

Five Shillings or One Dollar

# new worlds

Samuel R. Delany  
Thomas M. Disch  
Michael Moorcock

& Brian W. Aldiss:

UNDER THE WEIGHT OF SUNLIGHT, the low hills abased themselves. To the three people sitting behind the driver of the hover, it seemed that pools of liquid—something between oil and water—formed constantly on the pitted road ahead, to disappear miraculously as they reached the spot. In all the landscape, this optical illusion was the only hint that moisture existed.

The passengers had not spoken for some while. Now the Pakistani Health Official, Firoz Ayub Kahn, turned to his guests and said, "Within an hour, we shall be into Calcutta. Let us hope and pray that the air-conditioning of this miserable machine holds out so long!"

The woman by his side gave no sign that she heard him, continuing to stare forward through her dark glasses; she left it to her husband to make an appropriate response.

She was a slender woman of dark complexion, her narrow face made notable by its generous mouth. Her black hair gathered over one shoulder, was disordered from the four-hour drive down from the hill station.

Her husband was a tall spare man, apparently in his mid-forties, who wore old-fashioned steel-rimmed spectacles. His face in repose carried an eroded look, as if

(Continued inside on page 4)



# Nine by Laumer

short stories by  
**KEITH LAUMER**

Keith Laumer, one of the most creative and original science fiction writers at work today, presents nine dazzling short stories which display all his talents at their very best. From **Hybrid**, with its unsettling picture of man as parasite to an arboreal host, to the frightening world that Bret Hale discovers in **A Trip to the City**, Laumer constantly diverts, startles and entertains.

25s

# The Thunder and Lightning Man COLIN COOPER

The trouble about Badgeroe was that he looked a crank. Hard to take seriously his claim to be in touch with aliens *en route* to earth. Or so Mark Horley thought until he took a holiday in Somerset and came upon a curious set of Badgeroe memorials in the village church . . .

This is science fiction—seasoned with wit and humour and set against a solidly realized English background—for those who remember H. G. Wells with affection.

25s

**FABER & FABER**

## BUY YOURSELF 12 NEW WORLDS FOR CHRISTMAS

SPECIAL  
CHRISTMAS OFFER  
TO READERS

**One year's subscription to  
New Worlds (12 issues) for just £2 10s.  
6 months for £1 5s.**

Back issues are also available from issue 173.  
Add 4s. for each copy you order

Name.....

Address.....

I enclose £.....s.....d. I would like my subscription to  
start with issue no..... I would like back issues.....



*Between Vision & Confusion*  
1/6 Fortnightly  
**£2.10. pa. U.K. From:**  
**IT. 22 Betterton St. WC2** TEM 3727



# new worlds

Number 185

## Contents

- 2    Lead In**
- 4    Brian W. Aldiss:**    ... And the Stagnation of the Heart
- 10   Leo Zorin:**    The Apocalypse Machine
- 14   Andrew Lugg:**    Andy Warhol: Portraits, Still Lives, Events
- 23   Michael Moorcock:**    The Delhi Division
- 28   Thomas M. Disch:**    The Colours
- 32   Joel Zoss:**    The New Agent
- 39   Bill Butler:**    Peace Talking
- 40   Samuel R. Delany:**    Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones
- 57   Books and Comment:**    Two Kinds of Opium

Cover by Gabi Nasemann

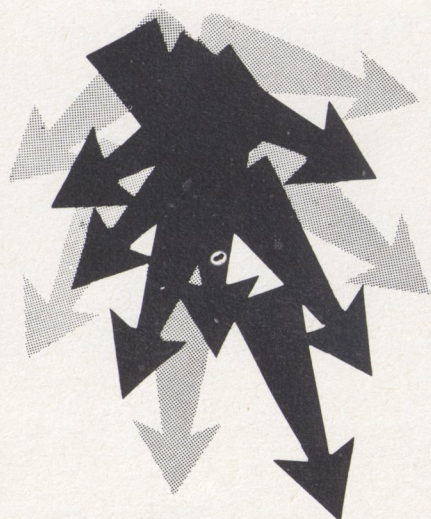
Illustrations by Nasemann, Myrdahl, Cawthorn, Cornwall

MICHAEL MOORCOCK and JAMES SALLIS, editors. CHARLES PLATT, associate editor, fiction. NIGEL FRANCIS, design. DOUGLAS HILL, associate editor. Dr. CHRISTOPHER EVANS, science. DIANE LAMBERT, advertising and promotion (01-229 6599). M. JOHN HARRISON, books editor. EDUARDO PAOLOZZI, aeronautics advisor.

NEW WORLDS is © December 1968, published monthly by Michael Moorcock at **271 Portobello Road, London, W.11.**, with the assistance of the Arts Council of Great Britain. Distributed by Continental Publishers and Distributors Ltd, 25 Worship Street, London E.C.2. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double spaced with wide margins on white, quarto paper and **will not be returned** unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope of suitable size. No responsibility is taken for loss or damage to manuscripts or artwork.

Subscriptions: 60/- (10 dollars) for twelve issues





## LEAD-IN

**T**HOMAS M. DISCH'S strange and unconventional story this month is one of a group he wrote in London between returning from Istanbul and leaving for Milford, Pennsylvania where, for the moment, he is living. His superb novella, *The Asian Shore*, a 'tale of possession' based on his experiences in Istanbul, will be published next year in Damon Knight's *Orbit* series. These stories represent something of a departure for Disch, who is beginning to explore new forms as well as new content.

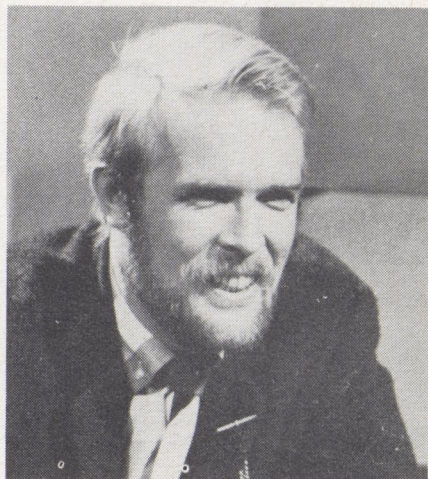
Samuel R. Delany made his first appearance in NEW WORLDS nearly two years ago with a perceptive article on the nature of modern science fiction. Although his excellent story *Starpit* was accepted for NEW WORLDS, it

was never published due to confusion concerning the rights, and *Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones* is actually his first piece of fiction in the magazine.

Delany has published nine novels and has won, for both novels and short stories, the Nebula Award three times within two years. His award-winning novel *Babel-17* was published here recently by Gollancz and other novels are appearing from Gollancz in hardcover and Sphere in paperback. With Roger Zelazny, Delany is considered one of the most exciting new writers of the baroque sf tale. His latest novel, *Nova*, has just been published in the States (see our review in Books and Comment) and soon will be published by Gollancz.

**B**ILL BUTLER, WHOSE poem *Peace Talking* is his third to appear in NEW WORLDS, is the proprietor of the Unicorn Bookshop in Brighton. He was recently found guilty of selling obscene publications in a case where the magistrate not only ruled for the prosecution but also spent some time castigating expert witnesses for appearing in Butler's defence. One of the books in the case was *Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan*, which was described as being 'a book with a four-letter word in its title by an American science fiction author'. It was in fact by England's own J. G. Ballard, who originally wrote the piece for Disch & Sladek's *Ronald Reagan, the Magazine of Poetry*.

This month we begin the first of a new series of Jerry Cornelius stories, *The Delhi Division*; the next of these, *Jeremiad*, will



Butler: 'Obscene' publications appear next month and is written by James Sallis. The authors believe this to be the first conscious experiment of its kind and would appreciate hearing from readers about it. Cornelius is the hero of Moorcock's *The Final Programme* (Avon Books, N.Y.), which will be published next year in the U.K.

We should very much like to hear from readers who have difficulty in obtaining NEW WORLDS locally. It would help us considerably if we were informed of the newsagents who cannot obtain or do not stock the magazine, so that we can help them receive copies regularly; this will save your searching or writing to NEW WORLDS directly, and will help us improve our distribution which is still, we gather, weak in some areas.



Shortly we hope to begin a correspondence column in *NEW WORLDS*, now that our publishing schedule is back to normal, and would appreciate hearing readers' comments on the magazine or particular aspects of it.

**WE** HAVE RECENTLY appointed as books editor M. J. Harrison, whose first story for us, *Baa Baa Blocksheep*, appeared



*Nasemann: people, time, paper and words* last month. Mr. Harrison wishes to contact readers with a knowledge of specialist subjects who would be interested in reviewing non-fiction.

Doubtless those who saw last month's issue were impressed by the work of the two photographers

who illustrated the bulk of the



*Delany: baroque sf tale* magazine. Jay Myrdahl is an American based in London and Gabi Nasemann is German, also living in London. She is now 21. Born in Hamburg, she came to London after taking a photographer's apprenticeship, planning to stay for six weeks, but found the atmosphere to her liking and decided to remain here and work. Of her photographs she says, "Most of them I do when I feel like it. They are all part of me and the game played with people, time, paper and words, which makes me happy. I would like to do a book with poems and their translation into photographs and paintings" We shall be publishing more of Miss Nasemann's photographs in future issues and plan to begin a project along the lines she describes.

**JAMES CAWTHORN** IS well known to regular readers as

both an excellent illustrator and an outstanding book reviewer. He has been associated with the magazine since 1964, when he produced the first two covers of our paperback format and illustrated the bulk of the paperback-sized issues. His last illustrations were for C. C.



*Cawthorn: illustrations, reviews* Shackleton's article on H. G. Wells in number 182. Cawthorn's illustrations appear with the Delany story and his reviews of current sf and fantasy will be published next month. Next month, also, we intend to bring you fiction by Boris Vian, James Sallis, J. J. Mundis, Thomas Pynchon, John T. Sladek, Giles Gordon and others, and would suggest that the best way of obtaining the issue is to place a regular order with your newsagent.



Continued from front cover

**BRIAN W. ALDISS:**

# ...AND THE STAGNATION OF THE HEART

he had spent many years gazing at just such countries as the one outside. He said, "It was good of you to consent to letting us use this slow mode of transport, Dr. Khan. I appreciate your impatience to get back to work."

"Well, well, I am impatient, that is perfectly true. Calcutta needs me—and you too, now you are recovered from your illness. And Mrs. Yale also, naturally." It was difficult to determine when Khan's voice concealed sarcasm.

"It is well worth seeing the land at first hand, in order to appreciate the magnitude of the problems against which Pakistan and India are battling."

Clement Yale had noted before that his speeches, intended to mollify the health official, seemed to produce the opposite effect. Khan said, "Mr. Yale, what problems do you refer to? There is no problem anywhere, only the old satanic problem of the human condition, that is all."

"I was referring to the evacuation of Calcutta and its attendant difficulties. You would admit they constituted a problem, surely?"

This sort of verbal jostling had broken out during the last half-hour of the ride.

"Well, well, naturally where you have a city containing some twenty-five million people, there you expect to find a few problems, wouldn't you agree, Mrs. Yale? Rather satanic problems, maybe—but always stemming

from and rooted in the human condition. That is why executives such as ourselves are always needed, isn't it?"

Yale gestured beyond the window, where broken carts lay by the roadside. "This is the first occasion in modern times that a city has simply bogged itself down and had to be abandoned. I would call that a special problem."

He hardly listened to Khan's long and complicated answer; the health official was involving himself in contradictions from which verbiage could not rescue him. He stared instead out of the window as the irreparable world of heat slid past. The carts and cars had been fringing the road for some while—indeed, almost all the way from the hospital in the hills, where East Madras was still green. Here, nearer Calcutta, their skeletal remains lay thicker. Between the shafts of some of the carts lay bones, many of them no longer recognisable as those of bullocks; lesser skeletons toothed the wilderness beyond the road.

**T**HE HOVER-DRIVER MUTTERED constantly to himself. The dead formed no obstacle to their progress; the living and half-living had yet to be considered. Pouring out of the great antheap ahead were knots of human beings, solitary figures, family groups, men, women, children, the more fortunate with beasts of burden or





handcarts or bicycles to support themselves or their scanty belongings. Blindly they moved forward, going they hardly knew whither, treading over those who had fallen, not raising their heads to avoid the oncoming hover-ambulance.

For centuries, the likes of these people had been pouring into Calcutta from the dying hinterland. Nine months ago, when the government of the city had fallen and the Indian Congress had announced that the city would be abandoned, the stream had reversed its direction. The refugees became refugees again.

Caterina behind her dark glasses took in the parched images. (*Mankind driven always driven the bare foot on the way the eternal road of earth and no real destination only the way to water and longer grass. Will we be able to get a drink there always the stone beneath the passing instep.*) She said, "I suppose one shouldn't hope for a shower when we get there."

Ayub Khan said, "The air-condition is not all it should be, lady. Hence the sensation of heat. There has not been proper servicing of the vehicle. I shall make some appropriate complaints when we arrive, never wonder!"

Jerking to avoid a knot of refugees, the hover rounded a shoulder of hill. The endless deltaic plain of the Ganges stretched before them, fading in the far distance, annihilating itself in its own vision of sun. To one side of the track stood a grim building, the colour of mud, its walls rising silent and stark. Not a fortress, not a temple: the meaningless functionalism, now

functionless, of some kind of factory. Beside it, one or two goats scampered and vanished.

Ayub Khan uttered a command to the driver. The hover slid to one side. The road near at hand was temporarily deserted. Their machine bumped over the ditch and drifted towards the factory, raising dust high as it went. Its engines died, it sank to the ground. Ayub Khan was reaching behind him for the holstered rifle on the rack above their heads.

"What's this place?" Yale asked, rousing himself.

"A temporary diversion, Mr. Yale, that will not occupy us for more than the very moment. Maybe you and your lady will care to climb out with me for a moment and exercise? Go steadily, remembering you were ill."

"I have no wish to climb out, Dr. Khan. We are urgently needed in Calcutta. What are we stopping for? What is this place?"

The Pakistani doctor smiled and took down a box of cartridges. As he loaded the rifle, he said, "I forgot you are not only recently sick but also immortal and must take the greatest care. But the desperate straits of Calcutta will wait for us for ten minutes' break, I assure you. Recall, the human condition goes on for ever."

(*The human condition goes on for ever sticks stones bows and arrows shotguns nuclear weapons quescharges and the foot and face going down into the dust the perfect place for death.*) She stirred and said, "The human condition goes on for ever, Dr. Khan, but we are expected in Dalhousie Square today."



As he opened the door, he smiled. "Expectancy is a pleasing part of our life, Mrs. Yale."

The Yales looked at each other. The driver was climbing down after Ayub Khan, and gesticulating excitedly. "His relish of power likewise," Yale said.

"We cadged the ride."

"The ride—not the moralising! Still, part of abrasion."

"Feeling right, Clem?"

"Perfectly." To show her, he climbed out of the vehicle with a display of energy. He was still angry with himself for contracting cholera in the middle of a job where every man's capacity was stretched to the utmost; the dying metropolis was a stewpot of disease.

As he helped Cat down, they felt the heat of the plains upon them. It was the heat of a box, allowing no perspectives but its own. The moisture in it stifled their lungs; with each breath, they felt their shoulders prickle and their bodies weep.

Ayub Khan was striding forward, rifle ready for action, the driver chattering excitedly by him, carrying spare ammunition.

TIME, SUFFERING from a slow wound, was little past midday, so that the derelict factory was barren of shadow. Nevertheless, the two English moved instinctively towards it, following the Pakistanis, feeling as they went old heat rebuffed from the walls of the great fossil.

"Old cement factory."

"Cementary."

"Mortarl remaniés. . . ."

"Yes, here's an acre stone indeed. . . ."

The rifle went off loudly.

"Missed!" said Ayub Khan cheerfully, rubbing the top of his head with his free hand. He ran forward, the driver close behind him. Ramshackle remains of a metal outbuilding stood to one side of the factory facade; a powdered beam of it collapsed as the men trotted past and disappeared from view.

*(And the termites too have their own empires and occasions and never over-extend their capacities they create and destroy on a major time-scale yet they have no aspirations. Man became sick when he discovered he lived on a planet when his world became finite his aspirations grew infinite and what the hell could those idiots be doing?)*

Switching on his pocket fan, Yale walked up the gritty steps of the factory. The double wooden door, once barred, had long since been broken down. He paused on the threshold and looked back at his wife, standing indecisively in the heat.

"Coming in?"

She made an impatient gesture and followed. He watched her. He had watched that walk for almost four centuries now, still without tiring of it. It was *her* walk: independent, yet not entirely; self-conscious, yet, in a true sense, self-forgetting; a stride that did not hurry, that was neither old nor young; a woman's walk; Cat's

walk; a cat-walk. It defined her as clearly as her voice. He realised that in the preoccupations of the last two months, in doomed Calcutta and in the hospital ward, he had often forgotten her, the living her.

As she came up the steps level with him, he took her arm.

"Feelings?"

"Specifically, irritation with Khan foremost. Secondly, knowledge we need our Khans. . . ."

"Yes, but how now to you?"

"Our centuries—as ever. Limit gravely areas of non-predictability in human relations among Caucasian-Christian community. Consequent accumulation of staleness *abraded* by unknown factors."

"Such as Khan?"

"Sure. You similarly abraded, Clem?"

"He has chafage value. Ditto all sub-continent."

His fingers released her arm. The brown flesh ever young left no sign of the ephemeral touch. But the Baltic virus would have quickly healed the harshest grip he could have bestowed.

They looked into the old chaos of the factory, moved in over rubble. A corpse lay in a side office, open-mouthed, hollow, without stink; something slid away from under, afraid for its own death.

From the passage beyond, noise, echoey and conflicting.

"Back to the float?"

"This old temple to India's failure—" He stopped. Two small goats, black of face and beardless, came at a smart clip from the back of the darkness ahead, eyes—in Ayub Khan's pet word—"satanic", came forward swerving and bleating.

And from the far confusion of shadow, Ayub Khan stepped and raised his rifle. Yale lifted a hand as the shot came.

*(Temples and the conflicting desires to make and destroy ascetic priests and fat ones my loving husband still had his tender core unspoiled for more years.)*

The goats tumbling past them, Yale sagging to the ground, the noise of the shot with enormous power to extend itself far into the future, Cat transfixed, and somewhere a new ray of light searching down as if part of the roof had given way.

Rushing forward, Ayub Khan gave Cat back her ability to move; she turned to Yale, who was already getting to his feet again. The Pakistani calling, his driver behind him.

"My dear and foolish Mr. Yale! Have I not rifled you, I sincerely trust! What terrible disaster if you are dead! How did I know you crept secretly into this place? My godfathers! How you did scare me! Driver! *Pani lap, jhaldi!*"

He fussed anxiously about Yale until the driver returned from the ambulance with a beaker of water. Yale drank it and said, "Thank you, I'm perfectly well, Dr. Khan, and you missed me, fortunately."

"What do you imagine you were doing?" Cat asked.

*(Hold your hands together so they will not shake and*





*your thighs if he had been killed murder most dreaded of crimes even to short-livers and this idiot—)*

"Madam, you must surely see that I was shooting at the two goats. Though I hope thoroughly that I am a good Muslim, I was shooting at those two damned satanic goats. That action needs not any justification, surely?"

She was still shaking and trying to recover her poise. High abrasion value okay! "Goats? In here?"

"Mrs. Yale, the driver and I have seen these goats from the road and chase after them. Because the back of this factory is broken, they escape from us into here. We follow. Little do we know that you creep secretly in from the front! What a scare! My godfathers!"

As he paused to light a mescahale, she saw his hand was shaking; the observation restored a measure of sympathy for the man. She further relaxed her pulse-count by a side-glance at Yale, for their glances by now, cryptic as their personal conversations, told them as much; certain the shot was careless, he was already more interested in the comedy of Ayub Khan's reactions than his own.

She was still shaking and trying to recover her poise. *(Yes many would find him a negative man not seeing that the truth is he has the ability to add to his own depths other people's. He stands there while others*

*talk saintly later he will deliver the nub of the matter. My faith of which he would disapprove indeed I have an obligation not to be all faith must also fill my abrasion quota for him!)*

"You know, I really hate these little satanic goats! In Pakistan and India they cause the chief damage to territory and the land will never revive while goats are upon it. In my own province, I watch them climb the trees to eat up new tender shoots. So the latest laws to execute goats, reinforced with rewards of two new-rupees per hoof, are so much to my thinking, more than you Europeans can understand . . ."

"That is certainly true, Dr. Khan," Yale said. "I fully share your dislike of the destructive power of the goat. Unfortunately, such animals are a part and parcel of our somewhat patchy history. The hogs that ensured that the early forests, once felled by stone axes, did not grow again, and the sheep and goats that formed man's traditional food supplies, have left as indelible a mark on Europe as on Asia and elsewhere. The eroded shores of the Mediterranean and the barren lands all round that sea are their doing, in league with man."

*(Does the pressure of my thought make him speak of early mankind now? Through these centuries glad and stern I have come to see man's progress as a blind attempt to escape from those hopeful buffoons so exposed to chance yet chance beats down like weather whatever you cover your back with we know who live a long while that the heart stagnates without abrasion and the great abrader is chance.)*

NOW AYUB KHAN had perked up and was smiling over the fumes of his mescahale, gesturing with one hand.

"Now, now, don't be bitter, Mr. Yale—nobody denies that the Europeans have their share of minor troubles! But let's admit while we are being really frank that they also have all the luck, don't they? I mean to say, to give one example, the Baltic virus happened in their part of the world, didn't it?—just like the Industrial Revolution many hundreds of years ago."

"Your part of the world, Doctor, has enough to contend with without longevity as well!"

"Precisely so! What is an advantage to you Europeans, and to the Americans behind their long disgraceful isolationism, is a disadvantage entirely to the unluck Asiatic nations, that is what I am saying. That is precisely why our governments have made longevity illegal—as you well know, a Pakistani suffers capital punishment if he is found to be a long-liver, just because we do not solve our satanic population problem so very easily as Europe. So we are condemned to our life-expectancy of merely forty-seven years average, against your thousands! How can that be fair, Mr. Yale? We are all human beings, wherever we live on the planet Earth, equator or pole, my godfathers!"

Yale shrugged. "I don't pretend to call it fair. Nobody calls it fair. It just happens that 'fairness' is not



a built-in natural law. Man invented the concept of justice—it's one of his better ideas—but the rest of the universe, unfortunately, doesn't give a damn for it."

"It's very easy for you to be smug."

*(He looks so angry and hurt his skin almost purple his eyeballs yellow rather like a goat himself not a good representative of his race. But the antipathy can never be overcome the haves and the have-nots the Neanderthals and the Cro-Magnons the rich and the poor we can never give what we have. We should get back into the float and drive on. I'd like to wash my hair. The goats moved endlessly across the plain with every step they took the great enchanted ruin behind them crumpled into a material like straw and as they went and multiplied long grasses sprang out of the human corpses littering the plain and the goats capered forward and ate.)*

"Smugness does not enter the matter. There are the facts and—"

"Facts! Facts! Oh, your satanic British factualism! I suppose you call the many goats *facts*? How does it come about, ask yourself, how does it come about that these goats can live forever and I cannot, for all my superior reasoning powers?"

Yale said, "I fear I can only answer you with more factualism. We know now, as for many years we did not, that the Baltic virus is extraterrestrial in origin, most probably arriving on this planet by tektite. To exist in a living organism, the virus needs a certain rare dynamic condition in the mitochondria of cells known as *rubmission*—the Red Vibrations of the popular press—and this it finds in only a handful of terrestrial types, among which are such disparate creatures as copepods, Adelie penguins, herring, man, and goats and sheep."

"We have enough trouble with this satanic drought without immortal goats!"

"Immortality—as you call longevity—is not proof against famine. Although the goats' reproductive period is in theory infinitely extended, they are still dying for lack of nourishment."

"Not so fast as the humans!"

"Vigilance will certainly be needed when the rains come."

"You immortals can afford to wait that long!"

"We are *long-livers*, Dr. Khan."

"My godfathers, define for me the difference between longevity and immortality in a way that makes sense to a short-lived Pakistani man!"

"Immortality can afford to forget death and, in consequence, the obligations of life. Longevity can't."

"Let's get on to Calcutta," Cat said. Vultures perched on the top of the stained façade: she found herself vulnerable to their presence. She walked across to the doorway. The driver had already slipped out at the back of the factory.

*(On the long road the humble figures. When did that woman last have a bath to have to bear children in such conditions. This is what life is all about this is*

*why we left the stainless towers of our cooler countries their comforts and compromises in the broken-down parts of the world there is no pretence about what life is really like Clem and I and the other long-livers are merely clever western artifacts of suspended decay everyday we know that one day we shall have to tumble into slag each our own Calcutta oh for god's sake satanically can it!)*

THE MEN WERE following her. She saw now that Ayub Khan had laid a hand on Yale's arm and was talking in more friendly fashion.

The hover's door had been left open. It would be abominably hot in there.

Two skeletal goats crossed the road, ears lop, parading before two refugees. The refugees were men walking barefoot with sticks, bags of belongings slung on their backs. For them, the goats would represent not only food but the reward the government offered for hooves. Breaking from their trance, they waved their arms and wielded their sticks. One of the goats was struck across its serrated backbone. It broke into a trot. Ayub Khan raised his rifle and fired at the other goat from almost point-blank range.

He hit it in the stomach. The creature's back legs collapsed. Piddling blood, it attempted to drag itself off the road, away from Ayub Khan. The two refugees fell on it, jostling each other with scarecrow gestures. With an angry shout, Ayub Khan ran forward and prodded them out of the way with a rifle barrel. He called to the driver, who came at a trot, pulling out a knife; squatting, he chopped at the goat's legs repeatedly until the hooves were severed; by that time, the animal appeared to be dead.

*(The government will pay. Like all Indian legislation this bounty favours the rich and the strong at the expense of the poor and weak. Like everything else cool Delhi justice melts in the heat.)*

Above the factory entrance, the vultures shuffled and nodded in understanding.

Straightening, Ayub Khan gestured to the two refugees, inviting them to drag the body off. They stood stupidly, not coming forward, perhaps fearing attack. Clapping his hands once, Ayub Khan dismissed them and turned away, circling the goat's carcass.

To Caterina he said, "Just allow me one further moment, madam, while I shoot down this second goat. It is my public duty."

*(To sit in the shade of the ambulance or go and watch him carry out his public duty. No choice really he shall not think us squeamish we don't need his uncouth exhibition to tell us that even we are in the general league with death. Remember after Clem and I returned from the bullfight in Seville Phillip no more than seven years old I suppose asked Who won? and cried when we laughed. We must be brave bulls toros bravos who live on something less prone to eclipse than hope.)*

Yale said, "Follow and these can at least claim what's left."





"Sure, and we attend caprine execution."

"Gory caprice!"

"Goat kaputt."

"You over-hot?"

"Just delay. Thanks." Smiles in the general blindness.

"Delay product of no goal within fulfilment."

"Vice versa too, suppose."

"Suppose. Eastern thing. Hence Industrial Rev never took here."

"Factory example, Clem."

"So, quite. Wrongly situated regards supply, power, consumers, distribution."

*(Calcutta itself a similar example on enormous satanic scale. Situated on Hooghli, river now almost entirely silted up despite dramatic attempts. And the centuries-old division between India and Pakistan like a severed limb the refugees breaking down all attempts at organisation finally the water-table under the city hopelessly poisoned by sewage mass eruptions of disease scampering mesolithic men crouching in their cave exchanging illnesses viruses use mankind as walk-*

*ing cities.)*

"Calcutta somewhat ditto."

"Ssh, founded by East India merchant, annoy Khan!"

They looked at each other, just perceptibly grinning, as they walked round to the back of the factory.

The surviving goat was white-bodied, marked with brown specks; its head and face were dark brown or black, its eyes yellow. It walked under a series of low *bashas*, now deserted, apparently once used as huts for the factory-workers. Their thatched walls, ruinous, gave them an air of transparency. The light speared them. Beyond them, the undistinguished lump of Calcutta lay amid the nebulous areas where land met sky.

Ravenously, the goat reached up and dragged at the palm leaves covering a *basha* roof. As a section of the roof came doyn in a cascade of dust, Ayub Khan fired. Kicking up its bounty-laden heels, the goat disappeared among the huts.

Ayub Khan reloaded. "Generally, I am a satanically sound marksman. It is this confounded heat putting me off that I chiefly complain of. Why don't you have a shot, Yale, and see if you do a lot better? You English are such sportsmen!" He offered the rifle.

"No thanks, Doctor. I'm rather anxious for us to be getting on to Calcutta."

"Calcutta is just a tragedy—let it wait, let it wait! The hunting blood is up! First, let's have a little fun with this terrible satanic goat!"

"Fun? It was public duty a moment ago!"

Ayub Khan looked at him. "What are you doing here, anyway, with your pretty wife? Isn't this all *fun* for you as well as a public duty? Did you have to come to our satanic Asia, ask yourself?"

*(Isn't he right don't we eternally have to redeem ourselves for the privilege of living and seeing other life by sacrificing death Clement must have said the same thing often to himself by sacrificing death did we not also sacrifice the norms of normal life in this long-protracted life is not our atonement our fun helping supervise the evacuation of Calcutta our goat-shoot. In his eyes we can never redeem ourselves only in our own eyes.)*

"Instead of papering over the cracks at home, Doctor, we prefer to stand on the brink of your chasms. You must forgive us. Go and shoot your goat and then we will proceed to Calcutta."

"It is very very curious that when you seem to be talking better sense, I am not able to understand you. Driver, *idhar ao!*"

Gesturing to the driver, the health official disappeared behind the threadbare huts.

ON THE ROAD, the refugees still trod, losing themselves in the mists of distance and time. Individuality was forgotten: there were only organisms, moving according to certain laws, performing antique motions. In the Hooghli, water flowed, bringing down silt from source to delta, the dredgers rusting, the arteries clogging, little speckled crabs waving across grey sandbanks.



