to people on their way. Wildcat pulses with response and agility on the road in any model. But, put a convertible top on it and you've got light-hearted living with flair. The style and sweeping lines seem to put it in motion even at rest. It's a car for people on the move... for people going places. Take to the road and feel the tickle of 360-hp touch your toes. Catch the evening breeze at the flick of your finger and open the cabin to the star-studded blackness of soft summer nights. Feel the positive control and handling ease as you sweep into a curve on the highway. Sense the soft envelopment of padded cushions, spacious roominess and finger-tip convenience. It's all a part of Wildcat, tuned to perfection... the going-places machine.

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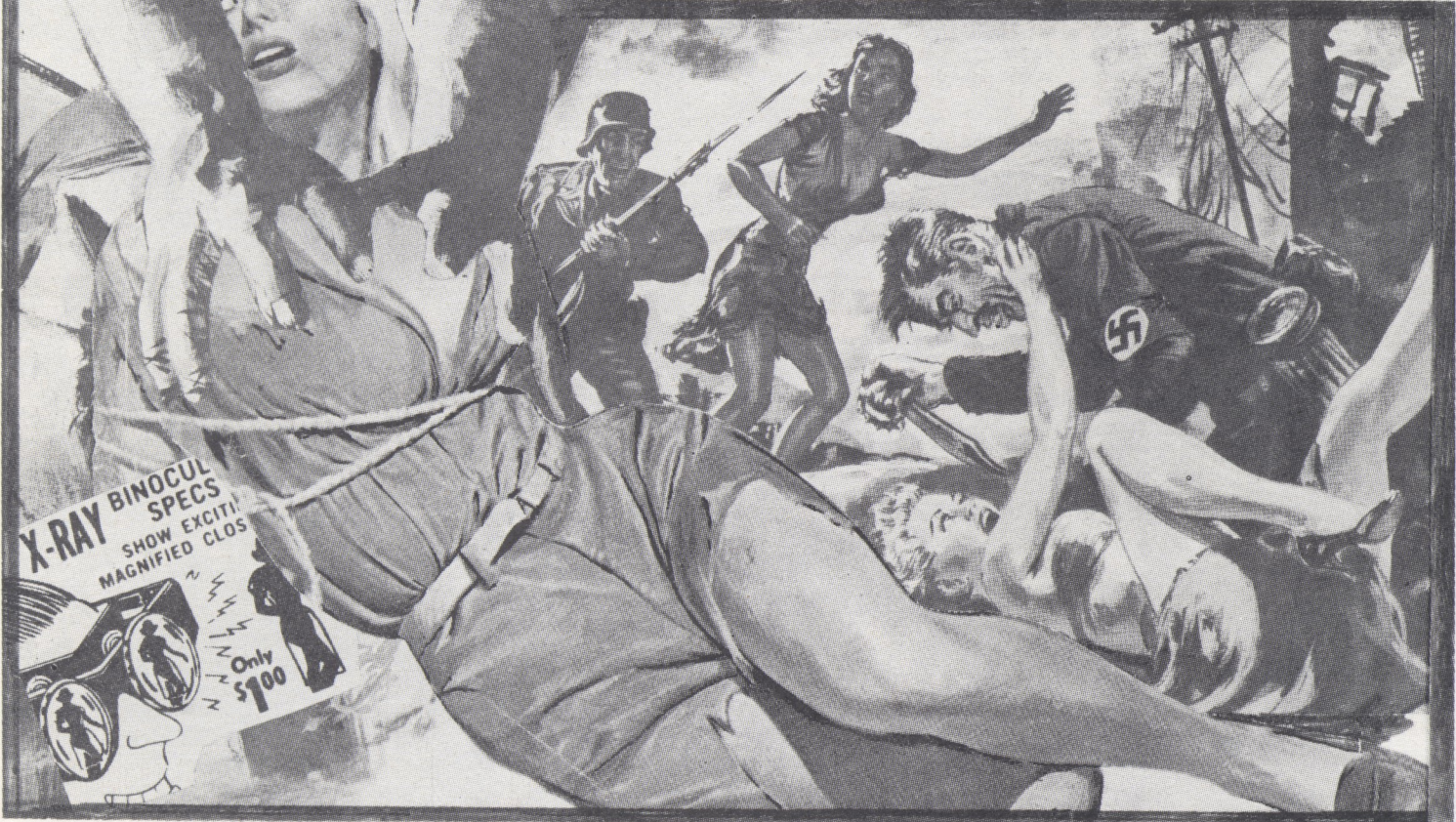
The influence of advertising on our values is well known. Basically sexual, the accent is usually on the offer or reward that will enrich your life when you use the product. A generalisation emerges: the answer to your personal problems is in your environment. What you do and what you buy can achieve satisfaction, achieve status, self esteem and peace of mind. Of course, we really know the ad messages are too trite, and consumer goods isn't the real answer to anything. But it's still easy to end up following the philosophy. And wondering why we still have problems.

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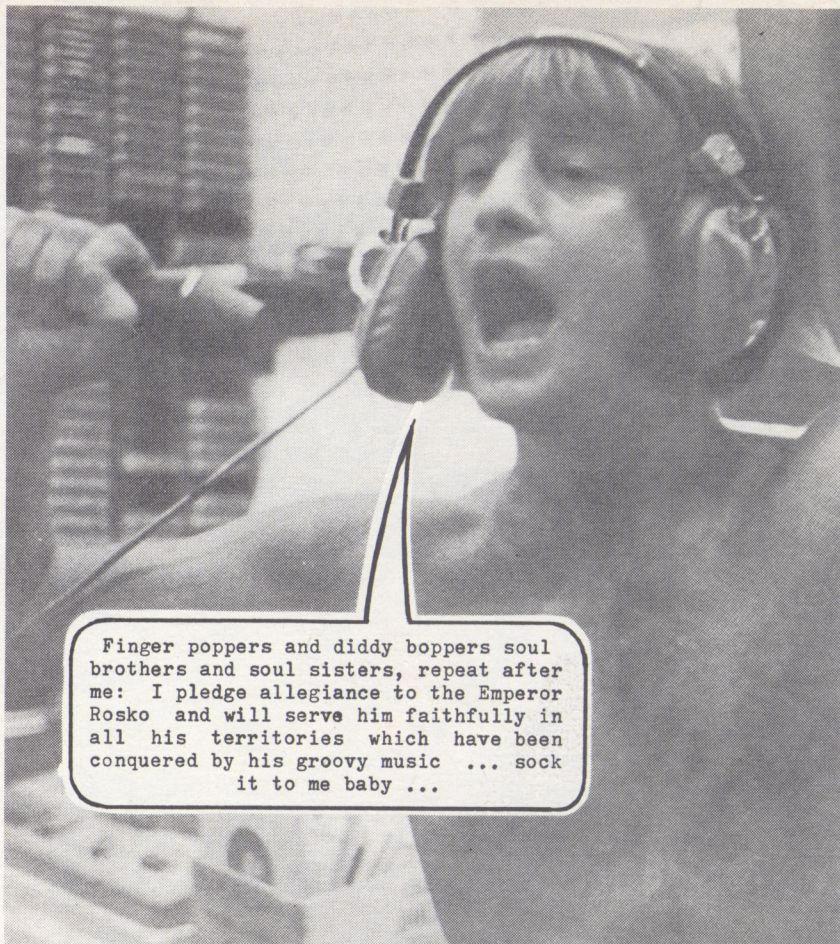
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CHOOSE YOUR GURU: Too many people are picking up the habit of looking for answers in the environment. Drugs were recently an 'in' way of discovering God, serenity, the meaning of life, the Answer. Meditation took over from LSD when the Beatles, epitomising dissatisfaction with material wealth, found the Maharishi. But even meditation loses its novelty, suffers from over-exposure and becomes unfashionable. Mc Luhan is no help; his brash, trendy philosophy to guide man through the technological jungle will date as quickly as a pop song. One might as well follow disc jockeys like Emperor Rosko who use keep-happy in-chat and beat music with instant emotional appeal to make you forget you had any problems in the first place. Of the current lineup of gurus, disc jockeys have the most subtle and lasting appeal.



Finger poppers and diddy boppers soul brothers and soul sisters, repeat after me: I pledge allegiance to the Emperor Rosko and will serve him faithfully in all his territories which have been conquered by his groovy music ... sock it to me baby ...

3

I accelerate evolution by transcendental meditation ... if one tenth of the adult population of the world continues to meditate in every generation, the world will be free from wars ... I think ladies meditate comparatively more successfully because the quality of heart is more developed in the ladies than in the men, and therefore the waves of joy are more aroused



The medium, or process, of our time -- electric technology -- is reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life. It is forcing us to reconsider and re-evaluate practically every thought, every action, and every institution formerly taken for granted. Everything is changing...

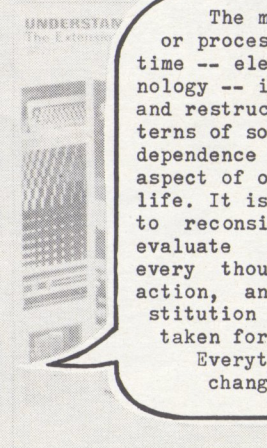
WHO IS MARSHALL MCLUHAN



He looks like this.



He reads like this.



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HAPPENING

MEMBERS CLUB

44 GERRARD ST. W.1

TUNE IN DROP

COME

LIFE TO

BE

THE PROCESS GRESS RSE

... you know the Gods had returned?
... you bored?
... could you like to live a life of maximum
... your job give you a pain in the neck
... you sick of conforming?
... in limbo?
... could you like to spend half your life in heaven and half in hell,
... have you the courage to fight against mass mediocrity?
... are you tired of being a pawn of the Grey Forces?



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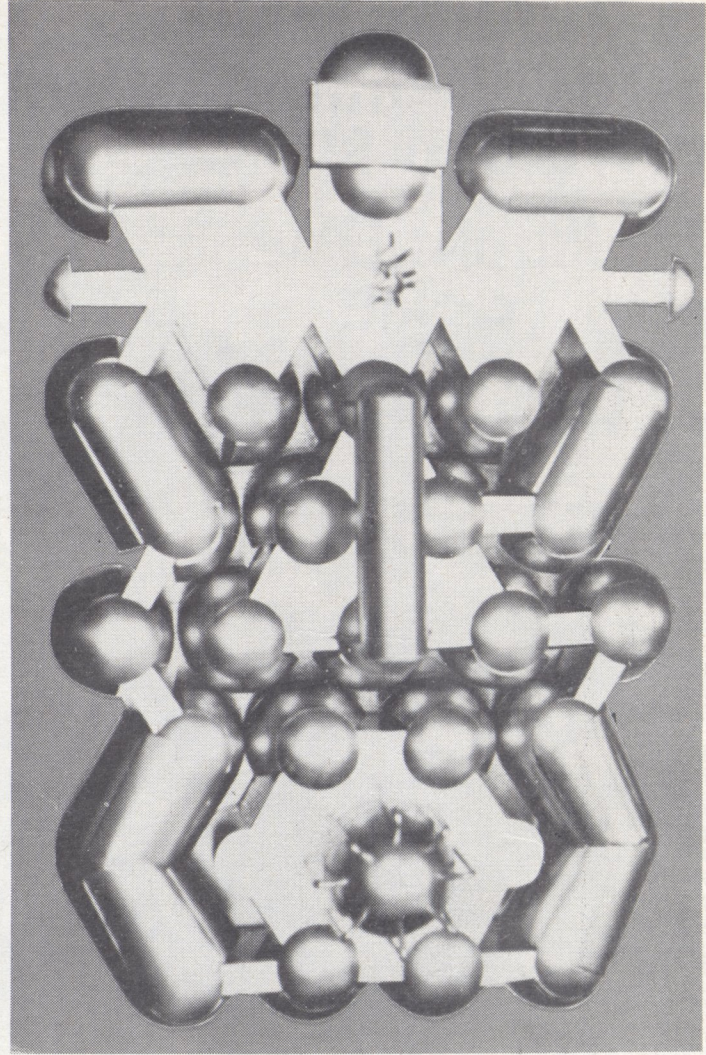
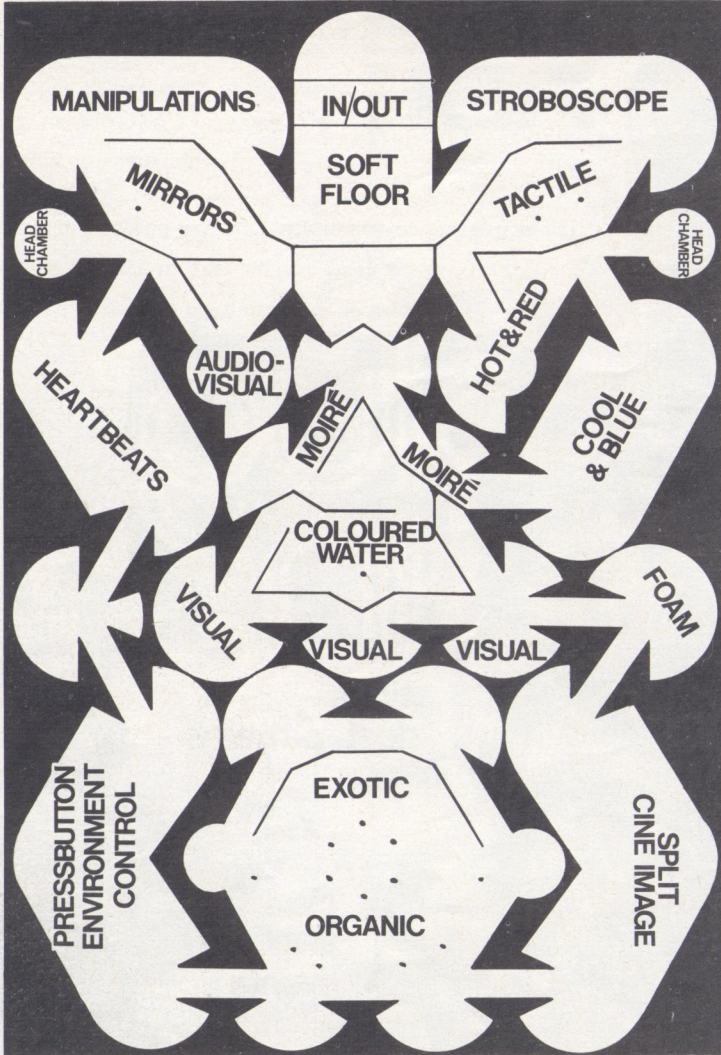
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4

DROPOUT MEDIOCRITY: Hippies renounced materialism but despite themselves retained its attitude that bigger-is-better, new-outdates-old. Get a kick from Beardley? Then copy him, even more grotesquely. Colours are mind-blowing, so make them brighter. If it doesn't work any more then try something stronger -- if 1000 watt guitar feedback doesn't make them freak out, add stroboscopes, colour slides, bright lights. The appeal of hippie music and art is inevitably transitory, being trapped in the same bigger-better, new-improved rut. Lacking true talent or imagination, they can't hope to produce anything lasting, even if they wanted to. A new trend will always outdatelast month's rave. There's always a bigger freakout.



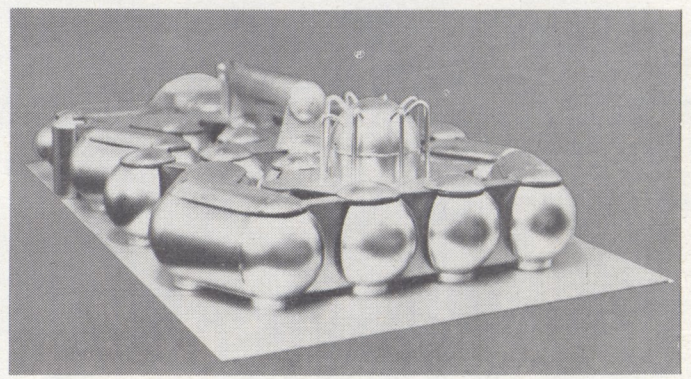
ULTIMATE FREAKOUT? The Keith Albarn fun palace is a fantasy environment. Wander through colours/odours/sounds/textures. Waterfalls of smoking foam gush out as you approach. Push-buttons control the colour/sound environment. There are tactile tunnels, op and strobe effects to sever your visual hold on reality. Get lost in it. The ultimate freakout? Hippie gimmick to add more stimulation to jaded senses?

