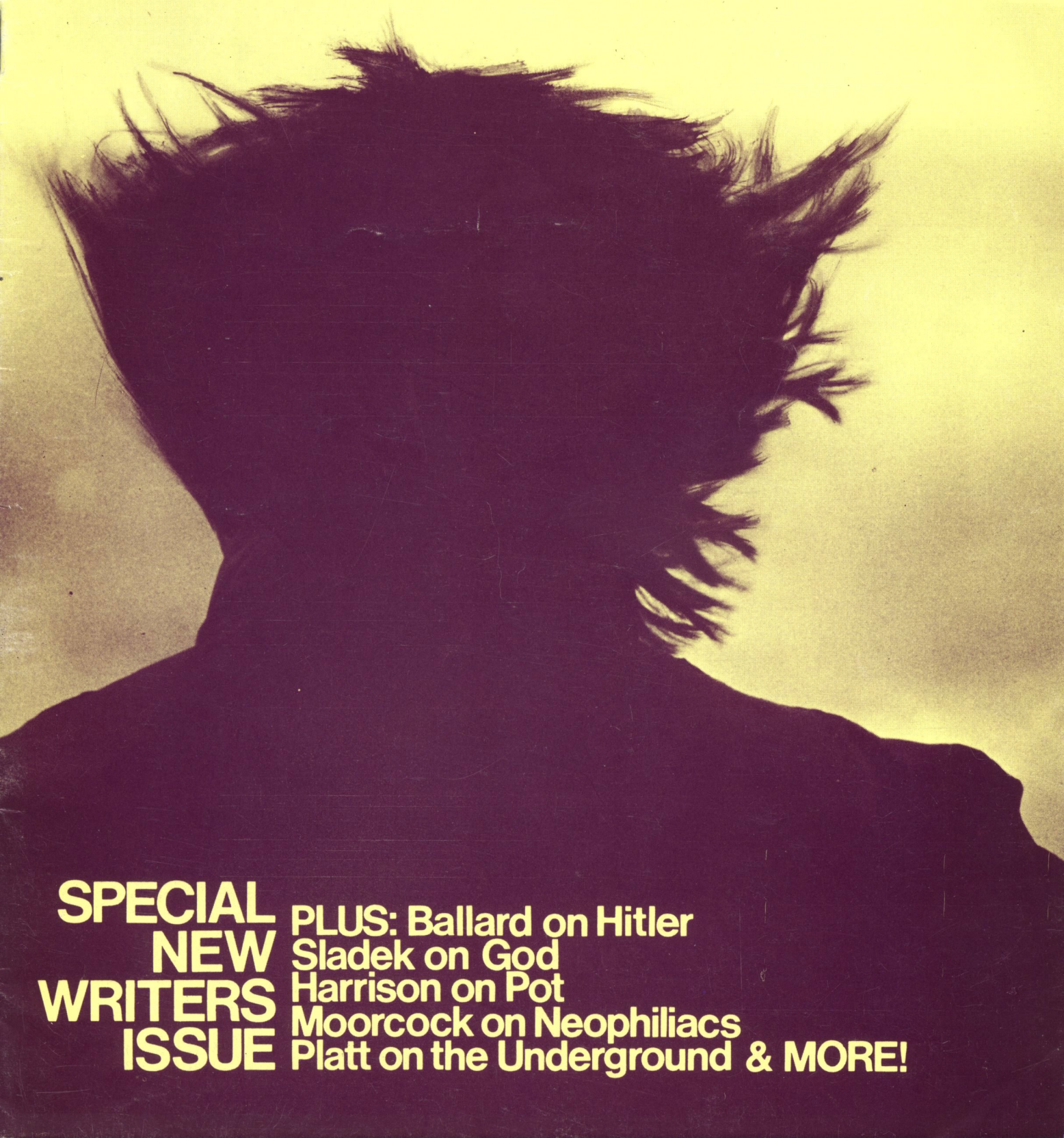


# new worlds

Number 196

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**SPECIAL  
NEW  
WRITERS  
ISSUE** PLUS: Ballard on Hitler  
Sladek on God  
Harrison on Pot  
Moorcock on Neophiliacs  
Platt on the Underground & MORE!



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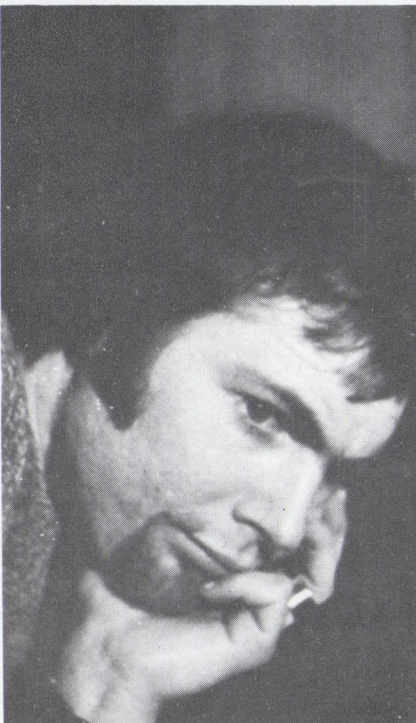
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# LEAD IN

**O**NCE AGAIN WE are pleased to present an issue which combines experimental storytelling from developing new writers, with highly imaginative examples of a more conventional literary craftsmanship. The keynote, here as ever, is diversity. In the wake of the new electronic communications media, those media which make use of the printed word may well be in for strange and bizarre future development. Indeed, it's foreseeable that the printed word itself may, outmoded, eventually disappear altogether. We hope, in the meantime, to cover as many aspects of its constant evolution as possible.

This issue sees two writers, not only new to the pages of *NEW WORLDS*, but whose stories are their first to be published anywhere.



*Marek Obtulowicz: second appearance*

*The Last Awakening* by C. R. Clive, again owes its effectiveness to a sensitive use of language and represents a refreshingly different approach to the post-disaster story. Clive is 27 and has been writing for several years.

Both the above stories show exceptional promise and we are sure we will be publishing more of the work of these two writers in the future.

Michael Biggs, author of *Hemingway*: seems to have proved that an interest in the "hard" sciences need not necessarily conflict with an interest in speculative fiction, having been involved recently on a film based on the Apollo 11 mission. Biggs is 26 and is married with one child. This too is his first appearance in *NEW WORLDS*.

*Rise and Fall* is Polish-born Marek Obtulowicz's second story for *NEW WORLDS*. His first, *The Hurt*, appeared in NW 190, and several of his illustrations have also appeared in the pages of past issues.

Rounding off the issue is the second instalment of Jack Trevor Story's new novel *The Wind In The Snottygobble Tree*. This comic fantasy is a broad and free-ranging attack upon many aspects of the Establishment. It represents an interesting development in Story's writing and shows his response to a medium and format considerably more flexible than those he has been concerned with in the past.

## COMING NEXT MONTH:

1970 and a new decade should be an exciting prospect. But the laborious news media coverage will have exhausted our interest, long before 1970 actually arrives.

In view of this, *New Worlds* presents a special issue, looking ahead to 1980. Twenty of the most imaginative writers and illustrators were asked for their own „personal reactions to the thought of the decade after next. Some fact, but mostly fiction and art, from:

BRIAN W. ALDISS  
J.G.BALLARD  
HARLAN ELLISON  
THOMAS M. DISCH  
JOHN T. SLADEK  
Dr CHRISTOPHER EVANS  
HILARY BAILEY  
MICHAEL MOORCOCK  
Dr JOHN CLARKE  
GRAHAM CHARNOCK  
RALPH T. CASTLE  
PAMELA ZOLINE  
VIVIANNE YOUNG  
GABI NASEMANN

...and many more.

There will also be the usual features, general fiction, and part three of our serial.

**LOOK FOR THIS SPECIAL ISSUE IN THE SECOND WEEK OF JANUARY 1970.**





# rise and fall

**O**UTSIDE there was the noise of school children. A distant church-bell laboured with the hour. It was four o'clock.

J. J. Lykke was awake but refused to admit it. Instead, by hiding his face in the pillow, he snubbed the urge to open his eyes and tried to coax himself back into sleep, his knees tucked lightly under his chin. The blankets were warm. The effort was retrograde.

—Shit!

A restless roll. The squeal of bed-springs.

Lykke, lying on his back, ceiling gazed. Bovine-eyed he traced an unexplored crack while his lukewarm mind probed one persistent thought: I'm not supposed to be awake till nightfall.

At the foot of the bed stood an old wooden rocking chair, which thoughtfully nodded whenever the door was opened. Beyond that, up against the wall, a pink painted cupboard, the pantry; its pearled-glass door showed a distorted blue and white wrapping, probably the sugar. On one of the lower shelves lay a grease-smeared fork, glued to an unwashed plate. Lykke closed his eyes. The eternity of being awake at the wrong time had passed, moving him to split apart the aril of dust-grey sheets. An impulse.

Bemused, he contemplated his cooling length, a survey which ended in an abrupt yell to his privates:

—It's not your bloody fault! Outcome: the collapse of both elbow supports plus further variations on bed percussion.

It's not every day one wakes without an erection.

Yet, it felt good to know the onsurge of tepid air; fresh air, gasworks-heated, above the playground cries. Although still meek, occasional gust forecasts shook the casements into polite self-discourse, symptoms of a future insanity. Tomorrow autumn took the vigil. That was official.

It's not every day one wakes without an erection.

Goose-pimples now had the better of him. So, in mechanical slothfulness, he righted his semi-dormant torso and dropped two balding legs over the edge of the bed. One foot homed onto the arris of an ashtray, which responded by standing on its side and showering a carpet of cigarette-shrapnel over the floor, before toppling to pin down one or two dog-ends with its weight. A suppressor-fitted yawn stifled the intended 'Shit!', only to fuse against:

—Those bloody pills weren't supposed to wake me till eight.

## Marek Obtulowicz



I'll do that quack: unaired afterthought.

For a long time, Lykke stood rigid, looking down at the mess between his feet. Last night, he remembered seeing the moon, a scythe sliver shrouded in Disneyland mist. It had filled him with resentment.

(Give me the moonlight and I'll pickle it to show my friends on their bank holidays.) Friends. Nostalgia sought out his friends; his office. And himself again, a senior employee at the age of twenty-five, prospects unlimited. For what? These annual three weeks of exile in the kitchen? He moved to go back to the bedroom, but a sharp, gleeful yelp from the children jerked him into the almost athletic motion of stooping, snatching and tossing ashtray onto the bed. It bounced, a single squashed butt stuck to the bottom.

From a stack of unread newspapers, piled under the bed, Lykke drew a large sheet and spread it out over the floor. A headline caught his eye, but he pretended not to notice and, one by one, began gathering the maimed tips. Each bend reminded him that he was getting fat, but this too he chose to ignore and scooped up the final handful in crude fingerjaws, scraping his nails across the lino. Down on all fours, his head twisted to one side, he tried to blow the last of the ash onto the paper, but only succeeded in scattering some of the already collected dregs. With a shrug of the shoulders, an adequate self-reproach, he crumpled the newspaper and pushed the parcel through the incinerator hatch.

*This will dispose of ALL RUBBISH and GARBAGE with the EXCEPTION of CANS and GLASS BOTTLES: these should be deposited in the BINS provided.*

He turned back to pick up the ashtray and in two ambling steps stood tapping it against the brim of the sink. The butt remained firm. Lykke hammered, porcelain rang loudly against the aluminium, the succession of knocks became more and more rapid, furious. Lykke pounded; nothing chipped, nothing cracked; but the butt remained firm. He took the tray in both hands, holding it at arm's length, as though about to perform a sacrifice, but then gently lowered it down onto the draining-board and started to piss into the sink. He smiled to himself. The urine swam round the bowl tinkling like a chorus of miniature sleighbells and gurgling belated protests as it flushed through the U-trap.

Self control, he thought, self control. And brushed his teeth without so much as a dribble falling onto his dangling nakedness. Poised, he prepared to congratulate himself in front of the shaving mirror, but a fistful of phlegm, flung from somewhere behind the tonsils, plugged his words. Forewarned and on cue his body was taken through a spasm of fruitless convulsions.

The gods were not interested.

Lykke lunged for the cigarettes on the table, but he had to twist back over the sink for a finale of coughs, chokes and splutters.

It was over. (Cigarette!)

—Ghods.

(It's as bad as being pregnant. Match!)

A long, long pull on the cigarette. Another. Another. And yet another.

(Think of what some women go through every month, you only suffer this lot once a year.)

Two thirds of the cigarette down. Back to the routine.

LYKKE now marched to the window-wall, out of which protruded two waist-high rulers at a fixed distance apart. With ease, he side-slid into this caliper measure, a by-product of a resolution passed, never to sport a beer-pot of such dimensions as to obscure direct penis-vision. Satisfied, he pulled a long draught of ale from a barrel, trestle-mounted in the corner. Nevertheless, he was getting fat.

The window needs cleaning. A broken sash-cord droops, impotent in its splitting frame. Lykke gazes down at the fallen leaves, heaped into neat mounds along the pathways which cut across the common. Children make ready a new day's work for the unknown sweeper. The boys prefer to snowplough their way through the rusted piles. The girls find their giggles in throwing bunches of browned flakes into the air, skipping and spinning with outstretched arms to catch the clusters as they float down on an unprogrammed descent. A mongrel terrier enthusiastically umpires their game.

From the gasworks-end of the green walks a girl, her hands deep in the pockets of an unbuttoned winter coat. It twirls and flaps about her knees as she moves, treading carefully so as not to lose her heel in the soft turf. She stops to let by a train of boys, which sends an avalanche of leaves darting around her feet. Smiling, she pats the guards-van on the head and walks on towards the courtyard. A small leaf is tangled in her loose hair.

(How often do they empty those bins? Not much need now that we've all got incinerators.)

The musty panes of glass reflected Lykke's kitchen—a corridor—the bed, rocking chair and pantry on one side, the beer-barrel, table and sink-unit on the other. Above the sink there was a bookshelf on which balanced a few ageing books. Outsized hardbacks.

(Books!)

A face, idiotically knotted in disbelief, turned to confirm the discovery.

(Is there anything else that hasn't been registered during all these years of tenancy? Somebody else left them there. Impossible.)

Organisation made certain that every year Lykke adopted the kitchen for three weeks. Three weeks on that ridiculous folding bed. A voluntary isolation, the only sure means of enduring, perhaps even understanding, the symptomatic chaos. This very retreat was a testimony to organisation.

(Forgetfulness? Another, a new symptom?)

A mumble about opticians.

(How could I have overlooked a bookshelf?)

Of the literature one volume stood out. It was not much larger than the rest, but very thick, hefty, and had the word JEWISH stamped in bold black print on the green spine of a



molested dust-jacket. More title and the author's name were in lower case type, almost illegible. Amidst further protests about opticians, Lykke drew back to the sink.

'JEWISH Cooking for Fun'.

Cooking Jews for Fun. Critics: 'Disappointing.' Adolf seems to have adopted a rather macabre manner of satirizing one of the crucial problems of our age. Definitely disappointing.

Disappointment on the increase, Lykke thumbs through successive leaves of yellowing paper. He selects a tome with seemingly the most sexless cover and squats cross-legged on the table. Even scanned at random the text is bad, but will kill the allotted sleeping time.

(She, obviously having made the climb many times before, led him by the eyes. The flimsiness.)

Knock at the door.

—Cumin.

—Er, excuse me

Lykke stands  
ohah! Sorry. I beg

The

door closes. She is gone. The girl from downstairs.

Puzzled Lykke looks down to his book, only to realise that he is not dressed.

(Poor kid. Must think I'm nuts.

Well she's no nympho. I suppose I ought to go down and apologise. Why? What right has she to disturb me anyway. Invasion of privacy. Why not her? Careful. The flimsiness of her tight well why not her? No I couldn't. Get off the table. She probably only wanted some sugar. Sweet.)



Lykke is fighting his trousers.

(No harm finding out what she wants. Still . . . No . . . forget it. It would be unfair, ridiculous. She's too close at hand. It must have been sugar.

She moved in about a fortnight ago on fine legs. In fact she was fine all over; pretty.)

This dogmatic assertion invoked a rush to the shaving mirror, where one set of digits were urged through his matted hair, while the other savagely attacked the odd assortment of crumbs and foodstuffs that lodged in the tangle of beard. Three weeks growth, already a beard.

**T**AP at the door: surprise.

—Cumin.

—I'll stay out here, if you don't mind.

—What?

—I'll stay out here.

—As you please, but you'll have to shout. . . . By the way I've got my trousers on.

The door splinters.

—O . . . I'm sorry to have disturbed you. . . . I'm awfully sorry.

—No, I wasn't doing anything. Look I'm sorry . . . I'd only just got up and . . . ah

—I see . . . well, sorry, I didn't expect

—No, yes . . . aam . . . my fault . . . Cumin, I'm harmless.

—Well I'll not argue.

Reflected smiles.

—It must have been somewhat embarrassing. What is it you wanted?

—Wanted? O yes, it's silly really

—It can't be if you risk coming up twice.

—No it is, you see, have you any tissues?

—Tissues?

—Well . . . toilet paper?

—Toilet paper? Yes, I've got some.

Lykke opening cupboard.

—You see it's early closing and I forgot.

Lykke holding out a toilet roll.

—Here. Is it?

(Had she been embarrassed?)

Early closing I mean.

—Yes.

Her holding the toilet roll.

—There's something in your hair.

—Where?

—There.

Lykke pointing.

—O. It's a leaf.

—Sure you don't want any sugar?

—No . . . I don't take it.

—Well I do, so I'll bring my own.

—What?

—Listen, you go down and put the kettle on and as soon as I've got a shirt on I'll come down with some sugar. Then you can invited me in for a cup of coffee.

She playing with the leaf.

—Well . . .



—Go on, it's about time we had a cup and I'm quite harmless.

—So you said.

—Honestly.

—Alright. I think I'll be able to cope with you. Thanks.

She waves the toilet paper.

Beautiful.

(Going out of your head. No, no. It's the hair, but no. I shouldn't have . . . Shirt.)

He can't find

any cuff-links, so he rolls up his sleeves.