# THE APOCALYPSE MACHINE

LEO ZORIN

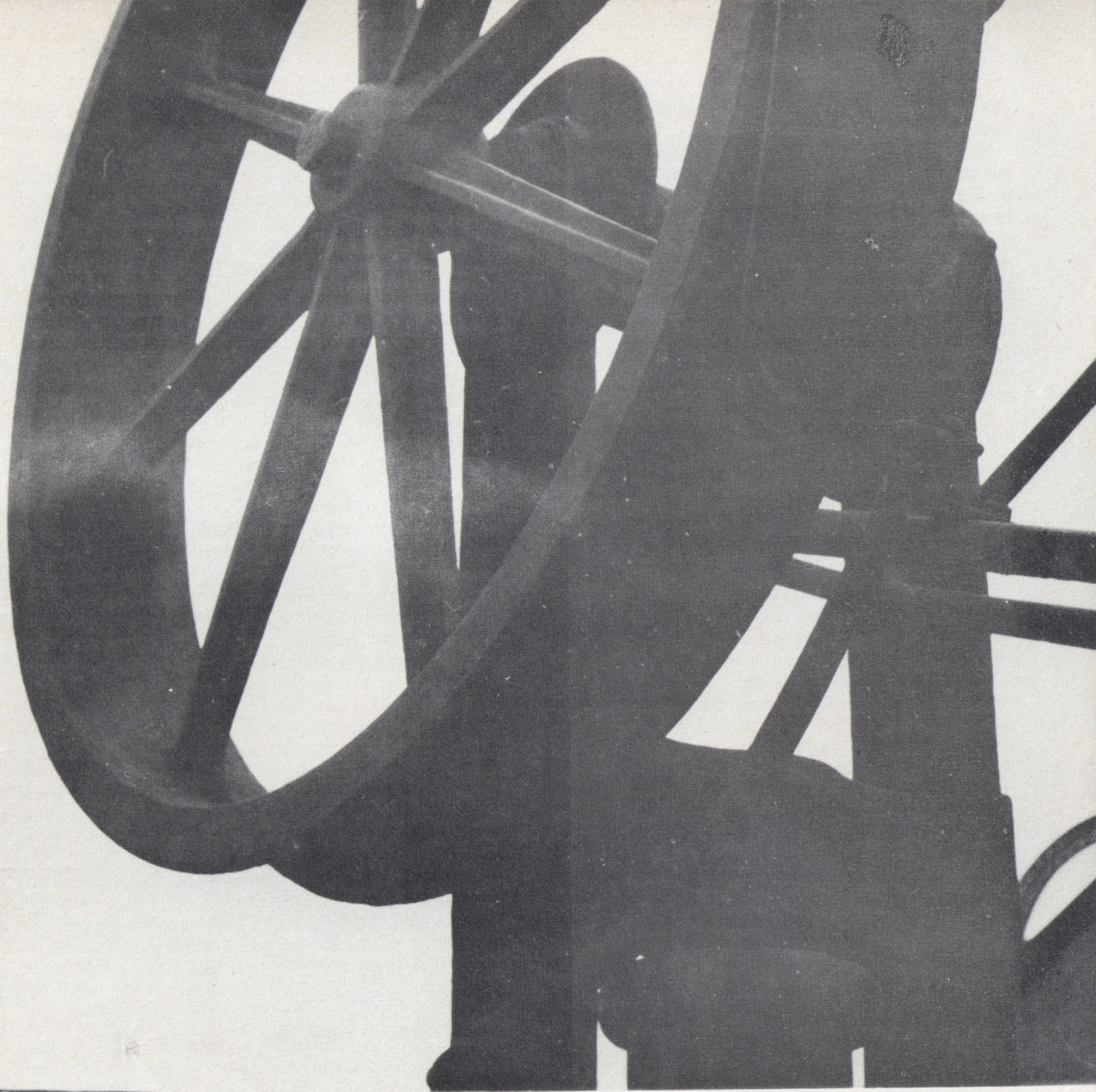
AND NOW, GENTLEMEN, we have our finest device, the latest product of our superb technology, won't you all take your seats, please, I hope you find them to your satisfaction. I think you will find that the viewplates are adjustable. I control the master-image from this console, and the calibrators are connected to one scanner, which will bring you an image of the selected target area, which likewise is defined by the calibrators. All very neat and compact, you see—this is to cut out any unnecessary complexity—indeed, a child could manipulate the device.

Nonetheless, we have at our disposal a number of

sophisticated techniques, and I'd like to show you a few sample demonstrations of the range and versatility of our little machine before we go on to a full-scale operation. Any objections, gentlemen? Well, then, I'll proceed.

You will note that the area in your viewplates at present is Piccadilly, which presents perhaps a typical picture of a very busy urban thoroughfare frequented by both traffic and pedestrians. My aim at this juncture is to show you the extreme *selectivity* of our device. Now we are *homing in*, as we say, on a young woman wheeling a pram along the north side of Piccadilly. I





apply a little pressure to the primary anti-personnel circuit, the prototype of which you had a chance to—ah yes, excuse me, gentlemen, you see her clothes are bursting into flames now, you can see her futile efforts to save herself . . . unfortunately, at this stage we have no sound receptors in the field, but no doubt you are getting a sufficiently vivid impression of the scene by sight alone . . . as you see, the young woman has gone into her terminal agony. The baby is crying, poor little thing. Never fear, gentlemen, at this very moment our operatives in the field are on their way to comfort him. His mother's supreme sacrifice in the cause of science

shall not go unnoted.

I think we've spent enough time in that direction, gentlemen. We're now rapidly moving our scanner to the Millbank block. Here we see a completely different situation, a number of modern glass and concrete buildings. On the whole, a much less frequented sector. What I'm going to do is to intensify the laser beams, and make a rapid cheese-slicing movement. I draw your attention to the Millbank tower. Right, now all that is needed is a little pressure from our ancillary boosters, ah, yes, and the top of the tower describes a beautiful arc and crashes into the Thames, giving rise to a large wave which is at



this moment capsizing a small pleasure boat not far away.

Now, obviously, gentlemen, the device is not really intended for such frivolous use as it has just been put to. To get an accurate idea of the device's range it will be necessary to undertake a full-scale operation. I want you to understand that the very simplicity of the Apocalypse machine, as we like to call it, is one of its great strengths. A really complex manoeuvre requires a long period of planning. Nonetheless it is possible to contrive quite a respectable campaign at the drop of a hat. And I proposed to do just this, gentlemen. I do hope you find your seats comfortable, as I shall require your very closest attention for what follows.

My agents have been preparing the ground by disseminating in various key centres, reservoirs, public parks, etc., useful cachets of psychedelic drugs, bombs that wait to be detonated, balloons of poison gas or toxic disease that can be burst at a suitable moment. All these items are merely refinements without which it would still be possible to organise matters to our complete satisfaction.

First of all, we are going to scan Hyde Park, where I intend to detonate a low-yield tactical atomic weapon, just as a signal, you understand, rather like the referee's whistle. I aim to dislocate communications between north and south and along the Oxford Street nexus. There she goes now, and a more delightful fireball I've never seen. There's not a great deal of blast damage, although the shock wave is spreading as you will see. The reverberations have reached Westminster and most of the spires are crumbling. Nelson's column is down. There is some panic there, I think. The psychedelic drugs are wreaking havoc in Whitehall, which should prevent any untoward action. After all, we don't want to precipitate a world war, do we, gentlemen? I might add that simultaneous trials of the Apocalypse machine are taking place in many of the world's major centres at this very minute.

**P**ERHAPS THIS WOULD be the right moment to initiate some further action. I notice that many of you are scanning the scene widely and I imagine you have between you a fairly good composite notion of the proceedings. I do urge you, therefore, to direct your attention once more to the Thames, where I am just raising the level of the water by six feet, *now*. Look, there are quite a few people who seem to have survived the blast scuttling, or, in the case of the stragglers, swimming, for safety. One of them appears to be the Hon. Member for ———, do any of you know him? I think a light strafing should do the trick, yes, he's been hit, the red stain is spreading, he's floating upside down now.

I advise you to range quite freely over the entire panorama now, gentlemen. While I've been talking to you, I've initiated a number of incendiary raids in various places. The City is on fire, I believe the centre of that particular raid was about two hundred feet from

the Monument. It will be interesting to see if the waves will succeed in dousing the fires. At least it will prevent anyone taking refuge in the cellars.

I'm just whipping up a good strong gale, which will help to blow the mustard gas across London in a westerly direction. So far the outer suburbs have largely escaped damage, so I think a ring of nuclear shells might serve to cut the metropolis off from the surrounding countryside.

I don't know whether any of you have spotted it, but I do believe that I've noticed the first death from one of the spasmodic diseases that have been disseminated. It's an old woman of about 70—no doubt you've noticed others. I agree the picture is a little confusing, but as the survivors begin to thin out no doubt things will become clearer. I do so admire man's ingenuity for survival, gentlemen, but I think I may say without boasting that our ingenuity is equal to anything our fellows can devise in the way of resistance.

The local rockets are levelling off most of the tall buildings now, and no doubt the debris is contributing to the general mêlée . . . I've just had the first provisional figure from our processing department of 3 million casualties, and I understand that a cessation of operations at this juncture will produce about 4½ million casualties, though how many deaths are included in this figure it is hard to ascertain. As you see, despite strenuous efforts, total dislocation has not been produced. I understand that the high ground in both North and South London has suffered very little damage. The giant reflectors in the satellites circling the earth, an important part of our apparatus, are just being trained now. I do want to stress that at all times I have personal control of this operation, and no other hand but mine is initiating any of these offensive measures.

As you will see, the incredible heat is ripping great swathes out of the high ground now. I've chosen a narrow and intense focus which does less damage on the whole but is, in my opinion at least, more aesthetically satisfying.

**I** THINK WE SHOULD allow a short period of inactivity now to review the results of the operation so far. Please continue to observe anything that interests you, gentlemen. My secretary will be bringing you some tea and biscuits, which I'm sure you all need after such a strenuous afternoon's participation. Thank you, my dear. By all means smoke if you wish, gentlemen. When you're ready, we'll continue with the proceedings.

I'm changing the direction of the wind now, and I think this will carry the secondary wave of diseases successfully through the metropolis. Most of the fires seem to be under control now, and likewise the flood seems to be reaching the limit of its expansion, so perhaps a few earthquakes will promote a favourable balance. I see that a number of you are alarmed. Never fear, gentlemen. Let me repeat my introductory remarks





—this laboratory, the precise location of which has been concealed from you, is completely insulated from any effects I may produce with the Apocalypse machine. Actually, the production of earthquakes is one of the more tricky operations, so I hope you will excuse me if I cease to provide commentary for a few moments while I make the necessary adjustments. . . .

I hope you're not becoming uncomfortable, gentlemen, as I do assure you that we have spared no expense to fit out this room as suitably as possible. I have completed the adjustments now, and have initiated earthquakes in Muswell Hill, Dulwich, Kilburn, Stepney and Paddington. You may care to examine the results, gentlemen. You will see that there is very little remaining sign of life. This is quite illusory, in fact. I understand that the latest figures we have show as many as a million survivors in the Greater London area. I am most reluctant to employ nuclear weapons at this stage as it would remove all finesse from the end-game. Apparently it would take some days to weed out the survivors at the present rate, with no guarantee of success. So I think perhaps more stringent measures are necessary.

Life is very much a gamble, gentlemen. In whipping

up the wind to 500 miles an hour, which I propose to do, I shall disperse the gas entirely and cause the spread of the disease, in due course, to other parts of the country, which I am loath to do. Never fear, gentlemen, they are already provided with adequate antidotes. We have carefully considered the consequence of our actions. So, you see, it is a mixed blessing, for it removes the horrors of a messy death through poison or disease, but brings its own dangers. Rather exciting, I feel.

I am making random raids all the time, using bombs, laser beams, small "buzz-bombs" and incendiaries, breaching reservoirs and dams. The outer areas are now almost razed, so that Edmonton and Morden may not escape the fate of Victoria and Holborn. I understand that we've achieved very nearly 100 per cent. success.

Well, what do you think of our little device, gentlemen? I see your mouths opening in wonderment. I can't quite catch your meaning. Are your chairs uncomfortable? Dear me, you seem to be writhing in some anguish. How unfortunate. Tell me your opinion, gentlemen. No, don't get up, your belts are fastened. You want to tell me what you think, gentlemen? Oh no, I see you can't—you're dead, gentlemen.



# WARHOL

BY ANDREW LUGG

**If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it.**

SOME FILM-MAKERS AND FILMS seem to demand critical attention; others, film-makers and films, are much more subdued. Whenever a film-maker tries to say something in his work or is outrageous in his social stances, or whenever a film is "literary" or controversial, the critics pounce. The reasons are obvious: writing about things *said* is easier than writing about things *shown*; controversy invites bandwagoning. Studies of Godard's work are a good example of the attention afforded to the "literary", whereas the controversy stirred up by Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* illustrates the bandwagoning effect.

On occasions, the outrageous and the literary converge—with predictable results. My subject here is a case in point, that of Andy Warhol.

WARHOL'S NOTORIETY and recognition came during 1962, that is, after he had performed prominently in the "pop revolution" and before he had made his first full-length film (1963). Nowadays the consensus among critics and those who have at least a passing interest in art seems to be that Warhol is both an outrageous artist and an outrageous human being. The vindictiveness which has been levelled at him has made him look much like a latter-day Machine-Gun Kelly. Even the film critics of the *New York Times* feel required to comment upon every film that emerges from the Warhol factory. American fashion and society magazines run stories on his entourage, and the exploits of Warhol's Baby Jane Holtzer and his subsequent "superstars" are reported as though they were the original. What is surprising about all this attention is that it is accompanied by little praise: the word "put-on" has never before been quite so in vogue.

Recently the American Underground, which of course includes Warhol, has been attacked by a number of British critics. Many arguments can be brought against their charges, one of which might be: it is not good enough to suggest that Warhol's work is in the

mainstream of the Underground and to dismiss, as Lyndon Johnson says, "the baby with the dishwater". Generally, however, the word "put-on" has not found its way into English print, but the critics' spirit if not their letter has a touch of the put-on indictment. Nevertheless, there is another way of looking at this situation. Paul Morrissey, Warhol's sound engineer, maintains that "It is not us that are putting you on, but you who are trying to put us on." But an argument about who is putting whom on will not get us very far. Questions as esoteric as "Why does an audience go to all the trouble of putting Warhol on?" certainly need consideration, but this surely cannot precede a critical study of the work itself. If I can show that Warhol has something to say and that he has an original approach to the medium (whether it be film or painting) then we shall at least know that consideration of such "esoteria" is in order.

## I

ANDY WARHOL'S PAINTINGS can be conveniently grouped into three categories: (1) paintings of people who are dead, non-existent or "cultural ikons", (2) paintings of inanimate objects, and (3) series of paintings which have subject matter drawn from (1) and (2).

*Dick Tracy*, *Golden Marilyn Monroe*, and some of the paintings from the *Death Series*—the non-existent, the "cultural ikon" and the dead—were Warhol's first attempts to salvage whatever aspects of everyday life could be acceptably two-dimensionalised. Each of these subjects has two features in common: they are fixed in time and our perception of them is formally two-dimensional. In my examples, the first of these features is obvious. A cartoon character looks exactly the same whether it is surveyed for for one minute or twenty minutes. Marilyn Monroe, as a cultural ikon, is "defined" by a dozen or so photographs. The dead do not move.

To illustrate that these Warhol subjects are essentially two-dimensional, I use a more difficult example than those previously considered. Jackie Kennedy is and is not a "real" person. To be sure, she does her daily round like the rest of us; but she also has another existence, which is projected on to her. It is this "aura of existence on Olympian Heights" which Warhol sees in spatial terms. Jackie is an image, not a person. The way she is "revealed" in magazines, in films, and on



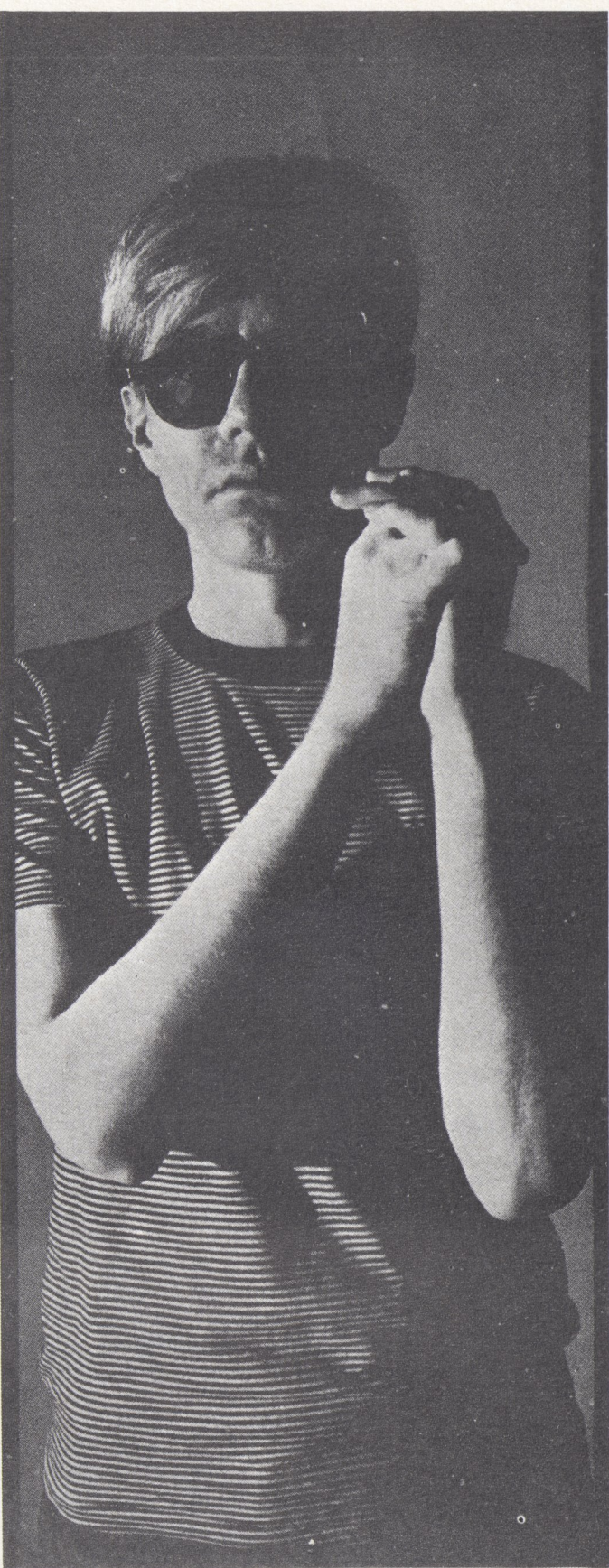
TV—which reinforces those initial projections we direct at her—shows her as a stereotype, a cultural ikon, a cartoon character. If we indeed see her in this way we can talk about Jackie as an image without being metaphorical.

The second category, which includes paintings of soup cans, bottles and flowers, is more easily transposed to the flat canvas. All you have to do is to look at the object from one direction and, perhaps, close an eye. These objects and the subjects-as-objects, are seen by Warhol in a special way: from the outside. The result hints at Warhol's respect for things themselves, or as Michael Fried would put it, for objecthood. That is to say, Warhol does not "contaminate" objects with his own whims or fancies. (This concern is also hinted at in other ways. During filming, for instance, it is common to hear from his actors phrases such as: "Aren't we all voyeurs?")

As a watcher *par excellence*, Warhol must inevitably take into account how he influences what is happening. The important thing is that the "object" not know it is being watched. Of course this is possible for painters and Peeping Toms, but it is not at all an easy thing to achieve in film-making or anthropology. Another problem is how to present what is in fact being seen.

These two questions are almost trivial to the painter of soup cans. The can has little interest in what is going on, and (with one eye closed) it is not difficult to get a good view of the can. Perhaps. With *110 Coca Cola Bottles*, Warhol appears to have opened the other eye and began to move around. There is more to be said about a bottle than the "one-eye-closed" procedure dictates. How much more? How many more bottles must be painted before the subject is exhausted? The answer is, in all likelihood, many more than 110. However, it is doubtful that any substantial gains can be obtained by extension to infinity. We are past the point of diminishing returns.

**W**HAT ABOUT JACKIE? There is more to be said about people than about bottles. In 1964, Warhol put together a series of *Jackie* paintings, in which sixteen panels appear as pairs of mirror images. The four panels in the upper left show her contented; the four in the lower right show her completely distraught. These are horizontally mirror-imaged. The other eight panels, paired vertically, depict her gradual realization of the death of her husband. Warhol tried with this "multi-faceted" device to give the paintings a structure which always directs the spectator to a different set of panels than the one he is looking at. The static tensions in each panel act to produce dynamic tensions *between* the panels. Of course, this is very much a feature of film—the montage effect. One other factor demands attention. The values of the colouring of the panels varies: in one panel she is clearly defined, while in another she is lost in the shadows. Warhol is attempting to show a total event. Unlike Goya (*The Third of May*), Warhol shows







*Jacky, 16 times*

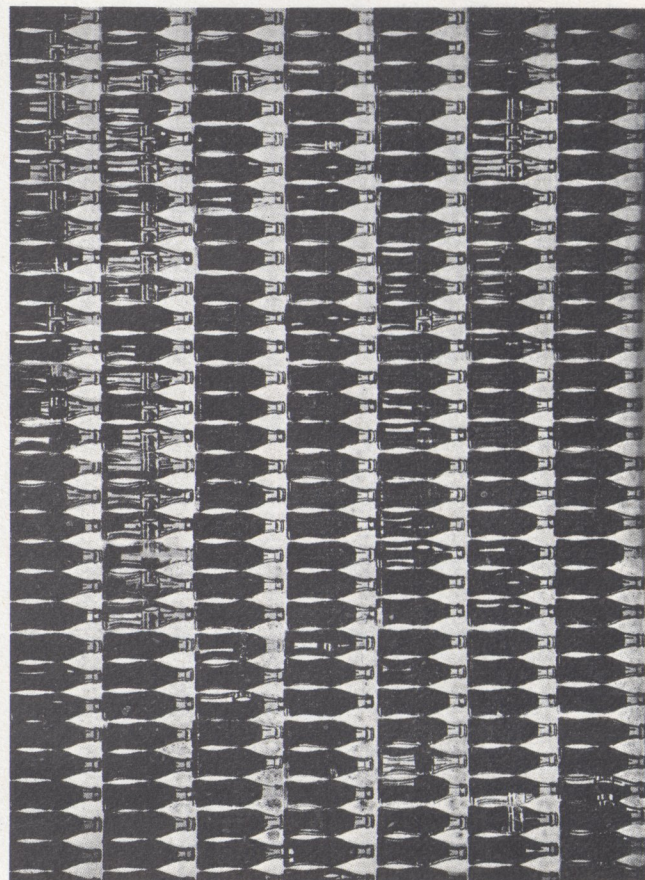
events before and after the “execution”. But more than this, he refines the details of the assassination to show just the *effects*, the surface reality, which in 1964 was still very vivid. The moment of the event is lost for all

**Machines have less problems . . . The reason I'm painting this way is because I want to be a machine . . . I want to be plastic.**

time, but the effects are recorded in the newspapers. Effects constitute the history of an event.

A year later, with *Jackie 16 Times*, Warhol limited further what he was willing to say about the Kennedy assassination. In the panels in this series the only variation is one of colour values. Warhol appears to be saying more about one of the panels of the earlier series; in 1965 he desired to reveal more of the complex of emotions that constitutes any one moment. Clearly this is a losing process. It is reminiscent of the Beckett-like “reductio-ad-absurdum” and his attempt to define an irrational number in terms of the set of rational numbers: sub-division goes on forever.

One aspect of the 1965 series illustrates the way



*Coca Cola Bottles, 1962*

Warhol was thinking. The structure of these panels is linear. All the *Jackies* are looking in the same direction—they look outwards and backwards toward a receding event. Time provides history with a yard-stick, i.e.,

**I never wanted to be a painter. I wanted to be a tap-dancer.**

complex events appear simpler because the attendant emotional considerations may be waived. This is an anathema to Warhol. He wants to show the surface of things, but he does not want to simplify them.

## II

AT FIRST BLUSH, Warhol's works do not look like paintings of things, but look like things themselves. However, first blushes do not go on forever. If they did Warhol would undoubtedly be well satisfied; he would have achieved the neutrality he was looking for. Unfortunately (for Warhol) all sorts of formal problems creep in to contaminate a down-to-earth appreciation of the





*Above  
Marilyn 1964*

*Above right:  
Liz, 1965*

*Below right:  
Jacky, 1964*



painting's subject. When we look at the Coca-Cola bottles we are made aware that we are only seeing *some*

**"Do you think pop art is . . ."**

**"No."**

**"What?"**

**"No."**

**"Do you think pop art is . . ."**

**"No . . . No, I don't."**

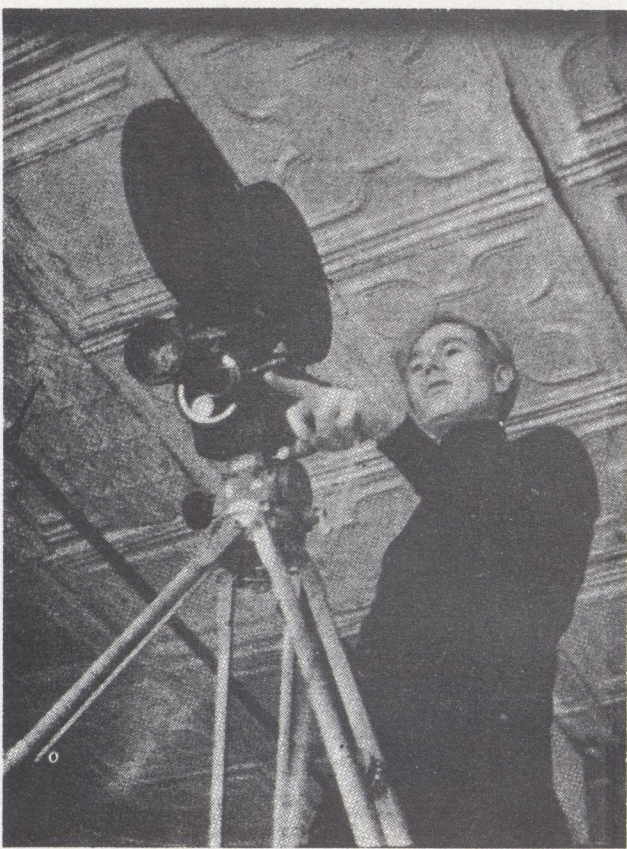
views and *not* all views; the painting itself seems to point this out. Likewise, the *Elvis* diptych is seen as showing two idealized views of the pop-singers, and *Marilyn* is a painting which only too obviously says things about her as well as showing her. Quite rightly it has been remarked that *Marilyn* is "beautifully seedy".

Now, although in the series of paintings we do not see everything, we do see more than the single view that a painting usually proffers. For most artists, of course, this limitation is part and parcel of the painting game. Not so for Warhol. Unlike Lichtenstein, Warhol had no

intention of involving himself with the formal problems attendant to pop art. Instead he looked (perhaps naïvely) to the cinema.

Before outlining Warhol's switch from painting to film, it is worth pausing to put the matter in perspective. Warhol is not the first artist to make the switch. For example, Peter Weiss started as a surrealist painter, then became a film-maker (*Hallucinations*, *The Studio of Dr.*





*Warhol with camera*



*Bike Boy, 1967*

lish that the switch necessarily yields a particular mode of film-making.

**In the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes.**

AT THIS POINT it appears that the fascination which film has for some painters can only be explained, if at all, in terms of the *causes* of the switch.

In the first place, I wish to rule out arbitrary decisions which might persuade a painter to become a film-maker. "Observations" such as the artist can make more money with films, or can become famous, or is "dried up", reduce the argument to a trivial level. Certainly there are cases when the switch has been motivated by similar considerations. And frequently it is argued that Warhol's motives were sinister rather than sincere — an argument easily refuted, however, by detailing his "artistic" development, as I am attempting here. But for the time being, I suggest that Warhol was neither "dried up" (the flower paintings were completed *after* he had established himself as a film-maker), nor was he searching for greater fame or more money. His fame was assured; he continued to paint, in fact, to finance his films.

The generalization usually proffered to explain the switch pivots around a simple observation: film can move in time whereas painting cannot. Clearly I have been hinting at this as a possible reason for Warhol's switch. If you can move around a painting you can see it from more than one point of view, and certainly photography is better suited than painting to showing something as it is. I want to show, however, that the generalization does not hold, and that the argument particularized does not fit in Warhol's case.

Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912) is often chosen to illustrate a painter's frustration

*Faustus*, etc), and only later switched to drama. Other artists have made brief excursions into film-making, e.g., Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray. What statements can be made about this fascination which film seems to hold for some painters? (Here, I wish to point out that generalizations concerning the effect of a redirection of artists' efforts invariably fall short of explaining what the switch means in individual cases.)

Compare Warhol's and Weiss' work. These are similar in a number of respects: the paintings were more often than not figurative; the films also are concerned with people; the spoken word is more predominant in the later films than in either artist's first efforts. Finally, it is possible to discern in both artists' work, to put it mildly, a certain social orientation. That is, both comment on man-in-society. Their art may be characterised as being open-ended—referring to larger issues than the particular events depicted.

There are differences as well. Warhol makes few ventures into the theatre (in its most general sense), whereas Weiss is now involved with it (in the strict sense). Another difference is that Warhol's social orientation is not at all explicit; his comments are essentially neutral or, better still, disinterested. Weiss, on the other hand, is a Marxist and this viewpoint is clearly expressed in his plays. These differences are considerable. I conclude that the "end-products" resulting from Warhol's and Weiss' switches are not sufficient to estab-



with detemporalised images. Painters generally are not tempted by moving things, of course. But assuming that they are, the *Nude* does seem to be one way out. In this work, movement in time is suggested. The nude is painted in a number of discrete positions, like superimposed photochronograms. Everyone would agree that, here, there is a definite link with one aspect of our

## **I never read, I just look at pictures.**

perception of time. Events are ordered. Event A comes before event B, and B before C. Hence A before C. However, the *speed* at which the events occur is missing. The photochronograph *shows* motion, but superimposed photochronograms only *imply* it. The next stage of the argument follows easily (too easily?): because an artist has insufficient control over the rate at which the viewer looks at various events or parts of the painting, he will desert the medium for film, which does incorporate this feature.