Not quite. Keith Albarn, who heads the team that designed it, has serious aims and tries to stay clear of psychedelia. We interviewed him.

"When we first did an experiment 3½ years ago, before psychedelia hit London, the thing was considered strange but accepted on its own merits. We had no money for advertising but purely by people walking in off the street, telling their friends and so on, we had about 5000 people through it. And then psychedelia hit us. People saw in us the only material manifestation of the LSD angle. We became suddenly part of the underground, which is rather against what we're doing. I'm all for getting the underground overground. For our sort of activity to have any effect it must be to some extent integrated into existing society, although determined to alter it. Subversion works better if it's using the lines of power and communication that already exist."

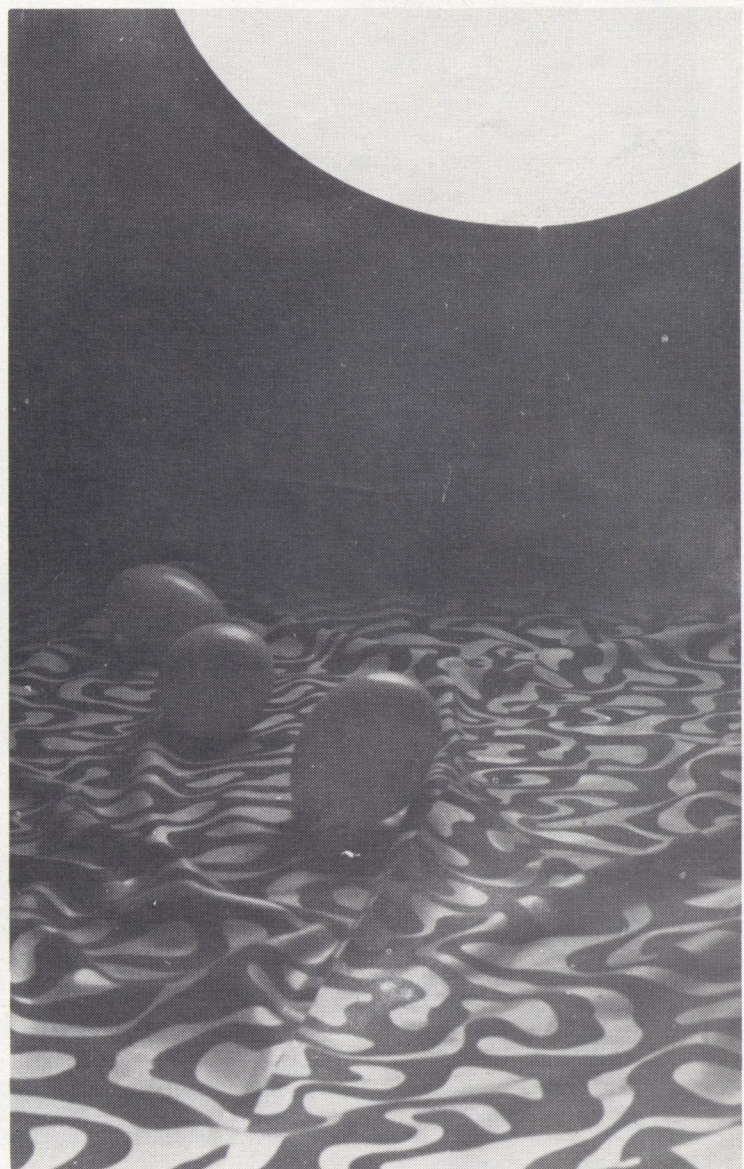
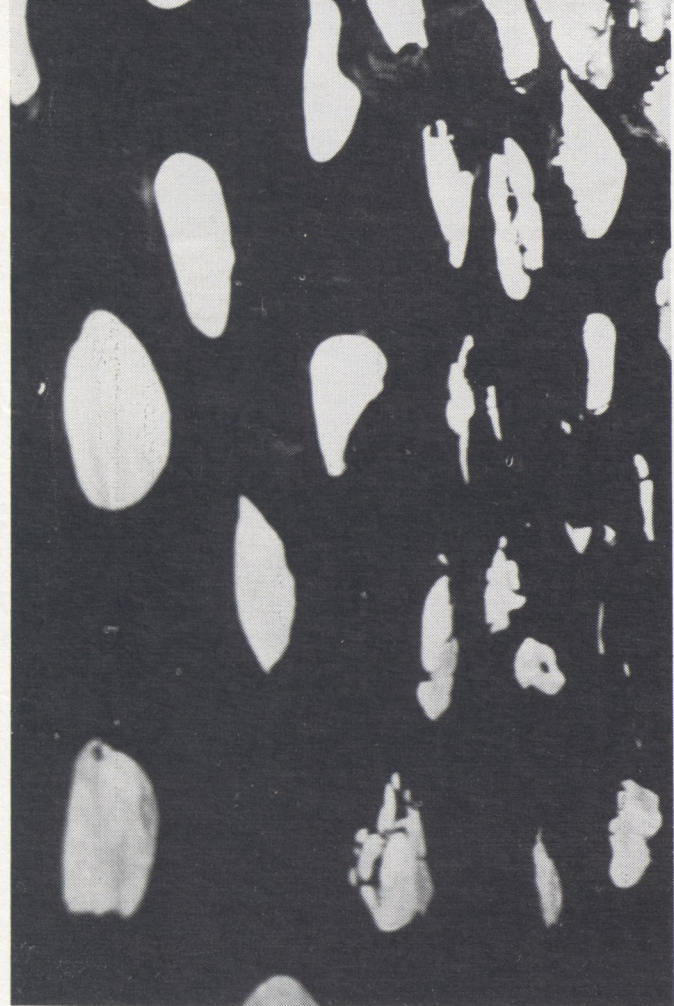
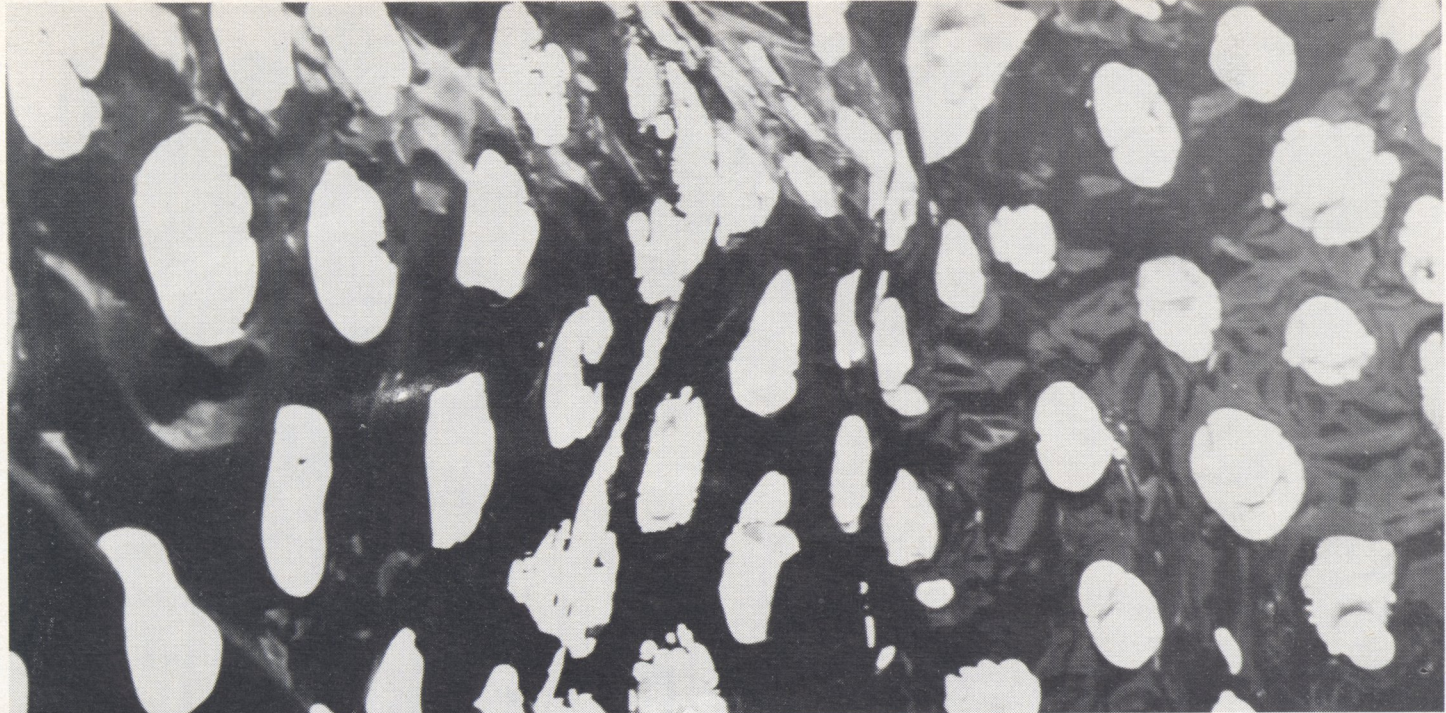
The newest Albarn fun palace opens in Margate this April. A model and floor plan of it are shown here, some visual effects opposite and overleaf. But what's the background to the scheme?

"All our activities are directed towards a more fluid relationship between man and environment. Creating an environment more responsive to man's actions -- machines, and so on. The other side to this is play; play as a social activity has ritual and pattern, and also the possibility of an open-

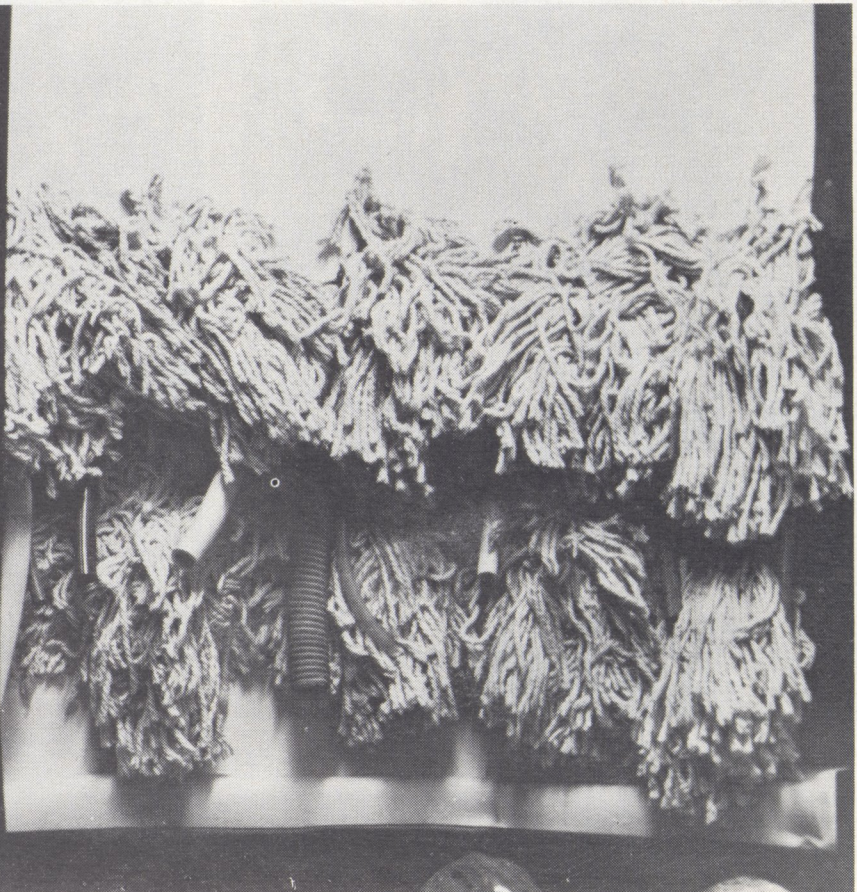
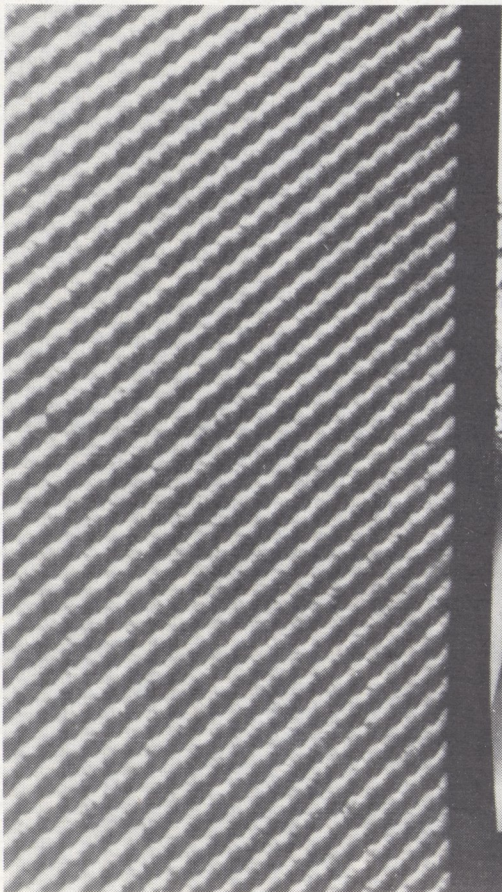
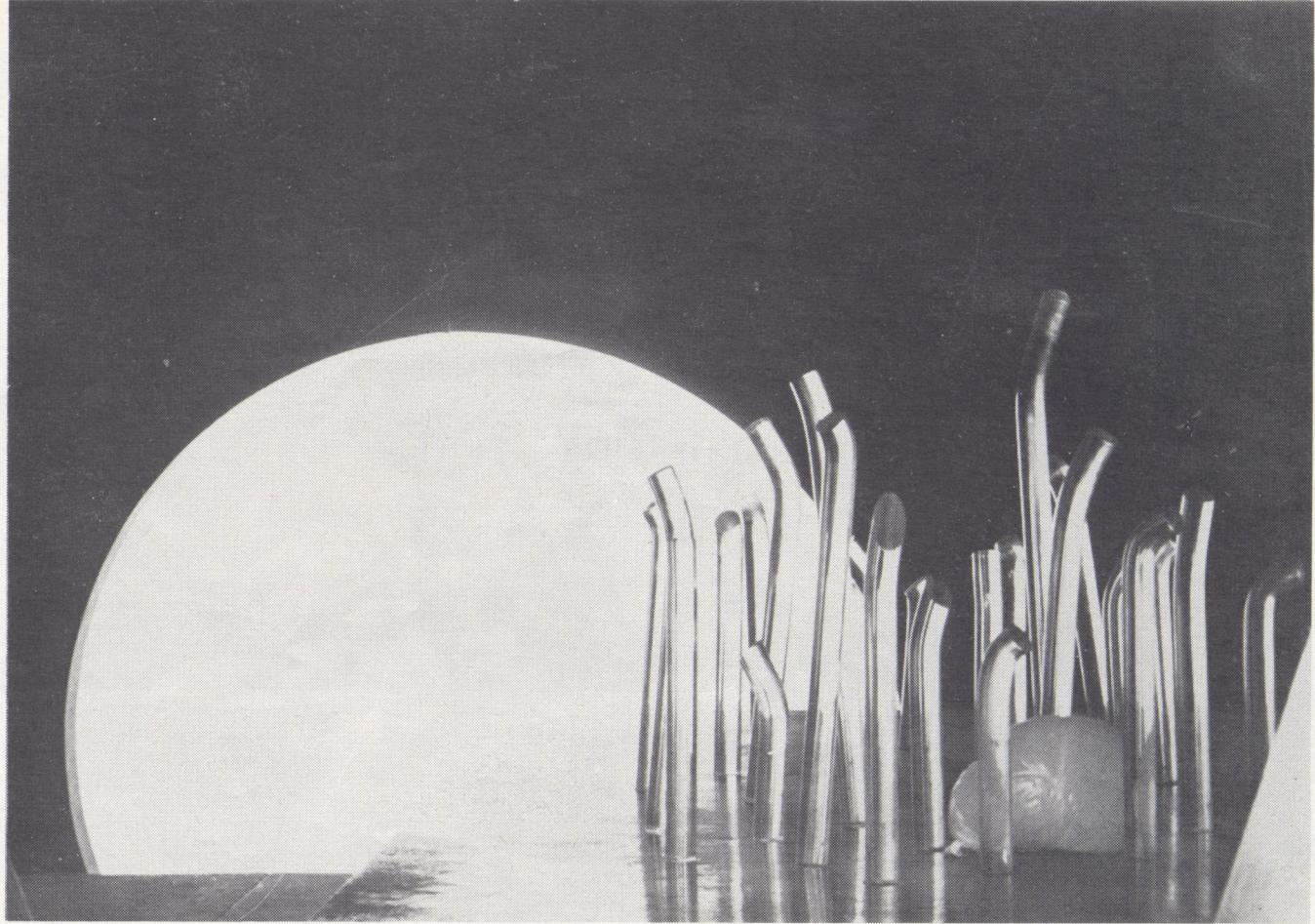


