

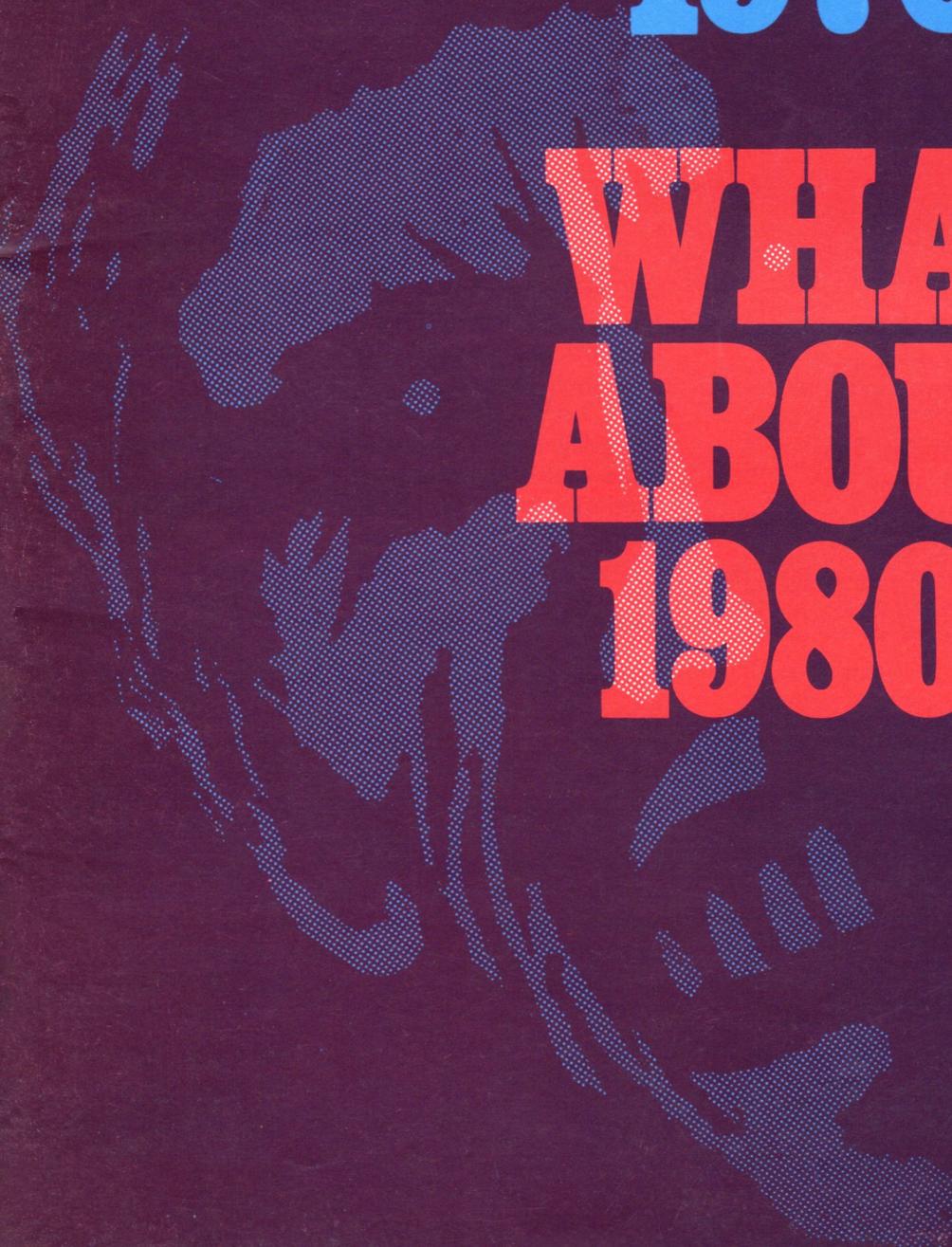
# new worlds

Number 197

3s. 6d.

**FORGET  
1970.**

**WHAT  
ABOUT  
1980?**



# 1980

## new worlds

number 197

### Contents:

- 1 Michael Butterworth: Concentrate 3
- 2 Graham Charnock: The Suicide Machines
- 5 R. Glyn Jones: Two Poems, Six Letters
- 6 Ed Bryant: Sending the Very Best
- 8 Hilary Bailey: Baby Watson, 1936-1980
- 10 Harlan Ellison: The Glass Teat
- 12 John Clark: What is the Nature of the Bead-Game?
- 13 Michael Moorcock: The Nature of the Catastrophe
- 15 Thomas M. Disch: Four Crosswords  
of Graded Difficulty
- 16 J.G. Ballard: Coitus 80
- 18 Brian W. Aldiss: The Secret of Holman-Hunt
- 20 John T. Sladek: 198--, a Tale of 'Tomorrow'
- 22 M. John Harrison: The Nostalgia Story
- 23 Joyce Churchill: Big Brother is Twenty-One
- 24 Jack Trevor Story: The Wind in the Snottygobble Tree
- 32 M. John Harrison: The Wireless School
- 32 John Cute: Gonorrhoea and Logorrhoea
- 33 Obituary for James Colvin