Did Duchamp solve his nude problem by resorting to the cinema? Far from it. His film, *Amenic Cinema*, shows ten discs bearing drawings alternating with nine discs bearing inscriptions, an experiment which appears to be directed to no less an end than to detemporalize a moving picture. Characteristically, Duchamp chose to stress that cinema has its own problems. It moves. Thus, although Duchamp's experiment was not unrelated to one of his concerns as a painter—in painting, to get the static to move; in film, the moving, stationary—it is clear that he was interested in two different problems.

There is another objection to the position which maintains that the cause of the switch is frustration with the non-moving. I will discuss it only briefly because it will not concern us later. As far as this study of Warhol goes, it is the Duchamp example which provides the golden key.

An Abstract Expressionist painting may be thought of as an image of a psychological event. The involved spatial configurations depicted suggest intervals, or sequences of events, and because psychological time need not concur with real time, the rate at which sequences are seen is of no consequence. The psychological event occurs for as long as we are willing to stand in front of the painting. Time is of no value to the Abstract Expressionist, yet it is this style of painting which many film-makers translate into cinematic terms. For years, the bulk of American experimental films looked like moving Jackson Pollock paintings. Film-makers who exploit this style are not liberating it from detemporalisation. If painting-in-motion stands for anything, there must be other reasons for getting Pollock moving.

All this has to be said: it is, as it were, a warning against presenting an easy solution to my question concerning the redirection of a painter's efforts. Now, the particular case of Warhol's work.



*Warhol and Superstars*

I think we're a vacuum here at the Factory, it's great. I like being a vacuum.

## **III**

**All my films are artificial . . . I don't know where the artificial stops and the real starts. The artificial fascinates me, the bright and shiny . . .**

**B**EFORE STARTING FILM-MAKING PROPER, Warhol made hundreds of screen tests (a person filmed in front of a plain backdrop). Here, the cinema and his series of paintings appear to converge. Instead of sixteen or 110 panels, there are in the screen tests roughly 4,000 panels. Each frame presents a slightly different view of the same thing. On the face of it there seems to be an accumulation effect under way. In the original version of *Sleep* (1964) we find, after doing the arithmetic, that there are close to half a million different frame-views.

Obviously, this is a very queer way of looking at the situation. What had actually happened (and Warhol was certainly aware of this) was that a *series of views* had been replaced by a *single moving view*. Although he could show developing views he could not show several views at the same time.\* So, like Duchamp, when Warhol began filming he had to deal with new problems. He had to find a way of telling the whole story in time; he could no longer stop time to take a look around the back. But despite these difficulties, Warhol's aims did not change. He continued to strive for neutrality; still he did not want to say anything about anything.

Now, just as the soup can is an easy subject for the





*Vinyl*. 1965

neutral painter, there are easy events for the neutral film-maker. A man sleeping, *Sleep* (1964), or the Empire State Building, *Empire* (1964), or Robert Indiana eating a mushroom, *Eat* (1964), do not cause too much trouble. There is little difference between a sleeping man and a corpse. Neither requires much manipulation to translate it into an artifact. In *Sleep*, which is more of a record than anything else, the "cinema" element is almost irrelevant; it simply provides an environment for the event. Shown under different circumstances, the record remains unchanged. For example, when the film was back-projected on to a small screen in the recent ICA exhibition *The Obsessive Image*, the spectator could easily get what was going on without the comfort of a seat and without being in a darkened theatre.

In *Empire*, which came shortly after *Sleep*, Warhol's mode of description—a peculiar form of ostensive definition—involves a few simple propositions: this is the world's tallest; over a period of time, day changes to night; lights go on at night; and so forth. However, if we look closely we find that Warhol has not been quite so austere in his description as he was in *Sleep*. The daytime sequence is hurried along, compressed, to give the main focus of the record, the coming of night, more emphasis. Here Warhol shows that he is willing to tamper with the natural order of events. Whereas in the paintings he seemingly strived to present the total event, in *Empire* he selected, albeit "marginally", parts of the



'Cowboy film', 1967

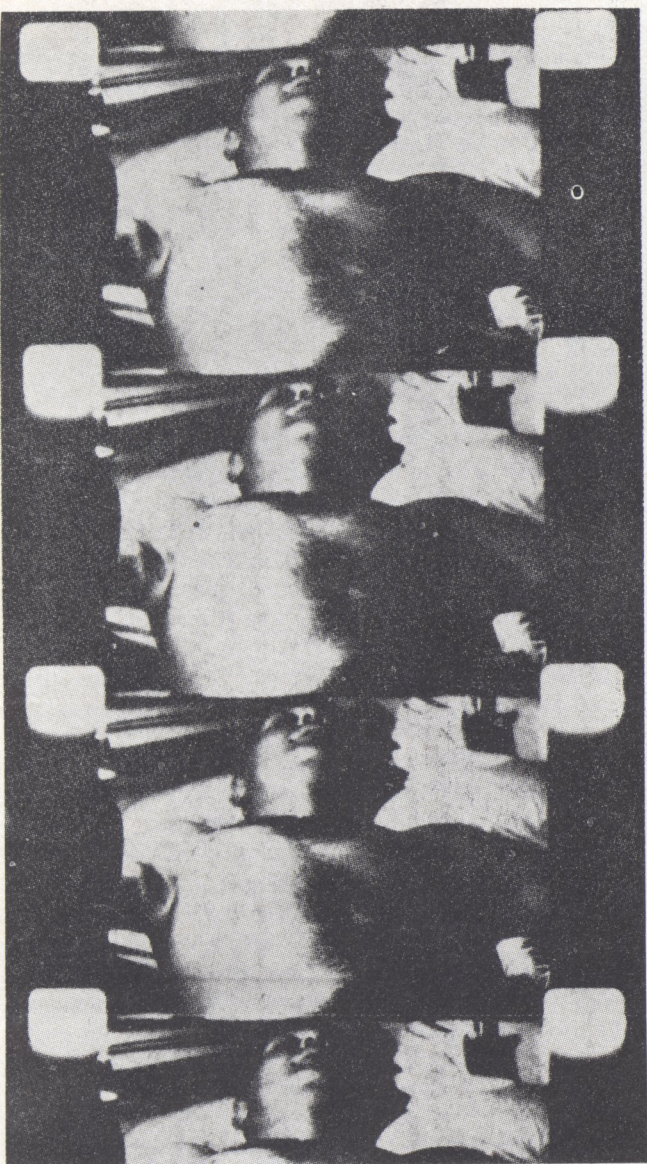
event for display. This interference might be dismissed as trivial if it were not for the earlier work. As it is, *Empire* points to future developments.

**I like boring things.  
I hate objects.  
Everything is pretty.**

DURING THIS PERIOD of Warhol's work, two new elements were introduced. Instead of beginning with the ikon, the well-known, and proceeding to the ordinary, he began with the unknown and built this into an ikon, a process later identified with the notion of a "superstar". That is, he no longer showed how a single possibility produces many alternatives, but how from a many-faceted situation a single "point" event can be refined. The sleeper, himself, is uninteresting when he first appears, but by the end of the film he seems monumental. He is our only reference point: we have been effectively cut off from larger issues; our attention is limited to a fine point of concentration. Second—and this is not unrelated to the first point—Warhol makes us aware of his vantage point. We do not have to know much about film-making to know exactly where the camera was placed.

The first of these elements is increasingly emphasised in Warhol's later work. Whereas *Sleep* (the film itself) can be thought of as a full-blooded event, the goings-on in the film constitute an attenuated or limited event. *Sleep* is no more than a portrait; it is quite without drama. In *The Life of Juanita Castro* (1965), a "family portrait" of the Castro family is presented in a dramatic fashion. As usual in Warhol's films of this period, the camera is stationary throughout the full 70 minutes and the actors perform within this portrait space. A few months later *Vinyl* was made, but this time the camera, between reels, is moved considerably. Now, it would not be true to say that this film marks the point at which Warhol starts to move around. Even before *The Life of Juanita Castro*, he had finished *Camp*, a film resplendent with bad camera work. Never-



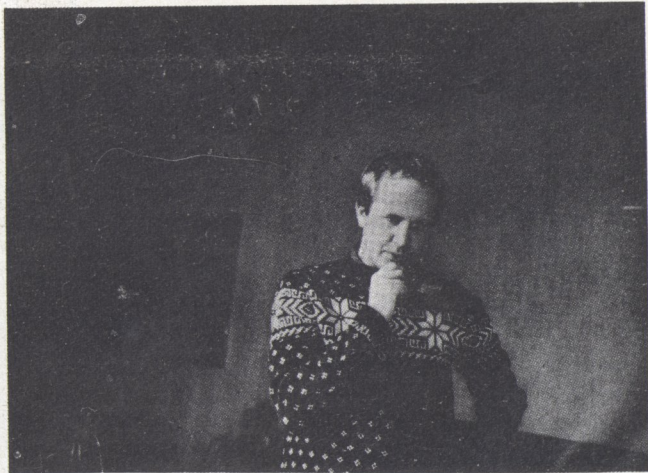


*Sleep, 1966*

theless, *Vinyl* is the first indication that the portraits are to become more mobile; that direct representation will give way to a "theatre" with a variable point of view; and that artificiality imposed by the artist is to be replaced by an artificiality imposed by the actors. From this point on, Warhol's aim is to be neutral towards the on-going events and to let the actors speak for themselves. Instead of quasi-portraiture, we are shown quasi-documentary.

**I still care about people but it would be so much easier not to care . . . It's too hard to care . . . I don't want to get too close . . . I don't like to touch things . . . that's why my work is so distant from myself.**

The variable point-of-view was introduced gradually.



*Sleep* and *Empire* are films made with one eye closed. In *Chelsea Girls* Warhol uses the zoom (moving closer); in *My Hustler*, the pan (moving across). The 'Cowboy' film (retitled several times, produced in 1967) is the work of a mobile film-maker with both eyes open. Little by little, Warhol has incorporated in his films the techniques and ways of working with which most other film-makers begin. *My Hustler* was his first film shot on location. He talks of getting a second cameraman and of filming, documentary-style, people on the street. Strange to say, each step seems to involve enormous effort, yet when done is used time and time again, unself-consciously and with conspicuous ease. And as Warhol has become more "professional", the drama in his films has increased. (Parker Tyler accounts for this: Warhol has moved "from dragtime to drugtime".)

#### IV

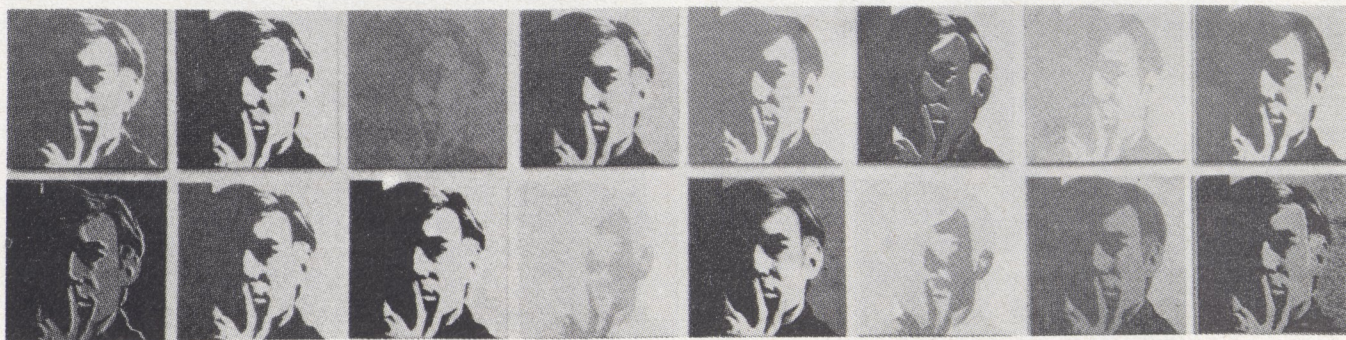
**M**Y NEXT AND LAST QUESTION is this: Given the increasing drama, how does Warhol retain his neutral view of the world?

Basically, my argument is that this desired neutrality derives from the way the films are developed rather than from the meaning of the events in them or from what the films refer to.

If you look at, say, *The Nude Restaurant* as a sociological document—or in terms of "who does what, when and how"—you will come up with a certain set of conclusions, which will almost certainly be different from those at which you would arrive from consideration of stylistics. For a start, the film would probably appear uninteresting and inconclusive. On the other hand, if you look at *The Nude Restaurant* in the same way as you would look at a John Ford western or any other highly stylised "exposition", the film would seem a bit more lively, or at least your appreciation of it would be.

To be sure, critics often exhort their readers to look for stylistics rather than thematics. Yet, judging from





the response to Warhol's films, this suggestion has not been assimilated by many spectators or by the majority of American reviewers. In this respect, it is unfortunate that films are not appreciated in the same way as are paintings. This is particularly surprising when it is remembered that Warhol was once a painter: surely we might expect one or two of his painterly traits to carry over into his films.

When viewing *Sleep* or *Empire*, one is forced (there is nothing else to do) to consider the film in terms of stylistics. When one does so, a whole series of questions come to mind: "What is a cinematic event?" "What is a theatre audience?" "What is its relationship to a film?" Indeed, "What is a film?"

**The lighting is bad, the camera work is bad, the projection is bad, but the people are beautiful.**

ONE WAY, THEN, in which Warhol maintains his neutrality is by posing questions. In *Empire*, the questions cannot be missed. What about *Camp, Bike Boy* or the *Chelsea Girls* where there is real drama? What about the confessional scene in *Chelsea Girls*?

Well, consider this scene. Pope Ondine is getting a shot of heroin. "I don't think I'll say anything— Paul shut up— Did you bring the soda, Gerard?— I'd love a drink, yes— I don't want to talk about my philosophy as pope— I want to talk about myself as man, not as pope." Ondine announces that his flock is made up of homosexuals, perverts, thieves, any sort of criminal. A while later, he calls for a confessor, who proceeds to call him a phony. From here on, Ondine's pope/man role becomes increasingly interwoven. He levels virulent abuse at the young girl, the confessor. "How dare they come on my set and tell me that I'm a phony— God forgive her— He who does not punish wrong, condones it— I'm a violent person." Then, reflecting, Ondine sums up, "We may have made history—a document."

Although this scene is highly charged (when I watch it, I get the feeling that I'm intruding) it does not appeal to such things as complicity, projection or identification on the part of the spectator. The drama arises out

of the fact that Ondine the actor is, even to himself, confused with Ondine the man. (The same sort of situation appears in Jean-Luc Godard's *Une Femme Mariée* when Charlotte asks Robert in the aircraft terminal whether or not he acts when he loves. Or, again, in *La Chinoise*, when Guillarme is questioned about his real life politics when he is acting the role of a revolutionary.)

If these scenes are dramatic, then we are using "dramatic" in an unusual way. What is being presented is something about drama.

In *Chelsea Girls* there are yet more touches of interest. Constantly we are being reminded that a film is in progress. Ondine says, "This is my set"; he talks to onlookers and so on. At every turn we are prevented from talking about the events of the film; we are forced out of the film and into a position in which we must talk about the film itself—about the process, not the product. Likewise, in *The Life of Juanita Castro* the characters are often requested to smile for the camera. The whole film seems to be not about the play or events themselves, but about a spectator/camera looking in on a play.

The drama in *Chelsea Girls* is obviously very different from that of *Empire*. However, the ends are the same: a reflection on the part of the audience—upon how events are handled. It does not matter that when *this* happens, *that* follows and *something else* is changed. What *does* matter is that we see how things happen and how the events are linked together.

This kind of reaction to Warhol's films depends to a certain extent upon appreciation of his previous work. Put the other way around, it is an attitude which can account for Warhol's *oeuvre*. I am not sure that it is the only attitude which will do the job. As I have said, to study the events of the films sociologically falls short of the mark; and Warhol's neutral posture *vis-à-vis* the world is another matter entirely, though this certainly should be of interest to sociologists and to other critics as well.

\*This is not strictly true. The original version of *Chelsea Girls* was shown in eight separate sections, each section being projected in a different room. Events taking place at the same time but in different rooms at the same time were projected simultaneously. Theoretically, at least, more than one developing view was being presented.



# The Delhi Division

Michael Moorcock

1.

A SMOKY INDIAN rain fell through the hills and woods outside Simla and the high roads were slippery. Jerry Cornelius drove his Phantom V down twisting lanes flanked by white fences. The car's violet body was splashed with mud and it was difficult to see through the haze that softened the landscape. In rain, the world became timeless.

Jerry switched on his music, singing along with Jimi Hendrix as he swung around the corners.

Were they finding the stuff? He laughed involuntarily.

Turning into the drive outside his big wooden bungalow, he brought the limousine to a stop. A Sikh servant gave him an umbrella before taking over the car.

Jerry walked through the rain to the veranda; folding the umbrella he listened to the sound of the water on the leaves of the trees, like the ticking of a thousand watches.

He had come home to Simla and he was moved.

2.

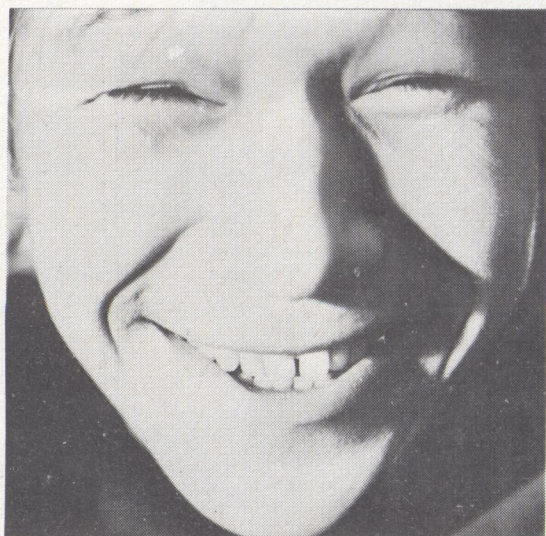
IN THE HUT was a small neatly made bed and on the bed an old toy bear. Above it a blown-up picture of Alan Powys had faded in the sun. A word had been scratched into the wall below and to the left of the picture:

ASTRAPHOBIA

By the side of the bed was a copy of *Vogue* for 1952.







a *Captain Marvel* comic book, a clock in a square case. The veneer of the clock case had been badly burned. Propping up the clock at one corner was an empty Pall Mall pack which had faded to a pinkish colour and was barely recognisable. Roaches crawled across the grey woollen blankets on the bed.

Rain rattled on the corrugated asbestos roof. Jerry shut and locked the door behind him. For the moment he could not concern himself with the hut. Perhaps it was just as well.

He looked through the waving trees at the ruined mansion. What was the exact difference between synthesis and sensationalism?

### 3.

JERRY STAYED IN for the rest of the afternoon, oiling his needle rifle. Aggression sustained life, he thought. It had to be so; there were many simpler ways of pro-creating.

Was this why his son had died before he was born?

A servant brought in a silver tray containing a bottle of Pernod, some ice, a glass. Jerry smiled at it nostalgically, then broke the rifle in order to oil the barrel.

### 4.

THE GHOST OF his unborn son haunted him; though here, in the cool bungalow with its shadowed passages, it was much easier to bear. Of course, it had never been particularly hard to ignore; really a different process altogether. The division between imagination and spirit had not begun to manifest itself until quite late, at about the age of six or seven. Imagination—usually displayed at that age in quite ordinary childish games—had twice led him close to a lethal accident. In escaping, as always, he had almost run over a cliff.

Soon after that first manifestation the nightmares had begun, and then, coupled with the nightmares, the

waking visions of twisted, malevolent faces, almost certainly given substance by *Fantasia*, his father's final treat before he had gone away.

Then the horrors increased as puberty came and he at last found a substitute for them in sexual fantasies of a grandiose and sado-masochistic nature. Dreams of jewelled elephants, cowed slaves and lavishly dressed rajahs parading through baroque streets while crowds of people in turbans and loincloths cheered them, jeered at them.

With some distaste Jerry stirred the fire in which burned the collection of religious books for children.

He was distracted by a sound from outside. On the veranda servants were shouting. He went to the window and opened it.

"What is it?"

"Nothing, sahib. A mongoose killing a cobra. See."

The man held up the limp body of the snake.

### 5.

FROM THE WARDROBE Jerry took a coat of silk brocade. It was blue, with circles of a slightly lighter blue stitched into it with silver threads. The buttons were diamonds and the cloth was lined with buckram. The high, stiff collar was fixed at the throat by two hidden brass buckles. Jerry put the coat on over his white silk shirt and trousers. Carefully he did up the buttons and then the collar. His long black hair fell over the shoulders of the coat and his rather dark features, with the imperial beard and moustache, fitted the outfit perfectly.

Crossing the bedroom, he picked up the rifle from the divan. He slotted on the telescopic sight, checked the magazine, cradled the gun in his left arm. A small drop of oil stained the silk.

Pausing by a chest of drawers he took an old-fashioned leather helmet and goggles from the top drawer.

He went outside and watched the ground steam in the sun. The ruined mansion was a bright, sharp white in the distance. Beyond it he could see his servants wheeling the light Tiger Moth biplane onto the small airfield.

### 6.

A journey of return through the clear sky; a dream of flying; wheeling over blue-grey hills and fields of green rice, over villages and towns and winding yellow roads, over herds of cattle; over ancient, faded places, over rivers and hydro-electric plants; a dream of freedom.

In the distance, Delhi looked as graceful as New York.



7.

JERRY MADE HIS way through the crowd of peons who had come to look at his plane. The late Victorian architecture of this suburb of Delhi blended in perfectly with the new buildings, including a Protestant church, which had been erected in the last ten years.

He pulled the flying goggles onto his forehead shifted the gun from his left arm to his right and pushed open the doors of the church.

It was quite fancifully decorated, with murals in orange, blue and gold by local artists, showing incidents from the life of Jesus and the apostles. The windows were narrow and unstained; the only other decoration was the altar and its furnishings. The pulpit was plain, of polished wood.

When Jerry was halfway down the aisle a young Indian priest appeared. He wore a buff-coloured linen suit and a dark blue shirt with a white dog-collar and he addressed Jerry in Hindi.

"We do not allow guns in the church, sir."

Jerry ignored him. "Where is Sabiha?"

The priest folded his hands on his stomach. "Sabiha is in Ganhinagar, I heard this morning. She left Ahmadabad yesterday. . . ."

"Is the Pakistani with her?"

"I should imagine so." The priest broke into English. "They have a tip-top car—a Rolls-Royce. It will get them there in no time."

Jerry smiled. "Good."

"You know Sabiha, then?" said the priest conversationally, beginning to walk towards Jerry.

Jerry levelled the needle rifle at his hip. "Of course. You don't recognise me?"

"Oh, my god!"

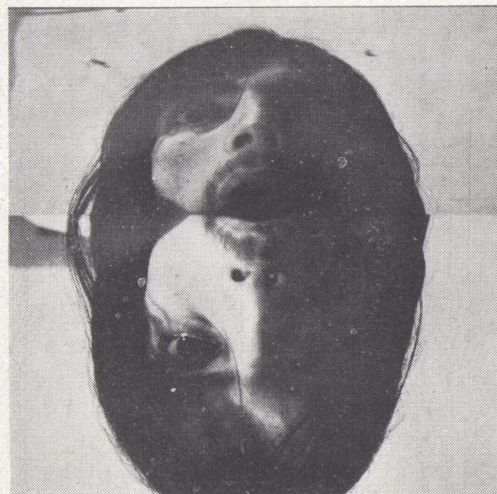
Jerry sighed and tilted the rifle a little. He pulled the trigger and sent a needle up through the priest's open mouth and into his brain.

In the long run, he supposed, it was all a problem of equilibrium. But even considering his attitude toward the priest, the job was an unpleasant one. Naturally it would have been far worse if the priest had had an identity of his own. No great harm had been done, however, and on that score everybody would be more or less satisfied.

8.

**THERE** are times in the history of a nation when random news events trickling from an unfriendly neighbour should be viewed not as stray birds but as symbols of a brood, the fingerposts of a frame of mind invested with sinister significance.

**WHAT** is precisely happening in Pakistan? Is there a gradual preparation, insidiously



designed to establish dangerous tensions between the two neighbours?

**WHY** are the so-called Majahids being enrolled in large numbers and given guerilla training? Why have military measures like the setting up of pill-boxes and similar offensive-defensive steps on the border been escalated up to an alarming degree?

(Blitz news weekly, Bombay, July 27, 1968)

9.

THROUGH THE HALF-constructed buildings of Gandhinagar Jerry wandered, his flying helmet and goggles in one hand, his rifle in the other. His silk coat was grubby now and open at the collar. His white trousers were stained with oil and mud and his suede boots were filthy. The Tiger Moth lay where he had crash-landed it, one wheel completely broken off its axle. He wouldn't be able to use it to leave.

It was close to sunset and the muddy streets were full of shadows cast by the skeletons of modern skyscrapers on which little work had been done for months. Jerry reached the tallest building, one that had been planned as the government's chief administration block, and began to climb the ladders which had been placed between the levels of scaffolding. He left his helmet behind, but held the rifle by its trigger guard as he climbed.

When he reached the top and lay flat on the roofless concrete wall he saw that the city seemed to have been planned as a spiral, with this building as its axis. From somewhere on the outskirts of the city a bell began to toll. Jerry pushed off the safety catch.

Out of a sidestreet moved a huge bull elephant with curling tusks embellished with bracelets of gold, silver and bronze. On its head and back were cloths of beau-



tifully embroidered silk, weighted with tassels of red, yellow and green; its howdah was also ornate, the wood inlaid with strips of enamelled brass and silver, with onyx, emeralds and sapphires. In the howdah lay Sabiha and the Pakistani, their clothes disarrayed, making nervous love.

Jerry sighted down the gun's telescope until the back of the Pakistani's head was in the crosshairs, but then the man moved as Sabiha bit his shoulder and a strand of her blue nylon sari was caught by the evening wind, floating up to obscure them both. When the nylon drifted down again Jerry saw that they were both close to orgasm. He put his rifle on the wall and watched. It was over very quickly.

With a wistful smile he picked up his gun by the barrel and dropped it over the wall so that it fell through the interior of the building, striking girders and making them ring like a glockenspiel.

The couple looked up but didn't see Jerry. Shortly afterwards the elephant moved out of sight.

Jerry began to climb slowly back down the scaffold-ing.

10.

AS HE WALKED away from the city he saw the majahid commandos closing in on the street where he supposed the elephant was. They wore crossed ammunition belts over their chests and carried big Lee-Enfield .303s. The Pakistani would be captured, doubtless, and Sabiha would have to find her own way back to Delhi. He took his spare keys from his trouser pocket and opened the door of the violet Rolls-Royce, climbed in and started the engine. He would have to stop for petrol in Ahmadabad, or perhaps Udaipur if he went that way.

He switched on the headlights and drove carefully until he came to the main highway.

11.

IN THE BATH he examined the scar on his inner thigh; he had slipped while getting over a corrugated iron fence cut to jagged spikes at the top so that people wouldn't climb it. He had been seven years old: fascinated at what the gash in his flesh revealed. For hours he had alternately bent and straightened his leg in order to watch the exposed muscles move through the seeping blood.

He got out of the bath and wrapped a robe around his body, walking slowly through the bungalow's passages until he reached his bedroom.

Sabiha had arrived. She gave him a wry smile. "Where's your gun?"

"I left it in Gandhinagar. I was just too late."

"I'm sorry."

He shrugged. "We'll be working together again, I

hope."

"This scene's finished now, isn't it?"

"Our bit of it, anyway, I should think." He took a brass box from the dressing table and opened the lid, offering it to her. She looked into his eyes.

When she had taken all she needed, she closed the lid of the box with her long index finger. The sharp nails were painted a deep red.

Exhausted, Jerry fell back on the bed and stared at her vaguely as she changed out of her nylon sari into khaki drill trousers, shirt and sandals. She bunched up her long black hair and pinned it on top of her head.

"Your son. . ." she began, but Jerry closed his eyes, cutting her short.

He watched her turn and leave the room, then he switched out the light and very quickly went to sleep.

12.

**THE** unbridled support given to the Naga rebels by China shows that India has to face alarms and excursions on both sides of her frontier. It is not likely that China would repeat her NEFA adventure of 1962, as she might then have to contend with the united opposition of the USSR and the USA.

**THAT** is precisely why the stellar role of a cat's paw appears to have been assigned to Pakistan. . . .

**OUR** Intelligence service should be kept alert so that we get authentic information well in advance of the enemy's intended moves.

**AND** once we receive Intelligence of any offensive being mounted, we should take the lesson from Israel to strike first and strike hard on several fronts before the enemy gets away with the initial advantages of his blitzkrieg.

(Blitz, ibid)

13.

*Waterfall* BY JIMI Hendrix was playing on the tape as Jerry ate his breakfast on the veranda. He watched a mongoose dart out from under the nearby hut and dash across the lawn towards the trees and the ruined mansion. It was a fine, cool morning.

As soon as the mongoose was safe, Jerry reached down from the table and touched a stud on the floor. The hut disappeared. Jerry took a deep breath and felt much better. He hadn't accomplished everything, but his personal objectives had been tied up very satisfactorily. All that remained was for a woman to die. This had not, after all, been a particularly light-hearted episode.



14.

**KRISHNAN MOHAN JUNEJA (Ahmadabad): How you have chosen the name BLITZ and what does it mean?**

*It was started in 1941 at the height of Nazi blitzkrieg against Britain.*

*(Blitz, ibid, correspondence column)*

15.

At least there would be a little less promiscuous violence which was such a waste of everybody's life and time and which depressed him so much. If the tension had to be sustained, it could be sustained on as abstract a level as possible. And yet, did it finally matter at all? It was so hard to find that particular balance between law and chaos.

It was a dangerous game, a difficult decision, perhaps an irreconcilable dichotomy.

16.

AS HE WALKED through the trees towards the ruined mansion he decided that in this part of the world things were narrowing down too much. He wished that he had

not missed his timing where the Pakistani was concerned. If he had killed him, it might have set in motion a whole new series of cross-currents. He had slipped up and he knew why.

The mansion's roof had fallen in and part of the front wall bulged outwards. All the windows were smashed in the lower storeys and the double doors had been broken backwards on their hinges. Had he the courage to enter? The presence of his son was very strong.

If only it had not been here, he thought. Anywhere else and the Pakistani would be dead by now.

Until this moment he had never considered himself to be a coward, but he stopped before he got to the doorway and could not move forward. He wheeled round and began to run, his face moving in terror.