(No need to

get involved. Not now! Why now? Of all times. Autumn! It would be murder if not suicide, but then . . . Sugar, sugar.)

The only readily washable utensil is a pint mug which Lykke fills with beer and drains in a few seconds. A quick rinse and the glass becomes a sugar-bowl.

**G**OING downstairs was an adventure. It had been almost a week since he had last left his keep.

Janet Morthon; neatly written under the bell. One ring. Moving sounds.

—Door's open.

—Janet?

—In here.

(Kitchen.)

—You don't mind me calling you Janet, do you Miss? Miss Morthon. You're on the door see.

(Don't overdo

the formality.)

—No. And it is Miss, but what do I call you?

—Lykke.

—Like?

—Lykke l.y. double k.e.

—Lykke?

—It's my surname. J. J. Lykke.

—What do the J's stand for?

—O, Jon Jay.

—The second J?

—J for Jay, j.a.y.

—Well John Jay Lykke, the kettle's boiled so I'll take that.

Lykke holds out the sugar.

—A cup or a mug?

—Mug please, thanks . . . I'm not interrupting anything am I?

—No no. I seem to do all the interrupting and then of course you did invite yourself.

—Are you angry?

—Yes.

—O.

—White black?

—Black.

—Sugar?

—One.

Janet drops a dry spoon into the mug, which she slides along the table towards Lykke, the handle facing him. She picks up her own cup and folds the other arm across her waist. She watches him stirring.

—Of course I'm not angry, anyway I was hoping you'd

come down.

—O?

—Yes, I think you're strange, you puzzle me.

Nervous Lykke scratches his nose.

—Are you some kind of social worker?

—No, why do you ask?

—Well I don't understand what should be so odd about me and why you should be interested.

—Why do you sleep in the kitchen?

—Kitchen?

—I couldn't help noticing the bed.

Lykke smothered in images of his unmade pit, the stale stained sheets.

—I can explain.

—And then what was that religious ceremony I barged in on this afternoon?

(Religious ceremony?—

imagination: seven out of ten.)

—No, it's just that I'm not supposed to be up till eight and I merely forgot to dress.

—But it's cold. Let's go in there.

—Cold? I hadn't noticed.

The room is full of female smells.

—You're working nights then?

—No.

Pleasant; Janet smells.

—Are you one of those funny people allergic to daylight?

I can draw the curtains.

—No. It's just the Eve. Autumn's Eve. It'll be dark soon anyway.

—O . . . Jay? . . . Is that a boy's name?

—I don't know.

Or, perhaps, are they the smells bequeathed by the previous occupant. Lykke, sitting on the bed, tries to recall who it had been.

—Something wrong?

—No. I was trying to remember who lived here before.

—Well I've moved things about a bit.

—It's not that. I've never been in here. I think it was . . . no . . . not him.

—Wasn't it empty for some time?

—I couldn't say.

—There you are, you *are* odd. You don't even know what's happening around you. What day is it?

—Tuesday.

—See. I told you it was early closing and you tell me that it's Tuesday.

—So you did. . . . Are all those books yours?

—Yes.

—I never seem to do any reading. Yousee, I don't often sit on the table naked.

Janet smiles.

—No time?

—No, well

—Perhaps you sleep too much.

Jon Jay Lykke chuckles, amused. Janet merely flashes a satisfied grin from two enormous eyes. Blue? Green? Silky hair.

Silence.

—You were going to explain about the kitchen.





—Mmmm. Yes, well . . . you know, the smell of the paint.

—Paint?

—In the bedroom.

—You're a painter?

—Not exactly.

(Coward.)

—I mean artist.

—No there are just these pots, gloss, emulsion, eggshell. Just household paints. Hundreds of them.

—Decorator?

—No I use them for my sculpture.

—A sculptor!

—Well . . .

—I'd love to see them.

—I haven't actually done anything yet. I'm still collecting them.

—O.

—You see I was struck by the shapes made by a burning candle. The way the wax moulded itself about the stem. I thought candles would be a bit small and rather unstable for what I had in mind, so I looked around for a sloppy decorator who let half the paint run down the sides of the pot. I found one. Now I'm going to spray the cans, without cleaning them and then fix them together. Or else I could leave them like sort of building blocks. Audience participation.

He had been gesticulating furiously.

She had been listening with psychiatric attention.

(She believes me; perhaps I *am* odd.)

She stares at him with half-closed eyes, blue-green eyes, as though trying to picture Lykke's pots. He raises an empty mug to his lips for the third time. (I'd go insane with a bedroom full of paint pots.)

—Well thanks for the coffee . . . listen feel free to come up to the kitchen any time.

—Yes, I will . . . there's a toilet roll to repay.

Smiles.

—Look . . . would you like to go out for a drink . . . later on?

—Yes . . . I think I'll like that. I've got some letters to write first.

(You big idiot.)

—Shall I come down later on then?

—Yes.

—Fine.

(Lykke equals insanity.)

Lykke backs out by remote control.

Gorgeous.

There was no adventure in going upstairs. On the cupboard shelf, in the kitchen, lay a grease-smearred fork, glued to the unwashed plate. Lykke tried to rinse them clean, but the water was cold.

(Why? Why, gods. Why?

Just go down and find out what she wants eh? Lykke you're a bloody fool. Lykke I don't. You can't do this to her . . . nor yourself. That hair. I bet she goes like a bomb.)

Lykke is vaguely making the bed.

(Not having last

year's failure, are we? Bloody whore! Me, me clipped for a fiver. A fiver for nothing, just . . . just because autumn starts here. Slip out without her noticing, yes, then resume the original plan. Get a professional, the genuine thing, do it right. Why bother when it's on the door-step, ol'boy? She's probably writing to her boyfriend, big sailor, due home on leave tomorrow.

(There's still tonight.)

THERE wasn't anything special about The Anchor. Just a pub, where one drank, spent money and tolerated the dart-throwing language that wafted over the bar from the public corral.

Lykke could be regarded as a regular, so long as the barman/maid turnover rate was not too rapid. The owner knew Lykke by name, but had gone out, taking with him the first law of woman-impressing.

Janet saw the ale house as yet another element in the chain of the eternal institution. This did not prevent her from buying a round nor from getting adequately drunk to be now dragging an equally drunk Lykke up two flights of stairs at a heel-breaking pace.

Sobriety to inebriation had been filled with a chat-range that had progressively astounded both participants. Tree climbing, mud pies and the relative merits of cowboys' indians as opposed to japsn'commandos were included in a conversation that spanned not only Anglo-Saxon architecture, but also the impotence of the theatre of the absurd. The merger of opinions had been infrequent, but each agreement was met with reassuring enthusiasm.

Janet was a librarian.

Lykke had decided that she was intelligent, nice-to-be-with and truly beautiful. He was involved.

The sailor boyfriend turned out to be mother.

Lykke was involved. Only twice during the evening had he been reminded of the failure of his plans and the treachery he was displaying to his abdicating master.



Number one conscience pang came with the mention of aphrodisiacs and the second blossomed, over-awed by the presence of a woman who had *I'm exceptional in bed* tattooed on everything that fell into view. Each of her movements accentuated her claim, effectively urging Janet into a more than friendly state of intimacy. Lykke responded, Lykke is involved.

He is also exhausted. A cigarette makes regular trips to his lips. His arm seems to have been evicted from any socket it might have at one time occupied.

Janet lets go of his hand to search her handbag for a key.

Breathless, Lykke leans against neatly written *Janet Morthon*, sending a vacant ring in to the abandoned structure.

—Don't John, there's nobody in.

—Give me a kiss.

—Get off the bell.

—Not till you give me a kiss.

—You're drunk.

—Drunk!

—Yes drunk. We're both drunk.

The bell stops, she has opened the door.

—Nonsense. I wouldn't go so far.

—O?

—Not drunk, just merry, just right.

—As you like, but not in the hall.

—Is that some kind of invitation?

—Well, I've got your sugar so come and have coffee.

—Coffee?

—Coffee.

—Certainly Madam, you're exceptionally kind.

This kiss was rather richer than the quick expression of mutual sentiment that had filled a dry moment in their homeward stroll. The security of isolation was relaxing.

—I'll fix coffee, you go and sit down. Have a cigarette.

Lykke becomes entrenched in an armchair. The room is full of pleasant Janet smells.

(I'm sure the guy who lived here had a moustache.)

There are no paintings, no pictures on any of the four walls, just bookcases, full. Above the bed, half a row of paperbacks leans, as though about to slide off the shelf. An open book lies upside-down by the bedside lamp, a bookmark next to that.

Janet leaves the kitchen for Lykke's knee.

—If you were to clip that beard and comb your hair you'd look quite decent.

—Decent?

Lykke glances towards the bay-windows finding the wardrobe mirror.

—Yes decent, you're attractive, but messy.

—And you're beautiful.

His fingers plait themselves into her hair.

—You've got beautiful hair . . . don't you like beards?

—No it's not that. Don't shave it off, just trim it. I'll do it for you if you like.

—I've only had it three weeks.

The kettle sounds a complaint on the grounds of neglect.

—Leave it.

—I can't.

LYKKE watches her out of the room. He lights a cigarette. The kettle has been fed. For a moment he stares at the burning match and then flicks it towards the ashtray, but misses. Charred bits break off, he scoops them up carefully.

—One sugar wasn't it?

—Yes, there's a clever girl!

—Silly!

She brings the coffee in on a tray, two elegant cups either side of a matching sugar bowl.

—You can sugar it yourself.

She sets the tray at his feet. He leans forward to pick up a cup, but she hands one to him, the sugar bowl in the other hand. Smiles. He sugars his coffee and balances it on the armrest. She puts the bowl back on the tray and standing, straightens out her loose-fitting pullover. Her long hair flares as she looks about the room.

—Lost something?

No answer. Janet moves to the dressing-table, opens a drawer and takes out a large pair of scissors which snick playfully in her long fingers. She sits on the bed.

—Come here.

Lykke puts his cup back onto the tray and kneels at her feet.

—Lift up your chin.

—It'll go all over the carpet.

—Doesn't matter.

She makes one or two cuts. Lykke chokes his cigarette. He takes her hand and kisses it. His head is buried in her lap.

—Something's wrong, what is it?

—Nothing why do you ask?

(Liar.)

—I've got a feeling, that's all.

—O.

—Tell me what it is.

—It's autumn.

—You've said that before, what does it mean?

—It's always like this in autumn.

She is smoothing his hair. He looks up into her eyes. His elbows lock into her thighs. Beautiful eyes.

—What's always like what in autumn?

—You don't know?

She shakes her head.

He moves up, forward. They fall onto the bed together. The kiss goes on for a long time. He searches out all the sensuous parts of her lips; his tongue finds each essential nerve.

Their lips break apart. He looks at her face and his eyes fill with tears.

Drawing back into the bedding, she looks at him closely, quizzically.

—I don't understand. Is it me?

—No. No, not you.

—John don't play games.

—I'm not.

He pulls her close again; then rolls over onto his back. They stare at the ceiling. There are no cracks.

—If you're worried about . . . well there's no need, it's quite safe.

—It's not that.



—What then?

—It's not just a one-off night.

—No . . . It's funny . . . I feel as if I've known you for . . . well . . . for a long, long time. As if we'd been going out—I don't like that word—as if we'd been like this for ages. I think it's right. And I know you do . . . remember, what you said in the pub.

—Yes.

(That makes things a lot easier. Why couldn't we have met three months ago, three weeks ago? Why take her out in the first place? Come off it Lykke, get in there boy, this wench doesn't mean a thing to you. Doesn't mean a thing to you?)

—Yes . . . and I meant it.

—If you meant it then it's all right.

—It's autumn!

—Don't keep saying that, what do you mean?

—What happens in the autumn?

—I don't understand.

—What happens in the autumn?

—It gets cold

—And

—And windy

—And

—And it rains. O stop it!

—And

—And everything dies

—And

—Say what you mean.

—And

—What?

—What?

—I'm lost

—Everything dies.

—And everything dies.

—What?

—What dies?

—Yes, what dies?

—The leaves and things.

—What happens to the leaves?

—They turn brown and gold and

—And

—And they fall off and rot and get

—Hold it.

—Mmmm?

—Back a few frames.

—Mmm?

—And fall off.

—I still don't understand.

Lykke pulls her onto him. *Never mind* is the whisper. He kisses her, professionally. She responds.

—Let's get into bed.

—What's autumn all about?

Lykke sits up, looks at her then gets off the bed. He stands with his back to her.

—O god, Janet, listen.

He turns.

—You must believe me.

—I believe you.

—It falls off. In autumn it falls off, just like the leaves.

—What?

—It falls off.

—You mean

—Yes . . . Yes.

Silence. Cold coffee stands on the floor. She sits up without taking her eyes off his face. He looks at the coffee. She folds up her legs and leans forward. Howls.

—Janet stop it.

Her body shakes in hysterical laughter.

—Janet please.

Lykke moves towards her convulsing form, but stops. He turns and leaves.

An itch . . .

EVERYTHING is still. He feels her warmth, carries her smoothness into his room, his kitchen, the asylum. There he takes off his trousers. His groin surrenders to the pain.

It happens.

He stoops, picks up the fallen cluster and without looking pushes it behind the incinerator flap.

His bed is cold.

Janet walks into his room. She is wearing a nightdress.

—When does it happen?

He throws back the sheets. She glances at him, then lowers her eyes.

—You didn't drink your coffee.

Pregnant silence.

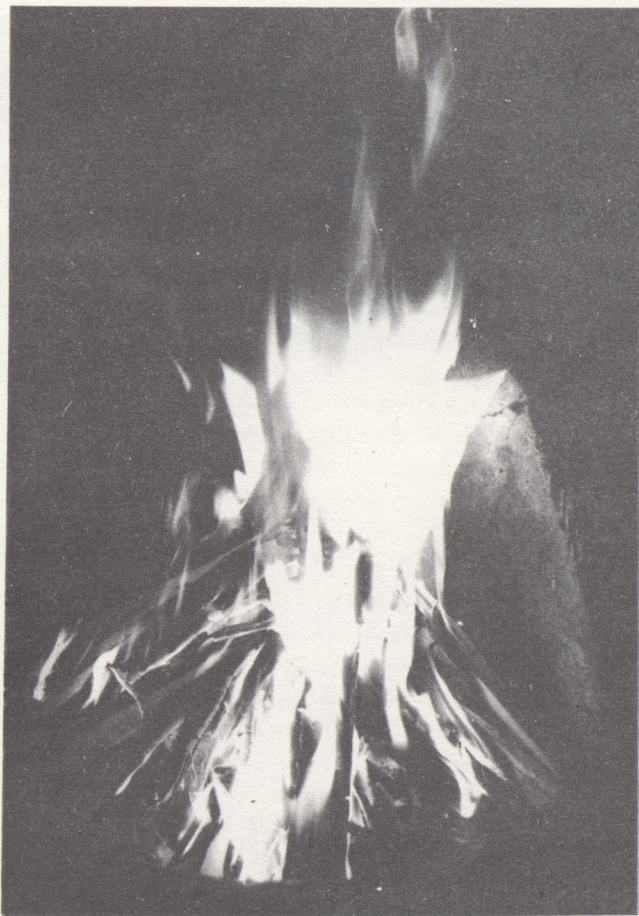
—Does it hurt?

—No.

—What happens now?

—I just have to wait till spring.

—O.





MICHAEL BIGGS

# HEMINGWAY

**L**ET ME EXPLAIN. We were in Paris, you and I. It was April, have you ever been to Paris in April? Living off the Boulevard Montparnasse, walking from bar to bar, following horse stories, writing newspaper stories, collecting enough equipment and time to go South, hunting, fishing and to the bull-fights in Spain.

We flew in, you and I, on a top level mission. I remember the purr of the limousines and the rapid efficient way your staff of young cipher clerk colonels clipped in the Paris-Washington Telex, a few computer circuits and a coffee machine into that old chateau.

We were in a long room stretching down the first floor, hung with tapestries with floor to ceiling windows leading out onto a balcony from which dropped down flights of steps into an ornamental 18th Century garden with an avenue down the middle, a lake and trees at the end, topiary and pavilions either side.

I could see the grey denim shirts of your security men dotted about the grounds with the antennae of their radios waving in the slight wind for I was standing by the window.

I never cared for your political harangues, nor the language style of your Vietnamese friends. They, it is true, looked hard, intelligent and they sat and watched sharply as Yankee boys lumber about, in and out the back room at our end of the chamber, where the Telex was kept. That was Okay. A necessary component, you and Mr. Lau standing up to each other. I however walked out of the French Windows onto the balcony.

It was one of those days that look like the engravings of these kind of Chateau gardens. A blanket of cloud, but cooler and simpler. I went down the steps to get to the lake, with my flask of absinthe, a little water, and a tooth mug, for I knew once I got there I would need a drink. The security men had gone to earth. All you could see were bits of wire sticking up. Maybe it was all a hoax.

I walked down the avenue. The grass was longer and when I looked round, back to the Chateau and the Eiffel Tower over its shoulder, shining in the sun, I could see you being wheeled from the small room to the other, standing on those little trolleys, towed by your speech writing colonels. Out here, watching you roll from window frame to window frame, tall and dignified, I remembered when you were young and we hunted together on the big two hearted river and then again at Kilimanjaro where the U.S. army flew in Sioux helicopters onto the Western summit, onto the Ngaje Ngai, and took you off, took your legs off and put you on trolleys, leaving me to hunt my way back through Africa, and then below I saw the long, low slung, grey, lightly mottled with olive, staff cars of the Vietnamese purr away down the driveway to their villa in the suburbs.

Jesus! You were getting closer and then further away.

The weather to you was temperate and behind me the lake seemed to boil up. I looked across the lake and there against one of the trees I could see a girl sitting and reading, wearing a tricolour bandana, a skirt made up out of the Old Glory and her hair brushed back like a boy's. As she read I could see she was reading out aloud and you could just hear her voice coming over the water.

"All men are born equal. They are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

It was the American Declaration of Independence—and as she cried it out you know it was a strange thing, like back in the States in the newspaper works, the words shaped up into slugs of lead and just hung in the air above the lake.