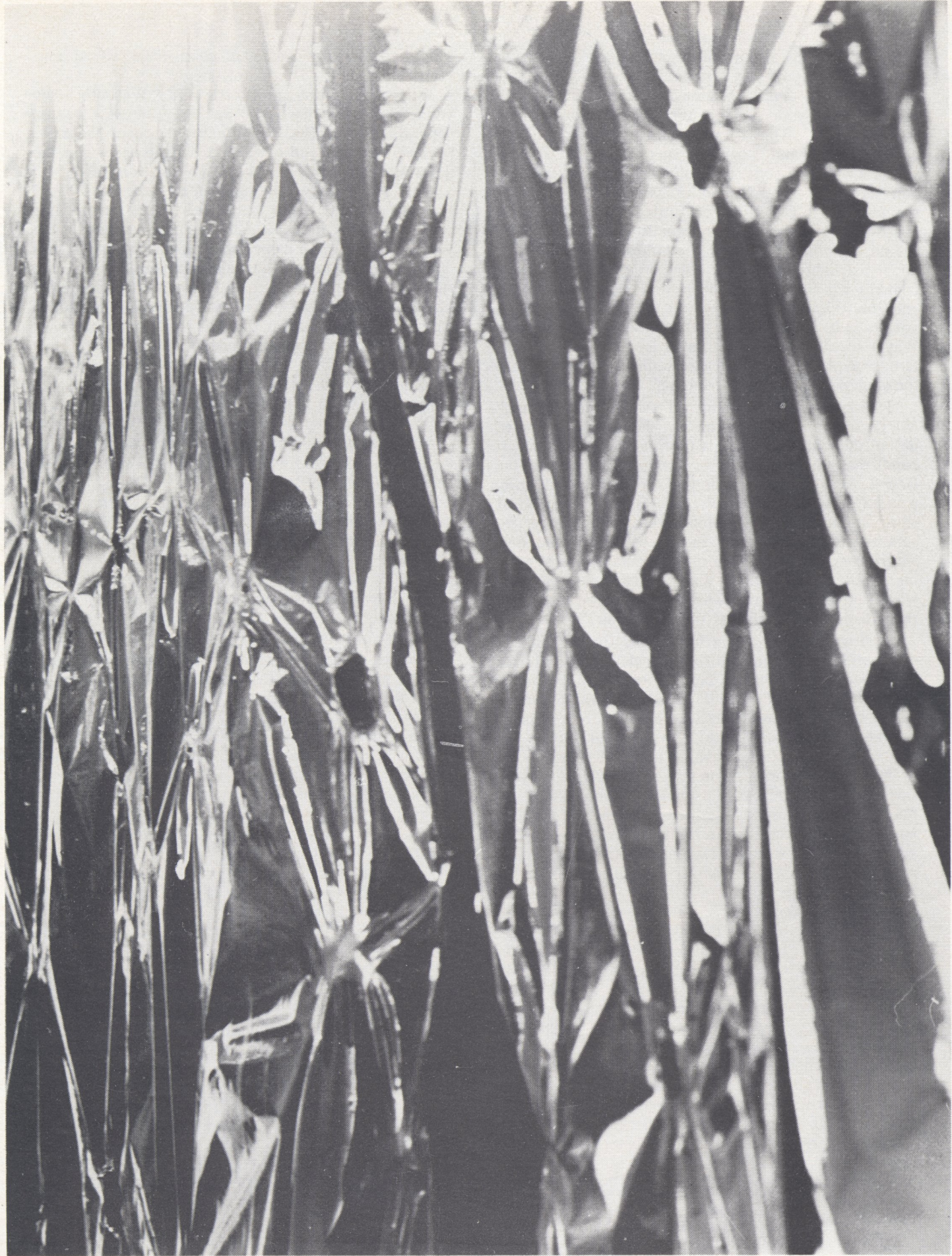
ended situation -- a degree of exploration. Our fun palace at Margate is obviously very play-orientated; it is after all going to be at a fairground. It's a sort of plug-in system that can be easily re-arranged: the lighting and effects are all responsive to the movements and noises the people make as they go through. Another scheme we're doing is very therapy-orientated, for autistic and handicapped children. It will be almost a small hospital. An autistic child can't communicate with fellow humans at all, he's totally isolated, and his only contact is very refined -- all his normal senses are channeled into one. Touch, for instance. The blockage may be eased by, say, placing him in a big, soft space or a hard-edged space. And then, somewhere in between therapy units and fun palaces, we're doing hardware for the home situation, the work situation, and so on."

Keith Albarn is a quietly-dressed, quiet-spoken man. In his ex-warehouse workshop near Holborn he is building environment hardware designed for stimulation, but not over-



stimulation, of the senses. It is an important difference; the fun-palace set-up isn't out to give a knock-out, dazzling, deafening, more-mindblowing freakout experience. The ideas and techniques aren't transitory and will be used to produce a healthy, aesthetically involved effect that is pleasurable but falls short of being devastating. Albarn sets a highly individual example that a lot of people could consider copying.





"Well," Morris said through miser-purse drawstring lips, "what do you say, Barron?"

"What do I say?" exclaimed Jack Barron. "I say you're out of your fucking mind, is all. For openers . . . *Openers?* This is all so loopy, there ain't no openers, gotta hand it to you, you're a nut, but at least you're a nut with style. First of all, I loathe everything you stand for. The Republican Party these days is nothing but a collection of Little Old Ladies from Pasadena, Rockwell-type screwballs and paranoid fat cat misers whose idea of a good President is someone about ten light-years to the right of Adolf Hitler. You couldn't win a Presidential election with Jesus Christ and John Fitzgerald Kennedy on the ticket. Why don't you crawl back under your wet rock where you belong? Way I see it, a Republican label is a dose of political tertiary syphilis. Do you get the impression I don't care for your party, Governor Morris?"

"I didn't think you were all that naïve, Barron," Morris said, and now Barron saw the naked, ugly, raw, no-bullshit nitty-gritty in his face, in his voice, remembered that fluke or not, this was the Governor of the largest state in the Union, that hopeless, kook, perpetual-loser party that it was, the GOP still had great gobs of industrialist Madison Avenue Wall Street insurance company banking money behind it, and now Morris was reminding him of it with face, voice, bearing. "You think we don't know exactly what you are, what you've been, and what you think of us? You really believe we're all that stupid, Barron?"

"And you're still trying to sell me the Republican nomination?" Barron said—sudden déjà vu of Morris' face becoming Howards' face Morris' deal becoming Howards' deal, intimations of wheels within wheels within wheels of power meshing, clashing, one invisible Frankenstein monster, with Howards and Morris but two visible aspects of the same unseen iceberg.

"Yes," said Morris, "but not because we like your smell. I loathe you easily as much as you loathe me, but we both know that when you reach the upper levels of power, there are times when you've got to set all that aside for strategic reasons. You're a marketable commodity, Barron, like a nice ripe cheese, an image behind which we can unite with the SJC to win the Presidency, the *only* image that can create a Republican-SJC fusion against the Democrats and Howards in '88. *Image*, Barron, image is what counts—like Eisenhower or Reagan or Bobby—not the man. We need your image, and *Bug Jack Barron* to sell it, and never mind what the real man behind the image is like—that doesn't win elections; all the voters ever see is the *image*."

For a hot moment, Jack Barron forgot Carrie, wide-eyed naked, power-adoring beside him, forgot economic sponsor-network squeezing power of GOP, forgot *Bug Jack Barron*, was back in Berkeley, L.A., red-hot Baby Bolshevik Sara beside him close to the blood innocent fury days.

"And if I accept, and if I'm elected?" he said coldly.

"Think I'd really make a good little Republican President?"

"That's our problem," Morris said. "We both know you're no politician, but neither was Eisenhower, neither was Reagan. You'll have plenty of the right advisors, men of substance and experience to run the government for you. You won't have to worry about—"

"I'm nobody's whore, and don't you forget it!" Barron shouted. "You don't sell Jack Barron like soap, then toss him aside like a used condom when you've got what you came for. You can take your goddamn nomination and shove it up your ass! You're right, I'm no politician, and if you want the reason, look in a mirror sometime if you've got a strong enough stomach. You're lower than a Mexican bordertown pimp; you'd have to stand on top of the Empire State Building to reach a cockroach's balls. You and your kind are vermin, lice, clots in the bloodstream of humanity. You're not fit to clean my toilet bowl. I'm an entertainer, not a whore. Value given for value received. You're the last of the dinosaurs, Morris, and it'll be a pleasure watching you sink screaming into the tarpits where you belong."

"Who the hell you think you are?" Morris practically snake-hissed. "You don't talk to *me* like that and get away with it! You play my game or I'll destroy you, lean on your sponsors, pressure the—"

Jack Barron laughed a harsh, false, tension-release laugh. Every schmuck in the country thinks he's got more going than poor old Jack Barron, he thought. Howards, Morris—matched pair of cretins.

"You're pathetic, you know that, Morris?" he said. "Know why? Because I've got this whole call on tape, that's why. Your fat face and your big mouth all ready to run on *Bug Jack Barron* any time I find you . . . shall we say, *tiresome*. You've taken your cock out in front of cameras and I can play it back to a hundred million people any time I want to. You're naked, Morris, bare-ass naked. I get a hint, even just a vibration that you're making waves in my direction, and, baby, I lower the boom. Go stick your tongue out at babies, Morris, you're wasting your time trying to scare me."

"Think it over," Morris said, suddenly forcing himself back into a tone of sweet pimp reason. "You're letting the chance of a lifetime go—"

"Ah, fuck off," Barron said, and broke the connection, shut off the recorder.

"**J**ACK . . ." CARRIE Donaldson sighed, throwing arms around his waist, wilting to her knees, lips sucking him in naked lap wish-fulfillment fantasy Carrie blowing him, her mind blown network orders blown cool blown going down on boss-man mindfucker, raped by simple *Bug Jack Barron* style vip putdown session—but now Barron saw it for the silly-ass goddamned inverted Sara-fantasy it was; Carrie-Sara turned on all the way by *Bug Jack Barron* scene, turned off the genuine article. Last thing I want now, he thought, pulling away from her, is to be blown by a wet-dream



ghost.

"Later, baby," he said, "that lox just turned me off." And on impulse (*Bug Jack Barron* subliminal walk-that-line balancing act impulse, he thought wryly even as he dialed) he dialed the unlisted home vidphone number of Lukas Greene.

Greene's angular black face bleered at him on the vidphone screen over a coffee cup, the master bedroom of th Governor's Mansion vaguely opulent in the background. "It's you, eh, Claude," Greene said, glancing at something off-screen. "Jack Barron—at *this* hour?"

"Come on, Lothar," Barron said, "you know I'm a

clean liver.”

“Percy,” Greene said, “I’ve seen cleaner livers smothered in onions in Harlem greasy-spoons. Speaking of which . . . where the hell’s my breakfast?” And almost immediately, a white-clad Negro flitted briefly across the screen carrying a breakfast tray, set it down on the bed, and disappeared silently into the woodwork.

“Beauregard,” Barron said grinning, “gotta hand it to you Southern gentleman types, really got them darkies trained right, don’t you?”

Greene nibbled a slice of bacon, dabbed at egg yolk with a roll, said: “You Commie nigger-loving Northern Liberal faggots is just jealous of Southern-style gracious living. We loves our darkies down here, we just *loves* ’em, and they loves us; any that don’t, why we just hang ’em from a sour apple tree. Hey, why you bug-ging an important man like me at this hour, shade? It ain’t Wednesday night, and we’re not on the air—*I hope.*”

“Guess who I just got a call from?” Barron said, clocking how Carrie was even more zonked out at the nitty-gritty race-humour between shade Jack Barron and the black Governor of Mississippi.

“The ghost of Dylan? Honest Ed? Teddy the Pretender?”

“Would you believe Daddy Warbucks?” said Jack Barron.

“Huh?”

“Greg Morris,” said Jack Barron. “Amounts to the same thing, doesn’t it? Would you believe you’re talking to the next President of the United States?”

Greene took a long drink of coffee. “A little early for you to be stoned, isn’t it?” he said seriously.

“Straight poop, Kingfish,” Barron said. “Morris offered me the Republican Presidential nomination.”

“Come on, man, stop putting me on and come to the punch-line already.”

“I’m not kidding,” Barron said. “It’s for real, Luke. The schmuck thinks I could get the SJC to nominate me too, put together a fusion ticket and we could all go out and zap Teddy the Pretender in ’88.”

“I still think you’re putting me on,” Greene said. “You a Republican and the SJC in bed with those Neanderthals? Either you’re putting me on, or the good Governor of California’s finally gone round the bend. How could the Republicans and the SJC possibly get together on *anything*?”

“Morris seems to think opposition to the Freezer Bill’s a big enough common issue to brush everything else under the rug,” Barron said. “The fusion ticket doesn’t run on any common platform, way he sees it, just runs against Bennie Howards. Loopy, eh, Rastus?”

Barron felt a long loud silence as Greene sipped coffee, eyes becoming cold, hard, calculating, saw Carrie, still looking at him hungrily, shift her eyes to stare at the vidphone image of Luke, smelt flesh-wood of Carrie, image-wood of Luke burning. Doesn’t anyone have a sense of humour left but me? he thought.

“This *is* for real, isn’t it, Jack?” Lukas Greene said quietly.

“For chrissakes, Luke—”

“Hold on, Vladimir,” Greene said. “I’m getting a flash. You. *Bug Jack Barron*. Republican bread—and they *are* still flush. You know, it could work. It just might work. Bennie Howards as bogeyman, we wouldn’t really have to run you against Teddy . . . yeah, we just *ignore* the Pretender, link the Democrats with the Foundation and we’ve got your show to do it with. A Social Justice President. . . .”

“Come on, man, what planet did you say you came from?” Barron said, the joke no longer funny, crazy Luke thinks he’s back in Berkeley wet-dream power-fantasy delusion of grandeur. “You can’t be that dumb. Morris just wants to use the SJC to elect a Republican President, and if he does, he’ll feed all you overgrown Baby Bolsheviks to the fishes. He just wants a fusion figurehead image to lurk behind, is all.”

“Sure,” said Greene, “but that figurehead is good old Jack Barron. Even Morris knows what a cop-out you are, so he thinks you’d be a tame flunky. But I know you better, Adolf. Comes nitty-gritty time, I think you’ll remember who you once were. I may be crazy, but I’d be willing to trust you that far. I think the National Council would too, after I got through working on their heads. You get that Republican nomination, I can get you the SJC nomination. Maybe I *am* talking to the next President. What did you tell Morris?”

“What do you think I told him?” Barron snapped. “I told him to go fuck himself. You gone round the bend too, Rastus?”

Greene frowned. “You and your big mouth,” he said. “Hmmm . . . Morris’s got to know where you’re at for openers, so maybe you haven’t gone and blown it. You got that call on tape?” Greene smiled knowingly. “Sure you have, Claude, I know how your head works. How about slipping me the audio?”

“Forget it, Luke,” Barron said. “This is your line of evil, not mine, not anymore. I’m not selling out to Morris or to you either. I sell out to anyone, it’s to —” Barron caught himself short—name he was about to say was Bennie Howards. Yeah, he thought, you sell out at all, risk blowing the show, you damn well do it for the big forever boodle, not a half-assed pipedream . . . Hey, wait. . . . All these silly-ass politicians can maybe give me an extra ace up my sleeve in poker game with Howards? Why not?