The Phantom V was ready. He got into it and drove it rapidly down the drive and out into the road. He went away from Simla and he was screaming, his eyes wide with self-hatred. His scream grew louder as he passed Delhi and it only died completely when he reached Bombay and the coast.

He was weeping uncontrollably even when the SS *Kao An* was well out into the Arabian Sea.





# THE COLOURS

THOMAS M. DISCH

THE WALLS were orange. The rug, an antique Kashan, was a brilliant red ornamented with blue, ochre and white. Taken all together, it was rather much.

Raymond poured glass jewels into his hand from a yoghurt container. When he rattled them about in his palm each facet flared with a different colour of refracted light.

"I doubt that glass beads have realised such a price since the sale of Manhattan," he said, intending a joke.

"Of course it uses transparencies too," Raymond said. (It was not Raymond's style, any longer, to make jokes.) "The only substantial material expense is the cabinet. The control elements are really quite cheap. Though I don't pretend to understand the programming. It's that, the design, that they pay for."

"Still . . . five hundred dollars?"

"Because it has to be custom-made now. If Boyd can find a manufacturer there's no telling what the price would be cut to."

"And if there were a market."

Raymond smiled. "Oh, there's a market."

The blonde girl drifted out of the kitchen and lay down, beside Boyd, in the Turkish corner. A moment later Anita brought in the tea.

Catching his look, Raymond said, "Regency. But mismatched."

Good old Raymond seemed to be sweating money these days. On the whole, it was a smell that became him.

"You'll try it then?"

"I'll try anything once," he said.

"Oh, but once you *start*, you know . . ."

Anita poured the tea into the vulgar, but surely quite expensive, cups. ("Lowestoft blue-and-white.")

"One lump or two?" Raymond asked, the tongs

poised.

"You're pulling my leg."

"One lump, then."

"Aren't you having any?"

"We started early, thank you."

"Yes, I did think Boyd seemed . . . a bit beside himself."

"Boyd is beautiful," Anita said.

"No doubt," he said, and then, *sotto voce*, "Hail, blythe spirit."

Raymond turned on the machine—an outsized television with the screen gone and its guts on view. Tubes twinkled. Colours flowed and faded on the back-projection screen. Prisms revolved, blinking. All distinctly pastel, like the somnolent Boyd.

"And now. . . ?"

"Wait," Raymond said. "Ripeness is all."

"Contemplate," Anita said.

(He didn't, he decided, like Anita.)

"How long?"

But either they did not reply or he was distracted by a sudden dazzle of yellow, shower of gold, behind the small proscenium of the cabinet, following which (and this surely could not be only an optical phenomenon) the space within the machine seemed to expand or (if not this) to take on a larger significance, though a purely spatial significance. One could not say that it had become thereby "beautiful" (the colours seemed very nearly as pastel as before), but something, something in no way tangible, had altered, and he was interested in this change.

There was a second, more golden flash attended by what seemed to be violet "echoes" that diminished rhythmically. The screen occupied the entire field of his vision now, or rather the colours were no longer con-



fined to the interior of the machine.

Raymond said something that could not have been very important.

Now it was orange, a Chinese orange that veered towards red (mandarin?) but lavender was somehow associated with it. One could not quite be certain about this orange. One needed to learn more before coming to a final decision.

It was fascinating. Yes, it was fascinating.

And a machine did this. How? Electrons, synapses, metered impulses, circuitry. But all *inorganic*—that was, somehow, the wonder of it: that these vagaries of light should have such a relevance not only to his retina but to every underlying conscious process, to these not-quite-articulated thoughts, to. . .

But no—"identity" did not come into it. "Identity" was, in this connection, quite beside the point.

That was the first thing he had learned, but already he sensed that it was *only* the first thing, that, as the thing developed, it would be dwarfed, its only significance residing in the fact that it *had* been the first.

He felt the hand that was placed on his hand. He expected it would be Raymond but it was the girl, the blonde girl.

"I'm Helen," she said.

He continued to look at her: instead of their being diminished (as he had feared) these new intuitions incorporated her face, reinterpreted it, played with it, just as the shifts of orange light from the machine, as they washed over the pale flesh, made it impossible to know the precise colour of her eyes, a problem which, in some other light, might not even have interested him.

"Do you like it?"

"That isn't the point, is it? Whether I like it. Whether I don't."

She smiled, seeming to agree. She laid her head on his shoulder and he looked back into the unfolding spaces—the high ceilings, the daedal corridors, the blossoming walls—of the machine, where everything, still, was orange and still more orange and then oranger.

THE DELTA of these considerations continued to broaden, branch, but only at the cue of colour. Thus, if Helen were to become an obsession, it was because her fluorescing flesh could be seen in one sense as a great uncompleted canvas, a Rubens still unglazed, the improbable tints a little raw, yellows citrine, neon oranges, no modulations of coolness and warmth. She remained a latency.

She stroked his armpit. Like the rest of them, she rarely smiled—that would be one of the harder things to learn.

He did not touch her. It was possible, with this much time, an entire Sunday morning, perhaps the day, to approach the matter of Helen with suitable deliberation, a sense of particularity, rather than (as last night) to plunge in, gasping, to the undistinguished mass of sensation, as into a great bed of pink floss—to come to an awareness of the brushwork by disregarding for the

time being the modelling of the limbs, the foreshortening, the "expression" of her lips.

"How are you?" she asked, turning on to her side, slipping out of focus.

"Oh fine. I'm just fine."

"And I can stay? For a while."

He nodded, glad that she had been the one to ask.

And though all this (these sensations and his examination of these sensations) was surely interesting, he was aware already (had he not, just last night, proven himself a quick student?) of the main problem posed by these now "colours": whether they existed, whether there was, *always*, a direct relation between stimulus and response, the act of seeing and the fact of the seen. Not that he would have loved Helen any the less (Helen representing now not the sensory object but the catalyst) if there were no such relation. But what a difference it would make in other respects! How much more valuable the *world* became if these colours could be regarded as innate, not his nor hers nor theirs but its very own, inalienable.

Yes, it was interesting—he would hang on to that. Though was there any prospect, really, of that interest soon coming to an end? Hadn't she been the one to ask if she could stay?

"I can do simple things around the apartment," she said. "Little jobs."

"If you like. And there are lots of books."

She looked at the wall of books looming above the bed, laughed.

"Why is that?" he asked.

"Oh, everywhere there is always such a lot of books."

She had the habit, which he was to pick up eventually, of speaking in such absolute terms ("always", "every", "never"), though seldom, despite this, with any precision, just as, much later, when she was gone and he would try to remember the exact contours and colours of her flesh, he could recapture only the gross image, an absolute Helen, the name, as one recalls of some painting one has seen many years ago the name and nothing else. But of these things he had, as yet, no notion.

TIME, THEN, was the sequence of these colours, the oranges less and less in prominence, yellow in the ascendant. Only at work would he be aware of the irksome revolutions of the numbered hours, the tally of days, but even here sometimes he would have a sense of less stable orderings, of unexpected congruencies and omissions, of the intrusion (even here) of the special claim that the "inorganic" now made upon him. The process of change was accelerating, and it made scant difference whether these changes were an interior or an exterior event. Polarities of any kind seemed rather beside the point.

He began to see that Raymond and his set, far from lacking a sense of humour, lived in a perpetual state of hilarity: for them the special occasions of wit were supererogatory. Every artifice in the city's infinite



treasury could tell its own small joke, but one cannot go about laughing *all* the time.

[Twice he returned to the studio, once with Helen and once, when Helen had gone off somewhere, alone. Now that its colours had "run" into the world at large the machine did not possess the same fascination. With the journey so well advanced one could feel only an affectionate nostalgia for these snapshots of the first ports-of-call. Instead of baring his mind to the spray blowing down from the brimming lip of light, without even entering the sanctuary, he sat in the kitchen with his host, asking questions about Helen.

"I think she told me she comes from the Bronx," Raymond said.

"The Bronx?"

"Or Yonkers—I'm not sure."

"How did you meet her?"

"At a party, I suppose. I can never keep track of all the people who are in and out of this place. The fellow in the astrakhan, for instance—I haven't the faintest clue to what he's doing here or who brought him. He's been about for two or three days now. Says he writes."

"How old is she?"

"Hey, what is this, a quiz show?"

"I think I'm falling in love with her. Or something like that."

"Well, that's your own lookout."

"You don't think I should?"

"Man, if you're going to fall in love, you'll *fall* in love. Won't you?"

"The funny thing is—she seems to have so little to do with it herself. I mean, it's not love that connects me and her—it's Helen that connects me and love."

Raymond shrugged: it was all philosophy to him.

For a while he watched the coffee percolating on the stove, like a dark brown Nola light, then left without saying goodbye to Raymond, who was helping the boy in the astrakhan be sick in the bathroom.

He decided to walk home rather than go down into the subway. A summer night, green trees, music, the city's munificent life. The sidewalk strewn with portents, trouvailles, and the sequence of faces slipping past his that touched, like the knobs on the metal disc of a musicbox, each, a different chord of perception.

Without Helen none of this would have made sense. She was his link not only to "love" but to the world.

When he arrived home, early in the morning, Helen was still out. He decided not to go to work. He made coffee and a kind of omelette from the food still left in the icebox. Morning lengthened into afternoon: olive-drab, muddled tans and ochres, mahogany and mother-of-pearl. Not dazzling, to be sure, but with their own distinct fascination nevertheless.

ORANGE:

YELLOW:

AND THEN a stage of virescence. The days of her absence had been like the sere March fields before the new grass—with this difference, that love cannot be

relied on to recur seasonally: its sere days, when they come, seem to come for ever.

Now, at the end of August, it was veritable spring. They spent their weekends (he was at work again) in the park, where alone in that city could be found a sufficiency of green, of grass and veined leaves that took their life, as he did, from the light, arching towards it, turning with it, amorous.

Helen always present, with Helen, touching her.

It was Helen's special grace that she allowed all things to be reduced to their surfaces, and it became his task, as her lever, to read, from a swell of muscle, from the underpainting of her skin (green, as in an early Siennese madonna) the meanings hidden in her name, to which end he would investigate the slightest clue.

They ate, in the evenings, miraculous salads—when they bothered to eat. Their days were not demarcated by necessities. Seldom had he been so slim, so self-indulgent, so exalted.

This was to be the apogee of his delight, when he looked neither forward nor back, the weightless instant at the crest of the wave. And so it was that when, one Sunday evening, beside the artificial lake on the west side of the park, they ran into Raymond and Anita, it required the most strenuous effort of memory to recall that these two had been so closely implicated in bringing him to this height (where *they* were scarcely visible) of happiness.

He left most of the talking to Helen. The conversation twined and intertwined its allusions, intentions, names, numbers across the trellis of his consciousness in Persian intricacies. Raymond made a joke and their mingled laughter rose, like a little fountain, into the chilled air. When they finally left he was exhausted.

"Shall we go to the party?" Helen asked.

"What party?"

"At Raymond's. Tonight."

He stared at her closed lips, stained with the chocolate coating from the ice cream, unable to read their expression.

"Do you want to? We'll go there if you want to."

He nodded, and dabbed at her lips with a paper napkin.

"Well?" she demanded.

"Yes. Yes, let's go."

He lay back on the abused and tenuous grass, gazed up, resisting the new era.

"What day is it?" he asked.

"Sunday, of course. What did you think?"

"I mean the date."

"I don't know. October something-or-other. Why?"

"Because the leaves are turning."

"You mean you just noticed that?"

"But the sky is incredibly blue, isn't it?"

Helen looked up at the sky. She shrugged. "I suppose so."

It was only then, with the initiation of the descent, that he knew he was committed: to just this action and no other. Beforehand such an event may seem pain-



ful, but he had never bothered to anticipate events. And now? Pain?

No—nor ever again, for it was only now in the dizzying descent that he had been able to find time to appreciate just how far he had come and what rare air he breathed in these altitudes. It was not as though his downward course were to be no more than a recapitulation, a reverie: the sensation of it was wholly new and the motion was downward only in the sense that he could no longer reverse its direction. In fact, there was no “down” or “up” at all, for it had always been downward in that he had never resisted nor wished to resist, and always upward in that each successive transformation, each new tonality, brought his mind to a higher and a finer pitch.

And how various each realm! What millesimal graduations from shade to shade! But especially the blues—the blues were like no other colour he had known before.

The sky. The sky flattened against the window of his room, a del Piombo, the morning paleness burnished, hour by hour, to the lapis lazuli of noon, a pigment of ground jewels costlier than gold-leaf.

Or the azure veins sealing her closed eyes, azure veins lacing her arms. The nameless blue of those eyes opened. The shadows revolving in slow measure about the shabby furniture, the hours.

And, sometimes, clouds—though these were white and dazzling.

The hyacinthine evenings and his body, lax, falling into night, and the night itself, indigo, and her name, Helen, and her body, the few highlights, the deep shadows, the indelible sense of just that instant in time, futureless, absolute, here, just here, Helen.

TOO OFTEN, of course, she would not be here. He would be alone, wondering where she was, when she would return.

Once, during such a crisis, Raymond came around.

“I tried to call,” Raymond explained, “but you’ve been cut off.”

“Oh yes,” he said. “The telephone.”

Raymond put the groceries he had brought into the icebox.

“How are you?”

“I’m fine.”

“We haven’t seen you for some time.”

“I’m fine.”

“Is Helen still living here?”

“Sometimes.” Then, looking away from the window: “Have you seen Helen?”

“Last night she was with a friend of mine. No, Thursday night.”

“I’m . . .” But he forgot.

“Are you sure you’re all right? I know a doctor—”

“If you should see Helen, give her my love,” he said, without intending irony.

Raymond carried out the garbage when he left, and that same night Helen was there. She’d brought a bottle

of wine and they celebrated. When she undressed there were bruises on her legs and arms.

“Don’t touch them,” she said.

And now? he asked himself. Would there be another colour? What could come after violet (which had gone past almost before he’d had a chance to notice)? Black? Black was the only thing left, so far as he could imagine.

Helen was running water into the bath.

“How are you?” he asked above the roar of the tap.

“Me? I’m fine.”

THEN, PRODIGIOUS as a comet, unannounced, the brightness fell, dazzling. And her smile, the sun in suspension above Gibeon, dazzling. Between her and this new light that shone through her he did not trouble to distinguish.

He looked into her eyes, they were white.

The fields of vision flooded and every sense spread back to accept the absolute gift. Pools of dazzling water reflected the retinal skies. Deserts blossoming.

Eyes and fingers reached, like vines, towards that light through endless stretches of white sand, white flowers.

Only the white.

Her body, so blanched now as to be invisible, suspended beneath his, and his, baked and basking in the perpetual light—as though they had been lifted outside the cone of earth’s shadow into the unchanging midday of space, into beauty beyond imagining, which still grew and only sometimes (that it might grow again) ebbed.

During the rare intervals, long or brief, he could understand, partially, what had happened and what still remained to happen. A rainbow, revolving, would be white: white, the harmony of all colours, their resolving chord, unprism’d light.

She always returned to him, and he knew that she always *would* return to him: here, just here. Touching. Perhaps not even that, perhaps only being near.

Then again the electric arc would leap the gap to consciousness, and then again, and then, more powerfully, again. He would look into the apotheosis of her eyes and the light would grow behind them until the image was dissolved in its own radiance.

Crystal! Not the facets’ partial truths but the immaculate inorganic core of chrysolite. Jewels spilled into his hands, ran through his veins, sprang dazzling, into the light, arched higher, turned to beads of spray that hung there, constellations of the noon.

He cried aloud.

Everything—all colours, the filthy walls, the sky falling against the windows, snow, sheets of ice—was white, and he knew there would be no colours after this, the journey’s end, and on the sign there, the white crystals of her name (which was all that could be known of her, finally): not Helen now, not with such sure syllables, no, just the white insatiable crystals, the name, blinding white, the name whispered so incessantly in his veins, the dazzle, the only possible desire.





# the new agent

by JOEL ZOSS

NICKOLAS DUGONIE sat quietly on a wooden bench. Across from him was another bench just like his, up against the wall. The wall was brown to chest height, then yellow to the ceiling. The woman on the brown bench across from him was very fat. Her patterned dress fell too short and Nickolas could see that her large legs, pressed by the bench, flowed into each other just above the knee. When she sat her legs began at the knees and her crotch was protected by a thick layer of abdominal flesh. She was hot. Nickolas wondered how she wiped her ass. She looked at him malevolently.

Nickolas was soft and thin and his flesh hung loosely. His hair was short, grey, damply rodential. From a distance his presence was vaguely alien; no one would be very surprised to find he commanded a distasteful odour. Sometimes his eyes went out.

Nickolas's usual sitting position appeared wildly uncomfortable to others, but like his eyes, was nothing

personal. The fat lady found the distribution of his limbs irritating, perhaps the last straw on a hot morning and an uncomely young man. Her attempted buxom gaze, already crushed by the bent face of its recipient, changed to disgust. Nickolas was not concerned enough to shrink beneath it, but he felt slightly afraid and then cowardly for fearing a woman he could probably outrun. He looked down the hall to a metallic receptionist; she would probably call him soon.

"Dugonie."

Nickolas walked to the receptionist.

"The Personnel Manager will see you." Nickolas entered the personnel manager's office and sat down before he was greeted.

Two days later he dressed like a doctor except for his coat, which was more like a sports coat and did not have a peasant's collar. His lips looked redder.



Nickolas had had no trouble landing the job once the personnel manager understood what he was after. He had insisted Dugonie didn't want to be a nurse, but an orderly, although Nickolas knew perfectly well he wanted to be a nurse. Finally he had been forced to tell the personnel manager a good deal of his past history, how he had served in the medical corps during the war, and how he had decided to become a nurse when his service was up. In fact, when he presented the papers certifying him a registered nurse Dugonie recalled how he had undergone a similar conversation with the head of the nursing school. She had not thought Nickolas wanted to be a nurse. He did not remember the arguments or explanations he had used then, but he vaguely resented repeating causes he was probably not required to give in the first place. The shortage of nurses put him in demand anyway.

For a while he would serve as a special, a semi-private nurse hired through the hospital by a patient who needed, for a time, more attention than he could expect from the regular staff. If everything worked out he would become a permanent member.

Nickolas read from a list that his first patient was Phillip Wexler. He had expected he would usually be assigned male patients, but this did not disturb his plans. Later in the day he went to the office of the floor manager where he was told he had been contracted to stay by Wexler's side eight hours every day. His case was rather unusual: some accident in his home had left him completely paralyzed. Perhaps it was his spine. At any rate, he lay flat on his back and fed intravenously. Little was asked of Dugonie but a careful watch for change in his condition.

As his duty did not begin until the next day Nickolas wandered about acquainting himself with the hospital, wandered aimlessly. He strode through gleaming corridors, sometimes clasping his hands behind his back. Turning a corner he leaned slightly forward from the waist. As his thoughts raced further away he smiled and his face radiated the cool grim glow of mercury vapour lamps.

A certain sort of person might have invested this jaunty stroller with a larval sort of beauty. Nickolas passed Nurse Nancy Karmal deeply bowed and grinning, and did not see her, so she was tempted to place herself in his path; but because she usually had no need to assert herself she was too slow and lost her chance. Even in her nurse's uniform Nancy's shining eyes and tight belly were arresting.

WHEN ON THE NEXT day Nickolas reported to room 1403 his patient was not there. Instead he found a pretty young lady who was unable to answer his questions or even move. He frowned, but when he picked up the chart at her feet and remembered what he had been told about Phillip Wexler his face suddenly brightened. The golden haired girl was called Phyllis

Wexler. She was totally paralyzed, had twenty-four years of age, and a normal temperature. Nickolas smiled and seated himself on a white metal chair, his back to the gauze curtained window.

Soon Dr. Paitch and Dr. Brill arrived with Phyllis's mother. Her father was dead. The doctors were not sure what was wrong with Phyllis; they told her mother she was currently under observation. They told Nickolas she must be watched carefully, Dr. Paitch remarking,

"We do not believe she is in any immediate danger, but she must be watched carefully for any change in her condition. As you see, she is completely paralyzed and her eyes are open. We are not sure she can see. She has not responded to the visual stimuli. Keep them moist. Respiration and other bodily functions are normal, although she may need some assistance eliminating. Of course she must be fed mechanically. Here is a detailed list of instructions. Be sure to report immediately any change you notice in her condition."

Nickolas returned to his seat by the window. As he read from the instructions that he was half an hour behind schedule for a rectal reading of his patient's temperature he thought how remarkable it was both she and her mother were so unusually attractive.

After several days his attempts at establishing a routine had been only partly successful. There was the matter of his training. More and more Nickolas found himself gazing at her, at her damp locks of golden hair. He looked at her eyes with forced casualness. Soon he began to scrutinize them with an intelligent frown; later he simply stared like a child. But as much as he wondered about those open eyes, and even though he was becoming less fastidious about her body, he confined himself to keeping them moist. Today as he watched her (part of a sheet was across her eyes, as if by accident) he looked carefully at her body, his fingers touched her thighs and breasts less efficiently. Nickolas felt that having a beautiful naked woman before him was a great step forward, but he was not sure where such a thought came from or what he should make of it. He continued washing.

The sun caught the tiny golden curls on her belly as he patted her dry. He turned her from one side to the other and then on her stomach to take her temperature, indulging himself as he manipulated her legs and bottom. With the smooth insertion of the thermometer he felt the elevator sensation in his abdomen. When he turned to the window to wait three minutes his temples were damp from the feeling of his dry fingers on her warm folds.

The nurse Nancy Karmal watched Nickolas. She frequently found business in the room across from his. In a few days he would begin to recognise her, and when he called on her for help they would meet. The nurse smiled angelically. A smooth involuntary rumbling from deep within her thorax accompanied this smile.



This nurse was a beautiful creature. Even as a child she had exhibited an uncanny ability to extract the nectar from the secret flowers of the good and evil forests without losing her way in either. Nancy made men wriggle. She was often in love but at any rate made love every evening, proud of her erect young body and pretty young men. Her sheets were crisp and sweet smelling, her rooms were golden and patterned. Here is something she wrote.

## THE GREAT RED DRAGON AND THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN

The woman is clothed with the sun. The dragon cannot hurt her, she is clothed with the sun, but still she watches him. The dragon is not real and the sun is. Only real things can be destroyed so the woman is vigilant. She is protecting her friends. She does not have to hold out her arms as she does. This may be just for show, but perhaps she has to to remind herself. Her friends and enemies melt greyly beneath her. They are not holding out their arms, they are afraid. The woman clothed with the sun is a little afraid because all things are possible, but her eyes have strength because, whatever the case may be, she is not afraid to dissemble fear to the great red dragon.

The power of the dragon is his unwholesomeness. He knows the woman lusts for him, this she knows too. She has four hundred kicking shrimp in her crotch. Will she make love with the great red dragon? Is this what is in her eyes? If she does, it will be at her instigation. How strong is her solar cloth? I would like her to try; however, it is her choice and she must know best. As a little girl she was very tidy. The red dragon is very beautiful. He has more than five heads, muscular wings. His hands are more graceful than the woman's because he knows nothing and has never been afraid. Great Red Dragon never thinks. He knows the woman is stronger, but he is immortal. He was never a child. Perhaps he will speak to the woman about his childhood until she lusts after him. Then it will not have been her choice after all. However, the dragon will not think this and will not hold it against her. Not that he is terribly magnanimous; on the contrary, he never considers such things at all.

Perhaps Nancy found Nickolas attractive. On the other hand, she may have found him repulsive. In the evening she sat cross-legged before the fire, discarding her clothes when she grew warm. As she played with her Book of Changes, with her rings and cards and incense, as she manipulated the universe between her thighs, she occasionally thought of that larval nurse.

DUGONIE LIVED in a large dark rented room. One can only guess at what he did there. He lived in the room just as he found it. His one friend, a pal named Mark from his tuna days, was now in the merchant marine, and was usually off at sea. When he was in town he called Nickolas and they went to the movies; soon they would not bother. The remnants of his family lived far away.

Nickolas once worked in a tuna canning factory. He had started in the processing department, but when he asked he was given work outside, standing to one side of a ramp on which dead or half-dead tuna were carried by conveyor belt into the factory from a large receiving pond. With a long pole he kept the fish in an orderly line. After a while he decided to make friends with the foreman, a man he admired for his robust countenance and open good nature. He would say to Dugonie,

"Well Nick, how many fish up the ramp today?"

Nickolas would smile weakly and shrug his shoulders. But one day he counted the fish, and every day after that he told the foreman. As the foreman made the rounds he began to dread meeting Dugonie; soon he noticed a gleam in Dugonie's eye and an excited wet anticipatory quiver in his voice. The foreman had him fired.

As she had expected, Nickolas needed Nancy's help when his patient began to menstruate. At first Nickolas swabbed her. He knew there was a more efficient way, but was not sure how to implement it. Nurse Karmal noticed his discomfort from across the hall. When he finally approached her he was upset, and as she took his hand and introduced herself his eyes may have moistened. Nancy got him a big box of Tampax from the closet. She showed him how to insert them, made him practice three times, and then had him agree to meet her for coffee in the cafeteria after work.

Nickolas was annoyed when Nancy dropped in to visit, especially now that he was coming to have the patient almost all to himself. It used to be that on days when Dr. Paitch didn't come to see her Dr. Brill did; but neither thought she would live, and the patient had not changed. They questioned Dugonie briefly. When Dr. Paitch stopped experimenting with her eyes Nickolas continued on his own, the sight of which unsettled Mrs. Wexler one afternoon, as she still had a few qualms about the sex of her daughter's nurse. She found Dugonie repulsive, or perhaps, like Nancy, she found him attractive. At any rate she limited her visits to one a week, believing the doctors would tell her if she should come more often. Paitch and Brill limited their visits to one a week. Nancy dropped in often. The stories she told Nickolas about the antics of her cats, at which he always muttered approvingly, only added to his feeling that she just took up his time. He agreed to anything she said.

Once Nancy got him to visit her at her apartment.





When she greeted him she wore Indian garb of silk and gauze, bracelets of beads; she sat him on patterned cushions. She placed whining music on the phonograph and brought him scented coffee to drink. Her hair shimmered in the firelight. Nickolas wrinkled his nose.

He sat cross-legged in dumb imitation, his particular mode of congeniality. As the fire warmed he squinted and they spoke of events at the hospital, Nickolas talking slowly of what they both knew while Nancy snuggled closer. She was surprised at the texture of his flesh. At 10.30, with nothing more to say, Nickolas took his leave.

**D**UGONIE DID NOT trust the pretty young nurse, he felt she attracted too much attention. When she left his room the other nurses and orderlies addressed him with salty remarks; this he especially disliked, but only his face, by becoming more aggressively bland, showed his disapproval. The staff could not understand why Nancy had anything to do with him. One young doctor, a French exchange intern, suggested they took drugs together.

Nickolas found Phyllis much more compelling. He also understood that she depended on him, although this insight arranged itself to inform him she was within his power. As he watched her on her bed his mind became crowded with methods, and the urgency of duty quickened his steps through the hospital corridors.

When a few days later he noticed that Phyllis could move her eyelids he decided to tell no one. He asked her if she could hear him; if she could, she should blink her eyes twice. After she did that he began speaking to her mechanically, as if reciting a lesson. To ensure privacy he told her that Dr. Paitch said her condition would improve only if she kept her eyes open as much as possible (that, in fact, until now she had been given a drug to keep them open), and that he, her mother, and all the doctors and nurses would be most displeased to see them move. Only he, Nickolas, should know. He would permit her to move them for some time each day because he understood she must be very lonely, and in that way she could have conversation.

Nickolas received part of his plan while pondering what else he should do about Phyllis's eyes. Later as he played with her crotch before inserting the rectal thermometer he concluded he must have her. Although he was not sure how to go about it, he knew the job could not be rash or precipitous. That evening he slept very poorly. He recalled dreaming.

He stood on a closely cropped green knoll of soft grass. The wind blew silver clouds through the sky. Sunlight shimmered painlessly recalling sparkling, tinkling sounds. Below him stretched a gleaming cement superhighway, and beside the green fifty-foot bank leading down from the highway's left side ran a narrow road lined with open air shops. They were constructed of glass showcases like those found in jewellery stores and bakeries. People eating the merchandise of the shops walked slowly over the narrow road.

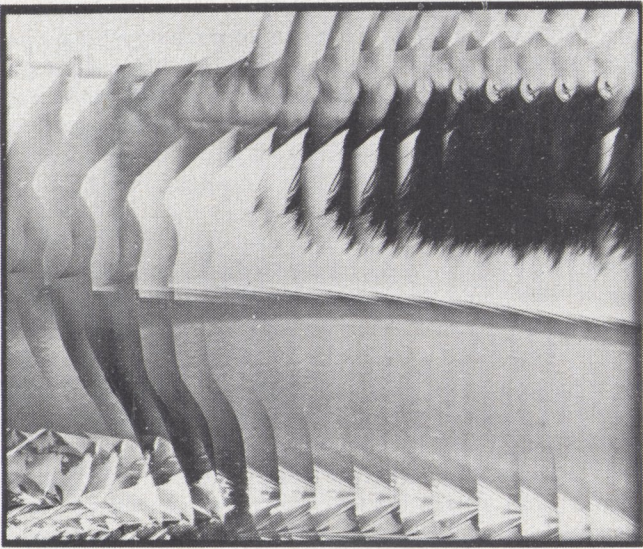
Nickolas knew the pleasant shops were selling pizza. After surveying the valley he began his descent to the road in mid-morning. Wind turned the leaves of the trees upside down. Soon he reached the shops, very hungry. He wandered from one end of the street to the other trying to decide which shop to patronize. All the proprietors smiled, but so did everyone; the ware of one shop differed little from that of the next.

On closer inspection Nickolas was surprised to find that the shops were selling pastry, not pizza; pastry cleverly designed to look like pizza. All the shops had signs: Pizza For Sale. Nickolas saw that everyone knew the pastry was not pizza. He picked a shop at random.

"I would like a piece of pizza, please," he said, pointing to a mushroom and sausage slice. As he paid the cashier he smiled and she smiled too. He put the pastry to his lips. He smiled toward the sun.

Next morning Nickolas returned to his patient with magazines featuring bold naked women. As he showed





these to her he recalled the nature of her accident, how she had slipped in passion and injured her back. He also held pages from exciting tales before her eyes. As he washed and changed her he spent more time than ever caressing her body. He moved his flat hands quickly over her sides or wiggled a finger back and forth in one place. Soon he entirely dispensed with the pretence of washing or changing and did as he pleased, kissing her breasts and burying his head in her crotch. All the while he addressed her with words of lust.