The air was hotter now, more tropical. The grass higher, and though the cloud cover appeared to hold the glare of its underside sharpened up the shadows all around. On the lake the water's surface was glassy and still and from the Chateau I heard you, Ave, shouting and I looked and there you stood, on your trolleys, at the French windows of the Telex room shouting "Take cover! Take cover! Come back! Come back!" and then your colonels wheeled you away. It was no use, for the Chateau I could not believe in. It was sliding about too much. It was too cool, smooth and easy. Out here, as the temperature flicked about my skin I could sense the prey. Was it, for a short while a quick hammering of firing from a boulder well down the slope to the lake? Possibly, all the same then a boat slipped around the headland rowed by two negroes who stepped out onto the shore, soft spoken, smiling, picking up my gear, my elephant gun, handing me the glasses. We could see those long, low slung purring beasts that we were hunting and then the Chateau turned frantic.

At one end you, Ave, like a cuckoo clock man moving in and out and in of the French windows while high above you the B.52's started their carpet bombing, steadily across the scenario. Champs Elysee, St. Germain de Pres, the Crillon went. Was the Eiffel Tower an I.C.B.M?

I reached up and pulled off some slugs from the sky to use as ammunition, useful words like life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We moved off into the boat, me sitting, they rowing and the shore disappearing rapidly.

I looked back once more to see you, Ave, on the Chateau balcony, but the mists had closed in and we were cut off. All we could hear were the thud of the bombs.

We pulled rifles out of boxes at the bottom of the boat and I slung a couple of bandoleers on and then we rested.

As we waited being on the lake reminded me of when I was younger on the lake off Hortons Bay. Jeez! that was good, when we hunted and fished and drank Irish Whiskey and water, ate dried apricots, flapjacks in the woods and



grilled fresh caught trout though now of course I had a hard time working out whether we were the hunters or hunted—until the canoes came, Iriquois war canoes I thought at first, long black boats with hawk-like prows that came silently out of the mist. A regiment, I would guess, of olive skinned, black-pyjamed Vietnamese. The negroes rowed us into the convoy and we moved off with them towards the warmer, damper air. I sat amidships and looked around at these Viets. A regiment from the North or one from the South, it was hard to tell. They were clean, well-disciplined and the Captains carried small books showing pictures of Ho Chi Minh and General Giap.

We travelled down the lake and out down a wide river. As we travelled I tried to pick out our whereabouts. The sound of the bombs and the shroud of the mist still engulfed us but here and there it was possible to catch slight glimpses. Was that the suburbs of Paris, white villas, roman tiled, surrounded by bougainvillea bushes, poplar trees and wrought iron work? The bridge at Avignon! Which I once nearly passed on a small car trip to Lyons and back. Madrid, another collection of white buildings and look! a slogan “Resistir y fortificar es vencer” painted on a wall in Spain. About now I remember drinking a little absinthe.

Those guys I was with, it's a pity they didn't read Spanish. They were all communists, they would have got a kick out of that. Communist Party slogans in the clouds above the Vietnamese.

The boat travelled on. Soon we will see the lights of Havana I thought and then they will shoot me all these radicals! I guess I was a little drunk. Drunk enough not to feel the jolt when we beached. We were in the jungle, I later discovered we had crossed from Laos. We were in the Liberated Zone in Vietnam, in the middle of the day.

The mist dispersed. The trees were green and grey and marked with strong streaks of sunlight. We picked up our guns and marched a little way inland where we split up into companies and sat and ate a little dried fish and rice soaked in *nuoc mam*. We, the two negroes and I, sat with an interpreter, a young party man who gave us half cliches and half the indication that there might be an engagement up ahead. They all seemed friendly enough and we chatted and I told them a little about Spain, Monte Cassino and so on.

Then we moved off through the jungle, a long march with the companies of Vietnamese moving irregularly so you could watch the trees and see their black shapes appear and disappear.

As we marched we passed through villages where each time I had to stand around while the party officials pointed out napalm attacks, lazy dog bombing, Incergel and C.S. gas victims, women and children mostly. They were quite civil about it but I could see they found it necessary to explain it all to any visiting yankee. The day wore on.

The interpreter explained we were approaching potential battle zones and that I was to take care. I said Okay and then we were sprung or so it appeared. The interpreter turned away from our group smartly. The command ran through the regiment to take cover. One of the negroes explained ‘helicopters’, this is to be an ambush! We crossed into some undergrowth and waited there—in the base of a valley. And then we could hear the helicopters bringing in their paratroopers and in a short while the first engagements, light arms fire to the South East. I wanted to move but the negro said no. We waited and for a while we could see some of the other companies of V.C. moving about a little and then some litters of the first wounded. The gun fire intensified. They were ahead in the trees walking and shooting, big, tall U.S. marines like country

gentlemen out on a grouse shoot. I lay very flat and sweated and then we were shooting in the front line. They were the enemy. The marines made for cover leaving a few dead and some wounded but we had good views ahead, good enough to hold the position and for a while we waited to move on orders that never came. For instead as we rested and switched my old tooth mug about we heard and then saw a column of gigantic infantry, throwing up the soil, smashing down the trees plumed in dust and clad in silk suits. And in the sky above it was just like August at Mons, a vision of John F. Kennedy smiling, holding out his hand to me and from his fingers dollar bills dripping, drifting into the sky. So many that the ground below him darkened over and it was only with difficulty that we could pick out the column ahead—the every now and then glint of steel as secret service men slipped in and out of these impregnable taking pot shots at us as we took each of our weapons and emptied our bandoliers and machine gun boxes and all to no avail.

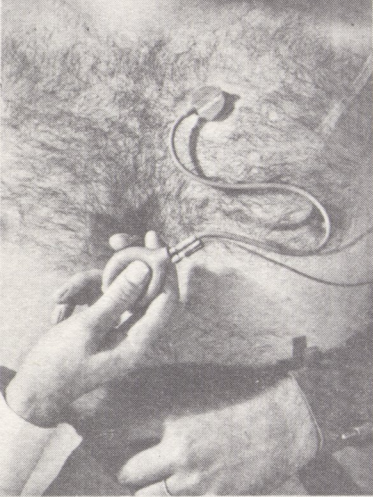
We could pick out their faces. The face of President Nixon, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Senator Fulbright, Dean Rusk, Clark Clifford, Edward Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy who looked a little ill with blood dripping off the back of his head. And from the back a tall, stove-pipe hat and an arm holding a piece of paper which fluttered away was blown towards us “The Gettysburg Address!”—“that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish on the earth”. But we were about to perish. Then I remembered the lead slugs. The slug life—life size for the Bazooka. The last of the ammunition.

We fired and hit the leaders who turned glazed then transparent and melted away and the stink that they left reminded me of the gangrenous wounds of the burnt up kids back in the jungle. But in taking out the leaders we had left ourselves many more targets further back and covering a wider area—carrying banners marking them as the Ford Corporation, The Pentagon, C.I.A., General Motors, the Senate, all moving steadily on us, me and the negroes, in their brassy silk suits. We loaded up the next slug, the Liberty slug. What a fine explosion it made, with the pictures in the sky going, the different groups shrivelling up between their banners, us flat on the ground and the trees stripped of their leaves with the branches turned upwards to a fine summer sky. Which left us with an assortment as determined as the others but dark visaged and not all so well dressed, wild in their gestures with closely knitted brows, a Confederate Band and banners saying John Birch, The Clan, Vote Wallace. “My turn to load and fire” said the negro. So I watched while the slug “pursuit of happiness” went into the band and then fanned out and all these small groups just singed up with the catastrophe whistling through them like a long slicing chain. It was all quiet. We sat back and listened to the birds, until suddenly the trees were on fire, the F for Phantoms were flying-in napalm. We retreated running too fast to smile until we fetched up against some trees by a clearing and a stream where I waited and then turned to talk to one of my negro friends when I got a bullet in an old wound, the Cuban belly. Too late to carry me. I sat around. There were U.S. Marines all about so I said to the negroes to go on while I sat to die again facing my own countrymen. It was a natural when you think. Words such as glory, honour and courage are obscene besides the names of napalmed villages, the numbers of schools, hospitals bombed, the names of victims and the Vietnamese regiments to defend them. It was a pleasant evening and as I sat against a tree I had a good view of the patterns of the exhaust of the F for Phantom jets.



THE HOUSING PROJECT WAS SOAKED WITH URINE. STALE TOYS COVERED THE FLOORS. THE BUILDING WAS COVERED WITH A GREY BLANKET. WE KNOCKED ON THE DOOR WITH RUBBER HANDS. THE DOG ON THE ROOF WALKED ROUND IN CIRCLES. MUSIC WAS PLAYED AND SOME-ONE SUGGESTED DANCING. SHE WAS SWUNG AROUND THE ROOM. THE BOY WORE ONLY A

T-SHIRT OF HIS WERE WITH SEVERAL WE HIM THE SKY-FOR THREE JUST THE OF VS TRAVELLING TIME TO THIS PART PROGRAMME .... THE FOLDED THE INSIDE.



AND PARTS OF HIS BODY COVERED EXCREMENT DAYS OLD. WATCHED THROUGH LIGHT HOURS; TWELVE AND OUR CLOCK. AFTER OF THE

..... PUSH-CHAM UP WITH CHILD

THE DOG BARKED AND ROLLED ON THE GROUND. THE CHILD FELL OVER BACKWARDS AND THE DOG BIT HIM... WE WATCHED LARGE TOYS WITH SOFT EYES. WE WATCHED THE CHESTS SWELL. WE SPLIT A SMALL WHISKY WITH A MEDICAL MAN. SCRAMBLED EGGS STUCK TO OUR RUBBER HATS, AND OUR GLOVES WERE STAINED WITH OLD COFFEE. WE HAD RUN OUT OF JOKES. IT WAS LATE. CLEARING UP WAS THE MAIN OBJECTIVE. WE CLEANED THE HOUSE AND REMOVED BANDRUFF. WE RUBBED POMADE ON ALL THE FURNITURE. WE MIXED MONEY IN WITH THE DOG FOOD. WE CHECKED OUR REPORTS.

# GRAPHICS BY IAN BREAKWELL

HANDS UP ANY WOMAN WHO...

## FOLLOW MY LEAD SAID THE OLD ELE CTRICIAN HAVE A STAKE IN THE WRECKED ROOM

### WIDESPREAD ERUPTIONS

...and future problems of waste disposal are slowly solved. Indeed, the future of the developmental stage is also in a few years may well hinge on its...

...into the...  
...on the main...  
...is a woman with...  
...window; he won...  
...the counter is at...  
...a purple dress;...  
...the wall behind her...  
...of rail...

...ected by the sea...  
...window. The tower stands on...  
...tobacco magnate; it is a loc...  
...le from the sea fifteen miles...  
...ss has moved into the room at...  
...e street and enters the restau...  
...ts at a table beside a girl in...  
...by her mother and father; the...  
...and push it very gently into...  
...digests it before giving her...  
...germails down the wall behind...

...his coat...  
...he says "

Two secti...  
...the only...  
...who is a...  
...waitress...  
...which st...  
...flexing...  
...cannot...  
...to him...  
...tower...  
...and is...  
...and is...  
...in the...  
...walks...  
...other...  
...who is...  
...food...  
...wait...  
...girl...  
...He...  
...or...  
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...ociety o...  
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...technics...  
...Within the...  
...consideration...  
...providing...  
...developing...  
...facts on which





**S**OME time ago I described a new method for making a skin graft go a very long way by converting it into a mesh.

The idea is to take a very thin sheet of skin, say from the thigh, and put it through a machine rather like a small mangle.

The rollers of the "mangle" are studded with rows of sharp blades so that the sheet of skin emerges with a network of slits in it. It can now be pulled out as a mesh which can cover an area nearly three times that of the original skin.

Once in place, the numerous small gaps very rapidly heal over with new skin and the grafting is then complete.

Surgeons at the University of Wisconsin recently had to put this procedure to the test when they were faced with the problem of an 11-years-old girl with a giant mole.

Most ordinary moles are areas from which the grafts were taken to heal completely so that further grafts could then be taken from the same sites.

The result was that they succeeded in covering almost the entire trunk with skin from only the two thighs.

The girl herself is so delighted with her improved appearance that she is now for the first time attending gym classes at school and will soon start to learn to swim.

The problem was of course how to get enough skin from the rest of the body to graft this enormous area after they had removed the mole. They decided to make use of the mesh-graft method.

They removed the mole in three stages with several weeks between each stage. In this way they allowed the

Dancing years..... money on ice  
..... a festive dinner in our  
ninth-floor office. We are  
having discussions and our  
officers are drawing up a scheme.  
We are delighted with the way  
things are going. Between  
courses small items of news  
were delivered by shoeshine-boys  
who are our friends. Just know  
instinctively how things have to  
be shaped. Business is advancing.  
Trade is good. We admired the  
painted ceiling. The band  
resumed playing..... everyone  
joined in. Photographers filed  
into the ballroom. The  
debutante onstage signalled  
with coloured flags..... by  
interpreting these signals one  
of our junior partners won a  
£50 voucher..... he received  
the voucher from the resident  
bandleader..... loud cheers.





# THE LAST AWAKENING

## FIRST PANEL

**A** SHAFT OF DAYLIGHT glanced delicately into the basement and boiled with dust motes. Then, it was lost, and darkness returned. A minute or so later, the shaft reappeared. The glass-shattered window was situated high up, just beneath the curved ceiling; it was long, slit-shaped and clasped in bars. Nothing had any colour. Milky light shone past black bars into a shadow-world: the basement. By stages, the shaft of daylight grew stronger. Stray colours and forms began to emerge.

A concrete buttress plunged down from the wall in which the window was situated and stretched its foot nearly a third of the way across the sunken floor. The basement room was long, and its ends remained hidden in darkness.

A sluggish movement broke the silence, and the pale patch of light on the floor became rippling water. The ripples lapped gently against the clearest form in view: a thick, gilt frame of intricate moulding.

The picture that filled the frame had been painted with such dark colours about its outer edges that the composition appeared to hang in mid-air. A scum had collected around canvas and gilding at water-level. Apart from this, the picture was intact, save for a few punctures, where the fragments of glass stuck in the canvas glinted in the light.



C.R.Clive



The ripples had disturbed a half-empty gallon can. There was a dull clunk as the can touched the edge of the frame and floated very slowly into view. Eventually, it stopped moving, a foot in front of the picture, and a concentric rainbow began to inch from its sides across the water. A yard or so away, the sunlit band of water was steaming faintly.

A sharp creak came from the deeply shadowed back wall, where layers of long, parallel edges were dimly visible.

When the light grew no brighter, the underground room appeared as dead as it had been in the dark.

## SECOND PANEL

**T**HE BACK OF THE VAULT, in a shallow recess between looming projections, a man was half-sunk in the water. He rested in an angle of the nook, sunken-chested and inert. His face was etched in the faintest pale, and seemed to hang in the air like the subject of the picture.

He raised his arm to his face and the water sloshed. Drips pattered down and the vault amplified their musical pizzicato. The air-current disturbed the steam rising from the water, and the wreaths ducked and leaned in a silent ballet.

He rubbed his hand stiffly across his eyes. The water did not disturb him; the pipes of a heating system ran somewhere beneath the surface along the inner-wall, spreading a tepid warmth throughout the pond.

The man drew a breath, and filled the place with a wind-like sigh as he exhaled. Silence returned in a moment. Then, his arm fell away from his face and crashed into the water. Noiseless ripples fled across the surface, disturbing the gallon can and orchestrating various crannies and gaps, which lisped, clucked and chattered for the moment.

The tiny current coaxed the can away from the frame, and urged it through its metallic iris into the band of daylight. When it entered the directly illuminated water, the can seemed to experience some resistance. It shuddered and appeared to become embedded. Its sedate voyage over, the listing vessel hung motionless in the band of light like a still-life.

The man's pale face was facing the picture.

## THIRD PANEL

**B**BROWN LINES DEEPENED in the man's brow and his lips vanished. The longer he looked, the more fragile the quality of his porcelain face became. At last, it seemed to shimmer in the steam—to shimmer, as though it might, at any moment, shatter into the charcoal cup of his caved-in chest.

The picture portrayed a kneeling woman clad in blue. Her serene face was the radial origin of the pentagonal composition. Within the great mandala, a square and a diamond successively became visible, then resolved into the whole once more, only to renew the indwelling cycle. Dominant her face in the square—the upper corners: a

grotto leading into a mountainous seascape, pastel-coloured in dawn, and a distant monolith framed by a rafted opening in the rocks behind; the lower: a kneeling man-child, his hand outstretched, and an adolescent girl faintly smiling. Plagal her face at the apex of the diamond—the lower vertex: a cross-legged babe; the lefthand: the man-child, whose shoulder she held; the righthand: the beautiful girl, unaureoled. Resolved her face in the middle of the pentagon as it fulfilled its immanent design.

The painting was disintegrating in the sunlight. Whole areas were becoming obscure. Some places, more sensitive than others, were being rapidly levigated. From these parts, the dust rained down in miniature cascades amidst a surrounding haze.

The very water beneath the sunlight was undergoing a change; the wan iris of paraffin oil appeared to effloresce and become brilliant. It bloomed like some two-dimensional flower, and a dusty pollen began to blur the prismatic hues. Then, the colour was lost, and a talc-white skin lay inert in the sunshine.

The disintegration was taking place wherever the sunlight played directly. As time passed by, the slit-shaped window became oval, its lower edge being worn down more quickly than the rest. Melting away in the finest powdery avalanche, the edge became round, mouth-like, with a gradual change of expression—from parted lips to an open smile to a vacant rictus.

The atomic transformation worked on the gallon can like the temporal compression of scores of seasons on a derelict adobe. Its listing walls shrank in irregular crenatures. The screw-cap and the handle fell together, landing in the dusty carpet with a brief purr. Then, the bars of the window became detached and slid away: spiked teeth from a hanging jaw. First one, then another, then three together plunged through the mantled water and struck the flagging with muffled chimes.

Random and scattered, the calls of decay presently augmented, till a strain—keyless, serial, sotto voce—melted through the air.

## FOURTH PANEL

**T**HE WATER SLOSHED harshly at the back and ripples ran across the basement, making the carpet of dust tremor.

The man cleared his throat.