“**C**OME ON, MAN,” Greene cajoled. “Humour me. Blip me the call. You got your jollies out of it, let me get mine. Nothing else, maybe we can use it against whoever the Republicans *do* come up with. That doesn’t hurt you, does it, o noble hero Jack Barron? Might even boost your ratings.”

“Since you’re twisting my arm, I’ll blip it to you on one condition,” Barron said. “Unless I give you the go-ahead—and I won’t—you keep it strictly private. Just between you and me, okay?”

"Beggars can't be choosy," Greene said. "I'll set my recorder for the blip." He did something off camera. "Fire when ready, Gridley."

Barron took the tape reel off his recorder, placed it on the input spool of the blipper built into his wall complex, fed it into the blipper. "Ready on this end," he said.

"Blip away," said Lukas Greene.

Barron pressed the blip button; the blipper compressed the sound of the phone conversation into about forty seconds of high pitched chipmunk gabble over the vidphone circuit to Greene's recorder in Mississippi to be fed a de-blippering circuit, give Luke his Machiavellian eat-your-heart-out-baby jollies.

"Got it," Greene said. "Unless you have any more earth-quaking revelations, Claude, I think I better tend to the business of the state of Mississippi. Later."

That hot to hear it, eh, Rastus? Barron thought. "I never deprive a maroon of his simple-minded pleasures. Later, Lothar," he said, broke the connection.

"Jack. . . ." Carrie snaked across the rug arms around his chest wide eyes visions of larger than life sugar-plums of power tickets to circles of where it's at magic image-musk goddamned eyes why always those goddamned fever-coated eyes same eyes every bitch knows my name sees my dick gets eyes like fucking vacuum cleaners, suck me dry eyes for living colour latest Brackett Count hundred million Americans Jack Barron. Now you too, Carrie Donaldson, cool network-programmed secretary-robot with red-hot cunt, don't buy bargain-basement *Bug Jack Barron* image bullshit too close to home, but let schmuck Morris, crazy Luke whistle "Hail to the Chief" and it's welcome to the club, Carrie baby.

Hey, what's with you, man? Barron asked himself as Carrie Donaldson worried his lips with her moist, frantic tongue. Ten minutes ago you wanted action you're getting right now—Carrie's mind totally blown fucked out whited out overscrewed in all mental orifices—and you played it for this, is why you riffed with Morris in the first place, well isn't it?

A sudden flash of insight as Carrie directed her demands to nitty-gritty primary limp and pouting organ, bugged ego-extension of him in her smooth cool hands cradling, wheedling, finally stimulating cold reflex hard-on as he felt blood, attention, desire flow mechanically into it—no chick since Sara had done as much time in the sack as Carrie Donaldson, steady couple-time-a-week cool, detached lay for months and months static, strictly belly-to-belly non-relationship had bugged him with network-orders head unattached to warmflesh cunt. But now, with Carrie's cool blown the way he thought he had wanted it, Barron saw that the cool itself was why he kept screwing Carrie—sanity-contrast to endless string of image-fucking Wednesday night honey-haired Saras. And now she was a member of *Bug Jack Barron* goddamned vacuumed-eyed fan club, giving him Wednesday night style déjà vu head, wet-dream Sara dream on-her-knees dream eating kick

'em in the ass world-famous Presidential timber so dumb bitch thinks Jack Barron, wet-dream wish-fulfillment déjà vu Carrie, like all the others, déjà vu masturbation-ghosts, not the real thing, one more flesh and hair ersatz, not Sara no longer Carrie. And not Sara, not ever Sara.

His betraying organ stiff and hard, his mind cold, cold light-year distant and nothing but nothing in-between, Barron rose to his feet, haughty-ironic Great Man hands-on-hips statue, held the immobile mock-heroic posture as warm undulating lips, caressing tongue, frantic rolling half-closed eyes sent waves of hot thick pleasure through thighs, balls, mindless pulsing independent organ: pleasure-waves that stopped stone-dead at his waist.

Enjoy, enjoy, Carrie baby, he thought, feeling the spasm building through ten thousand miles of electric circuit insulation. Make it good, old hot-mouthed Carrie—'cause it's the last action you'll ever get from Jack Barron.

STARING INTO THE NAKED orange flames of the firepit, naked flesh naked Carrie Donaldson on the bare rug in exhausted, sated semi-sleep beside him, Jack Barron felt a carapace of image-history-skin encysting him like steel walls of a television set, a creature imprisoned in the electronic circuitry of his own head perceiving through promptboard vidphone fleshless electronic speed of light ersatz senses, separated from the girl beside him by the phosphordot impenetrable glass TV screen Great Wall of China of his own image.

First time I remember being blown feeling like wet put-down ugliness, he brooded. Ugly, he told himself, is a thing you feel—truth is ugly when it's a weapon, lie is beautiful when an act of love is ugly when it's one-sided fuck is beautiful when it's simple, mutual, no-bullshit balling, ugly when chick gets kicks off you that isn't really there is why you feel like a rotten lump of shit, man. Getting blown Sara go down being dug by woman's a pure gas; being sucked off, image-statue living lie, someone else's lie being *eaten* (Let me eat you, let me eat you baby!) is a dirty act of plastic



cannibalism, *her* dirtiness, not mine.

Whole world's full of plastic cannibals feeding their own little bags off meals of my goddamned image-flesh, eating Jack Barron ghost that isn't there, and now Morris and my so-called friend Luke are hot to package my living colour bod into tv dinners, sell to hundred million viewer-voter cannibals for twenty pieces of power silver.

Anyone sells my body, he thought, it'll be me, the real thing to Howards for life eternal in the flesh, not to Luke or Morris for an asterisk losing candidate grave-marker in a history book nobody reads. But something's happening there too, and you don't quite know what it is, do you Mr. Jones? Howards-Morris-Luke daisy-chain of power wheeler-dealers at each other's throats, all with eyes for Jack Barron as a spare set of false fangs; too much action in too scary a league to be pure coincidence, something's up, big glob of shit about to hit National fan, and no one ready to give the straight scam to Jack Barron.

Well, we'll see about that Wednesday night, Bennie Howards, see how much cool you keep in *Bug Jack Barron* hot seat, after all man, you're now playing poker with goddamned Presidential timber hot-shot, gonna have to lay all your cards on the table to stay in *that* bullshit game, Bennie-baby. Yeah, you're in the cat-birdseat man, like top trick in a high-class whorehouse, you are—

The vidphone chime interrupted his Germanic self-pity petulance, and good riddance, Jack Barron thought as the familiar stimulus triggered ironic Jack digging vidphone Jack Barron conditioned cynical response. Even money it's Teddy the Pretender himself, he thought wryly, every other power-junkie around's tried to score off dealer Jack Barron already.

But the honey-blonde, big dark-brown-eyed (mind's eye supplying living colour to black and white vidphone image) face on the vidphone screen blew his cool to the far side of the moon as he made the connection, and the best he could do was to stammer: "Sara . . ."

"Hello Jack," said Sara Westerfeld.

Barron felt a moment of empty, aware-of-his-bare-ass-nakedness blank numbness, sensed the same helpless vacuum behind the frightened-deer eyes of Sara, searched for cue to a reaction-pattern on the blank promptboard in his mind, heard his irony-armoured voice saying: "Sadism or masochism, what's on your acid-soaked mind, baby?"

"It's been a long time," Sara said, and Barron, frantically scrabbling for a protocol-reaction-pattern to the ghost of a thousand body to body aching memory nights, fell on the inanity like a starving man on a slice of mouldy bread.

"No shit?" he said. "I thought you just went out to cop some pot six years ago. Get stuck in traffic, Sara?"

"Do you have to, Jack?" she pleaded helplessly with her eyes. "Do we have to chop each other to pieces?"

"We don't *have* to do anything," he said, felt bitterness rising. "You called me, I didn't call you. I'd never call you; what in hell can I possibly say to you? What can you say to me? You stoned? You freaking out? Whose head are you playing with now, yours or mine?"

"I'm sorry," she said. "I'm sorry for everything. Hang up if you want to, who could blame you? I . . . I want to see you, Jack, I want to talk to you. I . . ."

"You got a tv, turn it on Wednesday night and you can see me. Pick up a vidphone and call the monkey block, make it good and Vince'll put you on the air. What's this all about? It's been six years, Sara, six fucking years, and now you say 'Hello Jack' and expect me to come running? Where did you leave your head, Sara?"

"Please . . ." she said, with the iron defence of soft woman defencelessness. "You think this is easy for me? I . . . (A blankness, a panic seemed to move like a cloud across the sky of her eyes; she hesitated, then began to talk faster and faster) I saw your last show, by accident I admit, but I saw something there I thought was dead. Saw flashes, just flashes in all that bullshit, but they were flashes of *you*. I mean the real you, like flickering, but it was there and it was you and every time it flashed through it went through me like a knife, and God help me, I couldn't help loving you all alone there inside that television set all alone inside flashing between the real Jack and the cop-out Jack, not knowing which was real, and I didn't know which was real, the Jack I loved or the Jack I hated and I loved you and I hated you and I knew I still had a piece of you inside me, couldn't get rid of it and . . . and . . ."

"You were stoned, weren't you?" Barron said with intentional cynical cruelty. "Acid, wasn't it?"

Again that hesitation, like a slot-machine mechanism behind her eyes, before she spoke: "I . . . yes, it *was* a trip. Maybe . . . maybe that was it, seeing your show with new eyes, old eyes, like old-new eyes, I mean part of me was back in Berkeley and part of me was with you that last time and part of me was inside that television set with you, and . . . And I've got to see you, got to know whether it was the acid or . . ."

"SO NOW I'M a goddamned zonk," Barron snapped.

"Like a kaleidoscope or one of your old Dylan records, something to freak out to. Did you bring yourself off? See coloured lights? I don't want to be any part of your bum trips, not even by proxy. You're turning my stomach, calling me up like this stoned out of your mind. Forget it, baby, go ride the Staten Island Ferry and pick up a horny sailor and fuck with *his* head, because I'm not about to let you play acid games with mine, not any more. Not ever again."

"I'm not stoned now, Jack," she said quietly. "I'm straight, maybe straighter than I've ever been in my life. We all go through changes; I watched you go through yours, and I couldn't take it. Now I think I've gone through one of my own, a big one. It happens like

that sometimes, six-years of things just happening to you but not really getting through to your head, and then something, acid plus something, maybe something silly and meaningless, triggers the big flash and suddenly all those six years come through all the way at once, and you *feel* them, feel the years before too, and all the possible futures, all in a moment, and nothing's happened in that moment that anyone else can see, but you're just not the same you any more. There's a gap, a discontinuity, and you know you can't go back to being what you've been, but you don't yet know what you are. And only you can tell me, Jack. I've got no present now, and you're my past . . . and maybe, if I'm not just finally flipping out, if you still want me, my future too. I see another side to you now—I see that you can see things I don't, and now I'm not so certain that they're all bad. Help me, Jack. If you ever loved me, please help me now."

"Sara . . ." Sara, you crazy bitch, don't do this to me, put me on, stretch me out like piano wire, play arpeggios on my skull, ping pong with my balls. Barron thought, trying desperately to hug his cynicism-shield to him against the tide washing over him, tide of Berkeley cool love-stained sheets tongue in her ear hourglass comfort-shape unseen by his side to lean on warm breezes cool bougainvillea-fragrant California night in L.A., Berkeley, Acapulco, breathing pot smoke musk mouth to mouth in rumple snuggle beds hot close to the blood years innocent tomorrow the world years lost years six years lost and gone and buried in the bodies of Wednesday night image-balling déjà vu blondes and the song of those years that she sang with her off-key beautiful girl-voice, sad, wistful in happy laughing times, prescient sadness of Christmas future song:

*Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing
. . . ? When will they ever learn? When will they
ever learn . . . ?*

And when will *you* ever learn, Jack Barron? In your guts, you know she's nuts, but in your heart . . . In your heart is an empty, Sara-sized hole, not Carrie, not Wednesday night déjà vu, not anyone but Sara can ever fill if you live million years geological ages promise of Benedict Howards—you're a Sara-junkie, nothing you can do about it, baby, she's the only dealer in town. "Jack . . . say something Jack . . ."

"Do I have to?" he said—soft surrender to the ghost of hope that would not die. I can do it! I can do it! he told himself. I'm kick 'em in the ass Jack Barron can handle Senators, vips, Howards, Morris, Luke big league curve-ball artists; Jack Barron afraid to play the big game love game (game is all) for only woman I ever love? I'll help you baby, give you the boost to nitty-gritty reality, you and me in *Bug Jack Barron* twenty-third storey penthouse catbirdseat home, fill the rooms with your taste-smell-feel song of home, all for you, Sara, where you should've been all these years, and if it was really acid that opened your eyes, then three big ones for Crazy Tim Leary.

"When can I see you?" he said.

"As soon as you can get here."

"I'll be down in 45 minutes," Jack Barron said. "God, oh God how I've missed you."

"I missed you too," she said, and he thought he could see her eyes misting.

"45 minutes," he said, and broke the connection, and rose turning for the bedroom clothes and shoes and car keys.

And stood nose to nose with naked, white-faced Carrie Donaldson, her breasts limp and drooping like wilted hospital flowers.

"DON'T SAY IT," she said in her office secretary voice. "Don't say anything, Mr. Barron. It's all been said, hasn't it? All explained nice and neat. And I thought it was just because you were too . . . too big and important and filled with your work to have room to care about. . . . I thought if I made you comfortable, made it easy, no hang-ups no bullshit call me when you want me, warm your bed whenever it got cold, then someday you'd wake up nice and easy, slow-like, and see that . . . that. . . . But I was wrong, I misjudged you. . . . I wonder what it's like to be loved the way you love her. Way the world is, I wonder if I'll ever get to know. . . ."

"Carrie . . . I didn't . . . I couldn't . . . I thought the network—"

"The network! I may be a lot of nasty things, Jack Barron, but as I just heard someone else say, I'm nobody's whore!" she shouted. "Sure I was supposed to keep an eye on you, but you don't think that. . . ." She began to tremble; tears formed in her eyes and she tilted her head back to hide them, making her look proud, gutsy. Oh Christ, what a blind shit you are, Jack Barron, he thought as she stood there, taller in his eyes than she had ever been, and yet he still felt nothing for her, never had, couldn't even fake a moment of it now. "Why didn't you say something?" was all he could say.

"Would it have mattered?" she said. "You know it wouldn't. You've always been too hung on her to look at me or any other woman and see anyone that counted. And at least this way . . . you've been a good lay, Jack Barron. Too bad . . . too bad I'll never be able to bring myself to touch you again."

And all he could throw to her was a tiny morsel as he went to the bedroom to dress and allowed her the dignity of crying alone.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CROSSING 14TH STREET is like crossing the panel-dividers between different style comic strips, Jack Barron thought as he inched the Jag down Saturday-jammed 6th Avenue. Like going from *Mary Worth-Rex Morgan-Man Against Fear* style reality into *Terry and the Pirates* (old-style pre-Mao Chopstick Joe Dragon Lady Chinese river pirate schtick) *Krazy Kat-Captain Cool* freak-out, surreal Dali comic strip of the Village,

sprawling Istanbul-involved (river to river, 14th to Canal) Barbary Coast ghetto of the mind.

Reaching 4th Street, Barron impulsively made a left across traffic, then a right into the turgid river of cars clogging MacDougald—Money Street, Anything Goes Sin City Tourist Vacuum Cleaner Street, chief cloaca for outside square-type bread, lifeline of economic sewage into the closed river to river ghetto that the powers that be had carrot-and-sticked the Village into becoming.

And once again we see the fine Irish hand of Bobby still heavy on the land, Barron thought as the traffic inched at a foot a second towards Bleeker; past souvenir stands, bare-box strip joints, state-licensed acid parlours, furtive street-corner schmeck dealers, local action fading Slum Goddess tourist trade whores, through a solid miasma of grease-fried sausage smells, pot-musk, drunken-sailor piss, open air toilet aroma of packaged disaster—the pathetic faded Grand Old Lady Greenwich Village reduced to peddling her twat to passing strangers.

If you can't beat 'em, eat 'em—unspoken motto of the days after Lyndon. Nice cooled reservation for every tribe in America—give them niggers Mississippi, and them pothead longhaired acid freak beatniks the Village and Fulton and Strip City, and the old fuckers Sun City, St. Petersburg subsidised graveyards waiting rooms. All on the reservation, safe in their own bags and out of the way. And a nice little tourist-trade we can cash in on on the side—see Niggerland, Beatnikland, Seniorcitizenland, see America First, see America and die.