Daily Nickolas increased his license with the patient's body. Once he thought of telling her Dr. Paitch had said love-making was good for her condition, but could not remember whether he had already told her so. He decided not to risk mentioning the doctor's orders for fear that if he repeated himself Phyllis would suspect deceit, and his ruse would become transparent. For a long time he became more agitated and confused, but at last he decided to act. After lunch he locked the door, pulled the shade, and uncovered Phyllis from foot to waist, spreading her legs so far apart her heels stuck out over both sides of the bed. He uncovered and mounted the patient. Before long he had exhausted himself. After pushing her legs back together and replacing her sheet he sat in the chair by the window. Peering through the gauze curtains he saw new rain.

NICKOLAS CONTINUED this routine for a long time. Once he felt her move under him, and one day he heard her moan. One week after that he noticed she had missed her second menstrual period, and he began discarding the Tampax Nancy so methodically supplied, wondering if she would notice. Nickolas was worried, but also pleased, to discover how circumspect he had become. But evidence that could easily be disposed of and even pregnancy did not disturb him as much as Phyllis's increasingly frequent vocalisations.

One morning after Nickolas arrived at work and took

his place in the chair by the window he heard Phyllis making unusually loud noises. As he turned toward her he heard,

"Good morning, Nickolas."

His fears shrieked for attention. Phyllis lay motionless on her white bed while Nickolas selected one strand of terror and inspected her mouth for signs of control. In the following silence he began to dismiss the incident as an anxious artifact. For half an hour he quietened himself refolding sheets, then heard,

"I love you, Nickolas."

Neither Phyllis nor Nickolas said anything more that day or the next. Nickolas, of course, was not sure what to do. He knew it was possible that his patient was in love with him, and felt that if this was the case he should declare love and avoid unpleasant consequences. On the other hand, a declaration of love might be some kind of a trap. Nickolas had had little experience with women, but like most men he presumed to understand them (as a separate species) in direct proportion to his unattractiveness. Still he was not sure what to do. Plots and counter plots swirled in his head. After two days of silence he again began to believe he had imagined the whole thing, and decided to carry on as usual.

Phyllis spoke up. Although her lips hardly moved, she spoke clearly. She told Dugonie she was aware her doctors and mother had given her up, that only he had sustained her. She recalled how he had continued to experiment with her eyes, how he had massaged her body and fed her. Her long paralysis had deadened only her vocal apparatus.

She was sure that Nickolas's love had revitalized her tissues. She knew he had the therapeutic and emotional right to make love to her—the firmness of their bond made mockery of weddings and marriage certificates. She understood he had foregone declaring his love for fear his heart-spawned therapy might fail and so plunge his patient into deeper despair at the loss of her new lover than she must already know from the loss of her mobility. Phyllis had been saving her strength for the time—now—when she would finally be able to express her love and gratitude without faltering, to doubly declare herself.

She had never lost hope. Especially since the commencement of their erotic relationship she had daily felt new strength spreading through her body. When she was well she would collaborate with Nickolas in this business of her body just as she was finally able to verbalize the long-past gift of her soul. Remarkable as it may seem, she kept up in this vein for a long time.

So much talking made her very tired, but she had rambled long enough for Nickolas to realize what he must do. He declared awkwardly that he did love her, and continued something to the effect that he had not said so at her first words because he was too astonished to trust his own ears. Phyllis found it within her to excuse him. Nickolas's creative resources were almost



spent. He told her she should rest.

This whole surprising turn of events upset his plans and training; as soon as he could he decided she was unaware of her pregnancy. On second thought, he did not think the disclosure would present great difficulties; in fact, the more he reflected the more it became clear that Phyllis's sentence would change little after all.

ALL THIS, of course, took place in the fall. By the time of heavy snows Phyllis knew of the larval life within her. As Nickolas had expected, she received the news gracefully: in this case as in most others her magnanimous understanding contravened his reckless stupidity. At Phyllis's insistence they made love until the act became distasteful to Nickolas, but for some time she improved remarkably, and she credited this to their love making.

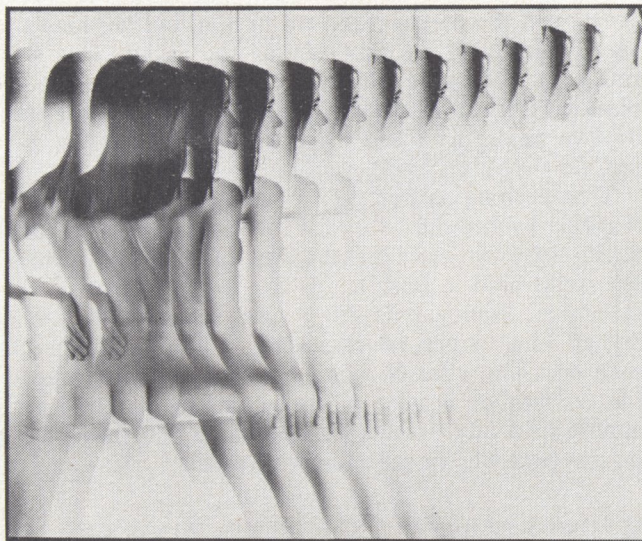
Dugonie's greatest fears were anticipated and removed because Phyllis was careful to hide her improvement from others. She intended to wait until she was perfectly well before making any statement. Then she would stand before those who had given her up, doctors, nurses and mother alike, and—nearly a mother—she would chide them with her tale of love. Nickolas had little choice but to approve of this caper. If it worked he would be praised; if it failed (Paitch told him she had little chance) no one would be the wiser. In either case he would be safe from outside attack.

But in spite of Phyllis's love her health, after its brief resurgence, began to decline. By the first hints of spring she could barely speak. Perhaps the effort of growing a child sapped her strength. She did not abandon hope; when she could she still spoke to Dugonie of their plans for triumph. Her relapse relieved him. As soon as he could he abandoned her body.

During her long decline Nickolas often told her stories, plots from movie and t.v. shows, and one afternoon the story of his second cousins, fraternal twins, whose parents' divorce had separated them when they were so young they knew of each other only by hearsay. The brother grew up in New York and the sister in San Francisco. As chance would have it they both gravitated to bohemian sectors of their cities, and the sister became a successful designer of advanced fashions. She was very beautiful but had never found satisfaction in love.

The brother lived in poverty, working just long enough to buy metal for another sculpture. Hunger and neglect added an air of spirituality to his earnest face and powerful hands. In fact, he was so poor that under the influence of drugs he almost became religious. As it was he met his sister at the opening of her new branch in New York and they established immediate rapport. Soon they were lovers.

With her help he was able to hold his head above water. They planned to marry. Their mother (their



father was dead) attended the wedding. Although she had not seen her son for twenty years, she could not help feeling there was something odd. At the reception she took him aside and discovered a strawberry birthmark beneath his right breast.

The bride and groom did not see why blood should stand in the way of love; in fact, each eventually confided in the other that it made things more interesting. For a time children presented a problem, but they agreed to reproduce asexually, using the clonal phenomenon. To date they have one boy and one girl, a replica apiece.

This story was Phyllis's favourite. When she could she asked questions about Nickolas's cousins; he elaborated, it led to much more than he had bargained for. She almost always concluded her inquiries with nostalgic recollections of her mother, and on several occasions urged Nickolas to get to know her better, even to call her Mother. Finally she could no longer speak.

As much as he hoped she would, Nancy Karmal had not forgotten Dugonie. Spring made her belly tingle, her smile more radiant, and by chance, almost by accident, she was to have her way with him. Having reached the end of the staffs' entertainment potential she had permitted her thoughts of Nickolas to take wing, and resumed visits to his room. One day when he was not there to greet her she looked at his patient.

When Nickolas returned from the men's room Nancy uncovered Phyllis and pointed. He began to explain that the doctors knew and of course she had been pregnant on admission to the hospital. As Nancy smiled Nickolas continued for some time in a confident tone until he remembered that the nurse had assisted at the first menstruation. A doglike helplessness. Nancy covered up his patient and said,

'Don't worry Nickolas, I won't tell anyone. Would you like to visit me tonight?'

Nickolas felt he had little choice. Nancy never again



mentioned the pregnant patient to him, but he was sure she would tell if he didn't do as she asked. This was rather silly because Nancy abhorred the thought of blackmail, if not of playing at it. She felt that fear was its own punishment and those who had it better watch out.

That evening as her cats looked on she finally laid Dugonie by her side. She was surprised by his pudding flesh, but even more by the size of his penis, which she could hold in both hands like a fish. Nickolas was miserable; Nancy enjoyed herself so much that she invited him to her house several more times. But on each occasion, after Nickolas had momentarily escaped the warmth of her clasp, she spoke insistently—once almost stridently—of her childhood, so that their meetings weren't wholly satisfactory after all.

SPRING WEIGHED stones on Phyllis Wexler's cracked health. She grew weaker as her belly grew larger, her eyes sometimes closed and she could not speak; and Nickolas was not sure how much longer he could mask her pregnancy. The hospital in all its corridors conspired to make him miserable. The sight of Nurse Karmal, once his friend, terrified him; the doctors he respected became his potential inquisitors, for the doctors, like vultures, began to pay more attention to his patient as her death became more certain.

Until now he had hidden his handiwork by artfully arranging the bedclothes before their visits. Then they had only checked her pulse and questioned him, but soon, he was told, she was due for a comprehensive examination. He had no idea what he was going to do; one evening he would have left town but could not decide where to go. No place he could think of promised him a pleasant reception, and he was loath to leave in the middle of an assignment. On the whole Nickolas enjoyed his work at the hospital. He ended by convincing himself that Paitch and Brill would either overlook the size of Phyllis's belly or attribute it to an exotic tumour.

Perhaps I should mention that at this time a widely popular song was so ambiguous that each word and note was subject to individual interpretation. No one really knew what the song meant, but there were twenty or thirty dominant understandings corresponding to social, religious, geographical, or other principle conceptual segments of the population. While in some cities the wholesome ditty was learned by school children, in others it was banned for obscenity. Of thirty people polled by the *Times*, some called it a silly tune about drunken giraffes, several praised its patriotism (a return to old values), four called it touching, and one thought it was propaganda for taking LSD-25. It was popular in restaurants, music-filled elevators, and dance halls. Clusters of girls strolled the sidewalks arm-in-arm chanting its verses; others listened to it behind closed doors and shuttered windows. Although it could be found in almost any record shop, dark men gestured

from doorways—"Hey man, you wanna . . ."

Nickolas never bought a copy. He thought it strange that a song about the quizzical expression on the face of a man lying in a pool of organic residue on a bed in a room spattered with shards of the blonde girl who had EXPLODED when he penetrated her should be so popular, though he felt he might understand later.

HIS HOPE that the doctors would overlook Phyllis's pregnancy was gone by the morning of her examination. Nickolas could no longer delude himself when the doctors and even Mrs. Wexler gathered around his patient's bed. To make matters worse, Nancy Karmal, drawn by the crowd, was present with an almost sober expression. If he had been less agitated he would have seen significant glances.

Dr. Paitch soon found that Phyllis Wexler's body contained two beating hearts. As he turned to her mother his puzzled expression turned to embarrassment. He applied the stethoscope again. He asked Brill for his opinion; both were at a loss for words. Finally Paitch made an effort to cover.

"Mrs. Wexler," he said with authority, "did you know your daughter was pregnant at the time of her accident?"

She had not known. Her expression of surprise slowly dissipated. "Did you?" she asked.

"Hmm," said Paitch. He glared at Nickolas. "I hardly see how her condition could have escaped the thorough examination she received on her admission to the hospital." Nickolas shrank as Paitch conducted struggling epiphanies. For a moment they all stared at him, each face ringed like a cloudy moon, very cold. He was terrified, he was going to faint. His cringes incited hostility. Dr. Paitch opened his mouth.

Just at that moment Nurse Karmal spoke out in a special tone of indignant conciliation, "Why Dr. Paitch, did you forget she was pregnant when she came here? Didn't you tell her mother? I thought we all knew it." She sounded slightly hurt, but more important, everybody was inclined to believe her. There is this about whipping dead horses even though the pacification later struck Brill as uncommonly thorough.

Nickolas was thankful for his deliverance, but he had finally decided to leave the hospital anyway. He was nearly finished. By the time Paitch and Brill came to question him he had submitted two weeks' notice, so with little fear he repeatedly replied he was sure they had been aware of the patient's condition, that his nervousness at the examination was only natural in view of the unexpected confusion. But the doctors did not press him. They were glad to hear Dugonie was leaving the hospital, and neither had expected improvement from Phyllis under the best of circumstances. Paitch was actually somewhat annoyed. Going out the door he launched a detailed attack against the use of sex for reproduction, a matter suited only for clonal specialists.

A few days before he was to leave the hospital



Nickolas suddenly became lustful. Since the discovery of Phyllis's pregnancy visitors had ended his privacy, but he could not contain himself. He was just putting things back in order when the door opened and Mrs. Wexler walked in. She looked on in silence while Nickolas bustled efficiently around the room. When he had exhausted its possibilities she approached him and looked deeply into his eyes. She made an effort to communicate something before she spoke, but Nickolas ignored this. Finally she grasped his hand warmly.

"I hope you will come visit me," she said with a smile. Nickolas nodded or said a few words as she wrote out her address on the back of a card. Still smiling she handed it to him and started to leave the room, so conscious of the brushing of her thighs as she walked that she stopped at the doorway to prolong the sensation and to begin it again. She waved to Nickolas. The next day Phyllis went into labour, or should have, and the day after that she and her child died. They were buried together at the Woodlawn Cemetery.

FOR SOME TIME Dugonie was at loose ends. He did not like being without work. Even though he had counted on his hospital job ending soon, he was not really prepared to face idleness, and he had been plunged into that a few days sooner than expected. He walked on the streets. From time to time he gave himself a goal, such as the blue shoe sign, and as he walked toward it welcomed anything that permitted him to stop.

One morning he found a card-shaped note from Mrs. Wexler in his mailbox thanking him for his attention to Phyllis. That very evening she phoned to propose they visit her daughter's grave, the headstone for which had just been put in place. If Nickolas had not been dulled by boredom he would have refused; as it was he could think of no excuse.

The next morning he was just beginning to wonder if she had been joking when she arrived in a green Chevrolet. They left immediately for the cemetery, Mrs. Wexler driving and talking about weather. Half-way there her tone changed and after speaking for some time about her daughter she said even more sincerely, almost conspiratorially, that she forgave Nickolas. Nickolas thought this comment was unnecessary. She had not had any part, at least as far as he knew; it was obnoxious. He did not respond, and decided to have nothing more to do with her.

At the cemetery he admired the headstone and even managed to put his arm around Mrs. Wexler's shoulders when she cried. Everything went very smoothly. Birds and wildflowers intermingled with just the right air of spontaneity. As soon as Mrs. Wexler stopped sobbing they walked back to the car along a sunlit path.

The drive back brought them so close to Mrs. Wexler's house she thought they might as well drop in for lunch. When Nickolas said he wasn't hungry her renewed offers, one of which possibly included a wink,

convinced him that her hospitality concealed demands, and he had himself dropped off for the bus. Instead of going home to meet a friend, as he said he must, he went to a park by the river where after about an hour it began to rain. He went to a movie.

NICKOLAS walked home to his rented room through wet streets. For a few days he relaxed. On the third of these days Nancy Karmal arrived at his room with a present of cooked chicken, perhaps some soup, but he saw her through the window and did not answer the door. He knew he would soon be back at work. He did not know at what; Nickolas had difficulty anticipating. Perhaps he would return to Seattle to wait.

That night he dreamt Phyllis Wexler gave birth to a wet tiger.

## PEACE TALKING

Somewhere  
nearby the peace talks  
have failed  
again the white toys  
sail on the pale  
blue sea becoming horizon  
the thunder nearby  
mumbles  
something of rain  
somewhere nearby discussions  
sail again  
the toy boats fail for lack  
of wind the thunder  
mumbles  
somewhere of rain  
boats sailing discussions  
carrying war.

Bill Butler





Samuel R. Delany:

TIME  
CONSIDERED AS A  
HELIX OF SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES



**D**AY ORDINATE AND abscissa on the century. Now cut me a quadrant. (Third quadrant if you please. I was born in 'fifty. Here it's 'seventy-five.

At sixteen they let me leave the orphanage. Dragging the name they'd hung me with (Harold Clancy Everet, and me a mere lad—how many monickers have I had since; but don't worry, you'll recognise my smoke) over the hills of East Vermont, I came to a decision:

Me and Pa Michaels, who belligerently given me a job at the request of *The Official* looking *Document* with which the orphanage sends you packing, were running Pa Michaels' dairy farm, i.e., thirteen thousand three hundred sixty-two piebald Guernseys all asleep in their stainless coffins, nourished and drugged by pink liquid flowing in clear plastic veins (stuff is sticky and messes up your hands), exercised with electric pulsers that make their muscles quiver, them not half awake, and the milk just a-pouring down into the stainless cisterns. Anyway. The Decision (as I stood there in the fields one afternoon like the Man with the Hoe, exhausted with three hard hours of physical labour, contemplating the machinery of the universe through the fog of fatigue): With all of Earth, and Mars, and the Outer Satellites filled up with people and what-all, there had to be something more than this. I decided to get some.

So I stole a couple of Pa's credit cards, one of his helicopters and a bottle of white lightning the geezer made himself, and took off. Ever try to land a stolen helicopter on the roof of the Pan Am building, drunk? Jail, schmail, and some hard knocks later I had attained to wisdom. But remember this oh best beloved: I have done three honest hours on a dairy farm less than ten years back. And nobody but nobody has ever called me Harold Clancy Everet again.

**H**ANK CULAFROY ECKLES (red-headed, a bit vague, six foot two) strolled out of the baggage room at the space-port carrying a lot of things that weren't his in a small briefcase.

Beside him the Business Man was saying, "You young fellows today upset me. Go back to Bellona, I say. Just because you got into trouble with that little blonde you were telling me about is no reason to leap worlds; come on all glum. Even quit your job!"

Hank stops and grins weakly: "Well. . . ."

"Now I admit, you young people have your real needs, which maybe we older folks don't understand, but you have to show some responsibility towards. . . ." He notices Hank has stopped in front of a door marked MEN. "Oh. Well. Eh." He grins strongly. "I've enjoyed meeting you, Hank. It's always nice when you meet somebody worth talking to on these damn crossings. So long."

Out same door, ten minutes later, comes Harmony C. Eventide, six foot even (one of the false heels was cracked, so I stuck both of them under a lot of paper towels), brown hair (not even my hairdresser knows for sure), oh so dapper and of his time, attired in the bad

taste that is oh so tasteful, a sort of man with whom no Business Men would start a conversation. Took the regulation 'copter from the port over to the Pan Am building (Yeah. Really. Drunk), came out of Grand Central Station, and strode along Forty Second towards Eighth Avenue, with a lot of things that weren't mine in a small briefcase.

The evening is carved from light.

Crossed the plastiplex pavement of the Great White Way—I think it makes people look weird, all that white light under their chins—and skirted the crowds coming up in elevators from the sub-way, the sub-sub-way, and the sub-sub-sub (eighteen and first week out of jail I hung around here, snatching stuff from people—but daintily, daintily, so they never knew they'd been snatched), bulled my way through a crowd of giggling, goo-chewing school girls with flashing lights in their hair, all very embarrassed at wearing transparent plastic blouses which had just been made legal again (I hear the breast has been scene [as opposed to obscene] on and off since the seventeenth century) so I stared appreciatively; they giggled some more. I thought, Christ, when I was that age, I was on a God damn dairy farm, and took the thought no further.

The ribbon of news lights looping the triangular structure of Communication, Inc., explained in Basic English how Senator Regina Abolafia was preparing to begin her investigation of Organised Crime in the City. Days I'm so happy I'm disorganised I couldn't begin to tell.

Near Ninth Avenue I took my briefcase into a long, crowded bar. I hadn't been in New York for two years, but on my last trip through oftentimes a man used to hang out here who had real talent for getting rid of things that weren't mine profitably, safely, fast. No idea what the chances were I'd find him. I pushed among a lot of guys drinking beer. Here and there were a number of well escorted old bags wearing last month's latest. Scarfs of smoke gentled through the noise. I don't like such places. Those there younger than me were all morphadine heads or feeble minded. Those older only wished more younger ones would come. I pried my way to the bar and tried to get the attention of one of the little men in white coats.

The lack of noise behind me made me glance back—

**S**HE WORE A SHEATH of veiling closed at the neck and wrists with huge brass pins (oh so tastefully on the border of taste); her left arm was bare, her right covered with chiffon like wine. She had it down a lot better than I did. But such an ostentatious demonstration of one's understanding of the fine points was absolutely out of place in this bar. People were making a great show of not noticing.

She pointed to her wrist, blood-coloured nail indexing a yellow-orange fragment in the brass claw of her wristlet. "Do you know what this is, Mr. Eldrich?" she asked; at the same time the veil across her face cleared, and her eyes were ice; her brows, black.



Three thoughts: (One) She is a lady of fashion, because coming in from Bellona I'd read the *Delta* coverage of the "fading fabrics" whose hue and opacity were controlled by cunning jewels at the wrist. (Two) During my last trip through, when I was younger and Harry Calamine Eldrich, I didn't do anything *too* illegal (though one loses track of these things); still I didn't believe I could be dragged off to the calaboose for anything more than thirty days under that name. (Three) The stone she pointed to. . . .

". . . Jasper?" I asked.

She waited for me to say more; I waited for her to give me reason to let on I knew what she was waiting for (when I was in jail Henry James was my favourite author. He really was).

"Jasper," she confirmed.

"—Jasper. . . ." I reopened the ambiguity she had tried so hard to dispel.

". . . Jasper—" But she was already faltering, suspecting I suspected her certainty to be ill-founded.

"Okay. Jasper." But from her face I knew she had seen in my face a look that had finally revealed I knew she knew I knew.

"Just whom have you got me confused with, Ma'am?"

Jasper, this month, is the Word.

Jasper is the pass/code/warning that the Singers of the Cities (who, last month, sang "Opal" from their divine injuries; and on Mars I'd heard the Word and used it thrice, along with devious imitations, to fix possession of what was not rightfully my own; and even here I ponder Singers and their wounds) relay by word of mouth for that loose and roguish fraternity with which I have been involved (in various guises) these nine years. It goes out new every thirty days; and within hours every brother knows it, throughout six worlds and worldlets. Usually it's grunted at you by some blood-soaked bastard staggering into your arms from a dark doorway; hissed at you as you pass a shadowed alley; scrawled on a paper scrap pressed into your palm by some nasty-grimy moving too fast through the crowd. And this month, it was: Jasper.

Here are some alternate translations:

Help!

or

I need help!

or

I can help you!

or

You are being watched!

or

They're not watching now, so *move*!

Final point of syntax: If the Word is used properly, you should never have to think twice about what it means in a given situation. Fine point of usage: Never trust anyone who uses it improperly.

I waited for her to finish waiting.

She opened a wallet in front of me. "Chief of Special

Service Department Maudline Hinkle," she read without looking what it said below the silver badge.

"You have that very well," I said, "Maud." Then I frowned. "Hinkle?"

"Me."

"I know you're not going to believe this, Maud. You look like a woman who has no patience with her mistakes. But my name is Eventide. Not Eldrich. Harmony C. Eventide. And isn't it lucky for all and sundry that the Word changes tonight?" Passed the way it is, the Word is no big secret to the cops. But I've met policemen up to a week after change date who were not privy.

"Well, then: Harmony. I want to talk to you."

I raised an eyebrow.

She raised one back and said, "Look, if you want to be called Henrietta, it's all right by me. But you listen."

"What do you want to talk about?"

"Crime, Mr. . . . ?"

"Eventide. I'm going to call you Maud, so you might as well call me Harmony. It really is my name."

**M**AUD SMILED. She wasn't a young woman. I think she even had a few years on Business Man. But she used make-up better than he did. "I probably know more about crime than you do," she said. "In fact I wouldn't be surprised if you hadn't even heard of my branch of the police department. What does Special Services mean to you?"

"That's right, I've never heard of it."

"You've been more or less avoiding the Regular Service with alacrity for the past seven years."

"Oh, Maud, really—"

"Special Services is reserved for people whose nuisance value has suddenly taken a sharp rise . . . a sharp enough rise to make our little lights start blinking."

"Surely I haven't done anything so dreadful that—"

"We don't look at what you do. A computer does that for us. We simply keep checking the first derivative of the grafted out curve that bears your number. Your slope is rising sharply."

"Not even the dignity of a name—"

"We're the most efficient department in the Police Organisation. Take it as bragging if you wish. Or just a piece of information."

"Well, well, well," I said. "Have a drink?" The little man in the white coat left us two, looked puzzled at Maud's finery, then went to do something else.

"Thanks." She downed half her glass like someone stancher than that wrist would indicate. "It doesn't pay to go after most criminals. Take your big time racketeers, Farnsworth, The Hawk, Blavatskia. Take your little snatch-purses, small-time pushers, house-breakers, or vice-impresarios. Both at the top and the bottom of the scale, their incomes are pretty stable. They don't really upset the social boat. Regular Services handles them both. They think they do a good job.



We're not going to argue. But say a little pusher starts to become a big-time pusher; a medium-sized vice-impresario sets his sights on becoming a big-time racketeer; that's when you get problems with socially unpleasant repercussions. That's when Special Services arrive. We have a couple of techniques that work remarkably well."

"You're going to tell me about them, aren't you."

"They work better that way," she said. "One of them is holographic information storage. Do you know what happens when you cut a hologram plate in half?"

"The three dimensional image is . . . cut in half?"

She shook her head. "You get the whole image, only fuzzier, slightly out of focus."

"Now I didn't know that."

"And if you cut it in half again, it just gets fuzzier still. But even if you have a square centimetre of the original hologram you still have the whole image—unrecognisable, but complete."

I mumbled some appreciative *m*'s.

"Each pin point of photographic emulsion on a hologram plate, unlike a photograph, gives information about the entire scene being hologrammed. By analogy, holographic information storage simply means that each bit of information we have—about you, let us say—relates to your entire career, your overall situation, the complete set of tensions between you and your environment. Specific facts about specific misdemeanours or felonies we leave to Regular Services. As soon as we have enough of our kind of data, our method is vastly more efficient for keeping track—even predicting—where you are or what you may be up to."

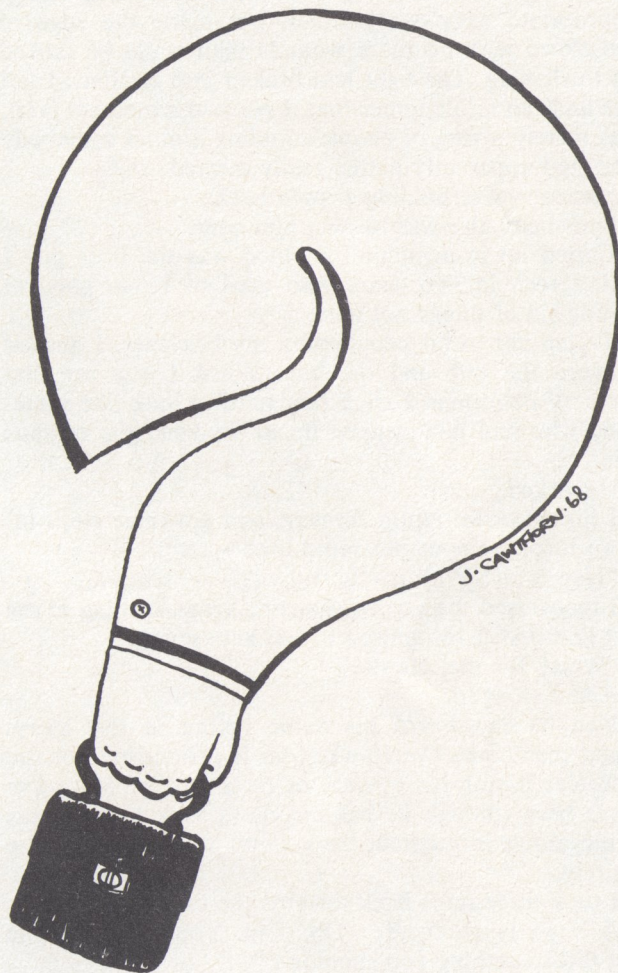
"Fascinating," I said. "One of the most amazing paranoid syndromes I've ever run up against. I mean just starting a conversation with someone in a bar. Often, in a hospital situation, I've encountered stranger —"

"In your past," she said matter of factly, "I see cows and helicopters. In your not too distant future there are helicopters and hawks."

"And tell me, oh Good Witch of the West, just how —" Then I got all upset inside. Because nobody is supposed to know about that stint with Pa Michaels save thee and me. Even the Regular Service who pulled me, out of my mind, from that whirlbird bouncing towards the edge of the Pan Am never got that one from me. I'd eaten the credit cards when I saw them waiting, and the serial numbers had been filed off everything that could have had a serial number on it by some one more competent than I: good Mister Michaels had boasted to me, my first lonely, drunken night at the farm, how he'd gotten the thing in hot from New Hampshire.

"But why—" It appalls me the clichés to which anxiety will drive us "—are you telling me all this?"

She smiled and her smile faded behind her veil. "Information is only meaningful when it is shared," said a voice that was hers from the place of her face.



"Hey, look, I—"

"You may be coming into quite a bit of money soon. If I can calculate right, I will have a helicopter full of the city's finest arriving to take you away as you accept it into your hot little hands. That is a piece of information. . . ." She stepped back. Someone stepped between us.

"Hey, Maud—!"

"You can do whatever you want with it."

THE BAR WAS CROWDED enough so that to move quickly was to make enemies. I don't know—I lost her and made enemies. Some weird characters there: with greasy hair that hung in spikes, and three of them had dragons tattooed on their scrawny shoulders, still another with an eye patch, and yet another raked nails black with pitch at my cheek (we're two minutes into a vicious free-for-all, case you missed the transition. I did) and some of the women were screaming. I hit and ducked, and then the tenor of the brouhaha changed. Somebody sang, "Jasper!" the way she is supposed to be sung. And it meant the heat (the ordinary, bungling Regular Service I had been eluding these seven years) were on their way. The brawl spilled into the street. I



got between two nasty-grimys who were ding things appropriate with one another, but made the edge of the crowd with no more wounds than could be racked up to shaving. The fight had broken into sections. I left one and ran into another that, I realised a moment later, was merely a ring of people standing around somebody who had apparently gotten really messed.