He was standing: a tall, slim figure in his water-drenched suit. He watched the boundary of sunlight broadening for several minutes. It moved with the elegant pace of the minute-hand on a grandfather clock. He did not look about himself; his attention was centred on the band of daylight. Whatever his feelings, they remained unregistered in his fixed, yellow eyes.

Pulling out a handkerchief, he crushed it into a ball and tossed it into the sunlight. It landed on the dust-coated water, and, in a minute, wilted and reticulated like a leaf in accelerated decay.

He turned and waded into the darkness. Abutting against the inner-wall, a stone staircase rose from the water. He mounted the steps and climbed to a small, railed landing. On the point of opening the door, he hesitated, and turned round to watch again the scene within the vault.



As he stood there, expressionless save for the chill glimmer in his eyes, the nearer corner of the distorted window collapsed and showered down in dust and fragments. The sunlight streamed in brightly through the enlarged orifice. It struck across, and set its new contour a few inches below the railings of the landing. The man remained immobile, but his eyes darted about momentarily—then settled.

The area to the right of the buttress, previously obscured in darkness, was now partly lit. A girl of about fourteen years of age lay on a broad elevated ledge that adjoined the inside of the buttress and ran along the outer-wall. She wore a dark jumper and jeans, glove-tight about her thighs and waist. She rested on her jacket, with her right arm full-length at her side and her left across her midriff. Her eyes were brown and gentle; the brows above them arched and distinct against the gold of her complexion. She was looking straight up at the man, a faint smile on her lips.

The man's left cheek twitched.

They looked at one another, neither saying a word: the girl with her gentle, questing eyes; the man with his frigid yellow stare.

The man looked away to the powder-covered water and then back at the child.

"Do you understand what's happening?"

"Yes," the girl said, after a pause, "It's started again, hasn't it?"

"Who are you?"

At first, the man did not respond; he simply stared at the girl. Then, he smiled—the yellow ice of his eyes suddenly thawing.

She studied the face above her.

"Are you—What are you going to do? You're not going outside are you?"

But the sphinx-like quality of the man remained. He seemed insensible of her questions as he gazed at her. The girl bit her lip.

"Oh! Say something!"

She turned her head away; allowing her eyes to roll back to the man after a few seconds.

"How long do you think it'll take before—?"

The man was walking down the stairs. As he stepped into the water, the girl turned on her side to face him.

He waded across the floor and halted close to the ledge; it was on a level with his waist. As his gaze travelled over her body, the thawing ice of his eyes seemed to refreeze and a slight constriction took place about his brows and cheeks.

"You're quite a work of art."

His voice was of glass and ice; it seemed to splinter from his throat.

This time, it was the other who remained silent—silent and tense. The man laid his hand on the girl's leg, just above the knee. The tendons in his hand became distinct and his breathing audible. His eyes played all over her body, barely glancing at her face.

"Take it easy!" she said, smiling, "I'm not a mousetrap!"

The man's other hand pounced and gripped her neck, knocking her head back sharply on the ledge.

"OW! Stop it!"

She twisted away, frowning.

"What did you do that for? You don't know much about sex, do you?"

The man's eyes glittered.

"There's no need to be so rough!"

His eyes became yellow diamonds, sparkling in the dim

light with a life of their own.

"What do you know about sex?" he said.

"As much as you! Why . . . does it matter?"

Her expression hovered between tenderness and apprehension.

"No one to protect you now. All gone."

His glance lingered over the curves of her body.

"Dinky little creature."

"Weren't you safe before? Eh? Boys your own age. An old man like me . . . could just . . . look on. Ha! Ha!"

"There were so many of you! Just try and love one of you though. God! What a veto!"

"Outrage! Filth! Ha!"

"And they wouldn't have you anyway. Not even a look."

"Glass cell. Ha! It's—Not now."

"Pretty thing. What's precious? Eh?"

A distant noise filled the basement. It seemed to come from above: a low, thudding boom, like the impact of a great weight on the ground.

The man started and glanced aside listening.

"Upstairs . . ." he said, after a few moments.

"You're not old."

Her voice trembled. She was pale and very serious now. He looked back at the girl.

"Forty-four and married. Old leper to a pretty youngster."

"What are you, thirteen? Fourteen? Pretty as a photo!"

"Those legs! Vulnerable. You're so . . . Ha!"

"A young girl!"

"Can't run away. Nowhere to run to. Alone. Just two of us."

His eyes were coruscating yellow fires; never settling for a moment, they roved continuously over the girl's body.

"What do you mean?" she said, "I . . . I'm not going to—Why don't you . . . be nice—be friendly with me? Please."

He frowned and pressed his lips together.

"No er . . . Look. Don't er . . . Don't speak! It's nice er . . . just quiet. I used to help run this gallery, you know."

He stared around him, then leant against the ledge.

"Don't you feel worried? No one. No one to protect. Ha! There's no one else but me. You're all alone with me. I won't hurt you."

His eyes settled on her crotch.

"I just . . . just want to hold . . . hold your pretty body."

His brow had become smooth again.

There was the sound of another impact—much fainter than the last, like the beat of a heart.

He reached forward and ran his hand over her thigh, squeezing her.

"Alone with me. Can't resist me."

"I'll love you. It'll be all right."

"Those teenage clothes . . . Sexy little thing! Nothing to stop me. Got you! You can't—"

"Gear! Ha!"

"They can't—"

"Going to have you . . ."

She pressed her small fist against the ledge.

"You said you won't hurt me. There's no need to—"

"Treat me like a *real* person . . . Please."

She placed her hand on his, trying to smile.

"Would you like me to . . . take off my clothes?"

He frowned, and for the first time since descending the stairs and joining her beside the buttress, stared into her eyes.

Lines and creases graved his face.

He rose from the ledge and stepped backwards in the



water, gazing at her blindly.

"What's the matter?"

She scrambled into a kneeling position on the edge of the ledge.

"Ooh! Nothing."

He turned round and began to wade back to the stairs.

"Please don't go! Please! There's nothing outside. It's just flat.

"Don't go. Tell me your name."

Dust was constantly spreading away from the sunlit water, and a whitish film had crept into the shadowed parts of the basement. As he sloshed through the water, the film behind him eddied in fern-like whorls, then stilled and clotted into a torn sheet.

"Emanuel."

He reached the foot of the stairs and climbed out of the water. Another impact sounded overhead: the beat of a drum, *sordo*.

"Don't go, Emanuel. I was— I only said what I thought you'd like. You don't have to go.

"Tell me! Tell me what I did!

"Please don't go. Oh please! It's *you* I want."

He stepped on to the landing and looked down to where the picture had been. The canvas had disintegrated completely, leaving an eroded door-frame straddling the deep bed of minute crystals covering the water. Visible through the skeleton was the stack of tea-chests which propped it in position. He looked from the dead to the living.

"Do you? Well, I'm afraid you spoil it."

"What *do* you want then?"

"Oh! I don't know . . . Your beauty perhaps."

"But you can have it . . ."

His eyes began to glisten, and his face became heavy and flabby.

"I no longer want you. What's your name?"

"Jane."

"Bye-bye, Jane."

As he opened the door, another section of the window broke away, and a beam of light struck across the stairs. Protected by the buttress, the beautiful child watched the transmutation with remote and shadowed eyes.

## FIFTH PANEL

**T**HE SUN'S RAYS RESTED on the walls of the gallery's rooms like vast, white girders. Everything was in the process of reduction to dust. Although the glass roofs had fallen in, a few arches still spanned the rooms, casting shadows of immunity. All the walls ran with powder; each surface a self-consuming cataract that slowly grew shorter as the sun rose higher and the day matured.

The man followed the feet of the walls that lay in shadow, coughing repeatedly, as he passed under the flows of dust. Every sound was muted and brief—absorbed at once by the cushioning environment.

He wandered through room after room, swiftly crossing the sunlight when he had to round the partitions.

Many pictures still hung intact on the walls which were protected from direct sunlight. Their spare rectangles of colour contrasted vividly with the scene that lay around. Above: the brilliant, cloudless blue. Beneath: an intramural desert, constantly encroaching on a narrow, parquet shore.

A high-pitched squeal issued from the top of the room through which he was walking. It was followed by the

grating of stone surfaces in friction. He looked up and saw one of the roof-arches twisting from its mis-shapen capitals. A series of cracks cut a weird summering into its outer-curve and the arch slipped away, breaking into two arcs—one large, one small. The large segment turned in the air like the felloe of a massive cartwheel and struck the floor with a boom. Grinding and squealing, it sank into the ground, leaving a black hole in the floor into which the dust smoothly flowed. At the end of the room, he turned round and retraced his steps.

In the middle of the next room, he left his path by the foot of the wall and crossed the white floor to a broad aisle on the far side. He walked along the aisle and came to the top of a steep slope flanked by a narrow strip of staircase. A wide, circular collar framed the sky overhead.

At the bottom of the staircase, he stepped into the entrance hall of the gallery. He halted in the shadows of the wing, and stared over the smashed doorway in the central portal. A curtain of powder rained down across the portico outside. At odd moments, the curtain thinned, dimly unveiling a vast expanse—seemingly flat apart from a vague eminence in the foreground.

He stood for a long time in the same position.

The dust-falls pervaded the air with an unending, faraway breath. As the sun rose higher, the girders of sunlight pivoted on the huge walls, compressing the last sanctuaries of shadow and colour.

The portico collapsed with the dull, tearing rumble of distant thunder, its columns buckling chaotically beneath its massive canopy. On their deadened impact with the ground, the ruins rocked and tumbled in a graceful way. A cloud of dust rose up, billowing and spraying in a silent finale.

The cloud slowly grew transparent, revealing the shattered wreck of the pediment and the scattered drums of the columns. Some minutes later, the air cleared completely. From the ruins to the horizon the land was white. A bossed cone lay in the theatre beneath. Beyond, a great arroyo wound its parched bed through a waste of dunes.

Screwing up his eyes, the man moved forward and stopped at the edge of the shadows.

## SIXTH PANEL

**T**HERE WAS NOT a breath of wind; the air was absolutely still.

He seemed to wade down the slope that had once been a flight of stairs.

The sun was fused with the sky; its blinding aureole merging imperceptibly into cyanic blue.

At the bottom of the small incline, he felt at the back of his neck and turned up his coat collar. He began walking to the left, away from the climbing western sun, and thrust his hands into his pockets.

The calm sea of dunes spread before him. Few were taller than his shoulders. Their recumbent, trapezoidal banks rose smoothly from the vale-like troughs in between.

He walked towards a dune which was higher and more regular than most. When he reached its corner, he stepped into the long side-bank and began a diagonal ascent. His feet sank deep into the bank. At each step, miniature dust-slips encumbered his legs, as the surface above him



subsided. Six feet up, at the top, the broad brim shelved into a level floor, a yard and a half below.

He looked at the panorama. Radiating outwards in a heterogeny of plans, an immense, shadowless maze of galenic dunes encrusted the land. A few miles away, the sun levelled the daedal waves with a candescent glaze, and they flowed on to the horizon: a white, ceramic plain.

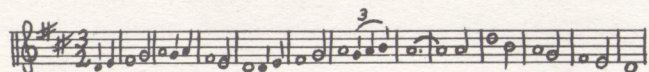
"Crystal. Heh!"

He turned away from the brim and waded down the bank of the huge frustum, again following a diagonal course.

"Must be . . ."

About halfway down, his movements became more awkward than ever and he almost fell over. He threw out his arms to regain his balance, then stood still, frowning.

Very faint, harmonious music was seeping through the dune. The melodic line rose and fell with the crystalloid undulation of the landscape itself.



A smile gathered on his face and he began to hum with the music. His cheeks had taken on an ashen sheen and his back was almost white.

He looked over the meander of the huge arroyo below him, a quarter of a mile away. The harsh, blue sky wedded the ceramic horizon with scarcely a change of hue.

As he recommenced his trek down the bank, he left a wake of gently swirling motes. He reached the trough and tramped on slowly, looking straight ahead. The trough dipped down near its end, and joined a broad, straight vale at an angle. Two shallow chains of dunes bordered the new course.

"Sstrand."

He entered the vale.

"Strand!"

He walked towards the middle.

"Cemetery!"

The acoustical wasteland swallowed his voice at once, as he followed a mid-course between the dune-rows.

Very quietly, very softly, he began to moan.

A horizontal spindle, white and motionless, appeared in the heavens: three linked dunes of different sizes mounted on perfect reflections.

The back of his head was bald and his thighs and calf muscles seemed to have worn oval holes through his trousers. Powder ran from his back in a fine rain.

The spindle became blurred, as if it had begun to rotate, then faded and vanished as suddenly as it had materialized.

His steps remained steady and unhurried; his footprints were cut with faultless definition.

An errant gnomon in the withershins revolution: Before him moved his shadow, more distant than the sun; and behind him, on the boundless sundial, his calibrations, as neat as they were true.

## THE LAST PANEL

**M**UFFLED RUMBLING began behind him and lasted several seconds. He continued trudging at his steady pace. His head and shoulders were stiffly braced, as though

they were cast in one piece.

When the noise had faded away, the friction of his clothes and the dulcet crunch of the powder beneath his shoes were, once again, the only sounds in the air.

His steps became much slower, and, in a methodical clockwork fashion, he stopped.

A few moments later, he turned round.

Blood rubricated the ashen mask of his face. His eyes were screwed up into thin slits.

A large cloud obscured the dune on whose bank he had heard music. The ground shimmered in the heat, and the plumes of crystal dust gently rippled.

He turned his head to the right and gazed into the distance. His eyes were becoming more and more distinct—changing to sulphur geodes in the toneless hollows of his head. The dust falling from him marked the rhythm of his breathing, becoming thicker at regular intervals.

"... man ..."

The sound seemed indeterminately remote.

He looked away from the daedal plain.

A nebulous figure appeared in the trough beneath the cloud, and the faint cry rang through the air again.

"... manuel."

The child emerged from the cloud running awkwardly. Her clothes were pale with powder. She ran down into the broad vale, her footprints mingling with the man's.

"Emanuel!"

In her background: the far end of the theatre below the gallery. The boss of the squat cone topped a sprawling dune on her left.

"Emanuel!"

The noise of her panting and the beat of her foot-falls became louder. Her hair, its colour still visible, and the lithe action of her body turned the world behind into a curving wall, and the sky into a vitreous dome. The man's rhythmic dust-fall grew opaque.

She broke into a walk ten yards from him. Her etiolated clothes and the marble sheen of her skin gave her a quality of nakedness. She moved her hands from her sun-glanced sides and placed them on her thighs. As she walked nearer to him, her eyes filled with tears. She halted as her shadow touched his feet.

His face was a bloody sculpture. As his bald brows drew together, his face dripped blood. Fine streams of powder ran down on either side of his nose and poured over his upper lip in twin symmetry.

He stared at the girl. His eyes were sulphur brilliants. They shone and sparkled in his face.

He stretched out his arms and his dust-fall increased, robbing him in a misty surplice.

She came close to him.

Looking into his drying eyes, she reached up and put her hands on his shoulders.

He closed his eyes and hugged her tightly.

"Oh Emanuel."

His eyes opened, scintillating once again, then looked at the sun, and remained there till they became impeared.

"Emanuel. Did you see the rainbows? In the cloud. They were so lovely. Oh Emanuel. Emanuel."

\* \* \*

They walked on awhile, hand in hand, until the man collapsed. The girl sat down beside him. She put one hand round his bare head and rested her other on his arm.

In time, the dust became minutely embossed where they had been.



# JACK TREVOR STORY

## THE WIND IN THE SNOTTYGOBBLE TREE

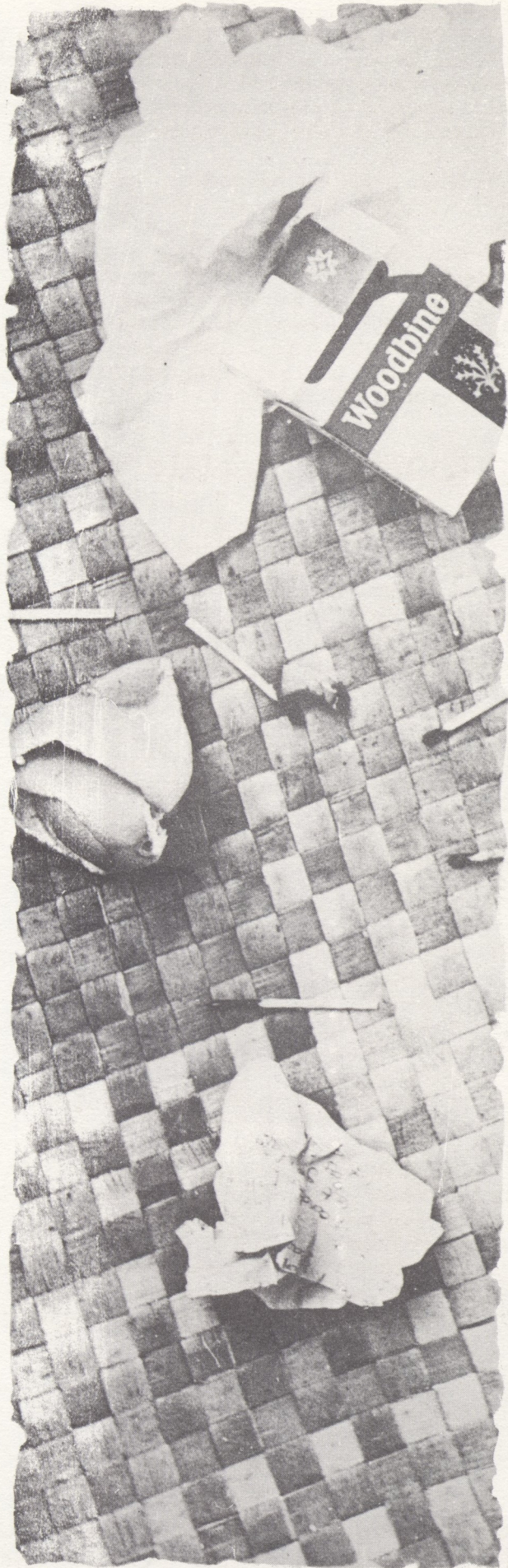
"Too many people are hanging themselves in prison and police station cells with their braces," Horace said, "and it's high time everybody wore belts."