Turning left on to Bleeker, Barron found himself overwhelmed by sadness—meeting a love of his youth in a Mexican whorehouse blowing for wooden nickels, and brother can you spare a dime.

Where have all the flowers gone

Long time passing. . . .

Sara . . . Sara. . . . Another hooker on the string of image-pimp vampires, a prop in the streets of an open-air cathouse Disneyland-Hippyland turnstile madness. . . .

“It's Jack Barron!”

“Hey, Jack!”

Shit, I've been spotted, Barron thought, picking up on the ironic paradox of disgust-satisfaction inside him, as a red-headed, nicely-stacked chick in kinesthop-patterned leotards (electric-blue snakes slithering-flashing ever twatward—Sara design?) shouted his name with banally-worshipful eyes, and eyes turned, faces turned, street-traffic momentarily clotted in a small eddy of rubberneck stares.

“Yeah, it is! It's Jack Barron!”

A moment of panic as sidewalks on both sides of Bleeker bulged gutterward with hippies and turistas, arms waving, shouting, ripples spreading towards the corner of MacDougald behind him, up Bleeker ahead of him as locals and tourists, come there for the smell of action, seized on the shouting in their desperate bore-

dom, joined in the waving, harmonised in the shouting, indifferent, oblivious to the source of it all—just hungry for the centre of where whatever was at.

But as the Jag inched eastward through the frozen traffic, Barron saw buttons above boobs on jackets under beards—red-on-blue kinesthop flash patterns like hot vacuum eyes of Wednesday night Saras on his body like hands waking images of Berkeley, L.A., Meridian marches Baby Bolshevik eyes that no longer were young, staring at him like some plastiglow Jesus, hero to something he no longer believed. His own name mocking him from a freakshow marquee: “Bug Jack Barron” the kinesthop buttons said.

Yeah, baby, dig your ever-loving public. “Bug Jack Barron”—rating-vitamin saying started right here in home to which there is no returning, streets of the past, youth-dream yours for the taking, but all of it bullshit, none of it real.

But caught by the rhythm, heat of warm bodies, sound-smell of his own name in the air, Barron waved, smiled, copped out on himself like a fucking Hollywood premier.

The traffic finally sped up as the Jag passed Thomson, faces became phosphordot blurs on a TV screen sounds became just dopplered background noises. And when he turned on to West Broadway, headed to Houston, the main east-west thoroughfare out of the scene, he found he was sweating—like bolt upright in bed at the end of a crazy wet dream.

WHAT MADE ME do *that*? Jack Barron thought as he felt the motion-breeze of the open Jag cool him as he headed east towards Second Avenue. *Now* who's playing with Jack Barron's head—the master mindfucker himself, is all. Who you putting on, man, should've been straight down Sixth to Houston and nowhere near Clown Alley with all that idiot traffic, *knew* they would spot you, is all. Jack Barron fanclub: every loser in Village hippies in San Fran hardluck chicks wherever you are Berkeley, Strip City street scene stretching block after block, one big where it all was at from Commercial Street to MacDougald to Haight to Sunset, wallowing in pre-Bobby bullshit ghosts of glory, Wednesday-night-digging the boy who made good from the bag.

Barron made a left on to Second Avenue, and his mood changed with the street: Second Avenue, nitty-gritty insiders' main drag. Ricky-ticky bars, coffee-houses, discos, galleries, zonk shops in lower storeys of renovated Ukrainian Polack buildings, street and street-mood where ghosts of the future rubbed tight neon asses with uptight descendants of Slav-Jew-P.R. ghetto-spectres of the past. Yeah, Barron thought, this is where the action is, bordertown paranoia-ville, semi-cheap apartments, folk-shops of the new hippy ghetto in building by building guerilla warfare with the dregs of old-style rent-control slumlord Great Society slum-scene of the dying past—Flower People pushing as hard to get in as waves of immigrants since god-knows-when

pushed to get out.

The ass is always greener, Barron thought. Village days, Berkeley was the place, Berkeley days Strip City, and back to here in goddamned Coast-to-Coast incestuous daisy-chain, hey which way to the action, man. And, baby, when you're a loser, the action's always somewhere else. So why not the other side of the glass tit, *Bug Jack Barron* land in electric circuit contact with places of power, acid dreams of revolution, hundred million Brackett Count insiders' secret: kick 'em in the ass Jack Barron cutting up vips: one of us, man. *That cat's on our side.*

Truth, isn't it? Barron thought. Reasons of my own, rating-type reasons, I *am* on their side, side of every hung-up person in the whole wide universe, phosphor-dot image of the sounds of freedom flashing—"enemy to those who make him an enemy, friend to those who have no friend". Boston Blackie, is all.

So what bugs you so much about them buttons?

Where who why do they come from? is the nitty-gritty question. Luke or Morris or both already screwing around with trial-balloon free samples of prospective image-meat TV dinners? Or just harmless zonk?

Shit, man, you *know* why you're bugged. Sara dragging your million dollar ass down on to her turf; one lousy phone call and into the car into Village into past

fast as fat little Michelins will carry you, pearldiving in sewage, dumb '60s song, but right where it's at:

Slum Goddess from the Lower East Side

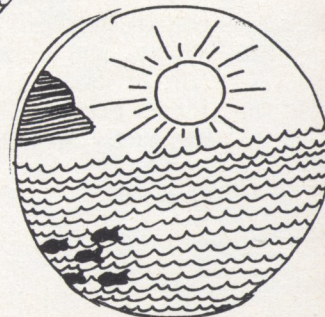
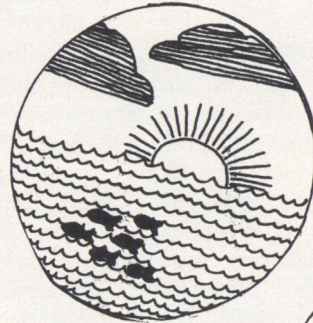
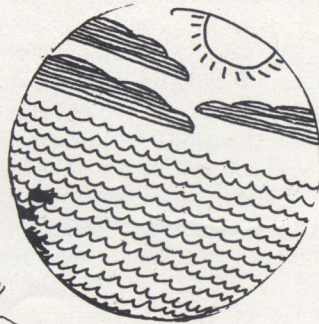
Slum Goddess, gonna make her my bride. . . .

The first time that I balled her I went outa my mind. . . .

Oh, you *so* right, baby! So here I am dragging my dick along Second Avenue, right back in the whole dumb scene I kissed goodbye six years ago. Sara, you stoned when I get there, I'm gonna beat the piss out of you, so help me.

But as he parked the Jag on the corner of Second Avenue and Ninth Street, he wondered who was really gonna beat the piss out of whom.

SARA'S APARTMENT was on the third storey of a five-storey renovated walk-up (like progress, Barron thought, old days anyone you went to see in the East Village *always* lived on the fifth floor) and you could tell it was hers by the door: it and the surrounding wall area were painted in a continuous, door-outline-blurring kinesthop pattern—undulating, free-form black and chartreuse concentric bullseye striping that created the illusion of a tunnel expanding past the doorframe, converging circle in circle in uneven circle on a weirdly off-centre yellow doorknob-buzzer, the focus of the



pattern strangely placed near the top of the door.

Barron paused, staring at the gold doorknob, feeling himself caught in the pattern, humming hoops of bright green leaping out from the flat black background, like an electric charge neon tunnel around him, sucking him inward like Sara's smooth legs around his waist extended into the environment, pulling attention to gilded goody—open me! open me! let me suck you in, baby, the kinesthop pattern said.

Barron couldn't help smiling, knowing it wasn't his wish-fulfillment bag at all, but goddamn Sara knows exactly what she's doing with stuff like this—making entrance to her pad a cunt to the world. Dig the paint, man, it's old, starting to flake at the edges; this thing was here long before she called you, remember where *that's* at and don't blow your cool.

He reached out, pressed the ivory bellybutton in the centre of the doorknob, heard taped Chinese J. Arthur Rank gong from within, footsteps on muted carpet, and Sara opened the door. And stood in the doorway, framed by a single wine-coloured spotlight, dark hallway behind her long loose hair bloody gold to her shoulders, in a black silk kimono flowing over her naked breasts, hips like oil, nipples low and taut through the cloth, stomach-legs convergence, imagined softflesh triangle hinted by heavy folds of black sheen.

Déjà vu irony of entrance to his penthouse, remembering own come-into-my-parlour come-on, his own seduction-environment and from *who* he had the learned the kinesthop hypnotic technique, Barron laughed, said: "Way to a man's heart is through his stomach, way to the crotch is through the eyeballs, eh, Sara?"

"Same old Jack," she said, with an unexpected sly smile that caught him off-balance, sucked him into brittle, laughing, sad, pathetic-brave eyes, through levels of illusions, inside joke on the universe between them, spark of old love Jack and Sara destiny's darlings hard-edged Berkeley, L.A., mystics, their innocent cynicism a sword against the night. "Magic's lost on you; I forgot that rune you wear against necromancy."

"Thank you., J. R. R. Tolkien," he said, stepping inside and closing the door behind him in a protocol-control gesture. "Someplace we can sit in this cave of the winds?" he said, suppressing gland-reaction images battering his cool, wanting to grab her hanging there before him. Keep your cool, he told himself.

She smiled, led him through the velvet hall-blackness-shadows dancing (black wash over kinesthop patterns, he thought, image of *Bug Jack Barron* set backdrop, we play the same games, only stakes are different) into a straw-mat-floored studio room, low primary-coloured geometric-precision Japanese furniture hard-edged in the neutral, off-white pseudo-lantern overhead light, thousand-years-distant in cool squares and rectangles from ricky-ticky neon-baroque Village streets. He squatted on a red plush pillow before a black-lacquered table, smiled at the TV sitting arrogantly on it like Yankee Imperialismo in oriental

sheets.

She sat down beside him, opened a blue box on the table, took out two cigarettes, handed him one. He dug the trademark, snapped: "No grass, baby, straight talk, and I mean *straight*, both of us, or I leave."

"Your sponsor, Acapulco Golds," she said, fingering the joint coyly. "What would the network think?"

"Cut the shit, Sara."

"All right, Jack," she said, suddenly empty in open little-girl confusion (as if *I'm* the one that started this, Barron thought, pissed) "I was hoping you'd . . . you'd write the script for this scene. That was always your bag, not mine."

"My bag? Look, baby, this has been your orbit straight from ground zero. You called me, remember? You asked me to see you, I didn't drag my dick down here to . . ."

"Didn't you, Jack?" she said quietly.

And he looked into her pool-dark eyes that knew holes with no bottoms inside his eyes locked on hers locked on his X-ray cameras facing each other in feedback circuitry between them gut to gut belly to belly big dark eyes eating him up saying: I know you know I know we know we know we know endless feedback of pitiless scalpels of knowledge.

"All right, Sara," he said in soft surrender to nitty-gritty grammar of mutually understood feedback truth. "I forgot who I was talking to. Been a long time; I forgot that anyone was ever that deep inside of me. Wanted to. Wanted to forget I knew you knew how I still feel about you. It's a bum trip to remember that you walked out on me, and me still loving you when you went."

"What kind of bullshit is that?" she snapped with a defensive pout, but with a hurt-eyes reality behind it. "I didn't leave you, you threw me out."

"*I threw you out. . . ?*" Barron started to shout, heard his voice rising into ancient traditional six years buried argument she never understood, into pointless, useless brick-wall non-communication endless, endless hassle. And called his cool back. "You never understood, Sara, you could never get it through your head. No one threw you out. You kept issuing ultimatums and finally I got pissed enough to call you on one of them, and you split."

"You made me go," she insisted. "You made it impossible for me to stay. I couldn't take it and you wouldn't change. You threw me out like a used condom."

"Now we get to the nitty-gritty," he said. "And straight from your own mouth. You didn't want the real me, way I really was, and when I refused to play Baby Bolshevik games and started living in the real world, you couldn't cut the action, come out of your grass-lined hole, and when I wouldn't crawl back in with you, you split. And this by you is being thrown out."

Waiting for the expected endless-replay snapback, Barron saw the familiar breaking-up-days, hurt eyes,

quivering lips mask form on her face . . . and dissolve suddenly into open near-tears.

"No," she said, as if reminding herself of some New Year's resolution, "this is now, not six years ago, and I don't want to fight, don't want to win any arguments. Last time out, I thought I won and you thought you won . . . and we both really lost. Can't you see that, Jack? You threw me out, I left you . . . words words words. When did we stop trying to dig each other and start making points? That's what I felt when. . ."

She hesitated strangely, something weirdly cold seemed to flicker across her eyes before she went on: "When I saw your show on acid—the you that I loved was still there, it was always there, but this other you, making points, always making points, with Hennering and Luke and Yarborough, same as you were always making points on me at the end. . . . That's you too, Jack, it always was, always will be, and once I loved that in you too, when your enemies were our enemies. . . . Remember? Remember Berkeley and the night you put together the SJC, not Luke, not the others, but you bringing it all together, making points for a reason, the way you stopped that riot in Meridian with just your face and your voice? And watching you pick the Foundation to pieces the way you used to pick me to pieces, but the way you picked that fascist bastard to pieces and got the show in the first place too, oh that was Jack Barron, all Jack Barron, the Jack Barron that was meant to be. And I thought that maybe you hadn't changed, maybe it was me, I stopped trying to understand, somehow, afraid of power, afraid of safe dreams becoming reality, afraid of the responsibility of being a winner's woman, afraid of the real sharks in the real ocean. If you were a cop-out, I was a coward, putting you down instead of trying to understand. Oh Jack, you're the only man I ever really loved, only man I ever respected, and I still don't understand you, maybe I never will, but if you'll have me, I'll spend the rest of my life trying. I love you, I love you, don't say a word, fuck me, fuck me, darling, fuck my brains out, I'm tired of thinking, I just want to feel."

AND SHE FELL AGAINST him, arms around him, breasts warm and wriggling, thrust her tongue to the hilt unbidden through his still-tight lips. He shuddered in quivering, helpless he-she rôle reversal as inverted déjà vu flashes mocked him, her eyes bottomless, open as she kissed him, Wednesday night vacuum leaching eyes of endless string of surrogate Saras becoming real Jack and Sara Sara Berkeley, L.A., Acapulco night breezes Sara becoming wet-dream California of the mind Sara becoming every Sara that never was in false memory banks of forlorn longing becoming Saras past Saras future, flashing positive-negative white-out black-out reality-fantasy in and out of past and wet-dream-future time with the rhythm of her liquid thrusting tongue.

Vacuum in the personality-centre behind the win-

dows of his eyes, his hands moved like disbelieving robots pulling aside the black kimono sheen, and her body naked against him—brown freckle in contact with left nipple mole above border of red-gold triangle, secret second navel, tongue moving sweet spittle in long-remembered trail along the curve of his cheekbone hot wetness moving in ear encircled by lips of bougainvillea musk breathing fingers dancing down belly smoothing his thigh in primeval rhythm—filled the void with Saraflesh reality, image-ghosts fleeing down timelines as his hands closed on the massive breast present: Sara! Sara! It's *you* and it's real!

I'm Jack and you're Sara is all that matters—and he pulled her face to him as she rolled him off the pillow, naked under him on the straw-matted floor. Moaning into him as he kissed her tongue on tongue mouths moving in slow pelvic rhythm, her hands at his ass kneading and urging, shoving him down between legs spreadeagled encircling caressing, mouth free now and screaming orgasmic rhythm: "*Fuck me fuck me fuck me. . .*" And. . . .

And. . . .

And it just wasn't there. Spent totally in the night filled with Carrie, in morning-after image-eyed return event—six years of desire-images come to a moment of reality, and in that moment of all moments, it just wasn't there!

He felt the cold moment of super-Freudian disaster spiralling around him—then Jack seeing Jack with maniac laughter. What the fuck does it matter, it's me that counts, not my dick, got nothing to prove cockwise in *this* arena, I love her, is all, and she's here.

He slid his face down her belly skin to chin-stubble, buried it in musky coarse-haired dampness lips to wet lips tasting her body as her thighs gripped his cheeks his tongue went inside her rolling and coaxing with love and wry self-frustration, thrusting and moving in pelvic simulation as she rocked against him in asymptotic rhythm—and went off in great groaning spasms.