Someone was holding people back.

Somebody else was turning him over.

Curled up in a puddle of blood was the little guy I hadn't seen in two years who used to be so good at getting rid of things not mine.

Trying not to hit people with my briefcase, I ducked between the hub and the bub. When I saw my first ordinary policeman I tried very hard to look like somebody who had just stepped up to see what the rumpus was.

It worked.

I turned down Ninth Avenue, and got three steps into an inconspicuous but rapid lope—

"Hey, wait! Wait up there. . . ."

I recognised the voice (after two years, coming at me just like that, I recognised it) but kept going.

"Wait! It's me, Hawk!"

And I stopped.

You haven't heard his name before in this story; Maud mentioned *the Hawk*, who is a multi-millionaire racketeer basing his operations on a part of Mars I've never been (though he has his claws sunk to the spurs in illegalities throughout the system) and somebody else entirely.

I took three steps back towards the doorway.

A boy's laugh there: "Oh, man. You look like you just did something you shouldn't."

"Hawk?" I asked the shadow.

He was still the age when two years' absence means an inch or so taller.

"You're still hanging out around here?" I asked.

"Sometimes."

He was an amazing kid.

"Look, Hawk, I got to get out of here." I glanced back at the rumpus.

"Get." He stepped down. "Can I come too?"

Funny. "Yeah." It makes me feel very funny him asking that. "Come on."

BY THE STREET LAMP, half a block down, I saw his hair was still pale as split pine. He could have been a nasty-grimy: very dirty black denim jacket, no shirt beneath; very ripe pair of black-jeans—I mean in the dark you could tell. He went barefoot; and the only way you can tell on a dark street someone's been going barefoot for days in New York is to know already. As we reached the corner, he grinned up at me under the street lamp and shrugged his jacket together over the welts and furrōws marring his chest and belly. His eyes were very green. Do you recognise him? If, by some failure of information dispersal throughout the

worlds and worldlets you haven't, walking beside me beside the Hudson was Hawk the Singer.

"Hey, how long have you been back?"

"A few hours," I told him.

"What'd you bring?"

"Really want to know?"

He shoved his hands into his pockets and cocked his head. "Sure."

I made the sound of an adult exasperated by a child. "All right." We had been walking the waterfront for a block now; there was nobody about. "Sit down." So he straddled the beam along the siding, one foot dangling above the flashing black Hudson. I sat in front of him and ran my thumb around the edge of the briefcase.

Hawk hunched his shoulders and leaned. "Hey . . ." He flashed green questioning at me. "Can I touch?"

I shrugged. "Go ahead."

He grubbed among them with fingers that were all knuckle and bitten nail. He picked two up, put them down, picked up three others. "Hey!" he whispered. "How much are all these worth?"

"About ten times more than I hope to get. I have to get rid of them fast."

He glanced down at his hanging foot. "You could always throw them in the river."

"Don't be dense. I was looking for a guy who used to hang around that bar. He was pretty efficient." And half the Hudson away a water-bound foil skimmed above the foam. On her deck were parked a dozen helicopters—being ferried up to the Patrol Field near Verrazano, no doubt. But for moments I looked back and forth between the boy and the transport, getting all paranoid about Maud. But the boat *mmmed* into the darkness. "My man got a little cut up this evening."

Hawk put the tips of his fingers in his pockets and shifted his position.

"Which leaves me up tight. I didn't think he'd take them all but at least he could have turned me on to some other people who might."

"I'm going to a party later on this evening—" He paused to gnaw on the wreck of his little fingernail, "where you might be able to sell them. Alexis Spinnel is having a party for Regina Abolafia at Tower Top."

"Tower Top . . .?" It had been a while since I palled around with Hawk. Hell's Kitchen at ten; Tower Top at midnight—

"I'm just going because Edna Silem will be there."

Edna Silem is New York's eldest Singer.

Senator Abolafia's name had ribboned above me in lights once that evening. And somewhere among the endless magazines I'd perused coming in from Mars I remember Alexis Spinnel's name sharing a paragraph with an awful lot of money.

"I'd like to see Edna again," I said offhandedly. "But she wouldn't remember me." Folk like Spinnel and his social ilk have a little game, I'd discovered during the first leg of my acquaintance with Hawk. He who can



get the most Singers of the City under one roof wins. There are five Singers of New York (a tie for second place with Lux on Iapetus). Tokyo leads with seven. "It's a two Singer party?"

"More likely four . . . if I go."

The inaugural ball for the mayor gets four.

I raised the appropriate eyebrow.

"I have to pick up the Word from Edna. It changes tonight."

"All right," I said. "I don't know what you have in mind but I'm game." I closed the case.

WE WALKED BACK towards Times Square. When we got to Eighth Avenue and the first of the plastiplex paving, Hawk stopped. "Wait a minute," he said. Then he buttoned his jacket up to his neck. "Okay."

Strolling through the streets of New York with a Singer (two years back I'd spent much time wondering if that were wise for a man of my profession) is probably the best camouflage possible for a man of my profession. Think of the last time you glimpsed your Tri-D star turning the corner of Fifty-Seventh. Now be honest. Would you really recognise the little guy in the tweed jacket half a pace behind him?

Half the people we passed in Times Square recognised him. With his youth, funereal garb, black feet and ash pale hair, he was easily the most colourful of Singers. Smiles; narrowed eyes; very few actually pointed or stared.

"Just exactly who is going to be there who might be able to take this stuff off my hands?"

"Well, Alexis prides himself on being something of an adventurer. They might just take his fancy. And he can give you more than you can get peddling them in the street."

"You'll tell him they're all hot?"

"It will probably make the idea that much more intriguing. He's a creep."

"You say so, friend."

We went down into the sub-sub. The man at the change booth started to take Hawk's coin, then looked up. He began three or four words that were unintelligible through his grin, then just gestured us through.

"Oh," Hawk said, "thank you," with ingenuous surprise, as though this were the first, delightful time such a thing had happened. (Two years ago he had told me sagely, "As soon as I start looking like I expect it, it'll stop happening.") I was still impressed by the way he wore his notoriety. The time I'd met Edna Silem, and I'd mentioned this, she said with the same ingenuousness, "But that's what we're chosen for.")

In the bright car we sat on the long seat; Hawk's hands were beside him, one foot rested on the other. Down from us a gaggle of bright-bloused goo-chewers giggled and pointed and tried not to be noticed at it. Hawk didn't look at all, and I tried not to be noticed looking.

Dark patterns rushed the window.



Things below the grey floor hummed.

Once a lurch.

Leaning once; we came out of the ground.

Outside, the city put on its thousand sequins, then threw them away behind the trees of Ft. Tryon. Suddenly the windows across from us grew bright scales. Behind them the girders of a station reeled by. We got out on the platform under a light rain. The sign said TWELVE TOWERS STATION.

By the time we reached the street, however, the shower had stopped. Leaves above the wall shed water down the brick. "If I'd known I was bringing someone, I'd have had Alex send a car for us. I told him it was fifty-fifty I'd come."

"Are you sure it's all right for me to tag along, then?"

"Didn't you come up here with me once before?"

"I've even been up here once before that," I said. "Do you still think it's . . ."

He gave a withering look. Well; Spinnel would be delighted to have Hawk even if he dragged along a whole gang of real nasty-grimys—Singers are famous for that sort of thing. With one more or less presentable thief, Spinnel was getting off light. Beside us rocks



broke away into the city. Behind the gate to our left the gardens rolled up toward the first of the towers. The twelve immense, luxury apartment buildings menaced the lower clouds.

"Hawk the Singer," Hawk said into the speaker at the side of the gate. *Clang* and tic-tic-tic and *Clang*. We walked up the path to the doors and doors of glass.

A cluster of men and women in evening dress were coming out. Three tiers of doors away they saw us. You could see them frowning at the guttersnipe who'd somehow gotten into the lobby (for a moment I thought one of them was Maud, because she wore a sheath of the fading fabric, but she turned; beneath her veil her face was dark as roasted coffee); one of the men recognised him, said something to the others. When they passed us they were smiling. Hawk paid about as much attention to them as he had paid to the girls on the subway. But when they'd passed, he said, "One of those guys was looking at you."

"Yeah. I saw."

"Do you know why?"

"He was trying to figure out whether we'd met before."

"Had you?"

I nodded. "Right about where I met you, only back when I'd just gotten out of jail. I told you I'd been here once before."

"Oh."

BLUE CARPET covered three-quarters of the lobby. A great pool filled the rest, in which a row of twelve foot trellises stood, crowned with flaming braziers. The lobby itself was three storeys high, domed and mirror tiled.

Twisting smoke curled towards the ornate grill. Broken reflections sagged and recovered on the walls.

The elevator door folded about us its foil petals. There was the distinct feeling of not moving while seventy-five storeys shucked down around us.

We got out on the landscaped roof garden. A very tanned, very blond man wearing an apricot jump-suit, from the collar of which emerged a black turtleneck dicky, came down the rocks (artificial) between the ferns (real) growing along the stream (real water; phony current).

"Hello! Hello!" Pause. "I'm terribly glad you decided to come after all." Pause. "For a while I thought you weren't going to make it." The spaces were to allow Hawk to introduce me. I was dressed so that Spinnel had no way of telling whether I was a miscellaneous Nobel laureate that Hawk happened to have been dining with, or a varlet whose manners and morals were even lower than mine happen to be.

"Shall I take your jacket?" Alexis offered.

Which meant he didn't know Hawk as well as he would like people to think. But I guess he was sensitive enough to realise from the little cold things that happened in the boy's face that he should forget his

offer.

He nodded to me, smiling—about all he could do—and we strolled towards the gathering.

Edna Silem was sitting on a transparent inflated hassock. She leaned forward, holding her drink in both hands, arguing politics with the people sitting on the grass before her. She was the first person I recognised (hair of tarnished silver; voice of scrap brass). Jutting from the cuffs of her mannish suit, her wrinkled hands about her goblet, shaking with the intensity of her pronouncements, were heavy with stones and silver. As I ran my eyes back to Hawk, I saw half a dozen whose names/faces sold magazines, music, sent people to the theatre (the drama critic for *Delta*, wouldn't you know), and even the mathematician from Princeton I'd read about a few months ago who'd come up with the "quasar/quark" explanation.

There was one woman my eyes kept returning to. On glance three I recognised her as the New Fascist's most promising candidate for president, Senator Abolafia. Her arms were folded and she was listening intently to the discussion that had narrowed to Edna and an overly gregarious younger man whose eyes were puffy from what could have been the recent acquisition of contact lenses.

"But don't you feel, Mrs. Silem, that—"

"You must remember when you make predictions like that—"

"Mrs. Silem, I've seen statistics that—"

"You *must* remember," her voice tensed, lowered, till the silence between the words was as rich as the voice was sparse and metallic, "that if everything, *everything* were known, statistical estimates would be unnecessary. The science of probability gives mathematical expression to our ignorance, not to our wisdom," which I was thinking was an interesting second instalment to Maud's lecture, when Edna looked up and exclaimed, "Why, Hawk!"

Everyone turned.

"I *am* glad to see you. Lewis, Ann," she called: there were two other Singers there already (he dark, she pale, both tree-slender; their faces made you think of pools without drain or tribute come upon in the forest, clear and very still; husband and wife, they had been made Singers together the day before their marriage seven years ago), "he hasn't deserted us after all!" Edna stood, extended her arm over the heads of the people sitting, and barked across her knuckles as though her voice was a pool cue. "Hawk, there are people here arguing with me who don't know nearly as much as you about the subject. You'd be on my side, now, wouldn't you—"

"Mrs. Silem, I didn't mean to—" from the floor.

Then her arms swung six degrees, her fingers, eyes and mouth opened. "You!" Me. "My dear, if there's anyone I never expected to see here! Why it's been almost two years, hasn't it?" Bless Edna; the place where she and Hawk and I had spent a long, beery



evening together had more resembled that bar than Tower Top. "Where have you been keeping yourself?"

"Mars, mostly," I admitted. "Actually I just came back today." It's so much fun to be able to say things like that in a place like this.

"Hawk—both of you—" which meant either she had forgotten my name, or she remembered me well enough not to abuse it, "come over here and help me drink up Alexis' good liquor." I tried not to grin as we walked towards her. If she remembered anything, she certainly recalled my line of business and must have been enjoying this as much as I was.

Relief spread Alexis' face; he knew now I was *someone*, if not *which* someone I was.

As we passed Lewis and Ann, Hawk gave the two Singers one of his luminous grins. They returned shadowed smiles. Lewis nodded. Ann made a move to touch his arm, but left the motion unconcluded; and the company noted the interchange.

Having found out what we wanted, Alex was preparing large glasses of it over crushed ice when the puffy-eyed gentleman stepped up for a refill. "But, Mrs. Silem, then what do you feel validly opposes such political abuses?"

Regina Abolafia wore a white silk suit. Nails, lips and hair were one colour; and on her breast was a worked copper pin. It's always fascinated me to watch people used to being the centre thrust to the side. She swirled her glass, listening.

"I oppose them," Edna said. "Hawk opposes them. Lewis and Ann oppose them. We, ultimately, are what you have." And her voice had taken on that authoritative resonance only Singers can assume.

Then Hawk's laugh snarled through the conversational fabric.

We turned.

He'd sat cross-legged near the hedge. "Look . . ." he whispered.

Now people's gazes followed his. He was looking at Lewis and Ann. She, tall and blonde, he, dark and taller, were standing together very quietly, a little nervously, eyes closed (Lewis' lips were apart).

"Oh," whispered someone who should have known better, "they're going to . . ."

I watched Hawk because I'd never had a chance to observe one Singer at another's performance. He put the soles of his feet together, grasped his toes and leaned forward, veins making blue rivers on his neck. The top button of his jacket had come loose. Two scar ends showed over his collarbone. Maybe nobody noticed but me.

I saw Edna put her glass down with a look of beam-ing, anticipatory pride. Alex, who had pressed the auto-bar (odd how automation has become the upper crust's way of flaunting the labour surplus) for more crushed ice, looked up, saw what was about to happen, and pushed the cut-off button. The autobar hummed to silence. A breeze (artificial or real, I couldn't tell you)

came by and the trees gave us a final *shush*.

One at a time, then in duet, then singly again, Lewis and Ann sang.

SINGERS ARE PEOPLE who look at things, then go and tell people what they've seen. What makes them Singers is their ability to make people listen. That is the most magnificent over-simplification I can give. Eighty-six-year-old El Posado, in Rio de Janeiro, saw a block of tenements collapse, ran to the Avenida del Sol and began improvising in rhyme and metre (not all that hard in rhyme-rich Portuguese), tears runnelling his dusty cheeks, his voice clashing with the palm swards above the sunny street. Hundreds of people stopped to listen; a hundred more; and another hundred. And they told hundreds more what they had heard. Three hours later, hundreds from among them had arrived at the scene with blankets, food, money, shovels and, more incredibly, with the willingness and ability to organise themselves and work within that organisation. No Tri-D report of a disaster has ever produced that sort of reaction. El Posado is historically considered the first Singer. The second was Miriamne in the roofed city of Lux, who for thirty years walked through the metal streets singing the glories of the rings of Saturn—the colonists can't look at them without aid because of the ultra-violet rays the rings set up. But Miriamne, with her strange cataracts, each dawn, walked to the edge of the city, looked, saw and came back to sing of what she saw. All of which would have meant nothing if, during the days she did not sing—through illness, or once she was on a visit to another city to which her fame had spread—the Lux Stock Exchange would go down, the number of violent crimes rise. Nobody could explain it. All they could do was proclaim her a Singer. Why did the institution of Singers come about, springing up in just about every urban centre throughout the system? Some have speculated that it was a spontaneous reaction to the mass media which blanket our lives. While Tri-D and radio and news-tapes disperse information all over the worlds, they also spread a sense of alienation from first-hand experience. (How many people still go to sports events or a political rally with their little receivers plugged to their ears to let them know that what they see is really happening?) The first Singers were proclaimed by the people around them. Then, there was a period where anyone could proclaim himself who wanted to, and people either responded to him, or laughed him into oblivion. But by the time I was left on the doorstep of somebody who didn't want me, most Cities had more or less established an unofficial quota. When a position is left open today, the remaining Singers choose who is going to fill it. The required talents are poetic, theatrical, as well as a certain charisma that is generated in the tensions between the personality and the publicity web a Singer is immediately snared in. Before he became a Singer, Hawk had gained something of a prodigious



reputation with a book of poems published when he was fifteen. He was touring universities and giving readings, but the reputation was still small enough so that he was amazed that I had ever heard of him, that evening we encountered in Central Park (I had just spent a pleasant thirty days as a guests of the city and it's amazing what you find in the Tombs Library). It was a few weeks after his sixteenth birthday. His Singership was to be announced in four days, though he had been informed already. We sat by the lake till dawn, while he weighed and pondered and agonised over the coming responsibility. Two years later, he's still the youngest Singer in six worlds by half a dozen years. Before becoming a Singer, a person need not have have been a poet, but most are either that or actors. But the roster through the system includes a longshoreman, two university professors, an heiress to the Silitax millions (Tack it down with Silitacks), and at least two persons of such dubious background that the ever-hungry-for-sensation Publicity Machine itself has agreed not to let any of it past the copy-editors. But wherever their origins, these diverse and flamboyant living myths sang of love, of death, the changing of seasons, social classes, governments and the palace guard. They sang before large crowds, small ones, to an individual labourer coming home from the city's docks, on slum street corners, in club cars of commuter trains, in the elegant gardens atop Twelve Towers, to Alex Spinnel's select soirée. But it has been illegal to reproduce the "Songs" of the Singers by mechanical means (including publishing the lyrics) since the institution arose, and I respect the law, I do, as only a man in my profession can. I offer the explanation then in place of Lewis' and Ann's song.

THEY FINISHED, opened their eyes, stared about with expressions that could have been embarrassment, could have been contempt.

Hawk was leaning forward with a look of rapt approval. Edna was smiling politely. I had the sort of grin on my face that breaks out when you've been vastly moved and vastly pleased. Lewis and Ann had sung superbly.

Alex began to breathe again, glanced around to see what state everybody else was in, saw, and pressed the autobar, which began to hum and crush ice. No clapping, but the appreciative sounds began; people were nodding, commenting, whispering. Regina Abolafia moved over to Lewis to say something. I tried to listen until Alex shoved a glass into my elbow.

"Oh, I'm sorry . . ."

I transferred my briefcase to the other hand and took the drink smiling. When Senator Abolafia left the two Singers, they were holding hands and looking at one another a little sheepishly. They sat down again.

The party drifted in conversational groups through the gardens, through the groves. Overhead clouds the colour of old chamois folded and unfolded across the

moon.

For a while I stood alone in a circle of trees listening to the music: a de Lassus two-part canon, programmed for audio-generators. Recalled: an article in one of last week's large-circulation literaries stating that it was the only way to remove the feel of the bar lines imposed by five centuries of metre on modern musicians. For another two weeks this would be acceptable entertainment. The trees circled a rock pool; but no water. Below the plastic surface, abstract lights wove and threaded in a shifting lumia.

"Excuse me . . . ?"

I turned to see Alexis, who had no drink now or idea what to do with his hands. He was nervous.

". . . but our young friend has told me you have something I might be interested in."

I started to lift my briefcase, but Alex's hand came down from his ear (it had gone by belt to hair to collar already) to halt me. Nouveau riche.

"That's all right. I don't need to see them yet. In fact, I'd rather not. I have something to propose to you. I would certainly be interested in what you have if they are, indeed, as Hawk has described them. But I have a guest here who would be even more curious."

That sounded odd.

"I know that sounds odd," Alexis assessed, "but I thought you might be interested simply because of the finances involved. I am an eccentric collector who could offer you a price concomitant with what I would use them for: eccentric conversation pieces—and because of the nature of the purchase I would have to limit severely the people with whom I would converse."

I nodded.

"My guest, however, would have a great deal more use for them."

"Could you tell me who this guest is?"

"I asked Hawk, finally, who you were and he led me to believe I was on the verge of a grave social indiscretion. It would be equally indiscreet to reveal my guest's name to you." He smiled. "But discretion is the better part of the fuel that keeps the social machine turning, Mr. Harvey Cadwaliter-Erickson . . ." He smiled knowingly.

I have *never* been Harvey Cadwaliter-Erickson, but then, Hawk was always an inventive child. Then a second thought went by, viz., the tungsten magnates, the Cadwaliter-Ericksons of Tythis on Triton. Hawk was not only inventive, he was as brilliant as all the magazines and newspapers are always saying he is.

"I assume your second indiscretion will be to tell me who this mysterious guest is?"

"Well," Alex said with the smile of the canary-fattened cat, "Hawk agreed with me that *the* Hawk might well be curious as to what you have in there," (he pointed) "as indeed he is."

I frowned. Then I thought lots of small, rapid thoughts I'll articulate in due time. "*The Hawk?*"

Alex nodded.



I don't think I was actually scowling. "Would you send our young friend up here for a moment?"

"If you'd like," Alex bowed, turned. Perhaps a minute later, Hawk came up over the rocks and through the trees, grinning. When I didn't grin back, he stopped.

"Ummmm . . ." I began.

His head cocked.

I scratched my chin with a knuckle. ". . . Hawk," I said, "are you aware of a department of the police called Special Services?"

"I've heard of them."

"They've suddenly gotten very interested in me."

"Gee," he said with honest amazement. "They're supposed to be very effective."

"Ummmm," I reiterated.

"Say," Hawk announced, "how do you like that? My namesake is here tonight. Wouldn't you know?"

"Alex doesn't miss a trick. Have you any idea *why* he's here?"

"Probably trying to make some deal with Abolafia. Her investigation starts tomorrow."

"Oh." I thought over some of those things I had thought before. "Do you know a Maud Hinkle?"

His puzzled look said no pretty convincingly.

"She bills herself as one of the upper echelon in the arcane organisation of which I spoke."

"Yeah?"

"She ended our interview earlier this evening with a little homily about hawks and helicopters. I took our subsequent encounter as a fillip of coincidence. But now I discover that the evening has confirmed her intimations of plurality." I shook my head. "Hawk, I am suddenly catapulted into a paranoid world where the walls not only have ears, but probably eyes, and long, claw-tipped fingers. Anyone about me—yea, even very you—could turn out to be a spy. I suspect every sewer grating and second-storey window conceals binoculars, a tommygun, or worse. What I just can't figure out is how these insidious forces, ubiquitous and omnipresent though they be, induced you to lure me into this intricate and diabolical—"

"Oh, cut it out!" He shook back his hair. "I didn't lure—"

"Perhaps not consciously, but Special Services has Holographic Information Storage, and their methods are insidious and cruel—"

"I said cut it out." And all sorts of hard little things happened again. "Do you think I'd—" Then he realised how scared I was, I guess. "Look, the Hawk isn't some small time snatch-purse. He lives in just as paranoid a world as you're in now, only all the time. If he's here, you can be sure there are just as many of his men—eyes and ears and fingers—as there are of Maud Hickenlooper."

"Hinkle."

"Anyway, it works both ways. No Singer's going to— Look, do you really think *I* would—"

And even though I knew all those hard little things

were scabs over pain, I said, "Yes."

"You did something for me once, and I—"

"I gave you some more welts. That's all."

All the scabs pulled off.

"Hawk," I said. "Let me see."

HE TOOK A breath. Then he began to open the brass buttons. The flaps of his jacket fell back. The lumia coloured his chest with pastel shiftings.

I felt my face wrinkle. I didn't want to look away. I draw a hissing breath instead, which was just as bad.

He looked up. "There're a lot more than when you were here last, aren't there?"

"You're going to kill yourself, Hawk."

He shrugged.

"I can't even tell which are the ones I put there anymore."

He started to point them out.

"Oh, come on," I said, too sharply. And for the length of three breaths, he grew more and more uncomfortable, till I saw him start to reach for the bottom button. "Boy," I said, trying to keep despair out of my voice, "why do you do it?" and ended up keeping out everything. There is nothing more despairing than a voice empty.

He shrugged, saw I didn't want that, and for a moment anger flickered in his green eyes. I didn't want that either. So he said: "Look . . . you touch a person, softly, gently, and maybe you even do it with love. And, well, I guess a piece of information goes on up to the brain where something interprets it as pleasure. Maybe something up there in my head interprets the information all wrong. . . ."

I shook my head. "You're a Singer. Singers are supposed to be eccentric, sure; but—"

Now he was shaking his head. Then the anger opened up. And I saw an expression move from all those spots that had communicated pain through the rest of his features, and vanish without ever becoming a word. Once more he looked down at the wounds that webbed his thin body.

"Button it up, boy. I'm sorry I said anything."

Halfway up the lapels his hands stopped. "You really think I'd turn you in?"

"Button it up."

He did. Then he said, "Oh." And then, "You know, it's midnight."

"So?"

"Edna just gave me the Word."

"Which is?"

"Agate."

I nodded.

He finished closing his collar. "What are you thinking about?"

"Cows."

"Cows?" Hawk asked. "What about them?"

"You ever been on a dairy farm?"

He shook his head.



"To get the most milk, you keep the cows practically in suspended animation. They're fed intravenously from a big tank that pipes nutrients out and down, branching into smaller and smaller pipes until it gets to all those high yield semi-corpses."

"I've seen pictures."

"People."

". . . and cows?"

"You've given me the Word. And now it begins to funnel down, branching out, with me telling others, and them telling still others, till by midnight tomorrow. . ."

"I'll go get the—"

"Hawk?"

He turned back. "What?"

"You say you don't think I'm going to be the victim of any hanky-panky with the mysterious forces that know more than we— Okay, that's your opinion. But as soon as I get rid of this stuff, I'm going to make the most distracting exit you've ever seen."

Two little lines bit down Hawk's forehead. "Are you sure I haven't seen this one before?"

"As a matter of fact I think you have." Now I grinned.

"Oh," Hawk said, then made a sound that had the structure of laughter but was all breath. "I'll get the Hawk."

He ducked out between the trees.

I GLANCED UP at the lozenges of moonlight in the leaves.

I looked down at my briefcase.

Up between the rocks, stepping around the long grass, came the Hawk. He wore a grey evening suit; a grey silk turtleneck. Above his craggy face his head was completely shaved.

"Mr. Cadwaliter-Erickson?" He held out his hand.

I shook: small sharp bones in loose skin. "Does one call you Mr. . . ?"

"Arty."

"Arty the Hawk." I tried to look like I wasn't giving his grey attire the once-over.

He smiled. "Arty the Hawk. Yeah. I picked that name up when I was younger than our friend down there. Alex says you got . . . well, some things that are not exactly yours. That don't belong to you."

I nodded.

"Show them to me."

"You were told what—"

He brushed away the end of my sentence. "Come on, let me see."

He extended his hand, smiling affably as a bank clerk. I ran my thumb around the pressure-clip. The cover went *tsk*. "Tell me," I said, looking up at his head still lowered to see what I had, "what does one do about Special Services. They seem to be after me."

The head came up. Surprise changed slowly to a craggy leer. "Why, Mr. Cadwaliter-Erickson!" He gave me the up and down openly. "Keep your income

steady. Keep it steady, that's one thing you can do."

"If you buy these for anything like what they're worth, that's going to be a little difficult."

"I would imagine. I could always give you less money—"

The cover went *tsk* again.

"—or, barring that, you could try to use your head and outwit them."

"You must have outwitted them at one time or another. You may be on an even keel now, but you had to get there from somewhere else."

Arty the Hawk's nod was downright sly. "I guess you've had a run-in with Maud. Well, I suppose congratulations are in order. And condolences. I always like to do what's in order."

"You seem to know how to take care of yourself. I mean I notice you're not out there mingling with the guests."

"There are two parties going on here tonight," Arty said. "Where do you think Alex disappears off to every five minutes?"

I frowned.

"That lumia down in the rocks," he pointed towards my feet, "is a mandala of shifting hues on our ceiling. Alex," he chuckled, "goes scuttling off under the rocks where there is a pavilion of Oriental splendour—"

"—and a separate guest list at the door?"

"Regina is on both. I'm on both. So's the kid, Edna, Lewis, Ann—"

"Am I supposed to know all this?"

"Well, you came with a person on both lists. I just thought. . . ." He paused.

I was coming on wrong. Well. A quick change artist learns fairly quick that the verisimilitude factor in imitating someone up the scale is your confidence in your unalienable right to come on wrong. "I'll tell you," I said. "How about exchanging these—" I held out the briefcase "— for some information."

"You want to know how to stay out of Maud's clutches?" In a moment he shook his head. "It would be pretty stupid of me to tell you, even if I could. Besides, you've got your family fortunes to fall back on." He beat the front of his shirt with his thumb. "Believe me, boy. Arty the Hawk didn't have that. I didn't have anything like that." His hands dropped into his pockets. "Let's see what you got."

I opened the case again.

The Hawk looked for a while. After a few moments he picked a couple up, turned them around, put them back down, put his hands back in his pocket. "I'll give you sixty thousand for them, approved credit tablets."

"What about the information I wanted?"

"I wouldn't tell you a thing." He smiled. "I wouldn't tell you the time of day."

There are very few successful thieves in this world. Still less on the other five. The will to steal is an impulse towards the absurd and the tasteless. (The talents are poetic, theatrical, a certain reverse charisma. . . .) But it is a will, as the will to order, power, love.



"All right," I said.

Somewhere overhead I heard a faint humming.

Arty looked at me fondly. He reached under the lapel of his jacket, and took out a handful of credit tablets—the scarlet-banded tablets whose slips were ten thousand a piece. He pulled off one. Two. Three. Four.

"You can deposit this much safely—?"

"Why do you think Maud is after me?"

Five. Six.

"Fine," I said.

"How about throwing in the briefcase?" Arty asked.

"Ask Alex for a paper bag. If you want, I can send them—"

"Give them here."

The humming was coming closer.

I held up the open case. Arty went in with both hands. He shoved them into his coat pockets, his pants pockets; the grey cloth was distended by angular bulges. He looked left, right. "Thanks," he said. "Thanks." Then he turned, and hurried down the slope with all sorts of things in his pockets that weren't his now.

I looked up through the leaves for the noise, but I couldn't see anything.