Of course he didn't mean 'people' or 'hanging' or any of those things but what he did mean is that the good old British Public are getting increasingly frightened to go out at night in case they meet a squad car—this is a kind of curfew. And if the police are not what they seem, how about the rest of the municipal services; how about dustmen, firemen, ambulance men, magistrates; how about County Cricket Clubs? How about anything?

In other words, nothing is what it seems . . .

Take *James Balfour Marchmont*, aged 24. He had always felt a bit like Peter Lorre; had always yearned for sticky heat and ceiling fans and hot-eyed women like *Miss Bartholomew*, his colleague at Trade Winds Travel. Now on the face of it, Marchmont seems to be indulging a long-standing fantasy of his, despatching small packages to fictitious secret agents throughout Europe via his various clients. And since the packages only contain bits of rubbish, cotton wool, old income tax returns, empty cigarette packets, you might think it's all harmless enough fun. So why is he visited one morning by *Blattner*, the master spy from Ruislip? Why is he surreptitiously photographed and fingerprinted? And why has a bomb been planted in his bed?

Marchmont flees from his booby-trapped bed to Miss Bartholomew's and then to *Kiki's*. But *Kiki* is involved with the underground magazine *Hunchback*, and *Hunchback* is acclaiming him as a hero of the revolution. It's all a bit too much for Marchmont, especially when, raided by *Detective Chief Inspector Marcus* and his special squad, his only recourse is to hide submerged in the bath with *Kiki*. It's as though, involved in a harmless game of cowboys and Indians he has caught the baddies using real bullets . . .





# PART TWO

9

**B**lattner was being watched by the Pope.

That is, more than most people were being watched by the Pope.

He had seen Marcus's force arrive outside the Tudor-style semi, five in plain clothes, ten in uniform, and had been unable to interfere at this juncture. He could have gunned them down or blown them up, but he was unwilling to kill gratuitously now that he was semi-retired and had his own landscape gardening business.

However, he could see pretty much how things were going to go. It was unlikely that Marcus would kill Marchmont here. More likely that he would be taken back to his own lodgings and forced to reveal his h.p's (Hiding Places). It was for this reason that Blattner left the derelict old Hillman Minx and walked up to the bus stop on the Watford Road to wait for a 321.

Another reason for doing this was that anyone with the professional expertise of Detective Chief Inspector Marcus would know that the drum was being watched — especially since *Hunchback* had shifted its editorial from Notting Hill to avoid the repeated beatings-up and expensive confiscation of machinery. The raid would be followed by an outer-ring raid designed to close in on unsuspecting watchers like Blattner before he could relay any information to his hq.

The Pope happened to be sitting in the front seat of the top deck of the 321 bus and he saw Blattner before Blattner saw him. It was quite unlike Blattner to be seen first, but he was lost in sad speculation about young Kiki. If they had a *carte blanche* on Marchmont they would not leave her as a witness.

"God bless you, Blattner!" The Pope was stepping off the bus as Blattner was stepping on.

"Fock God," Blattner said. He pushed The Pope back on the platform, bundled him back up the stairs. "What are you doing here?"

By the time Blattner had got the old man back to the front seat of the top deck he had thoroughly cased everybody aboard; it seemed impossible to him that they had let the Pope out alone but they had. He was a vital part of Operation Vatican and he should have been at Ayot St. Peter. Failing that he should have been back in Cell Barnes Mental Hospital where they found him.

"All right," Blattner said when the bus conductor had taken their fares, "where are you off to?"

"I'm going to see the Bishop of St. Albans," the Pope said.

Blattner ran his hand over his face, tiredly, and he could smell last night's semen in the palm; he had been forced to waste an orgasm in the back of the Hillman, watching Miss Bartholomew's shadow come and go. It had taken him two hours and twenty-five minutes and given him a blinding headache.

"Would you like to see some cricket?" he asked the Pope.

"First-class?"

"County," Blattner said.

"Excellent," said the Pope.

The bus hit the bottom of St. Michael's hill and got a racing start up Holywell, rocking like a canoe. The Pope sat forward gripping the rail and smiling his enjoyment. Apart



Note: the first episode of this serial appeared in last month's issue, still available for 4s from New Worlds, including post & packing.



from the white skull cap with the bob of white hair round it and the dog-collar, he bore very little resemblance to the Pope; yet he was more certain that he was the Pope than the Pope was. He could bless, issue edicts, deliver homilies, sway governments.

When The Pope came to the U.K. (United Kingdom) this weekend it would be this Pope who returned to Vatican City.

Marchmont had made this possible.

Blattner had to find a way of rescuing Marchmont.

*"Unde cavae tepido sudant humore lacunae?"* the Pope quoted softly to himself as they humped the new dredged mud of the steaming Ver.

"Like what?" Blattner said.

It was a Virgil's eye-view of the veil of slime and from every hollow upsteaming the vapours rise, but the Pope was by this time onto something else.

## 10

The vapours were rising around Marchmont as he peeled off his piss-sodden clothes.

"I'm sorry," Kiki said, "but it saved your life. Anything less stinking and they'd have felt in it, pulled the plug out. I always hide the mag plates like that when the police come."

"The police don't kill people!" Marchmont exclaimed.

"They're not ordinary cops, love," Kiki told him. "They're the heavies for counter-intelligence. They recruit them from bobbies who are sacked for bestialities — to save their pension. Marcus is from Sheffield — you remember the Sheffield case. His boss is even worse — Old Uppers. Newcastle, I think. I recognised several. Fraser, Stockport, Hill, Notting Hill — 'oonchback has its own list."

*Hunchback* was the only aspirate word she seemed unable to cope with. They were standing together in fresh running hot water in the bath now, bathing each other.

"I'll have to get another suit," Marchmont told her. "I'll have to go my digs."

"I don't think it's safe."

Marchmont said: "What do they think I've done?"

Kiki laughed. "They don't think, they know. You hit the headlines yesterday, didn't you?"

"Did I?"

"Haven't you seen them?"

There was coffee and a pair of Kiki's slacks, one of Miss Batholomew's forage jackets and a pair of Dutch clogs — he looked a raving idiot in them; and there was yesterday's *Daily Mail*.

*THIRD MAN BEHIND TOP RED SPY RELEASES?*

"They're exchanging the Kragers, Bernstein and Rappolo for you know who — excuse me while I take Felicity some biscuits."

She went out and downstairs leaving Marchmont floundering in the obscurities of the lead article. There were now thirty British tourists in eastern European prisons. He was interrupted by Kiki's scream from below, rushed over and locked the door. So the police had not all left? Next moment Kiki was banging on the door.

"Come and see what they've done to this poor dog!"

In the living room of the flat below the tall gentle Afghan hound was spreadeagled on the table, her long nose muffled into a carpet slipper, her front legs trapped in the crack of the draw-leaf, her back legs running with blood.

"They raped her!" Kiki said.

"The police?"

"*Tontons Macoute*," Kiki said. "This could have been me." Then she looked round at Marchmont as they began

to release the animal and their thoughts coincided. "Shall I tell you something?"

*It could have been Marchmont.*

Marchmont felt quite ill.

Marchmont said: "Are you coming?"

"I must stay and look after Felicity, clean the place up, look for time-bombs — they usually leave one somewhere."

Marchmont began to shake. "I'm going home."

"Shall I see you again, love?" Kiki asked him.

"I don't know. I don't really want to get involved."

Kiki smiled, understandingly. "I'll never make any demands on you. Heroes belong to The Group."

"Ta ta," Marchmont said.

She waved ta ta.

Marchmont clattered out of the house in his clogs, trussed up like a chicken in the little coloured clothes.

## CHAPTER THREE

The Pope, or Popey as he was called in Cell Barnes, was now standing on a child's barrow in order to peer over the wall surrounding the County Cricket Ground.

"Well played, sir!" he was calling. And: "Pretty! Pretty!"

"What can you see, Mister?" the little boy asked him.

*"Populus et glauca canentia fronde salicta!"*\*

"An' who's winning?" asked the boy.

Through the gateway nearby could be seen the gardener, Blattner as ever was, trundling a wheelbarrow between the flower borders and lawns surrounding the games field proper. He was now wearing a green apron and a flat cap and while manipulating the camouflaged accoutrement of the cold war was also keeping one baby-sitting eye on Popey's head atop the wall until help arrived.

## 2

Marchmont was walking home on this showery, sunny, early-closing Thursday afternoon wearing his little coloured girl's clothes and clogs and feeling a complete cont. And yet this was also true, feeling more like a spy than in all his Peter Lorre years. The point was, he had been baptised, if that was the phrase, by fire.

*Third man behind top red spy releases*, he was thinking.

And Marchmont was thinking: *A one-man international front.*

*Trieste, Budapest, Vienna, Vladivostok*, he thought. And he thought: *"We thought Marchmont was a code name . . ."*

That pinned it to him; otherwise he felt it could all have been intended for somebody else. It was like a dream in which all the dull dear familiar things of your life go mad. An *Alice in Wonderland* dream. Policemen, for instance; particularly policemen. Marchmont had always liked policemen. He'd wanted to be a policeman.

Now they were out to kill him.

Marchmont had always relied upon the police force; now they had gone mad.

## 3

Marchmont turned off Holywell Hill, crossed Sumpter Yard and popped into the Abbey.

Marchmont thought he would have a little pray.

Underneath the famous Cedar of Lebanon outside the Cathedral a bunch of happy tourists were taking photo-

(\*The poplar, the willow whose grey shows white in the wind as it sways.)



graphs of each other.

Marchmont wanted to tell them all about it.

He felt that if he told somebody it would all be over.

4

St. Peter's Street was six-hundred-and-forty Marchmont steps long, held seventy-two street lamps one side, fifty-three the other; there were twenty-seven plane trees separating the shops' service road from the main carriage-way. Little-known facts included that a thousand years ago the Monks of the Abbey used to stand at the Wax Gate and flog their candles.

These things Marchmont had noted and recorded as part of his boredom after losing his driving licence. Marchmont used to pass towns and villages at roughly the same frequency he now passed street corners.

Marchmont's life had narrowed down; he was a pedestrian.

5

Peter Johnston had just finished cleaning the clear plate glass door of Marks and Spencers when Marchmont came along in his pretty little outfit and clogs and tried to throw himself through it only to collapse bumped and bruised in the doorway.

"What you doing mate?" the window cleaner asked Marchmont.

Marchmont had suddenly espied a policeman's uniform up by the ABC teashop and had tried to dash into the store, forgetting it was early closing day. Across the road a whole bus queue waiting to go to Welwyn Garden City was laughing.

"What's happening?" said the policeman, coming up.

"He thought the fucking door was open!" laughed the young window-cleaner.

"Hello, Marchmont," the policeman said then. And he said: "What's all this about your digs, then?"

LOCAL GAS  
EXPLOSION

Marchmont found that the policeman was smiling and talking to him without shooting him. He was so relieved he didn't listen to what the young chap was saying. They knew each other for it was a small town. P.C. Henry Couper knew Marchmont as that chap at the travel agency. A lot of people knew Marchmont because of his tropical suits and dark glasses. He brought a touch of colour and mystery to a very unmysterious town.

"Do you want me?" Marchmont asked the policeman.

"What d'you mean?" the constable replied to Marchmont.

Marchmont could not explain his meaning in concise terms but by obscure question and answer he discovered that he was not wanted by the police and there was no such officer as Detective Chief Inspector Marcus within the Hertfordshire police force. As for policemen with guns you

had to be practically bleeding to get a permit; even then it was only the ones with firearms training that got them.

"What are you getting at, then?" the constable asked Marchmont.

It was a relief for Marchmont to mention something of what had happened at the mock-Tudor semi up by the King Harry.

The policeman laughed. "I wondered why you were dressed up like that," he admitted. And he explained: "They were art students.

"Oh?" Marchmont said.

"You look at their uniforms you'll find they're not regulation. Otherwise they'd be liable."

HOUSE  
BLOWN UP

Marchmont had not known how frightened he had been until now the relief began to set in; he tried to find other things for the nice young normal helpful and kind policemen to discount for him. He mentioned the raping of the dog.

"Focking students!" Peter Johnston the window cleaner chimed in, for he had stood by listening. "That's what I say. They don't know what they do fucking want."

"Did you want to make a charge, Mr Marchmont?" the young constable said, for he had perceived that Marchmont was upset. "You're quite at liberty to make a charge."

"You're at liberty to make a charge," the window cleaner confirmed.

His first thought was no, but then he remembered that foul urine bath and felt angry; but then, how could he?

"I don't know any names, do I?" he said.

P.C. Couper said: "You know Detective Chief Inspector Marcus — oh, no you don't that was a false name. Here! Just a minute! We've had another complaint about him. Yes. Do you know a Mr Parfitt?"

"He's the manager at Trade Winds. He's my boss," Marchmont said.

"Ah," said the constable, as if he knew it made sense, "that explains it. Was he at this party?"

It wasn't a party, He made it sound like a party?

"It wasn't a party," Peter Johnston the window cleaner said. "Mr Marchmont went there because he was afraid to go home. What did Mr Parfitt say, then?"

The constable didn't know. He wasn't at the station when the complaint was filed. But he was thinking you wouldn't get a Detective Chief Inspector at student age, surely. When he mentioned this the window cleaner put him right about it. His wife's father was doing two years at the teacher training college at Watford.

"It's the grant, you see. It's as much as they get on the fucking dole. What? Four hundred women, beer and fags, Trafalgar Square every Sunday. His old woman's doing her nut. No wonder they're sending the fucking Pope over. We're giving Europe a bad name!"

"You're right," the constable said.

"What did they do to Mr Parfitt?" Marchmont asked.

"I don't know," said P.C. Couper, "but he was up the



hospital getting treatment.”

“Focking hooligans!” said the window cleaner.

The constable said: “It’s only a minority.”

But Marchmont was worrying again. “Was there any mention of a Miss Bartholomew?”

There was not.

Marchmont said: “I wonder why they picked on me.”

“It was having your name in the paper, Mr Marchmont,” the policeman said.

“Oh?” said Marchmont.

“You weren’t blown up, were you?” the policeman asked him, concerned suddenly. “The whole thing could be the result of shock.”

“Shock does funny focking things,” said Peter Johnston the window cleaner.

Now Marchmont was looking at the news placards across by the bus queue. *The Evening News* said: *LOCAL GAS EXPLOSION* while *The Evening Standard* gave: *HOUSE BLOWN UP*.

Marchmont thanked his two friends for their conversation, crossed the street and bought the two papers, went into the ABC and read them with a cup of tea and a cream slice.

At this stage he was beginning to feel better.

Marchmont began to rationalise.

He was not suffering from shock (at least he didn’t think he was, though he realised that shock itself could make you think you were not suffering from shock).

The whole thing might have been a student prank (but he didn’t think it was for it did not explain everything).

The whole thing from the moment of the camera shutter and that chap might be somebody getting their own back for what he had been doing to package-holiday clients to alleviate his boredom since losing his driving licence. (This explained everything including Oliver Mapplebeck).

This still left the question: *Who was Blattner?*

This still left the question: *How was Blattner connected with Kiki? TSLTQ: Was Hunchback behind it all?*

This was good. Marchmont wanted some questions left. He was smiling when he went and got another cup of tea. He was walking on his toes again and looking in mirrors.

The woman at the pay desk stared at him oddly, he thought; then he saw that he had dropped some cream on his flies.

Still . . .

6

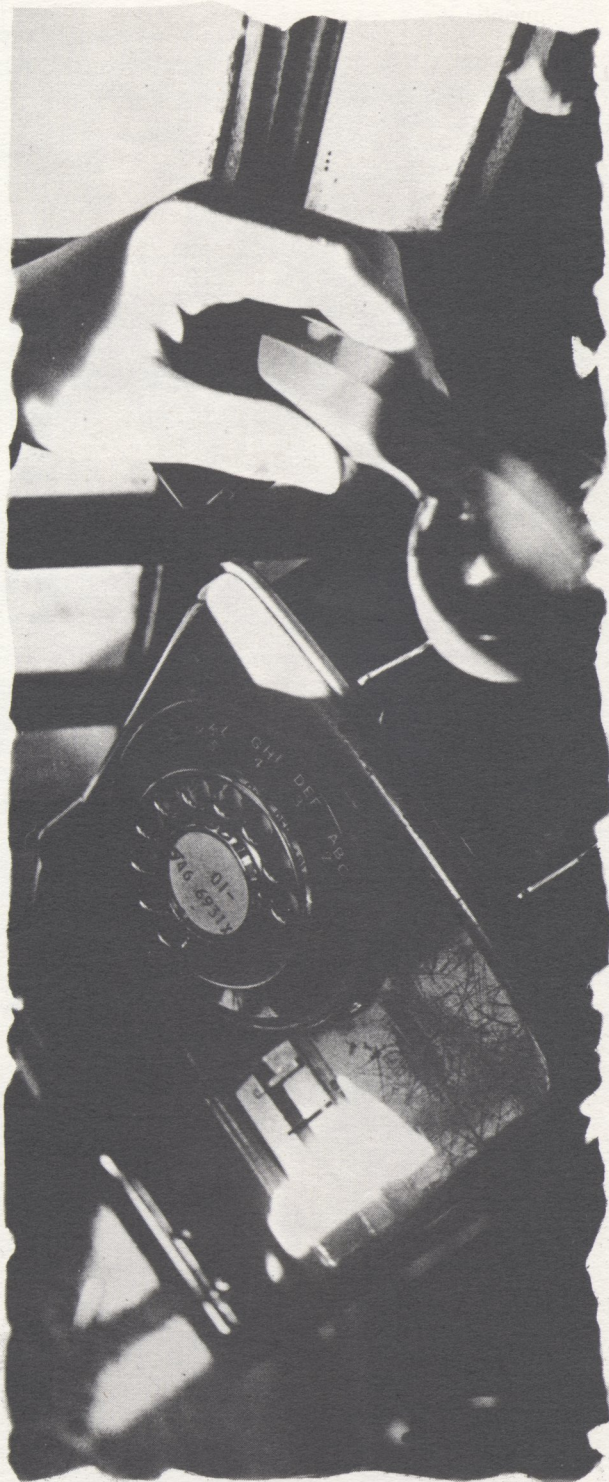
Marchmont returned to his HQ (Headquarters).