Resting his chin on the bone of her pelvis, he smiled at her face across the luffing sail of her belly, breasts awry like puppy-dog mountains, her eyes met his across pink continents of skin-to-skin pleasure. . . .

"Jack. . ." she sighed. "Oh thank you thank you . . ." Then she looked down at him with a fey knowing smile. "That's the best you could do this early in the day? Just out of curiosity, what was her name?"

"Whose name?" he said, grinning mock innocence.

"Miss Last Night. . . . I sure hope there *was* one, wouldn't want to think you were. . . ."

"Give me about an hour to recuperate and I'll answer your question," he said, moving up her body to face to face languor.

She laughed and kissed him quick dry lips sated, but he felt the hunger there still his to command, taste of her still in him, and he felt it stirring through cotton layers of fatigue as she reached down to stroke it.

"Still in there fighting, just where I left it," she said,

and years melted away and he knew she was back. "Take it slow and easy, we've got time," she said, hugging him to her. And with a strange-style shudder he had never felt before, said: "All the time in the world."

HAVEN'T DONE THIS SINCE they made grass legal, Jack Barron mused as the hand-rolled as in days of street-corner dealer yore joint passed around the mystic circle—himself, Sara, some cat named Sime who was obviously after Sara's ass, chick called herself Leeta or something (ironed-blond Psychedelic Church Acolyte) hairy type known only as the Wolfman. Barron sucked deep, getting into the anachronistic nostalgia bag, husbanding whiffs of smoke as if the stuff still cost twenty bucks an ounce, still was illegal.

"Wow," he said, drawing out the word in approved late '60s hippy style. "Don't let the word get out, but this stuff has a bigger kick to it than Acapulco Golds."

Sara laughed. "It should; there's some opium in it."

Barron smiled, felt sardonic detachment from the others squatting on the straw-matted floor. From old head days, he knew there couldn't be more than a taste of opium in the shit; you'd have to smoke about a pound of the grass to even get a buzz off O. But that's not where it's at, he thought, kick's in the *idea* of opium because the stuff's still illegal; you can buy pot in any candy store. So bring back images of danger with a couple pinches of O—pushers in the streets pay envelopes police lock fuzz in the hall good old Bad Old Days, where spice of the opium's at. And maybe there *isn't* any opium, just bullshit, what's the difference, charge is the same.

"Hey," said the Wolfman, "you hung on Acapulco Golds too? Funny how any old head that's really been around a while digs Acapulco Golds. And we all know how long *you've* been around, Jack." The last walking a thin line between genuine innocent affection and sycophant put-on.

Hearing from the Wolfman the question he was always asking himself, Barron suddenly dug why Acapulco Golds were an overwhelming best-seller in the Village, Fulton, Strip City ghettos, among old time nostalgiahead potheads: *my sponsor*, is all. National Marijuana's sure getting their money's worth out of *Bug Jack Barron*; smoke Acapulco Golds and you're smoking Jack Barron, act of patriotism for Wolfman for psychedelic ghetto types, True Believers in Dylan-haired (gotta get a haircut, starting to itch) Berkeley badboy, *our* boy kick 'em in the ass myth.

He passed the joint to Sara, saw her drag a deep tight bread times drag, wondered why he hadn't bitched about this potparty scene, so patently a show-the-flag Jack Barron returns to the people schtick, had looked forward to it, need for . . . need for . . . ?

"Hey, man," the Wolfman said, "those stories going 'round about you and the Foundation true?"

"What stories?" Barron said, and the whiff of a very professional rumour-mill (Luke's rumour-mill *already*?) hung in the air.

The Wolfman took the joint from Sara, dragged, held smoke in his lungs and talked through it in old-time pothead screendoor croak: "Say you're out for Bennie Howards. For blood. Last show a real gas. Public Freezer. Man, you—"

The Wolfman spasmed, coughed smoke in talk-inhale conflict resolution, immediately continued, loud and gesticulating in new-found lung-freedom. "Yeah, the word is that you're in with the Public Freezer cats, playing it real cool till you got the Foundation set up for the kill, and then Pow! down on the fuckers with both feet, split things wide open, and then everyone's got a chance at living forever, not just the usual fat cat fascist bastards, but like *people*, dig? Like we're all *people*, dig, one thing youglom on to when you're born, no matter what you do later, like whether you pile up bread or not, or how long you wear your hair, or whether you got a nine-to-five or just like *make it*, whether you're white or black or purple, dig? Yeah, like this death kick is laid on *everyone* soon as they're born, I mean one boat we're all in together, *people*, see? Like they got Medicare for everyone 'cause they finally dug that you shouldn't die just because you're wasted. Well, ain't Freezing just one more medical-type thing to beat the death kick? So it should be free for everyone like the rest of it. Like people. I'm people, you're people, Bennie Howards' people, we're all people, and we all should have the same odds to live, dig?"

Barron felt the wheels turning. Cat's riffing out straight SJC party line, with a neat little Jack Barron tie-in, *too* neat. Got put in his head real professional-like, but he doesn't know it, thinks it's his own scam, in the air, is all. Rumour-mill stuff all right, whispers in drunken bar-room voices, street-corners, discos, real spontaneous looking, just stuff everyone hears around—ten to one, it all comes from Evers, Mississippi. And I oughta know, I invented the schtick way back when.

Yeah, Barron thought, as he picked up on the moment hanging in the air, the four of them looking to him with life-death nitty-gritty desperation in their eyes vacuum eyes of Brackett Audience Count estimated hundred million people, planted story, but a good one 'cause it hit a nerve, Luke and Morris are right, death is like *the* issue. Face of death, we're all just people, do anything (lie, kill, form Foundation for Human Immortality, sell out to Bennie Howards) to stay alive just one more second, 'cause when you're dead, morality bullshit dies with you, only two party system on issue of life and death: Death Party and Life Party. Nitty-gritty Presidential campaign: SJC-Republican-Jack Barron Party of life eternal versus Howards-Democrat Party of death by numbers.

Jesus H. Christ on a Harley! Barron thought as it hit his gut-reality for the very first time—I actually *could* make the old college try for President!

"Well, like I'm with you in principle," Barron said, with horrid awareness of his words as possible projected instruments of history (stuff history!) public



statement from the Man who, thrust unwillingly into electric contact reality social conscience reality (god-damned silly-ass Berkeley bullshit is all) he needed like an extra rectum. "But from where I sit, the whole Public Freezer schtick's nowhere-ville. Don't you see what you're bucking? Bucking Benedict Howards and like billions in frozen assets, bucking the Democratic Party that's elected every President but one for over half a century, bucking Teddy the Pretender with the whole Kennedy bag behind him, and bucking the Republicans too—they don't want Public Freezing, just a piece of the action for their own fat cats, is all, and they're still rolling in bread. So what's that leave on the other side, the SJ and my big mouth and a few hundred fruitcakes parading around with picket signs? Big fucking deal!"

"Hey, you're beautiful, man!" the Wolfman said sincerely. "You got more people listen to you than any cat in the country, and you don't dig your own power, so groovy. You're the coolest head around is what you are, sitting up there with those sons of bitches, bigger than any of 'em, and not playing *that* game, still keeping your cool, cat we can *trust*. Shit, you're beautiful, man."

"He's right," the blonde chick said. "Don't you dig, you got the power like the rest of the bastards, but you're the only one didn't get it on a pile of dead bodies, so you can use it the way it should be used, for *people* . . ."

"Don't you see, Jack?" Sara said, staring hungrily at him with those old Berkeley eyes. "Power. . . . Remember how we talked about power in the old days, what we'd do when we got it? Sure you remember all that bullshit. But don't you see, it doesn't have to be bullshit anymore. We've got *you*, and you've got the power. You weren't afraid to lay yourself on the line in the old days, when it accomplished nothing, and now you can do it again, but this time it'll *matter*."

"Power!" Barron snapped. "None of you know shit from shinola about power! Look around you, take a good look, and you'll see Howards and Teddy and Morris—that's power. They're people, dig, *people*, is all, but, baby, they're *junkies*. All of 'em — power-junkies. That's what power does to you, a fucking monkey on your back, just like junk. First shot's free, kiddies, but after that you've gotta go out and cop more and more and more to feed the monkey. I'm a beautiful cat, eh? I'll take you outside and show you fifty former beautiful cats you wouldn't piss on, because, baby, they're *junkies*, and a junkie don't give a shit about anything but junk. Power and smack—it's all the same junk."

"Luke Greene's a junkie?" Sara said quietly.

"Bet your sweet ass he is. There he is, stuck in the Mississippi boonies, the poor lonely fucker, surrounded by sycophants and plain ordinary schmucks, hating every minute of it, hating himself, hating manipulating people. . . . All that race-put-down come-on—only it's real. He hates himself for being a nigger, thinks of

himself as a nigger surrounded by niggers. Luke Greene, *there* was a beautiful cat, my best friend, and now look at him, hating himself, hating everything, nothing but a big throbbing vein to feed the power-monkey on his back. You wanna see me like *that*, Sara?"

The silence was so thick you could cut it with a knife. What brought *that* on? Barron wondered. Jeez, what's in this grass, maybe it *is* loaded with opium junk. . . . Junk. . . . Yeah, maybe that's it, man, once you really were a power-junkie, in the old days, just a bag now and then to keep the monkey quiet. Wasn't that why you got yourself the show in the first place, biggest jolt of power-junk you ever had? Worked funny, didn't it, O.D.'d you, got you off it? And now you got everyone shaking the stuff under your nose, feel that hunger so hot you can taste it, and everyone telling you go ahead, shoot up, *you* can't get hooked again, sonny, you're a *beautiful cat*!

And that's where all this is at, he knew. Whole Village is a power-junk supermarket for old Jack Barron, and that's why you dug this party idea boy, you smelled the shit like an old junkie, couldn't keep away. One fix and you're hooked.

Not thistime, Sara. Too much to lose, *Bug Jack Barron*, maybe a free shot at forever. Throw *that* away for a surge of Presidential bullshit Samson-smash junk? Would you? Would anyone? Gonna be a junkie, be an immortality-junkie—at least *that* monkey gives as good as it gets.

Screw this whole scene! Barron thought bitterly. Truth, justice, you a beautiful cat bullshit—no different from the rest, all want my body for your own bags.

I'm tired of it all, Machiavellian motherfuckers, Howards, Luke, Morris, all losers, maybe you too, Sara, who knows? Goddamn paranoid nightmare! Show you all Jack Barron's his own man, nobody's flunky! I'll get what *I* want, one way or another, and on my own fucking terms!

WONDER WHO DID this stuff? Sara Westerfeld thought behind her shield of purposeful cynicism against Jack-reality as the elevator door opened, revealing the entrance foyer to his little-boy treehouse penthouse and the crude, not-quite-making-it kinesthop mural on the wall (should be whole kinesthop *wall* around the hallway entrance, really suck in all those chicks he's supposed to be balling, she thought professionally).

Jack smiled a little-boy smile, hair all curls like fresh from pillow years flaking away dig my pad baby smile of first meeting first love first day dingy Berkeley attic, and she reached out and pinched his ass—still firm, cute assflesh—felt the déjà vu about to be fucked for the first time thrill of the unfolding unknown.

He put his arm around her waist, led her past doors down a dark hallway towards a vast space she could kinesthetically sense beyond, paused suddenly, yanked her off her feet into arms around shoulder hand firm

under her ass caressing divide, and she went with it, arms around him, face nuzzled into wild curls roughness around his neck as he laughed, said: "I never got to carry you over any threshold, baby, so better late than never."

She giggled with semi-sincere, go-with-it-it's-his-bag pleasure, and said: "Darling, there are times when you're so beautifully square."

He carried her forward (she could feel muscles deliciously tight straining against her) paused at the brink of something (she could see stars, night-trees shapes across bulking distance), fiddled with some panel on the wall and . . .

Flames leapt up billowing orange from a huge fire-pit in the centre of a vast scarlet-carpeted room, dancing ruby shadows across chairs, pillow-piles, furniture, huge gizmo electronic wall consoles to a Californian patio beyond, rubber tree déjà vu against the naked sky, scintillating firelight glow from the faceted dome skylight ceiling reflected sparks into the dead New York sky, and she saw he was holding her from a deck-balcony above the huge living room as rock-montage music began to play from somewhere, colour-organ spectral flashes swirling with the music spun acid-reality magic into the air, and she felt him quiver against her, waiting for a reaction to his externalised head like a cornucopia before her—or just as like some silly-ass Hollywood set.

She hugged him silently, unsure of the truth of her reactions: so like Jack, magic, cop-out, phoney, extravagant, bullshit, and yet . . . and yet . . .

Yet it's *real*, real fantasy playpen, no interior-decorated calculated baloney, straight from Jack's head to reality, with nothing inbetween. It's *him*, it's his dream—Berkeley, L.A. California candy-store window, unafraidly naked garish conscious-subconscious Jack Barron day dream, sugarplum reality that money made *real*.

Sara felt herself teetering on the brink of a dangerous truth—who was *really* the cop-out, Jack, who went and got what he needed to make his dream real, moulding a Jack Barron reality to the shape of his dreams, or *me*, shaping dreams to the size of mundane reality (takes balls to be garish 'cause garish's your bag)? A hero's a man with the courage to live in his dreams?

"How's *that* grab you, baby?" he said, carrying her down to the lush-carpeted surface, setting her on her feet, staring into her eyes giving the question pregnant ego-involvement intensity.

I don't know how it grabs me, she thought vertiginously. Your bag, not mine, little boy stuff like tin soldiers, silly Hollywood crap, but you dig it, I dig you, and Jack darling, it's *real*. "It's you, Jack," she said quite truthfully.

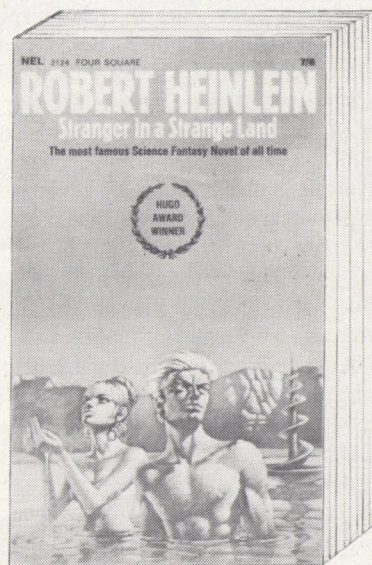
"You think it's a lot of silly bullshit," he said. "I can see it in your eyes."

"No!" she said loudly, impulsively, aware that she meant it only after she said it. "It's just . . . I've never

seen anything like it before. It's like . . . like seeing your head, I mean the inside of your head, out *there*. It's so . . . *naked*, I mean it's the nakedest room I've ever seen. Like you had a magic wand and just waved it and everything that you wanted in your head suddenly *was*. I won't con you, Jack, you know it's not my bag out there, it's yours, and if I was waving the wand, it'd all be different. But the idea of waving the wand in the first place—that's such a pure groove. I dig this place because it's *you*, exactly what you wanted to make it. It's a whole new bag, a whole new idea to me—wanting something like this, a dream, and having the power to make it reality. I . . . I . . . I'm not sure what I feel."

He smiled a knowing smile, kissed her lightly, and said: "There's hope for you after all, Sara. You're getting a taste of it, Sara, a taste of where the world's really at. It's all out there, every dream, everything anyone wants. But you don't get it by talking about it or dropping acid and wishing. You gotta get out there in the nitty-gritty and grab it, take as much of what's out there as what's inside you can get you. *That's* reality, not what's inside or what's outside, but how much of what's inside you can make *real*. If that's copping out—getting your hands dirty—well, then I'd rather be a cop-out than a one-eyed cat forever peeping in a seafood store. Wouldn't you? Is being hungry all your life *really* being true to yourself?"

FROM THE GRAND MASTER...



IT MUST BE CLASSIFIED WITH '1984' AND 'BRAVE NEW WORLD'

Available at all Bookshops or send direct to The New English Library, P.O. Box 11., Dept. H., Falmouth, Cornwall with 7s 6d plus 9d postage and packing.