I stooped down now and laid my case open. I pulled open the back compartment where I kept the things that did belong to me, and rummaged hurriedly through.

ALEX WAS JUST offering puffy-eyes another scotch, while the gentleman was saying, "Has anyone seen Miss Silem? What's that humming overhead—?" when a large woman wrapped in a veil of fading fabric tottered across the rocks, screaming.

Her hands were clawing at her covered face.

Alex sloshed soda over his sleeve and the man said, "Oh my God! Who's that?"

"No!" the woman shrieked. "Oh no! Help me!" waving her wrinkled fingers, brilliant with rings.

"Don't you recognise her?" That was Hawk whispering confidentially to someone else. "It's Henrietta, Countess of Effingham."

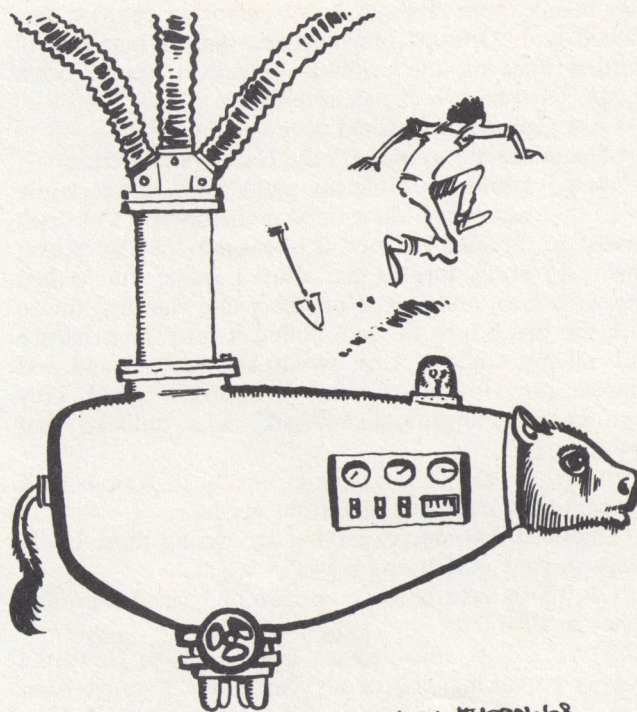
And Alex, overhearing, went hurrying to her assistance. The Countess, however, ducked between two cacti, and disappeared into the high grass. But the entire party followed. They were beating about the underbush when a balding gentleman in a black tux, bow tie, and cummerbund coughed and said, in a very worried voice, "Excuse me, Mr. Spinnel?"

Alex whirled.

"Mr. Spinnel, my mother. . . ."

"Who are *you*?" The interruption upset Alex terribly.

The gentleman drew himself up to announce, "The Honourable Clement Effingham," and his pant legs shook for all the world as if he had started to click his heels. But articulation failed. The expression melted on his face. "Oh, I . . . my mother, Mr. Spinnel. We were downstairs, at the other half of your party, when she got very upset. She ran up here—oh, I told her not to!



I knew you'd be upset. But you must help me!" and then looked up.

The others looked too.

The helicopter blacked the moon, doffing and settling below its hazy twin parasols.

"Oh, please . . ." the gentleman said. "You look over there! Perhaps she'd gone back down. I've got to . . ." looking quickly both ways, ". . . find her." He hurried in one direction while everyone else hurried in others.

The humming was suddenly syncopated with a crash. Roaring now, as plastic fragments from the transparent roof chattered down through the branches, clattered on the rocks.

I MADE IT into the elevator and had already thumbed the edge of my briefcase clasp, when Hawk dove between the unfolding foils. The electric-eye began to swing them open. I hit DOOR CLOSE full fist.

The boy staggered, banged shoulders on two walls, then got back breath and balance. "Hey, there's police getting out of that helicopter!"

"Hand-picked by Maud Hinkle herself, no doubt." I pulled the other tuft of white hair from my temple. It went into the case on top of the plastiderm gloves (wrinkled, thick blue veins, long carnelian nails) that had been Henrietta's hands, lying in the chiffon folds of her sari.

Then there was the downward tug of stopping. The Honourable Clement was still half on my face when the door opened.

Grey and grey, with an absolutely dismal expression on his face, the Hawk swung through the doors. Behind



him people were dancing in an elaborate pavilion festooned with Oriental magnificence (and a mandala of shifting hues on the ceiling). Arty beat me to DOOR CLOSE. Then he gave me an odd look.

I just sighed and finished peeling off Clem.

"The police are up there?" the Hawk reiterated.

"Arty," I said, buckling my pants again, "it certainly looks that way." The car gained momentum. "You look almost as upset as Alex." I shrugged the tux jacket down my arms, turning the sleeves inside out, pulled one wrist free, and jerked off the white starched dickie with the black bow tie and stuffed it into the briefcase with all my other dickies; swung the coat around and slipped on Howard Calvin Evingston's good grey herringbone. Howard (like Hank) is a redhead (but not as curly):

The Hawk raised his bare brows when I peeled off Clement bald pate and shook out my hair.

"I noticed you aren't carrying around all those bulky things in your pocket any more."

"Oh, those have been taken care of," he said gruffly. "They're all right."

"Arty," I said, adjusting my voice down to Howard's security-provoking, ingenuous baritone, "it must have been my unabashed conceit that made me think that those Regular Service police were here just for me—"

The Hawk actually snarled.

"They wouldn't be that unhappy if they got me, too."

And from his corner Hawk demanded, "You've got security here with you, don't you, Arty?"

"So what?"

"There's one way you can get out of this," Hawk hissed at me. His jacket had come half open down his wrecked chest. "That's if Arty takes you out with him."

"Brilliant idea," I concluded. "You want a couple of thousand back for the service?"

The idea didn't amuse him. "I don't want anything from you." He turned to Hawk. "I need something from you, kid. Not him. Look, I wasn't prepared for Maud. If you want me to get your friend out, then you've got to do something for me."

The boy looked confused.

I thought I saw smugness on Arty's face, but the expression resolved into concern. "You've got to figure out some way to fill the lobby up with people, and fast."

I was going to ask why but then I didn't know the extent of Arty's security. I was going to ask how but the floor pushed up at my feet and the doors swung open. "If you can't do it," the Hawk growled to Hawk, "none of us will get out of here. None of us!"

I had no idea what the kid was going to do, but when I started to follow him out into the lobby, the Hawk grabbed my arm and hissed, "Stay here, you idiot!"

I stepped back. Arty was leaning on DOOR OPEN.

**H**AWK SPURTED towards the pool. And splashed in. He reached the braziers on their twelve foot tripods and began to climb.

"He's going to hurt himself!" the Hawk whispered.

"Yeah," I said, but I don't think my cynicism got through.

Below the great dish of fire, Hawk was fiddling. Then something under there came loose. Something else went *Clang!* And something else spurted out across the water. The fire raced along it and hit the pool, churning and roaring like hell.

A black arrow with a golden head; Hawk dove.

I bit the inside of my cheek as the alarm sounded. Four people in uniforms were coming across the blue carpet. Another group were crossing in the other direction, saw the flames, and one of the women screamed. I let out my breath, thinking carpet and walls and ceiling would be flameproof. But I kept losing focus on the idea before the sixty-odd infernal feet.

Hawk surfaced on the edge of the pool in the only clear spot left, rolled over on to the carpet, clutching his face. And rolled. And rolled. Then, came to his feet.

Another elevator spilled out a load of passengers who gaped and gasped. A crew came through the doors now with fire-fighting equipment. The alarm was still sounding.

Hawk turned to look at the dozen-odd people in the lobby. Water puddled the carpet about his drenched and shiny pant legs. Flame turned the drops on his cheek and hair to flickering copper and blood.

He banged his fists against his wet thighs, took a deep breath, and against the roar and the bells and the whispering, he Sang.

Two people ducked back into two elevators. From a doorway half a dozen more emerged. The elevators returned half a minute later with a dozen people each. I realised the message was going through the building, there's a Singer Singing in the lobby.

The lobby filled. The flames growled, the fire fighters stood around shuffling, and Hawk, feet apart on the blue rug, by the burning pool Sang, and Sang of a bar off Times Square full of thieves, morphadine-heads, brawlers, drunkards, women too old to trade what they still held out for barter, and trade just too nasty-grimy, where, earlier in the evening, a brawl had broken out, and an old man had been critically hurt in the fray.

Arty tugged at my sleeve.

"What. . . ?"

"Come on," he hissed.

The elevator door closed behind us.

We ambled through the attentive listeners, stopping to watch, stopping to hear. I couldn't really do Hawk justice. A lot of that slow amble I spent wondering what sort of security Arty had:

Standing behind a couple in a bathrobe who were squinting into the heat, I decided it was all very simple. Arty wanted simply to drift away through a crowd, so he'd conveniently gotten Hawk to manufacture one.

To get to the door we have to pass through practically a cordon of Regular Service policemen whom I don't think had anything to do with what might have been going on in the roof garden; they'd simply collected to see the fire and stayed for the Song. When



Arty tapped one on the shoulder, "Excuse me please," to get by, the policeman glanced at him, glanced away, then did a Mack Sennet double-take. But another policeman caught the whole interchange, and touched the first on the arm and gave him a frantic little head-shake. Then both men turned very deliberately back to watch the Singer. While the earthquake in my chest stilled, I decided that the Hawk's security complex of agents and counter agents, manoeuvring and machinating through the flaming lobby must be of such finesse and intricacy that to attempt understanding was to condemn oneself to total paranoia.

Arty opened the final door.

I stepped from the last of the air conditioning into the night.

We hurried down the ramp.

"Hey, Arty. . . ?"

"You go that way." He pointed down the street. "I go this way."

"Eh . . . what's that way?" I pointed in my direction.

"Twelve Towers sub-sub-subway station. Look, I've got you out of there. Believe me, you're safe for the time being. Now go take a train someplace interesting. Good-bye. Go on now." Then Arty the Hawk put his fists in his pockets and hurried up the street.

I started down, keeping near the wall, expecting someone to get me with a blow-dart from a passing car, a death-ray from the shrubbery.

I reached the sub.

And still nothing had happened.

AGATE gave way to MALACHITE:

TOURMALINE:

BERYL (during which month I turned twenty-six):

PORPHYRY:

SAPPHIRE (that month I took the ten thousand I hadn't frittered away and invested it in The Glacier, a perfectly legitimate ice cream palace on Triton—the first and only ice cream palace on Triton—which took off like fireworks; all investors were returned eight hundred percent, no kidding. Two weeks later I'd lost half of those earnings on another set of preposterous illegalities, and was feeling quite depressed, but The Glacier kept pulling them in. The new Word came by):

CINNABAR:

TURQUOISE:

TIGER'S EYE:

Hector Calhoun Eisenhower finally buckled down and spent these three months learning how to be a respectable member of the upper middle class under-

world. That is a long novel in itself. High finance; corporate law; how to hire help: Whew! But the complexities of life have always intrigued me. I got through it. The basic rule is still the same: observe carefully, imitate effectively.

GARNET:

TOPAZ (I whispered that word on the roof of the Trans-Satellite Power Station, and caused my hirelings to commit two murders. And you know? I didn't feel a thing):

TAAFFITE:

WE WERE NEARING the end of Taafite. I'd come back to Triton on strictly Glacial business. A bright pleasant morning it was: the business went fine. I decided to take off the afternoon and go sight-seeing in the Torrents.

". . . two hundred and thirty yards high," the guide announced and everyone around me leaned on the rail and gazed up through the plastic corridor at the cliffs of frozen methane that soared through Neptune's cold green glare.

"Just a few yards down the catwalk, ladies and gentlemen, you can catch your first glimpse of the Well of This World, where, over a million years ago, a mysterious force science still cannot explain caused twenty-five square miles of frozen methane to liquify for no more than a few hours during which time a whirlpool twice the depth of Earth's Grand Canyon was caught for the ages when the temperature dropped once more to. . . ."

People were moving down the corridor when I saw her smiling. My hair was black and nappy and my skin was chestnut dark today.

I was just feeling over confident, I guess, so I kept standing around next to her. I even contemplated coming on. Then she broke the whole thing up by suddenly turning to me and saying, perfectly dead-pan: "Why, if it isn't Hamlet Caliban Enobarbus!"

Old reflexes realigned my features to couple the frown of confusion with the smile of indulgence. *Pardon me, but I think you must have mistaken. . . .* No, I didn't say it. "Maud," I said, "have you come here to tell me that my time has come?"

She wore several shades of blue, with a large blue brooch at her shoulder, obviously glass. Still, I realised as I looked about the other tourists, she was more inconspicuous amidst their finery than I was. "No," she said. "Actually I'm on vacation. Just like you."

"No kidding?" We had dropped behind the crowd. "You are kidding."

"Special Services of Earth, while we co-operate with Special Services on other worlds, has no official jurisdiction on Triton. And since you came here with



money, and most of your recorded gain in income has been through The Glacier, while Regular Services on Triton might be glad to get you, Special Services is not after you as yet." She smiled. "I haven't been to The Glacier yet. It would really be nice to say I'd been taken there by one of the owners. Could we go for a soda, do you think?"

The swirled sides of the Well of This World dropped away in opalescent grandeur. Tourists gazed and the guide went on about indices of refraction, angles of incline.

"I don't think you trust me," Maud said.

My look said she was right.

"Have you ever been involved with narcotics?" she asked suddenly.

I frowned.

"No, I'm serious. I want to try and explain something . . . a point of information that may make both our lives easier."

"I've been involved with them a good deal more than yes," I said. "I'm sure you've got down all the information in your dossiers."

"I was involved with them a good deal more than peripherally for several years," Maud said. "Before I got into Special Services, I was in the narcotics division of the regular force. And the people we dealt with twenty-four hours a day were drug users, drug pushers. To catch the big ones we had to make friends with the little ones. To catch the bigger ones, we had to make friends with the big. We had to keep the same hours they kept, talk the same language, for months at a time live on the same streets, in the same building." She stepped back from the rail to let a youngster ahead. "I had to be sent away to take the morphadine de-toxification cure twice while I was on the narco squad. And I had a better record than most."

"What's your point?"

"Just this. You and I are travelling in the same circles now, if only because of our respective chosen professions. You'd be surprised how many people we already know in common. Don't be shocked when we run into each other crossing Sovereign Plaza in Bellona one day, then two weeks later wind up at the same restaurant for lunch at Lux on Iapetus. Though the circles we move in cover worlds, they *are* the same circles, and not that big."

"Come on," I don't think I sounded happy. "Let me treat you to that ice cream." We started back down the walkway.

"You know," Maud said, "if you do stay out of Special eSrvices' hands here and on Earth long enough, eventually you'll be up there with a huge income growing on a steady slope. It might be a few years, but it's possible. There's no reason now for us to be *personal* enemies. You just may, someday, reach that point where Special Services loses interest in you as quarry. Oh, we'd still see each other, run into each other. We get a great deal of our information from people up

there. We're in a position to help you too, you see."

"You've been casting holograms again."

She shrugged. Her face looked positively ghostly under the pale planet. She said, when we reached the artificial lights of the city, "Oh, I did meet two friends of yours recently, Lewis and Ann."

"The Singers?"

She nodded.

"Oh, I don't really know them well."

"They seem to know a lot about you. Perhaps through that other Singer, Hawk."

"Oh," I said again. "Did they say how he was?"

"I read that he was recovering about two months back. But nothing since then."

"That's about all I know too," I said.

"The only time I've ever seen him," Maud said, "was right after I pulled him out."

Arty and I had gotten out of the lobby before Hawk actually finished. The next day on the news-tapes I learned that when his Song was over, he shrugged out of his jacket, dropped his pants, and walked back into the pool.

The fire-fighter crew suddenly woke up; people began running around and screaming; he'd been rescued, seventy percent of his body covered with second and third degree burns. I'd been industreously not thinking about it.

"You pulled him out?"

"Yes. I was in the helicopter that landed on the roof," Maud said. "I thought you'd be impressed to see me."

"Oh," I said. "How did you get to pull him out?"

"Once you got going, Arty's security managed to jam the elevator service above the seventy-first floor, so we didn't get to the lobby till after you were out of the building. That's when Hawk tried to—"

"But it was you actually saved him, though?"

"The firemen in that neighbourhood haven't had a fire in twelve years! I don't think they even knew how to operate the equipment. I had my boys foam the pool, then I waded in and pulled him—"

"Oh," I said again. I had been trying hard, almost succeeding, these eleven months. I wasn't there when it happened. It wasn't my affair. Maud was saying:

"We thought we might have gotten a lead on you from him. But when I got him to the shore, he was completely out, just one terrible mass of open, running—"

"I should have known the Special Services uses Singers too," I said. "Everyone else does. The Word changes today, doesn't it? Lewis and Ann didn't pass on what the new one is?"

"I saw them yesterday, and the Word doesn't change for another eight hours. Besides, they wouldn't tell me, anyway." She glanced at me and frowned. "They really wouldn't."

"Let's go have some sodas," I said. "We'll make small talk, and listen carefully to each other, while we affect an air of nonchalance; you will try to pick up



things that will make it easier to catch me; I will listen for things you let slip that might make it easier for me to avoid you."

"Um-hm." She nodded.

"Why did you contact me in that bar, anyway?"

Eyes of ice: "I told you, we simply travel in the same circles. We're quite likely to be in the same bar on the same night."

"I guess that's just one of the things I'm not supposed to understand, huh?"

Her smile was appropriately ambiguous. I didn't push it.

IT WAS A VERY dull afternoon. I couldn't repeat one exchange from the nonsense we babbled over the cherry peaked mountains of whipped cream. We both exerted so much energy to keep up the appearance of being amused, I doubt either one of us could see our way to picking up anything meaningful; if anything meaningful was said.

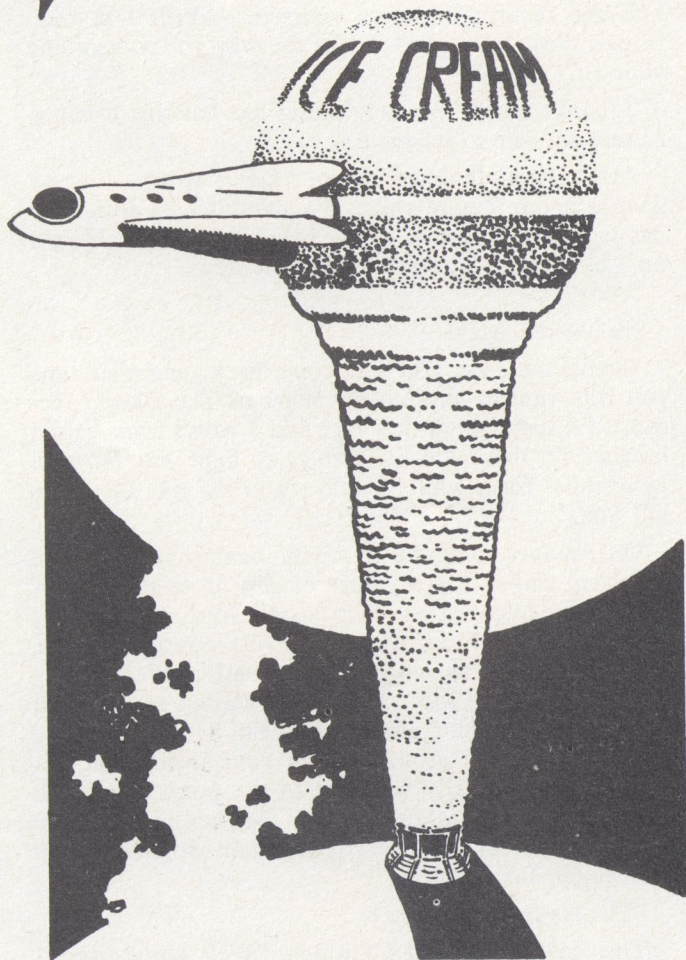
She left. I brooded some more on the charred, black phoenix.

The Steward of The Glacier called me into the kitchen to ask about a shipment of contraband milk (The Glacier makes all its own ice cream) that I had been able to wangle on my last trip to Earth (it's amazing how little progress there has been in dairy farming over the last ten years; it was depressingly easy to hornswoggle that bumbling Vermonter) and under the white lights and great plastic churning vats, while I tried to get things straightened out, he made some comment about the Heist Cream Emperor, that didn't do *any* good.

By the time the evening crowd got there, and the moog was making music and the crystal walls were blazing; and the floor show—a new addition that week—had been cajoled into going on anyway (a trunk of costumes had gotten lost in shipment [or swiped, but I wasn't about to tell them that]), and wandering through the tables I, personally, had caught a very grimy little girl, obviously out of her head on morph, trying to pick up a customer's pocketbook from the back of a chair—I just caught her by the wrist, made her let go, and led her to the door, daintily, daintily, while she blinked at me with dilated eyes and the customer never even knew—and the floor show, having decided what the hell, were doing their act *au naturel*, and everyone was having just a high old time, I was feeling really bad.

I went outside, sat on the wide steps, and growled when I had to move aside to let people in or out. About the seventy-fifth growl, the person I growled at stopped and boomed down at me, "I thought I'd find you if I looked hard enough! I mean if I really looked."

I looked at the hand that was flapping at my shoulder, followed the arm up to a black turtleneck, where there was a beefy, bald, grinning head. "Arty," I said, "what are. . . ?" But he was still flapping and laughing with impervious *gamutlichkeit*.



"You wouldn't believe the time I had getting a picture of you, boy. Had to bribe one out of the Triton Special Services Department. That quick change bit. Great gimmick. Just great!" The Hawk sat down next to me and dropped his hand on my knee. "Wonderful place you got here. I like it, like it a lot." Small bones in veined dough. "But not enough to make you an offer on it yet. You're learning fast there, though. I can tell you're learning fast. I'm going to be proud to be able to say I was the one who gave you your first big break." His hand came away and he began to knead it into the other. "If you're going to move into the big time, you have to have at least one foot planted firmly on the right side of the law. The whole idea is to make yourself indispensable to the good people; once that's done, a good crook has the keys to all the treasure houses in the system. But I'm not telling you anything you don't already know."



"Arty," I said, "do you think the two of us should be seen together here. . . ?"

The Hawk held his hand above his lap and joggled it with a deprecating motion. "Nobody can get a picture of us. I got my men all around. I never go anywhere in public without my security. Heard you've been looking into the security business yourself," which was true. "Good idea. Very good. I like the way you're handling yourself."

"Thanks. Arty, I'm not feeling too hot this evening. I came out here to get some air. . . ."

Arty's hand fluttered again. "Don't worry, I won't hang around. You're right. We shouldn't be seen. Just passing by and wanted to say hello. Just hello." He got up. "That's all." He started down the steps.

"Arty?"

He looked back.

"Sometime soon you will come back; and that time you will want to buy out my share of The Glacier, because I'll have gotten too big; and I won't want to sell because I'll think I'm big enough to fight you. So we'll be enemies for a while. You'll try to kill me. I'll try to kill you."

On his face, first the frown of confusion; then, the indulgent smile. "I see you've caught on to the idea of hologramic information. Very good. Good. It's the only way to outwit Maud. Make sure all your information relates to the whole scope of the situation. It's the only way to outwit me too." He smiled, started to turn, but thought of something else. "If you can fight me off long enough, and keep growing, keep your security in tip-top shape, eventually we'll get to the point where it'll be worth both our whiles to work together again. If you can just hold out, we'll be friends again. Someday. You just watch. Just wait."

"Thanks for telling me."

The Hawk looked at his watch. "Well. Good-bye." I thought he was going to leave finally. But he glanced up again. "Have you got the new Word?"

"That's right," I said. "It went out tonight. What is it?"

The Hawk waited till the people coming down the steps were gone. He looked hastily about, then leaned towards me with hands cupped at his mouth, rasped, "Pyrite," and winked hugely. "I just got it from a gal who got it direct from Colette" (one of the three Singers of Triton). The he turned, jounced down the steps, and shouldered his way into the crowds passing on the strip.

I SAT THERE mulling through the year till I had to get up and walk. All walking does to my depressive moods is add the reinforcing rhythm of paranoia. By the time I was coming back, I had worked out a dilly of a delusional system: The Hawk had already begun to weave some security ridden plot about me which

ended when we were all trapped in some dead end alley, and trying to get aid I called out, "Pyrite!" which would turn out not to be the Word at all, but served to identify me for the man in the dark gloves with the gun/grenade/gas.

There was a cafeteria on the corner. In the light from the window, clustered over the wreck by the curb was a bunch of nasty-grimys (à la Triton: chains around the wrists, bumblebee tattoo on cheek, high heel boots on those who could afford them). Straddling the smashed headlight was the little morph-head I had ejected earlier from The Glacier.

On a whim I went up to her. "Hey?"

She looked at me from under hair like trampled hay, eyes all pupil.

"You get the new Word yet?"

She rubbed her nose, already scratch red. "Pyrite," she said. "It just came down about an hour ago."

"Who told you?"

She considered my question. "I got it from a guy who says he got it from a guy who came in this evening from New York who picked it up there from a Singer named Hawk."

The three grimys nearest made a point of not looking at me. Those further away let themselves glance.

"Oh," I said. "Oh. Thanks."

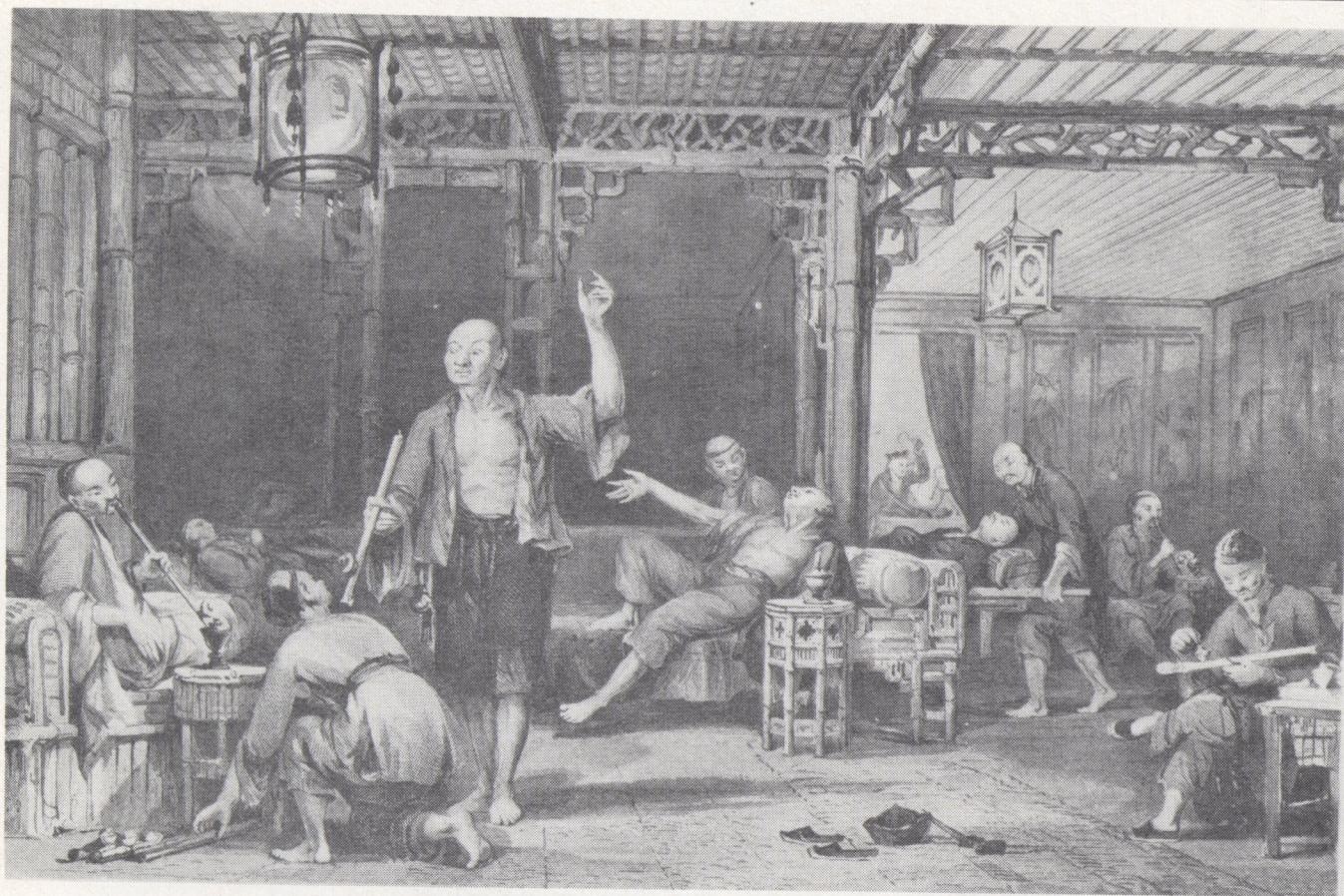
Occam's Razor, along with any real information on how security works, hones away most such paranoia. PYRITE. At a certain level in my line of work, paranoia's just an occupational disease. At least I was certain that Arty (and Maud) probably suffered from it as much as I did.

THE LIGHTS were out on the marquee of The Glacier. Then I remembered, and ran up the stairs.

But the door was locked. I pounded on the glass a couple of times, but everyone had gone home. And the thing that made it worse was that I could see it sitting on the counter of the coatcheck alcove under the orange bulb. The steward had probably put it there, thinking I might arrive before everybody left. Tomorrow at noon Ho Chi Eng had to pick up his reservation for the Marigold Suite on the Interplanetary Liner, *The Platinum Swan*, which left at one-thirty for Bellona. And there behind the glass doors of The Glacier waited the proper wig, as well as the epicanthic folds that would halve Mr. Eng's sloe eyes of jet.

I actually thought of breaking in. But the more practical solution was to get the hotel to wake me at nine and come in with the cleaning man. I turned around and started down the steps; and the thought struck me, and made me terribly sad, so that I blinked and smiled just from reflex: it was probably just as well to leave it there till the morning, because there was nothing in it that wasn't mine, anyway.