First of all he walked past the house.

Marchmont walked past his digs; felt pretty certain nobody would recognise him in that get-up. His own big window on the first floor, apart from having lost some glass did not give the appearance of total wreck or fire. He went to a telephone kiosk at the gateway of the County Cricket Ground and telephoned Mrs Pierce, his landlady.

Marchmont telephoned Mrs Pierce but Mrs Pierce was apparently not in for there was no reply. Brrr brrr, brrr brrr, went the telephone in Marchmont’s ear but there was no answer.

The newspapers said that a gas explosion, believed to be connected with a series of explosions in the town following the conversion to North Sea high-pressure gas, had wrecked Mrs Pierce’s first-floor front but luckily the tenant, a Mr James Balfour Marchmont, was not at home at the time.





Nothing about Arthur setting off a booby trap intended for Marchmont; nothing about Mrs Pierce screeching with her piercing voice as he came away with Marchmont's razor.

Marchmont put the telephone receiver back on its hook. He did not leave the kiosk but instead took a slow careful look around, his head moving as slowly and steadily as the cheese aerial on a radar scanner, missing no detail, no person, no movement, no noise, no feeling.

Marchmont took stock through the little glass squares of the red telephone box.

The cricketers in their dazzling whites and bright striped club colours moved slowly as aeroplanes against the distant green and sometimes little showers of clapping could be heard against the click click of leather ball on willow bat. Not many people were there. They seemed to be playing to themselves. Marchmont could see only a strip of cricketers between a gatepost and a shrubbery and the side of the pavilion.

A gardener walked past in foreground unwinding a long white hose from a reel. Unknown to Marchmont this was veteran spy Blattner preparing to rescue Marchmont and the Pope from the *Tontons Macoute*.

"Splendid! Splendid! Well played, sir!" a voice cried nearby.



Marchmont did not look directly but allowed his head to continue its slow scanning action, to reach the old clergyman standing on the child's barrow, to check in its movement and then to return as if overshooting. Marchmont was using his head as if controlled by an automatic servo action electronic device. His eyes were the primary element sending the signal to his brain which in turn relayed corrective action to his neck muscles. There was a certain amount of demand-side and supply-side lag resulting in some slight oscillating or hunting. Marchmont knew all about servo-mechanisms and electronic devices because before getting the sack from the bank and from the fish and chip shop Marchmont had got the sack from *Igranic Electric* for trying to sell plans of the new canteen to the YMCA. It was after Marchmont had seen his first Peter Lorre old movie on the telly and he was eighteen.

Marchmont stopped his head and eye movements and studied The Pope. The Pope was now clapping and nearly tumbled from the barrow for the little boy was no longer there to hold the shafts.

Bang! Crash! Marchmont's ears accepted the noise and relayed it to his brain which in turn started moving his head tick tick round until he could see the Corporation dust-cart which had just turned into the far end of the street, four-hundred-and-thirty-three Marchmont steps west along the cricket ground fence.

Marchmont saw seven angry dustmen slinging dustbins around in their usual livid noisy way.

"Run! Run! Why doesn't he run?" cried The Pope.

The words, unconnected though they were, put a small part of the fear back in Marchmont's belly.

It was nice.

Marchmont liked being slightly frightened; believed there was always a reason if you looked for it. Anyway, P.C. Couper did not know for certain they were students. Marchmont preferred to think that he was the victim of a large-scale and possibly dangerous practical joke carried out on the scale of a para-military operation.

"You are a hero of the revolution!" Kiki had informed him.

*What revolution?* Marchmont's mind questioned.

*There is only one, my friend,* Marchmont's mind replied, having now thought of it. *It began in Russia in 1917 and it is now going on everywhere.*

Marchmont was not too keen to stop being a hero of the revolution and go back to work at Trade Winds Travel.

Luckily, Thursday was early closing.

As Marchmont came out of the kiosk the little boy whose barrow it was came from one of the houses with his mother.

"Do you mind giving my little boy his barrow back?" she asked Popey.

Marchmont was amused to see the old clergyman climbing down and apologising; there was no danger here. He could go in and put a clean suit on.

"There, there, let me bless it for you," the Pope was telling the little boy as he gave him his barrow back.

Quite suddenly Marchmont stopped walking towards his house. It had struck Marchmont that there were no dustbins outside.

It had suddenly struck Marchmont that Thursday was not dustbin day. *IHSSM: The Corporation dust cart was not moving any nearer . . .*

Marchmont stared up the street at the dustcart. He could hear the grinding row coming from inside the huge aluminium destructor; he could see the stinking foul smoke chugging out of the little chimney atop the incinerator; he could see the men in the dirty rough clothes and overalls running backwards and forwards, sideways and lengthways, carrying, tipping, banging, shouting. But it all remained four-hundred-and-thirty-three steps away at the end of the street.

Marchmont thought he could see somebody in dark glasses staring down the street at him from behind the windscreen.

His first impulse was to run indoors.

His second was to run away.

Supposing there was another bomb waiting for him. And supposing Detective Chief Inspector Marcus and his men were up on that dustcart waiting for him to be killed so that they could incinerate his body on the spot. It was a frightening theory and there was no Arthur to test it out for him.

"Can I come in and watch the match?" he heard the old clergyman asking the gardener.

"You stay there and don't move till I say!" the gardener told the old gentleman.

This seemed to Marchmont to be typical of the automatic labouring classes and it gave him an idea.

"Here," he called to The Pope. "You want to watch the cricket? Come up to my place. Here's the key, let yourself in. I'll be up in a jiffy."

"God bless you, sir," said The Pope.

"Well that's his job, init?" Marchmont said.

He followed The Pope into the front garden and stayed out of sight behind the window bay while the old chap





popped into the house, up the stairs, into Marchmont's front room and shouted from the broken glass:

"Catch! Catch! Oh, well held, sir!"

A little shower of applause sprinkled from over the wall and Marchmont judged that it was safe for him to go inside. Which he did.

Marchmont went into the house.

The Corporation dust cart ground a little nearer.

*Blang crang blang crang.*

## 7

Whatever last night's explosion had done to Arthur, it had done little to Marchmont's pad he was glad to see. There was water everywhere and the bed was damp and the television which normally stood in the fireplace to serve as a screen in the summer months was now lying on its face on the rug; the explosion had apparently taken place tidily enough in the firegrate itself for the pile of apple cores and cigarette ends, ash, used tissues and dead matchsticks were now distributed fairly evenly about the room. But this was not what concerned Marchmont.

What concerned Marchmont was what had happened in the room before the explosion and before the Fire Brigade came in.

What concerned Marchmont was who had been through his dossiers, classified files, recording tapes and secret and most secret information.

WCM: Who had got on to him?

Apparently, at first glance, to the ordinary eye, nobody. Apparently.

Marchmont used his servo-radar technique again, gradually rotating and surveying minutely every fractional square inch as he did so, at the same time sticking and unsticking

his lips to make a plop-plop-plop-plop-plop sound.

"Ah!" he said.

He had noticed that the centre ceiling light had been pulled down on its self-enclosed pulley and then pushed up again but to the wrong height. He went down on his knees and studied the floor. Yes. There were four indentations in the old lino which, when he tested it, fitted the little table now standing in the window by the parson and holding a potted plant.

"Am I in your way, sir?" The Pope asked Marchmont and Marchmont told him that he was not. "I'm very concerned about the play," the Pope added.

But Marchmont was feeling reasonably certain that somebody had used the centre-light to take photographs of his secret documents; had changed the bulb for the purpose.

Marchmont checked the bulb now but of course it had been put back and the fingerprints wiped off.

"I've never seen that before," said The Pope.

Marchmont joined him at the broken window.

"They've lost their ball," The Pope said.

"Oh?" said Marchmont.

The cricketers were all looking towards the gardener who was waving them away with a scissors motion of his arms.

"He won't let them get their ball back," said The Pope.

Marchmont was more interested in where the dustcart was now. He couldn't hear it and he couldn't see it, though his view was restricted and it might have been quietly waiting further up the street.

But he had a depressed feeling that they had gone.

Marchmont had a depressed feeling that everything was becoming normal again. That everything that had happened had a dull everyday, matter-of-fact, run-of-the-mill explana-



tion.

Marchmont had a depressed feeling that the indentations in the lino had been made on some previous occasion when he himself had photographed his own secret documents.

Marchmont thought he would get changed.

He opened his wardrobe and looked at his suits.

*Trieste, Budapest, Vienna, Vladivostok, Constantinople* he thought clicking his fingers. *Hundreds, tenners, fivers*, he thought, getting dressed decently again and as an agent in the field. *Hake, cod, plaice, haddock and rock-salmon*, he thought. And he thought, trying on the gold-rimmed black glasses with the tiny mirrors in the frame: *Abel, Lonsdale, Blake and Philby*.

"Are you going to bed?" The clergyman was looking round at him.

Marchmont was wearing shirt and socks and dark glasses.

"No," he said. He grabbed for his trousers; it would be truly awful to get caught half-dressed in a bed-sitter with an elderly clergyman. He felt it necessary to give himself some status. "I'm a secret agent," he said.

"How delightful," said Popey. He left the window and came over to shake hands. "I'm The Pope."

Marchmont laughed. "No, I mean it. I had to hide in a bath of water this morning to avoid getting killed by the secret police."

"How jolly rotten for you," said Popey. "Would you like me to bless you? Or give you an audience, or anything?"

Marchmont did up his trousers before committing himself. He began to realise that the old chap was not joking. It was a funny sort of town for this kind of thing, surrounded by nut houses. There was a woman who came into the ABC who was always asking people to help her. 'I don't want money,' she would say. 'I want security'. There were others who talked loudly to themselves and others who got up on their chair and delivered speeches. At the Whitsun fair Marchmont had seen a man buy six balls at a coconut shy and turn and hurl them at the crowd.

"Which Pope are you, then?" he asked Popey. "Cell Barnes, Shenley or Napsbury?"

"Cell Barnes," said The Pope. "Though at the moment I'm at the Vatican. That's over at Ayot St. Peter," he explained.

"That's nice," Marchmont said.

Christ, he thought, He could get like that.

He wondered if it was any good applying to get his licence back.

"Rain seems to have stopped play," said the Pope. "Have you any secrets I could be browsing through?"

Marchmont found himself in an embarrassing position of opening his steel filing cabinet and showing The Pope his secret personal dossiers on the bank manager, the owner of the fish-and-chip shop and Mr Parfitt. He had their photographs, fingerprints, date of birth, passport numbers and various facts he had gleaned from gossip and anecdotes; political convictions and criminals records he had more or less guessed at.

"I see you have quite a lot of operators on foreign assignments," The Pope said. "Do they ever come to Rome? They must look in. I could always grant them an audience or give them a cup of tea."

"Ta," Marchmont said.

Now that he had got the foreign assignments card index file open he started to scan through it. These were people—like Mr Carroway, yesterday, who was going to Dubrovnik—who he had given jobs to; delivering empty

envelopes and sometimes cryptic poems which might have been considered coded messages. It suddenly occurred to him (why hadn't he thought of it before?) that Oliver Mapplebeck, who, according to the papers had vanished from the Villa Makarska while on a business trip to Yugoslavia, might possibly have booked through Trade Winds Travel.

Marchmont liked, when possible, to address his little tokens to people in the news; people who had been involved in something dramatic or were engaged in some delicate international negotiations or were on a peace mission of goodwill. It tickled Marchmont to think of strangers arriving at their hotel with inexplicable messages.

"You dropped this in the street in Hatfield!"

"Perhaps somebody stole it?"

"But there's nothing in it! Just an empty packet of Senior Service. Do you mean you've brought this all the way from England?"

"I was coming on holiday anyway."

"Then I don't quite see—who gave it to you?"

"A Mr Marchmont. He's with Trade Winds Travel—"

"Excuse. Plees." This is the local Mayor talking. "Perhaps you would rather conduct this privately? No? You wish to X-ray the packet? We have facilities—I will inform our Commissar."

"No, please. Comrade—this is a silly mistake. I don't even smoke—listen, Comrade, come back . . . Oh, my God!"

Harmless. Funny. Intriguing. At least something to speculate and conjure on when you're forced to walk the streets and can no longer use your car.

When you've lost your licence to live.

When you've been disqualified from the race.

But time to call a halt when the statuary of your imaginings begins to come to life.

That day the marbled humanity of Marchmont's dream had started walking.

*Marchmont's marbles were on the march.*

## 8

N. MAPPLEBECK, *Oliver*.

A. 39

PB *Chichester, Sussex, England*.

R *Sex* (Religion: sex? Marchmont thought)

L *English, Russian, German, Italian, French, Spanish, Greek, Chinese, Japanese, Hindustani, Africaans, Croatian, Slav*.

O *Sales Manager for Mary Baker Cake Mixes*.

P of C *Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Titograd*.

I&H *Cricket and Campanology* (bell ringing).

TWT (Trade Winds Travel) No: 745902

V form No: 930/328/461

Colour *Black* (Negro)

Known *Wounded at Berlin wall. Lost samples. 1963*.

Despatching Officer: *James Balfour Marchmont*.

SIGNED:

Funny, Marchmont thought, I've forgotten to sign it.

Marchmont thought it peculiar that he had forgotten to sign the dossier card. Marchmont signed it with his blue ball point while his mind was still groping for an explanation.

How could he possibly have forgotten that Mapplebeck was one of his own agents. That is, customers.

And if this was the case had Mapplebeck been kidnapped (murdered? tortured? sent to Siberia?) whilst carrying out one of Marchmont's own assignments? That is, package holidays.



And if this was the case what could he possibly have been carrying? Empty cigarette packet? Cotton wool from an aspirin bottle? Poem?

*AITWTC: Which poem?*

*Far from where one would expect  
The gladys and the roland necked  
Arriving home all foam and fecked  
Pretending nothing happened.  
Child's nursery rhyme*

Was one that must have confounded the KGB.

Marchmont had written a batch of such rhymes in his first month of bus travelling after losing his licence. He wrote them on the rough side of Jeyes toilet tissues and sometimes, if he thought anyone was watching him, he would slip such a piece of writing into his mouth and chew it up; pretend to swallow it. His first girl after cocooning his car in balloon fabric and parking it for the twelve months of the driving ban round by the lock-ups was a bus conductress who had seen him paper-chewing and had followed him home and broken into his room after he had put out the lights and pretended to go to bed. He had spotted her inside the telephone kiosk watching his window and had been waiting for her.

Her name was Mollie Ryan and she had lifted his first post-Breathalyser depression as nothing else could.

"Sure an' there's plenty you can do even without a motor car," had been one of her optimistic little Irish sayings.

Others had been; "There's things going on right under folks noses and them knowing the devil all about it!" And: "What chance has the individual?"

Mollie had gone to prison for persistent shop-lifting; always Sainsbury's and always greengame jam.

"Well fielded!" cried The Pope.

This came a split second after Marchmont had signed Mapplebeck's dossier card and a split second after that he

realised with a feeling of awful disaster that the card was not one of his. It was a different colour, the typewriter was different, being a san-serif face, and two of the routine abbreviations 'L' for languages and 'I&H' for Interests and Hobbies were non-standard; or at least non-Marchmont, who made his own standards. He used 'LI' for languages and 'Pp' (pastimes and pleasures) for hobbies.

"Cripes!" he exclaimed.

And then he did a silly thing which he instantly regretted. Marchmont scribbled his signature out. Marchmont scribbled his blue ball point all over his signature. This is a guilty thing to do on any document. On a secret service dossier it could result in extermination. When Marchmont had done it he looked round to see if anybody had seen him. The Pope, his skull cap haloed by his white fringe of hair, was intent on the cricket match again for the sun had come out.

Marchmont slowly sat down on the edge of his bed, holding the card in his hand. The implications were too vast to assimilate in one go. Marchmont's one go was to scribble it out. Marchmont needed two goes or even three goes.

The next thing he did was go over to the fireplace and apply his cigarette lighter to the card. It refused to burn. The scorch and smoke marks combined with the scribbled-out signature began to look horribly incriminating.

With his hands shaking now Marchmont tried to tear the card up. He could not tear it. The reason was it was not card. What it was—and this time Marchmont sat on the bed because he had to—was an indestructible documentary proof of his complicity should Oliver Mapplebeck's mutilated body ever be found.