Jack Barron, she thought. Jack Barron. Jack Barron. JACK BARRON. Christ, it's hard to think of him as anything but JACK BARRON in great big red capital letters. Hate him, love him, cop-out comic book monster hero lover, whatever he is, it's impossible to keep your cool around him. Jack's Jack, makes his own rules no one else can even follow, lies become truth becomes cop-out becomes psychedelic vision reality becomes lover becomes power becomes rock-bottom honesty, comes on like acid-flash white-out reversal images, foreground-background indeterminate interface of dynamic instability, and what he is is the paradox interface itself, not figure, not ground, but the standing wave pattern between. JACK BARRON.

AND SHE KNEW fear, knowing it was something greater than her, something hyper-real, encompassing her reality as a facet of himself, only *one* facet, knew fear that he saw through her like glass, saw lizard-man Howards pushing them together in chess-board gambit from bone-white windowless temple of power. And she knew guilt at her own cop-out, holding within her Howards' plan within her plan, playing the very same game she put him down for. But he himself had given her the path from guilt to resolution—reality, truth, is how much of what's inside you that you can make real. And she knew hunger for him, for his body reality love, for inside-head dreams made real, not for a moment, or a year, or a century, but forever. Forever. She knew hunger and knew she had never hungered like this before.

But she also knew a feeling which filled her with soul-jeopardy dread: *guile*. She felt the serpent-shaped slithering word within her, holding a piece of her back in cool rock lairs coil in reptile coil, waiting basilisk cold centuries ready to pounce; he knew she was faced with an order of decision-reality she had not believed existed—life eternal with Jack forever smirking knight in softflesh armour against a million years of worm-eaten nothingness. Knew in her hands was the darkness-power of life versus death for her, for Jack . . . for how many millions? And she knew with infinite sadness that at age thirty-five, she was no longer girl Sara Westerfeld; was woman Sara Westerfeld playing adult-deadly game with man Jack Barron for the highest stakes of all, for the right to think of herself *really* as Sara Barron, in great big red capital letters forever. SARA BARRON. Sara BARRON.

"Let me show you something that's us," he said, taking her hand. "A dream made real we can both dig together." And he led her across the red carpet to a small door, said: "Remember, Sara?" And opened the door to the bedroom and she stepped inside and saw and felt. And remembered.

Oh she remembered! She remembered sun-warmed grass against her back pushed to rich wet earth by him in her open sighing flash of stars glowing blue-black skylight above bed open to the stars Acapulco

breakers tropical night-smells she heard in the taped surfounds that came on at the touch of his hand. Patio foliage outlined against the duskglow of Brooklyn against sunset clawing through leaf-frond windows of L.A. bedroom his face blue and stubbly arms sleeping around her. Ivy-walled bedstead of Berkeley attic first time thrill grey wood texture of college-fuck walls. Saw plastigrass carpet, console in bedstead, surfound recording, sliding panels, scenery, props—the backside of a dream.

Her dream.

She turned towards him, and he was smiling, fey knowing buddha-eyes like scalpels, the conscious creator of her midnighttears dream.

Do I love him or hate him? She wondered if she'd ever know, if it mattered, for no other man so knew her. No other man gave off that dangerous heat. She could hate and love him from her innermost being (where love and hate might be the same thing)—beside JACK BARRON (in flaming capital letters) who else could be real?

"Jack . . ." she croaked, crying and laughing, flinging herself at him, her *self*—bundle of hate, love, thirty-five years of girlhood—open, reservations forgotten. Poor fool lizardman Howards to think he can use me against Jack Barron—a handful of sand thrown against the sea.

She was on the bed under him without remembering moving, swimming in tides of total sensation, a balloon of diffused nerve-endings living the moment on her sentient skin. And he was. . . .

Exploding within her, imploding around her, filling her, gorging her with electrical being, blunt lance of pleasure around which she surrounded, caressing it, feeling it, digging it, taking it in. Feeling him gasping in spiralling spasms, feeling molecule by molecule wet scorching osmosis, him-her symbiotic flashing interface where skin touched skin, she screamed with his throat as he flashed through her, and time jumped a long beat of unbearable pleasure and she soared in a dream of Islamic heaven—slow grinding orgasm for ten million years.

Opening her eyes, she saw his closed and dreaming. Jack. Jack, she thought. I'm a phoney, a liar, I came here like some damned Mexican whore. And she teetered on the edge of telling him all—Benedict Howards using her and she using him.

But she felt his weight on her, the touch of his skin, his hair tickling her nipples, and the thought of his body lying in humus, dead, gone and forgotten, tied her belly and tongue in constricted knots. She remembered that she stood between him and oblivion. If she was brave a little longer, held it back for a while, all that was Jack, all that was between them, never had to die.

Oh Jack, Jack, she wanted to shout but didn't, someone like you should never die!

(To be continued)

THE HEAD-RAPE

BY D. M. THOMAS

Chastity veil: *Universal headdress, often highly ornamental, consisting of telepathy blocks (usually in the form of jewels) fixed to the critical points of the skull. (First used c.2800).*

— from the *Revised Anglamerican Dictionary.*

He raped her. Ripped the filaments from her skull.
She pleaded, by their home, their children, but
he tore the jewels off, mad with desire
to know her, to entirely penetrate,
like some Europa-storming bull.

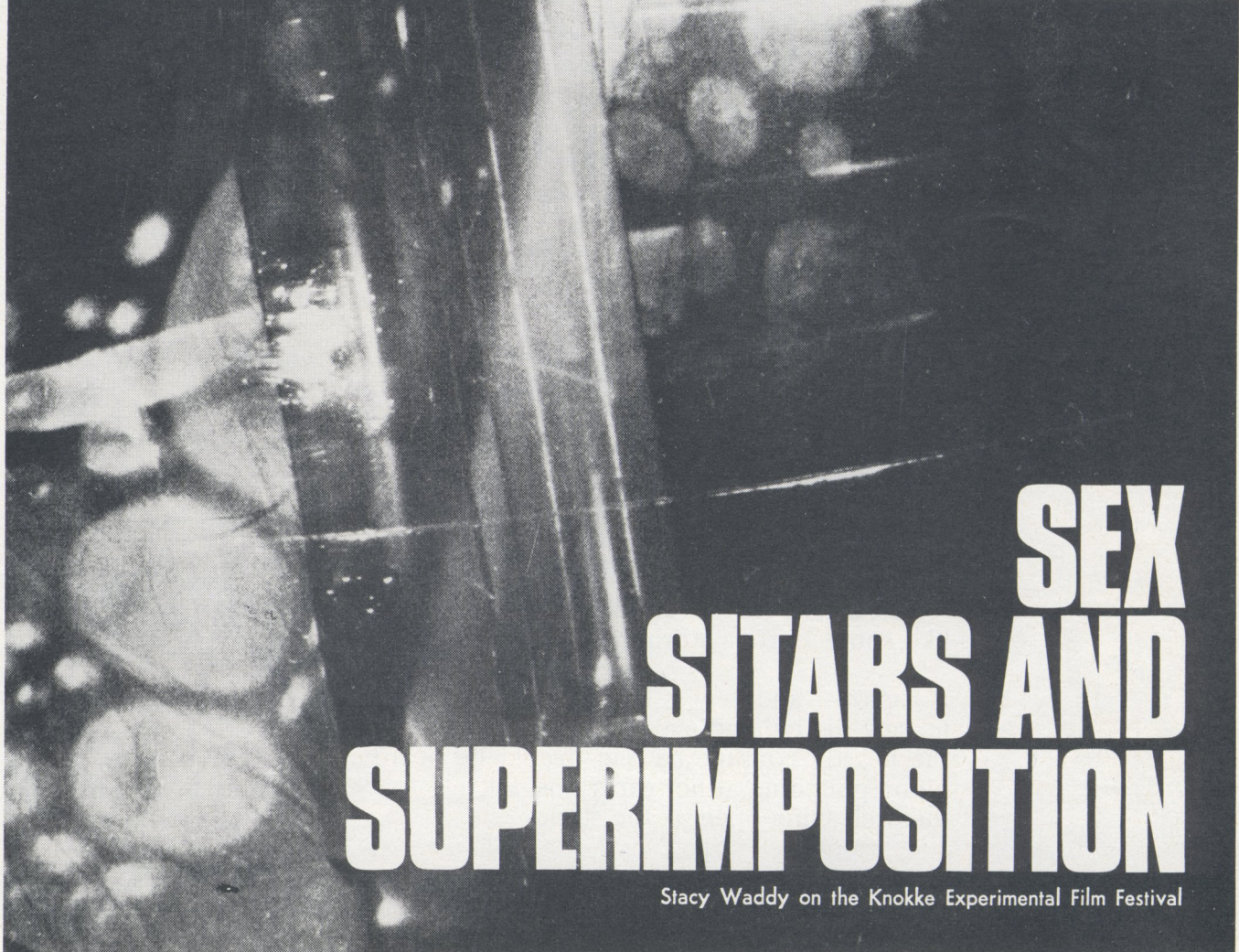
A topaz — and he was in her in a flash;
he saw his bulging eyes leer down, smelt
the beastly courage he had drunk, he heard
blood pounding at her eardrums, felt
mind cleaving open as the stones

went . . . diamond — and he flinched at her
emotions . . . onyx
— and one hammer-thought — HE'LL KILL ME . . .
sapphire — and vestigial memory
rushed into him — a girl beneath her father,

on a blue quilt; with the more terrible
revelations of times she'd lifted jewels
willingly . . . which horned an urge to kill
in earnest this wombed softness he
screamed in; and since he had come nude,

and she could not help but see, he re-
re-felt his lust, being carboned in her brain,
she re-re-felt the hysteria
that he re-felt, so he re-re-re-felt —
Their bedroom infinite: two facing mirrors.

Blood and black hairs on the ripped veil.



SEX SITARS AND SUPERIMPOSITION

Stacy Waddy on the Knokke Experimental Film Festival

AT THE LAST Knokke Experimental Film Festival they banned Jack Smith's "Flaming Creatures". And by comparison most of the prize-winning films have sunk into oblivion over the last five years. This time, for the 67-68 Festival, they missed the point again. Not by banning any film for its content — breasts and penises bounced through almost every film, and copulation was so nearly on screen that it seems incredible that "Flaming Creatures" could have seemed shocking. No, this time they put a stop to the audience participation that was developing quite spontaneously. This was the real area of experiment: the breaking down of the hitherto strictly defined barrier between audience and film.

162 films (90 in the competition, 72 outside it) proved pretty conclusively that it's no good experimenting with style and not content, or just content. Most of the films treated 'Experiment' like a place on the map, existing as an objective on its own. And most of them were hitch-hiking on anything that came along.

And in 1967 what came along was sitars, sex, and

superimposition. It is extraordinary that they should come along on a world-wide scale. I remember someone coming back from the Festival five years ago and saying he never wanted to see filmed stills with a flute accompaniment again. In 67, in America, France, Japan or Germany — they all slapped their colour home-movies into the labs and said "Superimpose those and add sitars to the track". Or they said to their actors "Do what you like but strip". Or they went to work on an egg. Black, white, Eastmancolour, raw, fried or boiled, there were eggs in 26 of the films I saw, nearly always being squashed.

These broken eggs may be an attempt to involve the spectator in disgust. But because you are still sitting clean and safe in the auditorium it fails.

Patience frayed at last. An American film, "Tapestry for Sorcerers," which described itself as "the film maker's journey through the underworld of sensory derangement . . . where the mysteries are enacted in the theatre of the soul," showed candles flickering and

Below : a girl having entered the MovieMovie. The balloons are inside.



lowering in a sinister breeze. Beautifully timed, someone puffed in the audience, and in laughter everyone else began to puff too. It was not the intention of the film maker, but what was important was this spontaneous bridging of the gap between film-action and real-life-action.

A 21-minute film of superimposition had recurring images of sparklers, and two or three people danced up on stage with real ones. This was the point when the judges announced that this kind of thing must stop.

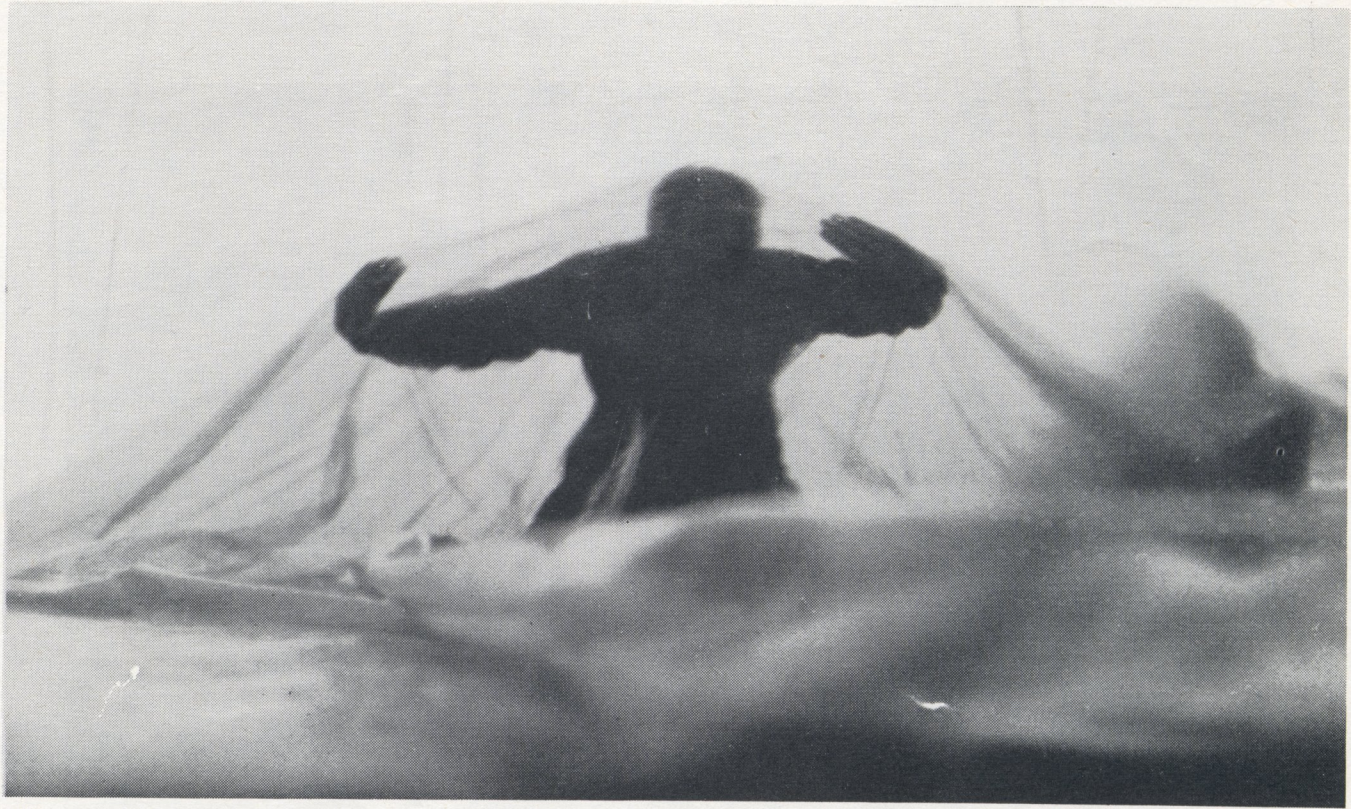
There was only one film that had thought out this principle. The Dutch "Hawaiian Lullaby" set a scene of corny romanticism to corny music, dark but for one white spot where a girl flashed in and out in a Hawaiian dance. In fact she was a real girl.

An experiment called the "MovieMaker" was the real exploration of this scene. It was put on by the Event-structure Research Group of Amsterdam, who work with inflatables. The MovieMovie is a transparent PVC dome, 30 feet high, with an inner cone of white, and as

it soughed and floated about, cinema images and slides were projected on to it, and on to the bodies of the people inside.

In the normal cinema, and even in the gilt-chaired hall of an Experimental Film Festival, the film goes on relentlessly whatever you do. You walk in, you walk out, it is irrelevant. You are conditioned to accept that this passive role of spectator is yours, and that you are a non-participant. With the MovieMovie, the image responds to you. You fill it in with smoke or foam and watch the images materialize. You leap on the inflations and the images fragment and reform. It fits so clearly with what is happening in the other arts. Kinetic sculpture, multiples, happenings, light shows — it is all the depth of the Art Object, immutable and completed, providing instead an art of involvement, multiplication and change.