*Cantonese opium saloon (after Allom)*

# BOOKS

## & COMMENT

### TWO KINDS OF OPIUM

IN THE FIRST half of the 19th century British and American merchants based on offshore islands were trading longcloth and Bombay cotton with the Hong merchants for Chinese tea and silk. Since the exports from China were more valuable than the imports, the Western merchants were forced to make up the deficit with silver. In order to save themselves the silver the major firms decided to begin smuggling opium into China from

India and virtually created a new market for the drug. There was soon a lot of silver flowing out of China—to the extent that China faced inflation. So large was the trade that special ships—often considered the most beautiful sailing craft ever built and known today as the Opium Clippers—were developed to speed it up. They sometimes carried missionaries as interpreters and space not used for the drug chests was taken up with bibles: two kinds of opium. The Imperial Court vainly tried to stop the trade and in doing so angered Palmerston who was the first to allow military operations against the Chinese mainland. Three expeditions later (with the French as allies and with the unofficial help of America) the British barbarians were at the gates of Peking, having gained all the concessions they had demanded. Effectively it was these wars that opened China up to Western influence—particularly by

the protestant missionaries—and gave extra momentum to the various nationalist secret societies such as the Taipings (a quasi-Christian sect whom General Gordon helped the Imperial government put down) and the Boxers, who were the predecessors to the Republican and Communist groups who emerged later and who eventually closed the gates of China, once again allowing the foreign merchants, much to their chagrin, only to trade from offshore islands. It took, therefore, about a hundred years for the Chinese to regain the ground the Manchus had lost. John Selby's recent book **The Paper Dragon** (Arthur Barker, 42s.) is something of a telegraphic chase through a very packed period of history. It describes the Opium Wars as well as the Taiping and Boxer uprisings but never really succeeds in giving the reader an insight into either the Chinese or Western mentality of the time. A



much better book, covering only the Opium Wars themselves, was Maurice Collis's **Foreign Mud** (published by Faber, now OP) which is a superb piece of popular history, with the virtue of making all the chief participants in the wars seem alive, and giving us an understanding of the Chinese outlook, which has rarely been matched. Mr. Selby goes to the usual sources for his material—such as *The Chinese Repository* of Canton and *The Chinese Gazette* of Shanghai—but comes up with no original ideas or fresh information. His bibliography and index are really rather more useful than the book itself, which is unlikely to make much sense to the reader unfamiliar with the place and period and offers little to those who already know something of 19th century China.

A MUCH MORE enlightening book is **China Observed** by Colin Mackerras and Neale Hunter (Pall Mall, 35s.), which is an account by two young Australian teachers who were working in China during 1964-67, which was the period of the build-up to the Cultural Revolution and the formation of the Red Guards. Both were Chinese speakers and seemed to have got on very well with their colleagues, seeing a great deal of China with a fairly detached and objective eye. They show that everyday life in China is still based very strongly on the idea of the family (although husbands and wives are often forced apart for long periods if their work demands it) with Mao as the grand patriarch, and that the old evils of poverty, drug-taking, widespread corruption, prostitution and so on, which used to fill the main cities such as Shanghai, are now largely non-existent and that smaller, less destructive evils sometimes occur in the shape of the Red Guards and State interference in private lives. The life of the peasants is much improved and even the pogroms against Westerners seem a little less arbitrary than they were under the Manchus

or the Warlords, rough insults having taken the place, on the whole, of beheadings. What the early traders never seemed quite capable of understanding in the 18th and 19th centuries was that every Chinese had as his chief abiding loyalty the State (in the person of the Emperor) and that all other considerations were secondary (the Hong merchants, for instance, represented the Emperor rather than themselves). Mao's Communism may be seen as a sophistication of this attitude and one cannot help feeling that the Chinese people's loyalty to Mao is rather more sensible than their loyalty to the old emperors; that their political system is a trifle better equipped to ensure them of getting, in the future, the leaders who will represent their best interests. One is saddened, however, to see art subordinated to politics, as in most Communist states (or for that matter Britain, in many instances) and, as usual, becoming the poorer for it. Rather as the missionaries' harmoniums ruined the music of India, the missionaries' protestant ethics appear to have robbed Chinese art of its subtlety and beauty. One is reminded of Maurice Collis's reference to the old Hai Kwan Pu ("Hoppo") visiting the British factory in Canton in 1873 and shuddering at the crudities he saw in Lawrence's portrait of George IV. We can mourn also the disappearance of romantic China, with its mysteries, its opulent corruption, and its mood of dark possibility. The splendid figure of Fu Manchu who represented the Yellow Peril before the war has a much less attractive substitute in the sober, frowning Commissar. The Commissar looks far too human, for a start.

EVEN IF SOCIAL realism has buggered up modern Chinese art, we always have books of reproductions and one of the most informative and attractive of the cheaper range is **The Oriental World** in Hamlyn "Landmarks of the World's Art" series (30s.). This book, by Jean-

nine Auboyer (on India and South-East Asia) and Roger Goepper (China, Korea and Japan), shows not only the mutual influences on art and architecture between the various oriental nations, but also the peculiar influence of Western art on, for instance, Indian painters (see plate 47, *Shepherds and their flocks*, which is a Mughal copy of a European painting—a romantic landscape oddly transmogrified, with a Mughal dome placed on top of a "Flemish" farmhouse, and other, similarly interpreted, details). This book is excellent value and complements Peter Swann's **Art of China, Korea and Japan** (Thames and Hudson, 35s.), which is one of the best popular introductions and contains, like the Auboyer and Goepper book, a remarkably well-selected bibliography.

W.E.B.

## The Angle of Attack

THE CONTEMPORARY LITERARY organism is a stale and self-conscious entity, involuted and incestuous. Out of it—or rather, alongside it, accepting that certain of its tenets, if not viable, were valid in their own time—has grown up a group of writers seeking to pose problems of the immediate present and to solve them in terms of a new presentation, a fresh angle-of-attack. Their work is as various and multivalent as the reality that involves them—Ballard and his fragmentation, the computer-fiction of John Sladek—and it is surprising, therefore, to find two novels that contain all the elements of this growing tendency to deal with the literary difficulties of an age in the precise terms of that age. Fitting the bill despite a complete difference in stress and approach: Michael Moorcock's **The Final Programme** (Avon, 60c.) and **Camp Concentration** (Hart-Davis, 25s.), by Thomas M. Disch.

**The Final Programme** is a farce, perhaps.



Set in a ludicrous, crumbling Europe of the late sixties—areas of space and time which automatically lend the novel a sense of urgency—it concerns the search of the Arctic Miss Brunner for the big answer, the summation of one time-cycle and the germinal ingredient of the next. Its protagonist, Jerry Cornelius, with his “long hair and pretty clothes”, holds various keys to this knowledge: access to a microfilm; an attitude; ultimately, his body. Jerry—ex-Jesuit, ex-guitarist, ex-human being—cavorts across oceans and snowscapes, aiding Miss Brunner, but constantly involved in his own internalised and vague reality—his incestuous relationship with his sister, his need to murder his brother, his careless and hilarious bisexuality.

Moorcock's style is light and factual, inclines to be a little arid. He has a definite interest in pyrotechnics, there are verbal clevernesses and idiosyncracies (including a good few puns that verge on the outrageous), but the humour is mainly situational, contained in the subject matter and juxtaposition of characters.

He encapsulates and modifies the beautiful, mutable, ersatz tone of the sixties, giving it a grim, steely ring; utilising the intellectual catchwords and periaps of the last decade—junk, economic reform, Tepid War terminology, homosexuality—to give a deceptive veneer. The skin of the novel erupts into farcical acne: but beneath it move grotesques, and the parodies are not kind. Instance: Jerry's town

house party, lasting for months, its guests quite oblivious of the collapse of Europe. Here, a distinct atmosphere of fin-de-siècle ennui and compulsive gaiety is heightened by dextrous use of modern archetypes: the Man; Hans Smith of Hampstead, Last of the Left-Wing Intellectuals; a pop group called the Deep Fix; the late great Bird Parker (this last a snide echo of Pynchon?). Or take the crowds that form in the depressed streets of London:

*As the light grew fainter, a crowd came in, its thick, snakelike body squeezing through the glass double doors and flowing out to fill the interior . . . It flowed toward him and detached a part of itself at him . . . The Part grinned slyly at him, and the rest of it mirrored the grin, all its heads turned toward him.*

Playful, but nasty and surreal.

It is hard to tell how much of this is a gentle send-up of the reader and how much (if any) is in deadly earnest. Certainly, Jerry seems to have hit on something when he says: “There is no new morality, Herr Marek—there is no morality. The term is as barren as your grandmother's wrinkled old womb. There are no values!” And just as certainly, the whole wild thing sprints into glorious self-parody as Cornelius Brunner, “the world's first all-purpose human being”, steps out of its incubator to be chaired off on an incredible lemming-jaunt across Europe by the scientists who shared its creation:

*The scientists and technicians murmured in awe, and some of them began to clap and whistle. Others cheered and stamped.*

*“Hi, fans!” said Cornelius Brunner.*

*. . . (They) began to march round the computer singing a wordless victorious chant which became a christening name:*

*“Cor-nee-lee-us Ber-un-er!”*

*Cornelius Brunner was making a big scene.*



*Detail from Douthwaite's cover for Moorcock's "The Final Programme"*



*"Just call me Corn," it grinned, and it blew kisses to one and all.*

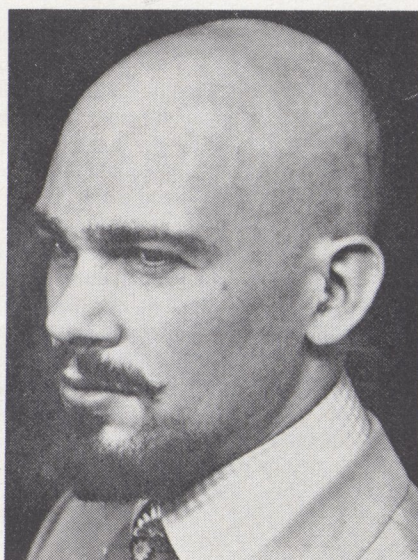
**The Final Programme** succeeds in verbalising the frenetic, unstable atmosphere of the present. The questions it poses are not social but personal, something that must happen between book and reader. And all that aside, it is unquestionably an experience in the way of comedy.

**T**HE IMPLICATIONS OF Thomas M. Disch's sombre re-statement of the Faustus myth, **Camp Concentration**, are less elusive.

**Camp Concentration** is the journal of Louis Sachetti, an American academic poet serving a five-year term as a conscientious objector. Early in his sentence he is taken without explanation to the subterranean Camp Archimedes, ostensibly to act as observer in an experiment to maximise intelligence. Various US Army offenders have volunteered to take Pallidine, a drug derived from the syphilis virus: in return, they receive exceptionally good treatment, a radically escalated intellectual capacity, and the prospect of a certain death from the syph within nine months. The journal covers Sachetti's early naïvety as regards his purpose in the camp; his discovery that he too has been infected secretly with the virus; and the eventual collapse of the system.

Disch handles his gloomy psychosis with consummate technical skill. The journal reveals a man with a finely-tuned sense of the aesthetic: Sachetti's religious conflicts, self-doubts and poetic vanities combine to give a very real picture of a disturbed and imprisoned poet. Disch's secondary characters—the bumbling Haast; Skilliman, the vicious antithesis of Sachetti's concern for humanity and dignity; Mordecai Washington, the rotting negro genius—not only live vigorous and blackly humorous independent lives, but also complement the characterisation of Sachetti. What the poet hears, what he chooses to

record, delineates his own personality.



*Disch: gloomy prophesy*

Stylistically, Disch's task is complicated by the fact that halfway through the novel he is impelled to reproduce the ravings of a poetic genius: a dangerous business for a writer of prose. He accomplishes this more than adequately by the use of cut-up techniques, amending quotes from Aquinas, Rilke, Rimbaud, to produce a verbal model of a poet's motivations and influences—implying the poetry rather than attempting to fake it. Words act for Disch as if he were Fautus himself: the bleak and raddled atmosphere of Camp Archimedes has the disturbing magic of degradation (echoing Genet, but never—as it would have been so easy to do—using Genet's methods as a crutch). Its effects on Sachetti have a frightening impact:

*As I reconstruct the scene, the world immediately about me, the world of typewriter, littered table, palimpsest wall, shrinks and swells rhythmically, now bounded in a nutshell, now infinite. My eyes ache: my sweetbread brains grown nauseous as though farctate with bad*

*food yet restrained from vomiting.*

Unlike Marlowe, Disch sees the eating of forbidden apples as a final salvation: he casts Sachetti into an abyss ("The very highest thoughts, pierced with this dread, plummet to earth, snapping the branches of trees") only to raise him a little of the way up again, leaving a sour hope for some sort of compromise between the brutality and the beauty of science. **Camp Concentration** is a pessimistic and realistic book, finely written and highly relevant to the contemporary relationship of technological advance, politics and art.

Joyce Churchill

### A Devil of a Job

**C**HRISt SELLS. Alongside the vast interpretive machinery of the major Christian sects, there exists a thriving popular market—Christ in full colour; Christ according to Peanuts, Billy Graham, Enid Blyton; Christ in Scouse. And very few of the contemporary paraphrases of *Mark* attempt more than the minimal accepted characterisation: having a theological axe of one sort or another to grind, they concern themselves with a two dimensional mouthpiece rather than a man. Consequently, their subject matter, potentially so powerful, is instead watery and insipid.

A quote from A. J. Langguth's first novel, **Jesus Christs** (Gollancz, 30s.):

*When Jesus bit his fingernails to the quick, the skin round each nail bled before it hardened into a callus and formed a hood over the fingertip.*

Which seems to go at least a little way toward eradicating the sugary images—the noble beard, the spaniel eyes, the faintest suggestion of female breasts.

Langguth presents the Christian myth as a chronologically moveable drama. The form of the novel is episodic, each section encapsulating an aspect of Christ's relationship with his environment, the whole showing various Christs as



they travel through successive incarnations and crucifixions to the present day. This is done economically and without fuss; his style is direct and uncluttered, throwing the stress on events and characters. The final success of the book lies in its truthfulness, its emphasis on observable data rather than polemic: Mary Magdalene as an insurance clerk; Thaddeus a worn-out junkie; Christ as a TV personality. All Lagguth's Christs are specifically human, by turns self-doubting, comically vain, weary, fated. Difficult material to work with, but Langguth has met the challenge and produced an outstanding book. Culminating in a brittle twentieth century irony, with Judas cast in the rôle of biochemist, *Jesus Christs* is remarkably worth reading both as a collection of vignettes and as a truly non-linear novel.

In **Black Easter** (Doubleday, 3 dollars 95 cents), James Blish attempts to deal with the other side of the religious coin. His shoddily-constructed stew of alchemy and black magic succeeds only in being pretentious. C. S. Lewis (to whom the novel is dedicated) had the modesty to describe his own tour-de-force in the same field, *That Hideous Strength*, as a "tall story" about devilry". Blish, in an affected preface, seems to consider *his* book a magistral work, dismissing without evidence or example all other treatments of the subject as "either romantic or playful".

In fact, **Black Easter** is the romantic and desultory story of a modern sorcerer hired to undertake various acts of murder and terrorism. Garnished with great unpalatable chunks of occult lore and hinging on nothing more than a literally interpreted aphorism from Nietzsche, it echoes the melodrama and endless digression (but never the hefty catharsis) of Dennis Wheatley's occult thrillers. James Blish might well have researched the process and paraphernalia of magic, but he would better have learned the

trick of "unromantic" presentation of devilry from the flat, sordid descriptions contained in the work of Lewis's contemporary and friend, Charles Williams.

Williams crops up in connection with his incomplete cycle of Grail poems, *Taliessin through Logres*, in Samuel R. Delany's new novel, **Nova** (Doubleday, 4 dollars 95 cents). Here, the Grail is used together with the tarot pack as the leitmotif of a slightly disappointing return to Delany's pre-*Einstein Intersection* manner. Lorq Von Roy, a stellar Ahab with a monstrous facial scar, strives to disrupt the galactic economy by securing a monopoly of the heavy fuel-metal Illyrion. To achieve his end, he has to travel into the heart of a nova and literally scoop the stuff out. Flashbacks sketch in the family feud that gave Von Roy his scar and motives; the political pressures necessitating his action; and the early life of Mouse the sensory-syrinx player, latest and most strongly delineated of Delany's wandering minstrels. Von Roy's crew are a delightfully mixed bunch of drifters, and there are some colourful moments as they planet-hop toward the nova. Baroque subject matter and jewelled prose compete for the reader's attention.

But this book has little of the haunting originality of *The Einstein Intersection* and no real compensation for its picaresque lack of direction and adequate theme; it is highly readable but finally unsatisfying. *The Einstein Intersection* broke free of the strictures and limitations of the sf label. **Nova**, however finely realised, is bedded in the genre's most stifling traditions.

The jacket of **Picnic on Paradise** by Joanna Russ (Ace Special, 60 cents) is adorned with an illustration which seems to suggest that Ace Books have graduated from the sensational approach to packaging.

The book, too, is something of a departure: Joanna Russ's feral heroine is realistically portrayed, unreservedly sexual, and without doubt one of the least clean-living, all-American figures ever to operate under an Ace cover.

Alyx, a primitive Mediterranean-Greek assassin, is fished out of her



own time stream and handed the job of herding a party of soft, civilised tourists across an arctic planet. She becomes emotionally involved with Machine, a bald young dropout who "refuses to relate"; loses her mind when he is destroyed by the environment; and winds up addicted to an hallucinogenic drug. The book is savage, tragi-comic, at times poetic. Marred by a faint breathlessness about the style and a harping on the current psychedelic scene, it is nevertheless an extremely capable first novel.

**The Last Unicorn** by Peter Beagle (Bodley Head, 25s.) is fantasy in a more traditional mode. The last unicorn, a slightly characterless beast, searches for her lost fellows,



meeting her climacteric at the castle of King Haggard. She is accompanied, but hardly aided, by a failed magician and a harriidan called Molly Grue. Beagle tries to turn the book into something other than a simple romance by adding uncomfortable parodies of things-modern: the result is roughly textured, self-conscious and larded with a coy whimsy reminiscent of the meaner elements of White's *Once and Future King*—which is a pity, because the tale of the quest is self-sufficient. At his best, he melds a sensitive feel for imagery with rough insight. I only wish the cover notes didn't advocate the novel as a talisman against the ills of worldliness.

John Sladek, whose short magazine fiction has consistently poked a witty but uncompromising finger up the noses of several cherished fantasies, has a well developed command of comedy, from the slapstick-grotesque to the subtle and complex. He demonstrates it at length in his first novel, **The Reproductive System** (Gollancz, 21s.).

The directors of a run-down American doll factory decide to move into the lucrative field of government-sponsored research. They produce a self-sustaining life system based on metal, and almost immediately lose control of it. The results are global, and through them Sladek manages to lampoon virtually every facet of twentieth century existence—the farce of east-west relations, the idiosyncrasies of the space race, the funnier aspects of the verbal and visual media. As the reproductive system gnaws at the social and economic structure, it is pursued by a delirium of odd characters, each sketched with clarity and economical precision: Toto Smilax, the mad doctor; General Grawk, who graduated from the Miami Institute of Technology. **The Reproductive System** is an incredibly funny book with a powerful satirical sting.

M. John Harrison



### DNA, a Game of Cards, Predacious Fungi

FOUR BOOKS ON BIOLOGY, of which two are of interest to scientists and non-scientists alike and two are written for laymen.

**The Double Helix** by James D. Watson (Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, 35s.) is an account of how "Jim" Watson and Francis Crick arrived at the three dimensional structure of the gene, work which won them the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology nine years later in 1962. The account of the two years leading up to the discovery is opinionated and direct, and makes for heady reading. Few scientists would dare say:

*One could not be a successful scientist without realising that, in contrast to the popular conception supported by newspapers and mothers of scientists, a good number of scientists are not only narrow minded and dull, but also just stupid.*

It takes nerve to come out with

stuff like this despite the fact that it is absolutely true. James Watson and Francis Crick, however, were not like so many of their fellow scientists. It was their combination of vitality, enthusiasm and originality of minds, their catalytic effect upon each other, and the twin stimuli of co-operation (from Maurice Wilkins in London) and competition (from Linus Pauling in America) that contributed to the discovery of the Double Helix. This was the most momentous discovery since Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, and laid the foundation of Molecular Biology.

This is an exciting and intoxicating book, not only for its historical importance but even more as a view into the world of creative science.

**The Design of Life** by Joseph Anthony Mazzeo (Macdonald, 42s.) concerns the major themes in the development of biology.

Dr. Mazzeo is neither a biologist nor an historian, but is instead Professor of Comparative Literature at Columbia University in New York. Perhaps it is for this reason that he has succeeded so well in what he set out to do. This is a book that will fire the imagination of any reader and generate new enthusiasm in any biologist who, like myself, had been taking the subject for granted.

Alcmaeon discovering the eustachian tube by dissection in 500 B.C., Hippocrates in 400 B.C. declaring that disease is a biological phenomenon and not the work of the gods, and Aristotle's studies of a hundred years later of taxonomy, embryology, comparative anatomy and ecology were all masterpieces of observation and deduction unrivalled for centuries.

Greek science went into a decline around 200 B.C., and during the Middle Ages in Europe, learning was in the hands of monastic institutions whose religious basis precluded any scientific enquiry. Only in Italy were there any educated laymen and it was in Italy that the



Renaissance arose. In the East, Greek learning survived in the hands of Arab scholars, who made many advances, particularly in optics and medicine. In the thirteenth century dissection was revived in Bologna, the professor lecturing from ancient Greek or Arabic texts while an inferior cut up the decomposing cadaver. But anatomy did not lose a lot of its erroneous ideas until, first, Vesalius, and then William Harvey. Harvey demonstrated the circulation of the blood firstly by studying blood flow in arteries and veins, and then by pointing out that the heart issued blood at the rate of about two ounces per beat. Seventy-two beats a minute gives nine pounds of blood a minute; nine pounds a minute is 540 pounds an hour—or three to four times the weight of a man! The same blood must, therefore, by recirculating continually; to believe anything else would be absurd.

The eruption of biological knowledge in the last two or three hundred years took place first in anatomy, then in evolutionary theory. This was followed closely by advances in physiology and microbiology, and then in genetics and biochemistry.

The last few years have seen the breakdown of barriers between the biological disciplines and the emergence of molecular biology. Week by week, piece by piece, the gaps in our knowledge are being filled. We now know a lot about the molecular structure and function of genes, of membranes and of muscles. The next problem to be solved is the molecular working of the brain.

**Modern Genetics** by Haig P. Papazian (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 42s.)

"PATERNAL: from the father. See *Maternal*" the glossary tells us, presumably wanting to enlighten. This, in fact, exemplifies what is wrong with the book: it explains concepts which need no explanation and when attempting to simplify the meatier stuff is most often very con-

fusing.

The foundations of genetics were laid by Gregor Mendel, an Augustinian monk in the then Austrian town of Brunn, now Brno in Czechoslovakia. For eight years he carried out hybridisation experiments on peas. He clearly had a good idea of what he was looking for, and in 1866 published the laws of segregation and free assortment of hereditary characteristics, the basis of modern genetics.

The first chapters go through the basic laws of genetics conscientiously, if not very lucidly. Things start to get confusing in the chapter on crossing over:

*One could imagine genes as lying on a surface that might crack, with a portion cracked off from the other surface; or genes might be visualised as having fixed positions as in a solid. But the fact is that linkage values only make sense if the genes lie in a one-dimensional unbranched array. This is a very precise and important finding; it says a lot.*

Not to me, it doesn't. He is saying that genes lie in lines (chromosomes) and are linked if they are on the same one. Much of the book is written in this rather obscure style.

The structure of DNA and the genetic code are described very fully. The DNA helix contains our base substances: Adenine, Thymine, Cytosine and Guanine—usually represented by their initials. They are attached to a thread of phosphate and ribose sugar molecules to form two long chains which twist round each other, linked across by the bases. A and T always link together and so do G and C. The two chains are complementary, so that if one chain has, say, GATCA, the corresponding chain will have CTAGT. When the chromosome divides, the two strands unwind and each acts as a template for a complementary copy of itself. Dr. Papazian has represented ATGC as the four playing card suits, so that the reader has to remember which is what. But the genetic code—whereby sets of three bases on a strand of RNA (copied off a DNA negative) act as templates for

the alignment of amino acids, which then link to form proteins—is always exciting to read about.

The third section of the book concerns natural selection and the theory of evolution. There is some interesting material on the inheritance of acquired characteristics, the theory which bedevilled genetics for so long; in Soviet Russia it became linked rather oddly with political theory and was perpetuated for years on poorly substantiated evidence by Lysenko and his school.

There is also an interesting chapter on the genetics of *Homo Sapiens* which makes the point that the differences between races, where they exist at all, are quantitative rather than qualitative.

**The Living World** by Dr. C. L. Duddington (Arthur Barker, 30s.) is a short excursion through the range of animals, plants and micro-organisms, and how they relate to one another in their environments. An interesting and well written book, it is unfortunately poorly illustrated with drawings and dull photographs which do nothing at all to show the diversity and beauty of living things. We note that Dr. Duddington is an authority on predacious fungi, an alarming thought.

Caroline Smith

### Not for Scientists

**Is Anyone There** (Rapp and Whiting, 35s.) by Isaac Asimov is a non-fiction collection surprising for its conservatism. Asimov is a cautious man and when looking toward the future sees it purely in terms of today's trends extrapolated to their conclusion. There is a lack of original thought.

Asimov is at his best when dealing with the science that is already known, and his beautifully simplified explanations are perfection in the art of mass-communication. Scientists will no doubt be irritated by the preference for imprecise words for the sake of their famili-



arity, and by the conspicuous lack of any attempt to define terms such as "intelligence", used loosely to say the least. But then, this book wasn't written to be read by scientists.

The simplified analogies do tend to take the guts out of the wonders of science even as they are explained, in that everything is made to seem so simple and neat it is hard to be impressed any more. But this is a welcome change from the pre-occupation of most science writers with inhuman horrors soon to be perfected by biological laboratories. Asimov's narrow outlook, however, is harder to excuse. Human psychology is largely neglected (there is Pavlov but little else) and there seems to be no mature attempt to relate science to society and to human beings as people. This attitude is reminiscent of Asimov's science fiction contemporaries of the forties and fifties. Then, they looked on the brain as a great big electronic computer. Now, Asimov explains its complex mysteries in terms of an electro-chemical logic network. When it comes down to it, there isn't much

difference between the two approaches.

C.P.

**The Death of Hitler** (Unknown Documents from Soviet Archives) by Lev Bezymenski (Michael Joseph, 30s.). In which it's proved beyond a shadow of doubt and in considerable detail that Hitler only had one ball.

**Heinlein in Dimension**, Alexei Pan-shin (Advent, \$6). The author's next work is rumoured to be a literary and biographical analysis of the oeuvre of Harold Robins and the hitherto unconsidered influence of Earl Derr Biggers.

**The Making of "Star Trek"** by Stephen E. Whitfield and Gene Roddenberry (Ballantine, 95c.). "What it is—how it happened—how it works!" Was it worth it?

**The Rose** by Charles Harness (Sidgwick and Jackson, 18s.). A re-issue in hardcovers of Harness's most interesting novel about the conflict between art and science in a somewhat surreal future. Recommended.

W.E.B.

# TIME OUT

## London

THEY WERE DRAGGED TO THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE...

Clothes	Food	Help
Lectures	Exhibitions	Groups
Folk/Jazz	Films	Theatre
Poetry	Shops	Music

Or send 1/- for copy by return post to  
TIME OUT 77 PLATTS LANE, NW3.  
(SW1 2308/584 7434)

Sword and sorcery novels, latest

Conans, Burroughs, Michael

Moorcock, Lin Carter, L. Sprague de

Camp, Robert E. Howard etc.

S.A.E. for list of over 500 phantasy

paper-backs . . . BM/The Vault of

Horror, London W.C.1

## WE REGRET

that James Sallis, who was to contribute our leading books article this month, was unexpectedly called to the U.S.A. on business. His reviews will appear next month and will include:

**Under Compulsion**, Disch (Hart-Davis, 25s.)

**The Secret Songs**, Leiber (Hart-Davis, 25s)

**Myra Breckenridge**, Vidal (Blond, 35s)

**Other Side of the Mirror**, Imbert (Macdonald, 30s)

and books by **Nabokov**, **Menegaz**, **Mrozek** etc.

Other reviewers next month are **J. G. Ballard**, **John Brunner**, **Langdon Jones** and more on fiction, the nature of time, chemical warfare, musical nihilism and graphic artists.

## DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

A new Jerry Cornelius story

**JEREMIAD** by James Sallis

An outstanding long poem

**POEMS OF MR BLAKE** by D. M. Thomas

**THE MASTER PLAN** by John Sladek

**CONSTRUCTION** by Giles Gordon

**INSIDE** by J. J. Mundis

and more.

Order your copy from your newsagent today or make sure of your next NEW WORLDS by taking out a subscription.



# THE BEST OF THE BEST

edited by JUDITH MERRIL

Twenty-nine outstanding stories by SF stars, a galaxy Miss Merrill has been exploring and mining for her renowned *The Year's Best SF* through a decade.

'The best collection of short stories I have read for a long time, and the eye is opened not only on a quite unfamiliar and mind-stretching world but on much new talent.'

Cyril Connolly, *The Sunday Times*  
50s

## Camp Concentration

*Thomas M Disch*

Actually Camp Archimedes, secret US Army project, where they seek to 'maximise' human intelligence.

But to what ends? 25s

## The Secret Songs

*Fritz Leiber*

First hardback collection in Britain of stories by 'the Original SF Man'. 25s

## Under Compulsion

*More from Leiber . . .*

'His originality of theme and intensity of language are a delight to jaded palates.'

Edmund Cooper, *Sunday Times*  
25s

## Carder's Paradise

*Malcolm Levene*

Watch out for the Grand Omnipotent Digitabulator. Black comedy in an automated gaol. 25s

## The Dream Master

*Roger Zelazny*

The last frontier to be penetrated is MIND itself. (Short version won a Nebula.) 25s

## Pavane

*Keith Roberts*

'A rare and beautiful novel—the imagination behind it is less science-fiction than historical.'

Brian W Aldiss, *Oxford Mail*  
25s



RUPERT HART-DAVIS

One of the Granada Publishing Group



**In her face the diagram of bones  
forms a geometry of murder. After  
Freud's exploration within the psyche  
it is now the outer world of reality  
which must be quantified and eroticised**

# **A Neural Interval**

**A J. G. BALLARD PRODUCTION**