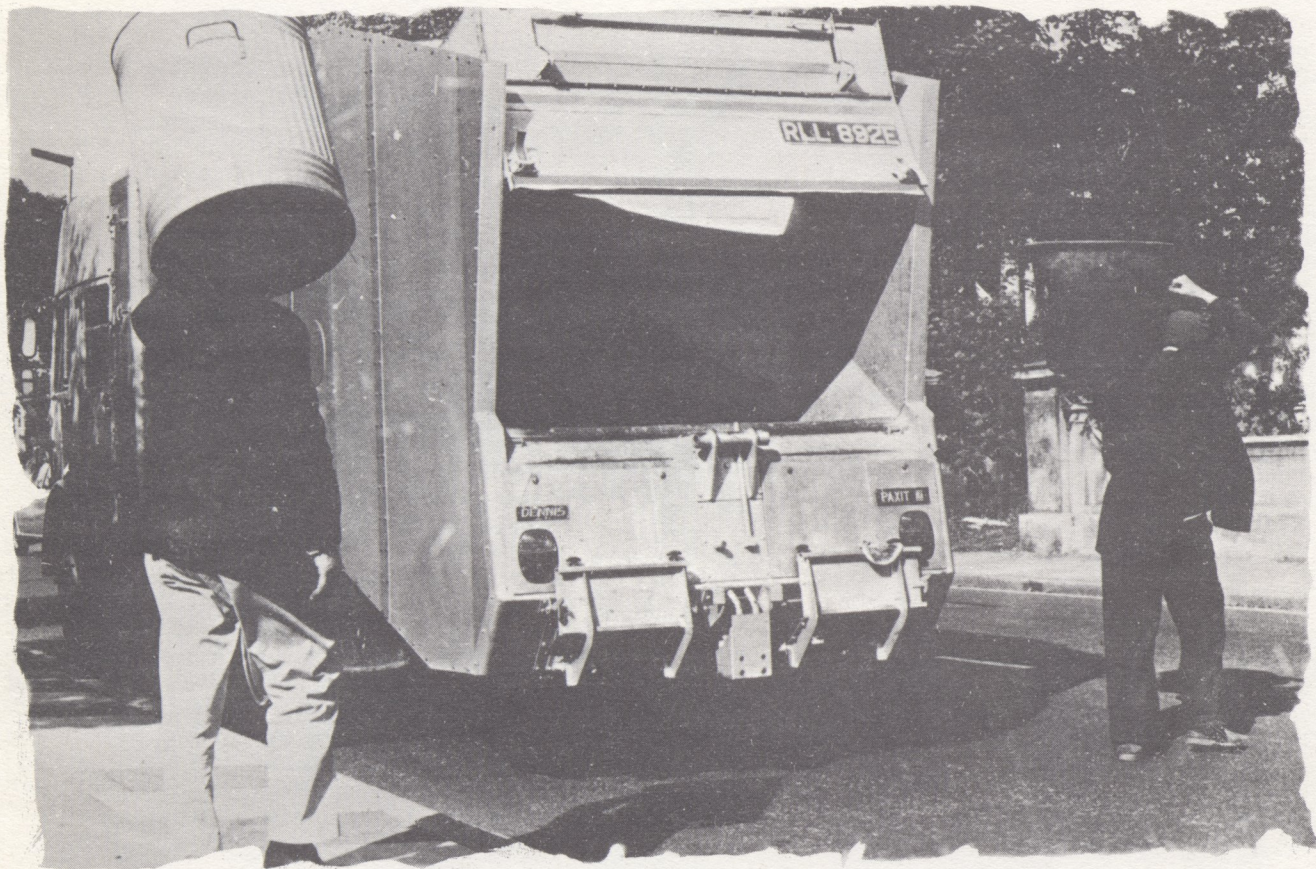
"Out!" cried Popey. "Out! Well bowled, sir!"

It was then that the dustmen called.

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(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)

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# BOOKS

## J.G. BALLARD: alphabets of unreason

**T**HE PSYCHOPATH NEVER dates. Hitler's contemporaries — Baldwin, Chamberlain, Herbert Hoover — seem pathetically fusty figures, with their frock coats and wing collars, closer to the world of Edison, Carnegie and the hansom cab than to the first fully evolved modern societies over which they presided, areas of national consciousness formed by mass-produced newspapers and consumer goods, advertising and telecommunications. By comparison Hitler is completely up-to-date, and would be equally at home in the sixties (and probably even more so in the seventies) as in the twenties. The whole apparatus of the Nazi super-state, its nightmare uniforms and propaganda, seems weirdly turned-on, providing just that element of manifest insanity to which we all respond in the H-Bomb or Viet Nam—perhaps one reason why the American and Russian space programmes have failed to catch our imaginations is that this quality of explicit psychopathology is missing.

Certainly, Nazi society seems strangely prophetic of our own—the same maximising of violence and sensation, the same alphabets of unreason and the fictionalising of experience. Goebbels in his diaries remarks that he and the Nazi leaders had merely done in the realm of reality what Dostoevski had done in fiction. Interestingly, both Goebbels and Mussolini had written novels, in the days before they were able to get to grips with their real subject matter—one wonders if they would have bothered now, with the fiction waiting to be manipulated all around them.

Hitler's 'novel', *Mein Kampf* (Hutchinson, 84s.) was written in 1924, nearly a decade before he came to power, but is a remarkably accurate prospectus of his intentions, not so much in terms of finite political and social aims as of the precise psychology he intended to impose on the German people and its European rivals. For this reason alone it is one of the most important books of the 20th century, and well worth re-printing,

despite the grisly pleasures its anti-semitic ravings will give to the present generation of racists.

How far does Hitler the man come through the pages of this book? In the newsreels Hitler tends to appear in two roles—one, the demagogic orator, ranting away in a state apparently close to neurotic hysteria, and two, a benevolent and slightly eccentric *kapellmeister* sentimentally reviewing his SS bodyguard, or beaming down at a picked chorus of blond-haired German infants. Both these strands are present in *Mein Kampf*—the hectoring, rhetorical style, shaking with hate and violence, interspersed with passages of deep sentimentality as the author rhapsodises to himself about the mystical beauty of the German landscape and its noble, simple-hearted peoples.

Apart from its autobiographical sections, the discovery by a small Austrian boy of his 'Germanism', *Mein Kampf* contains three principal elements, the foundation stones, walls and pediment of a remarkably strong paranoid structure. First, there are Hitler's views on history and race, a quasi-biological system which underpins the whole basis of his political thought and explains almost every action he ever committed. Second, there are his views on the strict practicalities of politics and the seizure of power, methods of political organisation and propaganda. Third, there are his views on the political future of the united Germanies, its expansionist foreign policy and general attitude to the world around it.

The overall tone of *Mein Kampf* can be seen from Hitler's original title for the testament: *A Four and a Half Years Struggle Against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice: A Reckoning with the Destroyers of the Nazi Party Movement*. It was the publisher, Max Amann, who suggested the shorter and far less revealing *Mein Kampf*, and what a sigh he must have breathed when Hitler agreed. Hitler's own title would have been far too much of a giveaway, reminding the readers of the real sources of Hitler's anti-semitic and racialist notions.

Reading Hitler's paranoid rantings against the Jews, one is constantly struck by the biological rather than political basis of his entire thought and personality. His revulsion against the Jews was physical, like his reaction against any peoples, such as the Slavs and Negroes, whose physique, posture, morphology and pigmentation alerted some screaming switchboard of insecurity within his own mind.

What is interesting is the language in which he chose to describe these obsessions—primarily faecal, one assumes, from his endless preoccupation with 'cleanliness'. Rather than use

economic, social or political arguments against the Jews, Hitler concentrated almost solely on this inflated biological rhetoric. By dispensing with any need to rationalise his prejudices, he was able to tap an area of far deeper unease and uncertainty, and one moreover which his followers would never care to expose too fully to the light of day. In the unanswerable logic of psychopathology, the Jews became the scapegoats for all the terrors of toilet-training and weaning. The constant repetition of the words 'filth', 'vileness', 'abscess', 'hostile', 'shudder', endlessly reinforce these long-repressed feelings of guilt and desire.

In passing, it is curious to notice that Hitler's biological interpretations of history have a number of striking resemblances to those of Desmond Morris. In both writers one finds the same reliance on the analogy of the lower mammals, on a few basic formulas of behaviour such as 'struggle', 'competition', 'defence of territory'. There is the same simple schematic view of social relationships, the same highly generalised assertions about human behaviour that are presented as proven facts. Hitler talks without definition of 'lower races' in the same way that Morris refers to 'primitive societies' and 'simple communities'. Both are writing for half-educated people whose ideas about biology and history come from popular newspaper and encyclopaedia articles, and whose interest in these subjects is a barely transparent cover for uneasy fantasies about their own bodies and emotions.

In this preface, the translator of *Mein Kampf* describes it as written in the style of a self-educated modern South German with a talent for oratory. In this respect Hitler was one of the rightful inheritors of the 20th century—the epitome of the half-educated man. Wandering about the streets of Vienna shortly before the first World War, his head full of vague artistic yearnings and clap-trap picked up from popular magazines, whom does he most closely resemble? Above all, Leopold Bloom, his ostensible arch-enemy, wandering around Joyce's Dublin at about the same time, his head filled with the same clap-trap and the same yearnings. Both are the children of the reference library and the self-improvement manual, of mass-newspapers creating a new vocabulary of violence and sensation. Hitler was the half-educated psychopath inheriting the lavish communications systems of the 20th century. Forty years after his first abortive seizure of power he was followed by another unhappy misfit, Lee Harvey Oswald, in whose *Historic Diary* we see the same attempt by the half-educated to grapple with the information overflow that threatened to drown him.



# M. JOHN HARRISON:

## pot pourri

At the height of some crisis involving a police raid on their premises, the editors of OZ sent their opposite numbers on INTERNATIONAL TIMES a telegram which read: WHAT'S ALL THE FUZZ ABOUT? The question might be fairly applied to that other underground perennial, hemp.

Pot has had its nine days: but there are people (notably policemen—who, it appears, are being maliciously misled by a Home Office pamphlet entitled *Drugs And The Police*, which describes marijuana as being, among other things, a poison with no known antidote—and columnists for WEEKEND, who haven't got much past the Brylcream Boys stage) who *still* don't know what the stuff is. It is this lack of hard information—not about the scene, or the sociological implications, or the morality, but about the substance itself and its effects—that gives rise to the absurd apocrypha and militates against a sensible attitude to the drug. We still live in the shadow of the dread Muslim and his *hashishins*.

Possibly, *The Marijuana Papers* (Panther, 60p), edited by David Solomon, will dispel some of the nonsense.

A fat book, this is divided into three sections: historical, sociological and cultural papers; literary and imaginative papers; and scientific papers. The first part contains material by advocates Leary, Lindesmith and Abrams, and, more important, an historical and botanical analysis by Norman Taylor, curator of the New York Botanical Gardens. The literary papers bring together work by Rabelais, Baudelaire, Gautier and Ginsberg. The scientific section includes the famous LaGuardia Committee report, a controlled experiment by Weil and Zinberg, and, oddly enough, a paper by William Burroughs on the distinction between sedatives and hallucinogens.

The body of the book is introduced by Solomon himself, who hopes that 'this anthology will serve as a basic factual manual'. In pursuing that aim, he might well have left out the literary section: it *may* contain plenty of fact; it certainly contains a good deal of emotion.

Taylor's article, *The Pleasant Assassin*, is a witty but florid piece, including an attempt to evoke the early days of the hashishins:

*Far below lay the frozen sea of a salt desert, terrible by day, but soon to be*

*drowned in the opalescent splendour of moonlight . . . to Hassan and his band of fanatics much had happened and was about to happen . . .*

And, more pertinent than this sort of tooling about:

*When fully ripe the female flower clusters (of the hemp plant, cannabis sativa) are covered by a sticky golden-yellow resin, with an odour not unlike mint.*

Facts, not opinions or politics or literary excursions. Now at least we could recognise one if we saw it.



*Cannabis Sativa (female branch)*

The scientific section of the book is comprehensive.

In 1944, Mayor LaGuardia's committee for the investigation of the marijuana problem in New York—which contains a mass of statistics, if you're interested in that sort of thing—came to the six-point conclusion that the marijuana user's personality is not changed; that the effect of the drug is to produce relaxation, some diminution of physical activity, euphoria *or* anxiety (being an amplifier of mood rather than a generator); that it does not invoke responses that would normally be alien to the user (that is, it doesn't cause shy ladies to go viking along the streets murdering and raping young men, or vice versa); and that introverts are more likely to use it than extroverts.

Disagreeing with the Mayor's 'lack of controls' (and also with the fact that his researchers did not specify the dose and quality of the tea used), Weil and Zinberg set up a good sound experiment using marijuana 'assayed spectrophotometrically as containing 0.9 per cent delta-1-trans-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)' and controlling it by the use of placebos composed of 'male hemp stalks, devoid of THC'. They describe their findings minutely and conclude latterly that 'Marijuana appears to be a relatively mild intoxicant . . . the effects of marijuana are easily suppressed—much more so than those of alcohol . . .'

One of the LaGuardia experiments

indicated that maryjane promotes verbal and emotional diarrhoea: the literary section of the book endorses that result. Ginsberg's *First Manifesto To End The Bringdown*, written partly under the influence, rambles—he might as well have been slightly tipsy; Terry Southern's *Red Dirt Marijuana* is an overlong—and twee—combination of social commentary and operating manual. The most entertaining of the six pieces here is undoubtedly the extract from Rabelais' *Pantagruel* (translated by Samuel Putnam), with its comic erudition and wry asides:

*Oh, what a great and marvellous thing! To think that the fire, which devours, ruins and consumes everything, should, alone, clean, purge and whiten the Carpasian Pantagruelion, the asbestine flax. If you are inclined to doubt this, and to demand the usual proofs, like the Jews and other incredulous persons . . .*

On the whole, *The Marijuana Papers* is an interesting and informative anthology. Some of the sociological and imaginative clutter might have been dispensed with to good effect: the former may be useful additional weight to the pro-pot (and the book is decidedly that) argument, the latter might be fun for the writer concerned: but both cloud the issue. What is necessary is a simple, irrefutable statement of chemical and pharmacological fact.





# JOHN T. SLADEK:

## space hopping with Captain God

Anyone who still believes that a superior being from another star arrived here in the dim, dumb past, to the well-documented amazement of the locals, must read Erich von Daniken's *Chariots Of The Gods*. He will probably suffer, as I did, a loss of faith.

From its serialisation title, *Was God An Astronaut?* one can deduce its smug anthropocentric point of view. Not only did aliens land, they looked like men, acted like men, and used miraculous twentieth-century devices to keep the natives awed. Daniken actually suggests that they planned the Deluge, sired Noah on an earth-gal, and snatched Elijah and Enoch (why not Ambrose Bierce?). Naturally they were worshipped by the simple natives every place they landed; by the Sumerians, the Egyptians, the Jews, the Chinese, the Eskimos, a seventeenth-century mapmaker, and by that funny rustic, Jonathan Swift. Daniken "proclaims" that they

*annihilated part of mankind existing at the time and produced a new, perhaps the first, homo sapiens . . . . It is my aim to try to provide proof of this assertion.*

This he does not do. The contents of this book prove nothing, though its sales (300,000 in Germany) seem to prove Barnum's famous sucker statistic.

It's a Barnum book, really, a sleazy sideshow crammed with Fortean facts and Ripley rarees, where you'll meet many old favorites like the Great Pyramid, Easter Island, UFO's and ESP.

Beginning with obscure or spurious data, Daniken proceeds by that logical path favoured by all high priests of hokum, where the Barely Possible becomes the Probable and ends up being a Certainty. Do cave drawings show men with thickened limbs and enlarged heads? These can only be SPACESUITS and HELMETS! The things sticking out of their heads (long mistaken by vulgar archaeologists for mere horns) are of course ANTENNAE! The Great Pyramid would have taken 600 years to build by hand (he says)—so they must have quarried the rock with lasers and shifted it by helicopter!

*In Helwan there is a piece of cloth, a fabric so fine that it could only be woven today in a special*

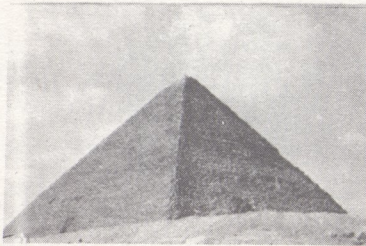
*factory with great technical know-how and experience.*

*Electric dry batteries, which work on the galvanic principle, are on display in Baghdad Museum.*

The chapters on archaeology abound with such *Believe it or so what!* dainties, and I don't doubt that the Deutsches Museum in Munich displays airplanes and bicycles, or that I have one eye.

Now for some mathematics:

*Is it a coincidence that the area of the base of the Pyramid [of Cheops] divided by twice its height gives the celebrated figure of  $\pi=3.14159$ , discovered by Ludolf?*



I don't know what Ludolf is supposed to have discovered, but this is not coincidence, it is fakery. Notice that the area of the base must be in square units (sq.ft., sq.cm., etc.) and the height must be in linear measure (ft., ins., miles, etc.). Dividing, one gets not  $\pi$  (which is a ratio, and has no dimensions) but some number in linear units. The size of this answer depends entirely on what units one has used in the problem: feet give one answer, inches another, meters another, and so on. By choosing a suitable unit of measurement, one can produce any string of digits one pleases.

And now for literature:

*Where did the narrators of The Thousand and One Nights get their staggering wealth of ideas? How did anyone come to describe a lamp from which a magician spoke when the owner wished?*

Apparently no reader, Daniken thus misquotes the story of Aladdin above as he will the Bible below, to his own purposes. The idea here is that the lamp was some kind of radio, but to get that idea he has to make the story duller and then ask why it was so imaginative; a genie with incredible powers is turned into the voice of a magician.

*Moses relates the exact instructions which 'God' gave for building the Ark of the Covenant. [How does Daniken know this?] The directions are given to the very inch and how and where staves and rings are to be fitted and from what alloy the metals are to be made.*

Anyone who doesn't know his inch

from his cubit (forearm) and who thinks that metals are made from alloys has no business trying to make Exodus a radio manual, but Daniken presses on: the Ark was really designed to pick up messages from God in His saucer. The idea is supported by deductions based on the death of Uzzah (in 2 Samuel 6), who put his hand to the Ark to keep it from toppling over and was struck dead for this reflex of little faith. Daniken diagnoses:

*Undoubtedly the Ark was electrically charged! If we construct it according to the instructions handed down by Moses, a voltage of several hundred volts is produced.*

Well, there is some room for doubt, especially since the Ark was only a box of shittim wood,  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  forearms in size, gold-plated and fitted with rings at four corners through which pass two carrying staves. Nothing at all is "produced", and it will not support any voltage. The staves are also of shittim wood also plated with gold, so even if the thing did carry several hundred volts it could not, in turn, be carried. If Uzzah was "undoubtedly" electrocuted, then Adam and Eve were undoubtedly barred from Eden by an angel with a soldering iron.

Daniken's astronomy is no better: he merely sets out the statistics that look good (there are likely a few planets in our galaxy with intelligent life upon them) and ignores those that don't (the galaxy is very big). Like so many UFOlogists, he insists the problem is only "Is there life on other planets?"