Inflatables introduce a new scale into the process. Totems can tower 50 metres high in minutes. The Event-structure group (an English, an Australian and a Dutch



Above and right : audience participation in the MovieMovie. Below : a figure inside the V structure, surrounded by semi-inflated polythene tubing.





boy in their early 20s) see their inflatables as a way to change not only environments but whole social attitudes. They form a kind of anarchitecture, and defy the current architectural statements of solids, series and invariables, pointing to a far less material and ordered future. The structures can come out of nowhere and are made out of virtually nothing — light and air, which are both free and universally available. They are, the group say simply, working out the antithesis of “a place for everything and everything in its place”. And yet people reacted so violently to this confrontation with a new flexibility that there were accusations of fascist on Belgian television.

It seemed an international but totally apolitical scene until — inevitably — the French started bitter war around the fact that “it is already a political statement to hold a film festival in a Casino”. There was picketing and scuffles and attempts to hide the images of a sado-Japanese picture by packing the stage. They stood with their arms raised to cover the screen, and suddenly in the film action someone turned on a shower. It was the coming together of film-time and real-time in an extraordinary image and drew wild applause, as the inadvertent example of audience participation and the way the real experiments in film may lie.

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REVIEW



THE STUFF

MAILER'S 'WHY ARE WE IN VIETNAM?'
REVIEWED BY
DOUGLAS HILL

TO GO DOWN and get the stuff." The novelist's job according to Norman Mailer in a throwaway line in *Cannibals and Christians* (Deutsch, 25s.). More particularly, his own job as he sees it, for he may criticise his brother novelists but rarely dictates what they should be doing.

Is he a god descending from the mountain to snip a few flowers in the valley? "Down and get the stuff." He is a dredger, a miner, a garbage collector with something of the dowser in him as well. And the stuff? Reality, but more than that: what John Wain (speaking of Mailer) has called "the true identity of our time—our time in America". It is noteworthy that Mailer believes the novelist must go *down*—not out and about, or abroad—to find it.

He collected a heap of stuff in *The American Dream*, and considerably more in his latest, *Why Are We in Vietnam?* In both these books Mailer has provided titles that are entrées, so we must enter by them.

The first title is a well known patriotic phrase that summons up nationalist myths and ideals—democracy, equality, freedom, prosperity, Jefferson, Lincoln, pioneer spirit, land of opportunity, frontiers old and new, etc. In this form it serves as ironic backcloth to the novel. The real setting is the actuality of the American Unconscious. And it is overflowing with brutal hero archetypes, mucky slaving monster archetypes, arbitrary violence, wholesale erotic fantasies, wish fulfilments and compensations and death wishes, all the Freudian/Jungian dream horrors on that side of the mind-censor that torment our realities on this side.

Why Are We in Vietnam? (Putnam, \$4:95) is dredging up the same kind of stuff, much of the time, but it also has engaged the American Conscious Mind. The title poses the question: the novel explores forces and undercurrents in what must be called the national mentality where the answer might be expected to lie.

It is not, of course, a novel "about" Vietnam. Away from the title, that country is not mentioned. It is a novel "about" a group of Texans in Alaska hunting big game: a tycoon, a couple of his business yes-men, his son (who acts as narrator) and his son's buddy.

NOW THE WORDS "Texas" and "Alaska" are highly charged American terms — *portmanteau* words like "the American dream", rich in overtones and allusion. So "Texas" is encrusted with the Alamo and the code of the west; with cattle drives and Indian attacks and Mexican wars; with the notion of the drifter cowboy who is a law and a gun unto himself, a hard virile loner who does what he's gotta do. And in more modern times it is overlaid with the translation of frontier primitivism into association with oil wells and Cadillacs, vast wealth and vaster power, culminating in the murder of Kennedy and also in Lyndon B. Johnson and his consort, infusing Texas virtues and values into Washington intrigue and international diplomacy.

"Alaska", more simply, bears the strain of being the U.S.A.'s last frontier wilderness, the last place within the nation (a corollary to battlegrounds outside) where a man may test and prove his manhood like his mythic forefathers did, in conflict with raw and murderous nature personified here by the giant, ferocious, almost unkillable grizzly bear.

So from these two fairly obviously emotive proper nouns can be got the drift of Mailer's answer to his title's question. But the novel is no mere dance of the metaphors. Mailer as a novelist is in the business of creating *beings* (his word) engaged in the process of living. His beings move through some increasingly elemental situations, out there in the northern backwoods, during which their elements are revealed. Even conscious, or semi-conscious—and so perhaps more superficial—elements are not ig-

nored as a means of getting the stuff. The lip-licking chapter on the rifles that accompany the hunters reveals much: when your manly Texan or American confronts his moment of truth on whatever frontier or demilitarised zone, he does it with a gun in his hand. In a very recent interview, Mailer writes:

America, more than any other country on earth, has an image of herself as a fighting nation. Americans really *want* to fight, really want a war . . . Fine. Have war games every year . . . Buy some place—some desert or jungle—and invite any countries we have eyes for to come to fight . . . Americans will just be doing what they want to be doing: some shooting, some war.

This was Mailer's answer to the interviewer's question, can we get out of Vietnam? It also answers his book's title. And yet, later in the book, the teenage narrator and his buddy temporarily slough off the crapulous power-hungry virility anxieties of their elders and cache their weapons, to wander unarmed and elated through their dangerous but paradisaical sub-Arctic.

IF WE TAKE this section to pieces, we can see the Mailer affirmation sliding into a curiously occult kind of vague mysticism. As perhaps in the whole book we can see the Mailer over-writing and high-pressure emotionalism that seems to strike many European readers (especially the more jaded literary folk) as embarrassing, naïve and crude. But this may simply underline the inadequacy of the analytic approach. For me, in its context, the section is a sustained wave of prose lyricism that has never been bettered in American literature. It is the style (if even that piece can be separated from the whole) that elevates and reinforces the book. The young narrator calls himself D.J., which may be his initials but also stands (he lets us know) for Doctor Jekyll and for "Disc Jockey to the world". And the style is deejay manner, rapid-

fire, hip, flip, glib, wide ranging, and raddled by instant shifts in time, space and subject. Yet the narrator keeps his distance, slyly offering the possibility that he is a crippled Negro in Harlem posing as the clean-cut Texas youth in order to tell his no-holds-barred story. So he is a contrivance, allowing Mailer first-person style with third-person freedom, allowing him to get much more of "the stuff" across to us without too much useless filtering or processing beforehand.

In an interview published in *Cannibals and Christians* Mailer dismisses the "craft" of the novel as a potential escape hatch through which the writer can avoid problems met in the writing—avoid "confronting a reality which might open into more and more anxiety and so present a deeper and deeper view of the abyss". Mailer replaces craft with full consciousness: he volunteers himself as a man and novelist who will face, explore and create reality in any extent or depth.

I think it is a legitimate view of the man. He hasn't been scared off or bought off; he hasn't become satisfied with surfaces or fringes; he remains determined to keep his consciousness operating at full potential, no matter how vulnerable this leaves him to the craft-mongers demanding order, discipline, good taste and convention. He believes, not as a "spontaneity" gimmick but as an axiom, that too great a concern for craftsmanship dilutes truth: some of the gravel has to be let through, to get all the gold.

After the *Last Exit* verdict, this impassioned, exciting book will probably not be published in Britain—because the boy narrator is what lady librarians and provincial aldermen would call "foul-mouthed". It makes me wonder where Mailer gets the tenacity to go on. It's so easy for people to fasten on to his flaws and weaknesses and pull him down. It's too demanding to try to see where he's got to, where he's going, and maybe join him there. It makes us vulnerable, too.

How Much Responsibility in a Cup of Coffee?

**James Sallis
reviews Newfield's
"A Prophetic Minority"**

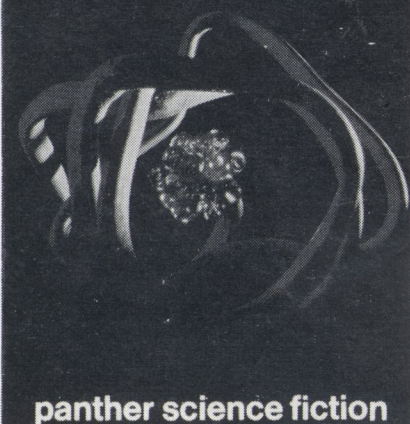
THE IDEA OF the interlocutor—the psychopomp—must, I suppose, have some currency today. These "interpreters" spring up along the process of cultural assimilation; just as surely as Baudelaire's "Dandy", they are the counters of a changing national mood. Today they serve as outriders to minority and subculture conscience, sitting on the fence or jumping from side to side, sending back reports: what it's like "where it's at". The intention is tutelary—to open windows so the people outside can see In, to provide a kind of shock-absorber. They write instructive articles on rock for women's magazines, articles on the underground press for men's magazines, and (now) books.

Jack Newfield's *A Prophetic Minority: The American New Left* (Anthony Blond, 30s.), for instance. Rather than offering any serious analysis of the social (much less, personal) implications of this "movement to make guilt impossible", Newfield contents himself with serving up a detailed chronology of the movement. At no point does Newfield really come up against the questions which seem most important—for instance, the fairly massive social responsibility these people have accrued to themselves in their actions. Lacking either the precision or unity of the shorter form, the book nevertheless comes off (certainly in execution, and for the most part in conception) as a kind of recomplicated magazine article.

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THE BOOK IS a curious alloy of common sense, research, and sudden, awesome losses of perspective. To patch the cracks Newfield has utilised rhetoric ("The New Radicalism began with a request for a cup of coffee"), dulling repetition, and pigeon-holing ("In the interest of simplicity I have broken the adult Left down into four broad groupings") . . . devices which are in turn supported by gassy generalisations such as: "The New Radicalism is authentically new in its vague weaving together of anarchist, existential, transcendental, Populist, socialist, and Bohemian strands of thought". In this way much of the potential energy becomes dissipated; the text often seems more a search for adjectives than for qualities. The book loses force and comes, finally, to read rather like an overlong essay.

What Newfield *does* afford you is this: a firm sense of the movement's gathering out of generalised social outrage, its shifts in mood and centre, its essential disinterest with (and difference from) the older radical traditions, and an introduction to problems now facing it. Perhaps this is all we can, at this moment, reasonably demand.

Newfield's major problem is, of course, the problem of every contemporary social analyst: the very instability and intangibility of the thing being watched. And perhaps here he is more troubled than most, for while there certainly exists a core of ideological, activist leaders, the entire "New Left" is less a movement than a set of generalised attitudes. It is to Newfield's credit that he aware of this, that he tries to outline the form (if *not* the shape) as best he can, and perhaps not wholly to his fault that he fails. Precision and accuracy are often separate things, and precision is perhaps, here, not the proper tool. While almost absurdly over-simplified, such statements as the one which follows seem at least a respectable attempt to get to the *mood* of what has happened. . . .

If a New Left activist is now twenty-two, he doesn't remember the Soviet Union's absorption of a satellite empire in the 1940's or the crushing of the Hungarian revolt in 1956. But he does remember that in April of 1961 America gave covert support to the Bay of Pigs invasion. He does remember America's increasing involvement in Vietnam and the indefensible intervention in the Dominican Republic in April of 1965. During the same period of time, this mythical twenty-two-year-old New Radical has seen the Soviet Union remove its missiles from Cuba, sign the nuclear test-ban treaty, intervene in the internal affairs of no other nation, and play peacemaker between India and Pakistan. Also, he has seen anti-Communism wed only to racism, militarism, and reaction in America . . . He has seen Communists only as victims, never as executioners. He has seen Communists denied burial in Arlington Cemetery, pilloried before HUAC, denied free speech on the campuses.

And perhaps it is in *tone* rather than material that Newfield comes closest—in a tone set by statements such as the following by Mario Savio, leader of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley:

There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart that you can't take part, you can't even tacitly take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all.

So: thank you, Mr Interlocutor, Mr. Newfield, thank you. Richter wanted to see how he looked in the mirror with his eyes closed. Take a good look, New Left. There you are. Were. And maybe you won't recognise yourself but maybe the others will. The ones standing out there, outside, watching.

NEWFIELD, in *A Prophetic Minority*, speaks of our society's freakish gift for absorbing or mer-

chandising all the forms of dissent, uniqueness, newness; so it is that "hippies" are used to sell sport-coats and "controversial" radio/TV shows flourish. This same process occurs within the literary establishment: the new, the off-beat, the ephemeral finds a strong voice, then discovers that it has been absorbed into the establishment (though perhaps *adsorbed* is the more appropriate word). And we witness the result in a current taste for pastiche, black humour, genre-derived novels, books built on grotesquerie, books adrift with loose symbolic *stuff* . . . and all snapped up, touted as serious, worthwhile fiction.

Exhibit: *Hump: or, Bone by Bone Alive* by David Benedictus (Anthony Blond, 25s.).

It belongs to a class of recent fantastic fiction which ranges from the snide, Wylie-derived flatness of Vonnegut, through Pynchon, to outré, satisfying books like *The Nightclerk*. It is composed of the necessary grotesque protagonist, sexual fantasy, paranoid mysticism, cannibalism and mutilation, magic, revelatory dreams, conjoined flatness of tone and sparkling verbalism. Rampant with abstracted, intellectualized humour and self-indulgent puns, it reminds one of the vogueish "insouciant" fiction, also of the contemporary poetry which attempts to make a tool of naiveté. It contains elements of the mystery, the thriller, the horror story, science fiction, fairy tale, and the whole range of "fantasy" from Kafka to Tolkein . . . a sort of genre stew. But: Art. They have it down almost to a formula now.

Hump is a parable of spirituality, or (if you prefer) the artist. Its protagonist, an acrobat, awakes one morning to discover that he is one of the twenty thousand guests invited to a massive government pre-election party. He also discovers that the guest of honour is Miss Rose Tuckaloo, fashion model and incarnation of his dream princess; but when his time comes to meet her, he disgraces himself by spilling ink on her dress and, horribly em-

barrassed, flees. Now he has disturbed the perfect order of society, and a group of politicians (quite witty people, these) take him to lunch in Paris. During the course of things he reveals that he can fly, though only two feet off the ground. The politicians insist upon knowing how he does this; the acrobat is unable to tell them. He is consequently—though without rancour on either side—mutilated. To isolate him, to keep him from talking to others, his limbs are cut off and his tongue torn out. Carried to the elections, he is ridiculed and avoided—but elected President. Asked for a speech, and with the help of Miss Rose Tuckaloo, he points out letters from newspaper headlines, indicating that his soul is in his hump. No one understands; they try to interpret his message and are unable. Afraid that he will divulge government secrets, the politicians again abduct him. He is carried away and placed in a coffin which proves too small. Miss Rose Tuckaloo appears and repents of her momentary lapse in feeling something toward him, in attempting, fruitlessly, to help him. He is removed and his hump cut off. Now he fits within the coffin. Minutes before he was to have assumed office, the coffin is let out to sea: "Clay in wood in water. Water."

Now. The conception and writing of the book are actually quite good; there are intensely moving episodes and moments, as well, of highly effective comedy. Still, it impresses one more as a parlour trick than anything else. (One is reminded of the superficial brilliance of Nathanael West's first novel, *The Dream Life of Balso Snell*—and, that having brought West to mind, of the similarities between *Hump* and *The Dismantling of Lemuel Petkin*.) One has seen all the pieces before, and one's major interest is in how they will be assembled *this* time around.

So: a stew. Pastiche, but the parts *do* get together to form a sort of inchoate whole. The assembly is excellent. And perhaps, finally, the

worst we can say of *Hump* is that it takes itself too seriously.

I am reminded of another reviewer who accused a writer of having "too much engine for his rear axle". Perhaps next time around Mr. Benedictus will be less eclectic and, much more importantly, less self-indulgent. Or perhaps the form of establishment fiction waiting just around the corner will be better suited to Mr. Benedictus' considerable talents. One hopes so.

Meanwhile, have another bowl of Art.

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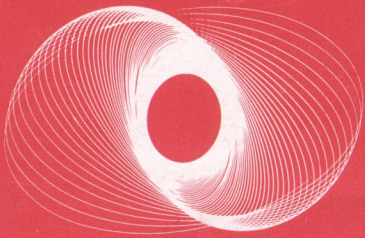
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