Since life on other planets associated with our sun has been (for UFO purposes) all but eliminated as a possibility, any space visitors must have come from elsewhere. They would need a near-light-speed drive to get anywhere, and even then the search for earth would take time. The life of a civilization such as ours (from Cro-Magnon man to?) has been estimated to take about as long as it takes light to cross our galaxy. The astronomers and biologists have more or less agreed:



1. It is almost certain that there are other civilizations in our own galaxy.

2. It is almost certain that we shall never contact them, or find any trace of them, or they us.

But scientists can be wrong (he hammers home this point), and they laughed at Galileo. And I suppose it is just possible that some aliens crossed twenty light years or so of space and searched over a few thousand habitable but uninhabited planets—and just to pick up an Elijah for their zoo. Or maybe they hung around (even less likely) while the Incas built them airfields, while the Egyptians learned a

# MIKE WALTERS:

## the revolutionary singsong

THE VOGUE IS FOR drastically simple views. It seems that Western society divides neatly into those who are feeding Capitalists ('The 007/TV way of life', to borrow a glib little put-down from Michael Horowitz) and those who are 'getting under way with (their) own renaissance'—that is, writing verse of the kind to be found in Mr Horowitz's anthology *Children of Albion* (Penguin, 50p).

The first group have been around for some time, watching Gene Autry movies, listening to the Midland Light Orchestra, and telling fibs about the situation in Korea. It is the latter faction—amalgamating Trilling's 'second environment' and a switched-on old boy network—that is ultimately the more stifling to our culture.

The sixty-three writers represented here presumably define themselves according to the dicta in Mr Horowitz's racy afterwords, and to the style recommended on the back cover:

... the diverse lyric, (the) political, visioning and revolutionary orientations of these new poets ...

On these terms—and apparently unabashed by the consideration that it isn't every decade which produces sixty-three great and original minds—the *Children of Albion* appear to be pressing a claim for some kind of uniqueness.

However:

*A feeling came more easily to them than a reflection, and an image was always at hand when a thought was not forthcoming ...*

Henry Taylor wrote it in 1834, of the later Romantics, but it applies equally to Bernard Kops' *The Sad Boys* (an echo of Yeats in its forlorn tone perhaps its sole concession to the present century), or to the random, gratuitous imagery of Pete Brown's *Confidences*. By 1850, there had been established a mode of writing that sought in poetry a fully integrated manner in which to voice the pre-occupations of its age. Something of the sort is necessary here: in our search for a voice that will explain what it's like to be alive in the mid-twentieth century—and the tenor of *Children of Albion* implies that a search is or has been going on—we must look further than Adrian Mitchell as he celebrates the Romantic gods by name, in method, and in content, calling up the shade of Shelley at his most verbose in the popular *To*

*Whom It May Concern*—employing a one-man-and-his-dog kind of refrain to underline six times a point he has expressed adequately in the opening stanza. This is a peculiarly poetic dishonesty: incantation masquerading as argument.

Elsewhere, Michael Horowitz and Gael Turnbull explain what it is like to be alive at the start of the nineteenth century. Mr Horowitz's cautionary tale, *Spring Welcomes You To London*, points, with a Wordsworthian attention to trivia that is verging on the parodic, to the heartless efficiency of the modern pigeon collector (pigeon collector?) and, as a gesture at the 60s, flaunts his proud declaration that he once said 'shit' to himself. While Turnbull's piece is a savage indictment of the Industrial Revolution: *At The Mineshaft Of A Ghost Town In Southern California* attempts satire, becomes banal and clichéd—the ultimate debasement of the Byronic mode as Brown's work is of the Wordsworthian.

'They are breaking the beer bottles', Herbert Lomas tells us; the 'Revolution' has taken on immense, Romantic connotations (like Shelley again:

*A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
From waves serener far ...*)

It is the vacuous correlative on which the 'so-called young' (Lomas) and those of little learning have hung their artistic misconceptions, their 'feelings', and, at length, their integrity. The Underground lives and thinks still in the shadow of the sophism exposed by Ruskin in terms of the pathetic fallacy.

Only when their verse assumes a real control are they effective. Libby Houston's innovation of replacing the customary cant with narrative in *The Tale Of The Estuary And The Hedge* gives a simple and somewhat tired theme enough refreshment and sufficient appropriate naïveté to validate it again. It is one of the very few 'achieved' pieces in this collection.



Appropriate naïveté

But refreshment is, generally, the quality most frequently missing from these poems. They respond to life in a wholly one-sided way, as conformist as the culture Mr Horowitz denigrates. A poetry that makes escape its organising principle, and fails to react responsibly to the environment that engenders it, is inappropriate.

*Sing Halleluiah the new apocalypse  
of troubadours?*



SPACESUITS and HELMETS!!

smattering of cryogenics, long enough to give Ali Baba a voice-operated door and Gilgamesh a joy-ride and so on (Daniken mentions these as probabilities). And then they had to leave, with every scrap of evidence of their existence (like the helicopters Ezekiel saw), pausing only to make man in their image. But I don't believe it.

Another possibility is that I'm in their pay or power, that I've been told to say all this to discredit the one man who is on the verge of discovering *the truth!*



# CHARLES PLATT:

## last year's truth

"Your Guardian-Times is your forces of oppression, to make you swallow your alienation . . ."

You will have guessed the source of the quote. Despite its fads, prejudices, adolescent whinings and above all its illiteracy (or maybe *because* of these things) International Times has established itself as a newspaper with as much totem-significance to the long-haired generations as any serious Sunday paper has to the shorter-haired ones.

But perhaps *Some of IT* (published by Knollar, price unmarked) will destroy some of the charisma. As throw-away, fish-wrapping ephemera, IT carries some sort of conviction. Put within book covers, the effect becomes

self-satirical. It is an incredible catalogue of last year's fake cults and nonsense philosophies: The Maharishi, macrobiotics, the power of pot and acid, of flowers and love, UFO, UFOs, political protest . . . Can they all have died so quickly? Can the readers have believed in them so completely, at the time?

In days gone by, IT had character. I remember recipes for hash cake, instructions for jamming parking meters, how to soak 'straight' cigarettes in pot-ether solution . . . IT flourished on the drug controversy. In his introduction (almost the only piece of coherent prose in the book) William Burroughs himself picks out drugs as an important area for the underground press to disseminate truth, as opposed to the distortions in sensational popular newspapers.

This would be fair enough, if only we could rely on the editors of International Times to distinguish truth from fallacy. To judge from *Some of IT*, truth seems to gain a new meaning every fortnight.

# MICHAEL MOORCOCK:

## no new is good new

ON THE EVIDENCE of *The Neophilics* (Collins 42s.)—A Study of the Revolution in English Life in the Fifties and Sixties—author Chris Booker emerges as a slightly stupid and sadly distressed individual who is unable to accept the complexity and variety of modern life and is prone to the old pitfall of believing that he has seen a sublime and simple order to the world which, if we all could see it, would save society. This could be called the basic Junk Solution but overwork, too much concentrated reading of old newspaper files and lack of sleep are also very good aids to such visions. As yet he does not appear to have realised that his revelations actually solve none of the problems he believes he is facing.

Much of the book, when it is not describing in detail newspaper reports about Suez, Profumo, Swinging London and so on, reads like a diary in which he admonishes himself 'to keep faith and to keep courage, and above all not to take refuge in the fretting of pointless speculation as to how things might have been different, or might still be'. He has become rather disenchanted with the life of the metropolis and believes himself to be dis-illusioned with society. He is displeased, it appears, not so much with the quality of 20th century society, as with the human condition itself. He begs his readers to rid themselves of their delusions that life is 'better' or 'different' from that of the past, to 'get back to reality', to try to attain a state of 'unity' known and understood by the Ancients, to embrace our Lord Jesus Christ and know the true peace of spirit.

One is tempted to feel kindly towards Booker and his pathetically hazy view of our times, just as one feels genuine pity for Enoch Powell, say, when he makes a speech pleading for the return of gold coinage ("I will give you a simple test whereby you can know whether and when we have regained our sanity and freedom. It will be if and when we are once more allowed to buy and sell our own gold coins, and gold itself.") or tries to explain to the unconvinced that he is really a man of good will, but it seems to me that too many fools are voicing too many nonsensical notions these days and one becomes weary of praising them for their good intentions when their results are so poor. Booker hates what he calls 'fantasy'—the distortion or deliberate avoidance of what he calls



Fish-wrapping ephemera



'reality'—and he is contemptuous of hypocrisy. Therefore, this review will attempt to avoid hypocrisy.

I cannot accept the answers in *The Neophiliacs* just as I cannot accept books offering me evidence that this planet was once populated by a great race of "Gods" who came here in flying saucers. *The Neophiliacs* has a familiar ring to it and I think I know what it is—there is a kind of writer who so desperately hates the idea that there may be mysteries to human existence that he rejects those mysteries—and any methods being used to plumb them—and seeks instead to impose his own version of order (or, strictly speaking, tidiness) on a rather complex world. Books of this sort are appearing from all sides this season and I am disturbed by them just as I am disturbed by the apparent increase in the ranks of Scientologists, the appearance in the streets of the Hare Krishna Buddhists and other cults, the number of publications willing to print the most dreadful sort of apocryphal and apocalyptic rubbish, the seriousness with which ludicrous quasi-scientific theories, like those of Desmond Morris, are taken by large sections of the community. Sensational simple answers are offered on all sides as palm-readings and astrological charts are offered in a Calcutta slum. Because society has become so complex, many people prefer to debate the pros and cons for the simple answers rather than concern themselves with the discovery of information that will help them face the inherent problems of the society we have created. Booker rightly suggests that we should attempt to separate the fantasy elements of life from the real ones—and we should try to get to grips with those realities, however alarming, as soon as possible.

Many of us are as bothered as Booker about the possible collapse of our society into anarchy, but I doubt if many could agree with his reasoning or with his rather vague solutions which are without doubt very similar to those of any sensitive teenager trying to tackle the problems of life.

Mr Booker complains about the high fantasy-content in our newspapers, seeming not to realise that journalists have always been gullible and that few people take their trendy Sunday newspaper articles seriously because they don't expect them to be serious, just as they don't expect glossy magazines like *QUEEN* or *ABOUT TOWN* to be serious and don't believe for a moment that *LONDON LIFE* would have been, in the words of its advance publicity, 'deeply enjoyable' and 'as rich, many-sided, eccentric as London' or that the revamped *Daily Herald*—*The Sun*—was to be 'a serious political journal . . . deliberately geared to the mental attitudes and new

interests of the mid-1960s'. If Booker believed it (as he implies) then he is blaming people because he, unlike the majority of the public, swallowed the obvious lies.

Admittedly, the level of vapidness reached by almost all newspapers and magazines by the early months of 1968 was pretty high. Mr Booker, however, spends most of his pages attacking the medium's trendy content and sensational language as if it were indicative of the whole state of British society during the period. As a journalist, of sorts, he seems to be under the typical journalist's delusion that the world of the popular press is the whole world. And, while he is disgusted by neologisms and empty but authoritative-sounding words and phrases, he's not above producing a few horrors himself—like 'neophiliac', 'nyktomorph' and 'explosion into reality' or of dismissing reaction to the Vietnam war as a 'world wide neurosis' and so on.

It would be ungenerous not to admit that Booker's insights (which he is inclined to present as revelations) are sometimes good—as when he is describing the destructive conflict between the right-wing fantasy and the left-wing fantasy, 'each exacerbating and feeding each other's hostility; each feeding on the potent half-truth that, since the other is wholly wrong, they themselves must be wholly right—and yet both fundamentally part and parcel of each other'. And his naive discovery that there are large areas of fantasy and distortion in our lives—particularly when presented to us in the form of newspaper stories—is accurate enough. There is, indeed, a mounting wealth of apocrypha in circulation at the moment and it could be that the increasing willingness of the public to swallow the most appalling old rubbish is an indication that our society is in a state of disorder and uncertainty and that therefore greater intelligence and responsibility should be encouraged in editors and writers by newspaper proprietors and the directors of the various broadcasting media (doubtless an unrealistic suggestion, vested interests being what they are). The fact is that Booker could fairly use the word decadence (a word he seems cautious about employing) to apply to, for instance, the newspaper industry he dislikes so much (there are obvious reasons why it is in decline, why it is decaying—see *Into the Media Web*, *NEW WORLDS* 183, Oct. 68) and he could use it to describe the state of the traditional novel or most modern poetry or most modern painting and sculpture and many modern plays, musical compositions and films but, as is almost always the case, new forms emerge at the same time as the old are in decay (and sometimes show a passing

similarity) and while the newspapers become increasingly lightweight and burble on about the latest fads, our standards of education are rising, the standard of popular music, thanks largely to the Beatles, has risen—though a period of stagnation seems to exist at present—and the standard of much popular television entertainment has risen (though not as high as its exponents claim) and by and large the standard of the popular cinema has risen.

In the sciences there have been developments and discoveries made in the last decade—DNA, the Moon landing, lasers etc.—that should help us to broaden our horizons, learn more about ourselves and our environment. But where science is concerned, quite evidently Booker is, as it were, a technophobe. He neither likes nor understands 'science' or what it has given to our society, and feels, strongly, that this 'science' could quite easily produce the downfall of man (if it hasn't already):

"Step by step, from those first discoveries of Kepler and Copernicus, through the theory of evolution which knocked away the last prop of stability from underneath man's stable world-picture by giving him the illusion that he was on an escalator moving ever more rapidly upwards into the future, to the total disintegration of today, with physical sciences, biological sciences, psychology, sociology, anthropology, bifurcating and trifurcating in all directions, each one examining an ever tinier fragment of reality and therefore seeing the world in terms of ever more superficial outward appearances, science has led mankind into the darkness of a universe made up only of shadowy nyktomorphs. And behind it all, with every stage, the underlying pattern becomes ever more apparent—of mankind's blind self-assertion, mounting towards what?"

Peculiarities of expression aside, this statement shows Booker's complete ignorance of the nature of science, what it does or what it is trying to do, his unawareness of the new shift towards the ontological approach in many sciences. The statement seems to me to be much more an expression of his own bewilderment (even stark fear!) than a reasonable view of our world. It is a fantasy view, worse than any he decries, a superstitious view, a primitive view that seeks to dismiss many of the most important aspects of the world we live in as irrelevant. It is a view he shares in common with the majority of the bohemians, anarchists, journalists, demonstrators and artists he describes in his book (at one point he complains that machines are 'inhuman') and it is, in my opinion, a potentially destructive view, strongly reminiscent of the kind of paranoia expressed in what Booker himself calls the right-wing fantasy.

That aside, the book's meticulous



record of events in Britain since 1955, its somewhat obsessive listings and groupings of the personalities involved in this period, together with their origins, its occasional insights, make it as interesting as one of the better pieces found in the Colour Supplements. The thing becomes nonsensical chiefly when Booker becomes philosophical and seeks to order those events to prove his own particular fantasy theory that the years beginning with 1955 and ending, apparently, with 1968, were a kind of group fantasy cycle involving, in his terms, an Anticipation Stage (looking for a dream-focus), a Dream Stage (where everything seems to be going right), a Frustration Stage (where all does not seem to be going well), a Nightmare Stage (in which everything goes horribly wrong) and a Death Wish Stage—or ‘explosion into reality’ (in which, as far as I can gather, everything falls apart). I have read more convincing theories of this kind (Spengler, for instance) and Booker is an amateur compared with the really great nonsense organisers of history, such as Valikovsky, Steiner or Jung, who, typically, in Booker’s own words applied to artists, find it necessary to make patterns in their minds to establish equilibrium with their surroundings—and then seek to impose those patterns on the world, past, present and future. A familiar condition in Nazis, for instance.

Booker also perpetuates the old confusion between the nature of Art and the nature of Society by equating the arts with Christian ideas of morality. Like his Victorian counterparts (Arnold, say) he needs to justify art in terms of some peculiar idea of specific social function never made quite clear. He is never very sure of his ground when he is talking about the arts, betraying his essential philistinism and placing himself neatly in the same camp as many members of a group he elects to see as muddle-headed ‘victims’ of their society (especially Amis, Conquest, Braine, Levin and the like). As Amis could, in his strange book in praise of James Bond (*The James Bond Dossier*) compare Fleming with Homer and, indirectly, Emily Bronte—so Booker, attacking Bond, compares Fleming with Hemingway and Shelley (among others—all, apparently, in his view bearing the same disgusting taint of Romanticism and therefore equally worthless, irrespective of their skill or their intention). But Booker is even less consistent than Amis for, towards the end of his book, we read this: “It is a natural corollary of the failure of our own times to draw a clear distinction between good and evil, that we have come to see the function of all forms of artistic expression as more or less the same. Classic and Romantic, Shakespeare and Shelley, *War and Peace* and *Finnegan’s Wake*, even Bach and

the Beatles, are all regarded ultimately as only different forms of ‘self-expression’. Such a confusion is hardly surprising, for it is after all one of the most insidious properties of fantasy that, by diverting attention solely to outward appearances and away from the meaning that underlies them, it strives continually to blur or erase the distinction between itself and reality.”

Booker once again seems to be describing his own malady rather than society’s.

The best book on what might be called the subject of ‘newness’ still remains, for me, Harold Rosenberg’s *Tradition of the New* (1960), published in the U.K. by Thames and Hudson in 1962. In his chapter “Death in the Wilderness” he gives what is a decent epitaph to Booker’s attempt to see an obvious pattern to recent events through consultation of ephemeral nonsense in the popular press: “Except as a primitive means of telling time, generations are not a serious category . . . The opinions of a generation never amount to more than fashion—the regretted ‘generation of Fitzgerald’ shared few ideas deeper than raccoon coats, hip flasks and Stutz

Bearcats. Innovations in thought depend on the labour and insight of individuals not on the preferences of an age-mass; and many ‘periods’, not necessarily the least articulate, are intellectually represented by a blank. Nor are the moods and will of a generation decisive for the future. The course of events is decided by the action of forces far deeper and more obscure than the ‘issues’ fought over by general consent.”

Booker has joined the older and cleverer Malcolm Muggeridge and a host of other reasonably good journalists and dreadfully bad novelists and academics as another Popular Pundit (“These might be unpopular views I’m expressing, but I happen to believe that things could be a lot better.”) and doubtless we shall soon see him emerging on television and Any Questions radio shows (“I may be old-fashioned, but I happen to believe in charity, common-sense and certain other virtues which these days are apparently unfashionable.”). He has, like so many others of little talent, almost certainly ensured himself of a reasonable living in years to come.

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