### Cover by R. Glyn Jones

Illustrations: Gabi Nasemann (9); Charles Platt (1, 16, 17); R. Glyn Jones (3); John Bayley (7); Eric Hunter (11); James Cawthorn (23); Pamela Zoline (21); Roy Cornwall (12,24-31)

Charles Platt, editor. Graham Charnock, associate editor.  
R. Glyn Jones, designer. M. John Harrison, books editor.  
Diane Lambert, publicity, advertising (01-229 6599).  
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There has been a monumental dullness about predictions for the 1970s. Laborious extrapolations of trends in technology, communications, population, food supply — man himself has been included only as a rudimentary button-pusher, or as a mere unit of society.

And so, over-exposed by the media, the 1970s are as inevitable and dull as the next moonshot.

Hoping to recapture some of the real essence of an unknown future, we commissioned 18 New Worlds contributors to look ahead, past the 1970s to the 1980s. This special issue is the result.

It is a more human picture than you'll find in the colour supplements, and the approaches are less direct. Michael Butterworth examines human perception of space, inner and outer; Graham Charnock explores sexuality of totally subservient, humanised robots; Ed Bryant presents an everyday situation overlaid with subtleties from a more sophisticated future; Hilary Bailey combines pessimism with great humanity in looking at the inevitable, inconsequential routine of Life; Harlan Ellison takes his regular tv-criticism column from the Los Angeles Free Press and projects it into 1980; M. John Harrison attempts an extract from a 1980 novel, and its oral review notice; John T. Sladek, in best science fiction traditions, tells a tale of tomorrow packed with truly amazing inventions; J.G. Ballard contrasts morbid trends in sex surgery with bogus sentimentality; Brian W. Aldiss provides very necessary humour; Michael Moorcock finds the future unreal and approaches it via the past; and finally Joyce Churchill looks back on Orwell's book, 1984, reminding us how unwise it is to try to make predictions. What unforeseen factors will render all our speculations so irrelevant and off-key, by the end of the 1970s?

There is not a great deal, here, concerning the future of our environment. But there is a lot concerning the future of us, as people.



## CONCENTRATE 3

### Michael Butterworth

Space is communication. To a human being space is realisation. No imagination could. But the awareness of himself on a planet in the universe is psychedelic.

Matter measures time. Having experienced the highways of space and seen the stars and below him the planet earth...?

#### The Astronaut

Oceans of scrambled knowledge are in his head – they form a conflict between awareness and balance. Space scrambles his mind.

His suit protects him from the real cold and the real vacuum. But his confused mind (accustomed to a keen perception of space/time) flips:

“Space became claustrophobic – suddenly there was no space, no time...”

*“He’s screaming. Hurry up with him. Get his hat off.”*

*The struggling body was brought through the hatch into the station boarding bay. An attendant wearing a white gown removed the casualty’s headpiece.*

“I experienced the stars crawling over me ... really I was struggling. My head became hot and buzzed. It really buzzed. There was nothing ... I felt there was nothing but the stars crawling over my face suddenly drowning in water/space.”

#### Valve

avenues of space of  
spiralling currents  
of low pressure ran  
within the vacuum

fields of gravity  
wakes of magnetic  
debris called the hip  
astronaut into line

his mind was filledup  
with the works of man

he was a technical  
part of the capsule

one country’s gain of  
name over another’s

they led his frail  
pressurised head into  
the regions of low  
pressure

and emptied it

# the suicide machines

## GRAHAM CHARNOCK

IT WAS THE third week of Oxford's strange, localised heatwave and the temperatures continued to climb steadily, now peaking in the eighties. The city, flushed with new, nationally publicised notoriety, was even more crowded than usual.

Felix Apropos had just driven up from London, battling thick traffic all the way. Now, fatigued, out of condition and feeling the first stirrings of conscience about it, he stood sweating on the Magdalen Bridge, his hands on the hot stonework. An empty paper bag rolled along the pavement to meet him but veered away into the gutter at the last moment to lie breathing there like an excised lung. A punt swam out from the arches below him, sending the sun shooting in a burst of tiny golden coins, painfully bright, largess upon the waters. A picnic hamper had been opened in the bottom of the boat. A discarded champagne bottle sat in the prow like an abstracted figure head. Two feedies looked up at him, all smiles, and on an impulse he smiled and waved down at them. They waved back. Straw boaters and bonhomie were back in fashion, apparently. Apropos felt slightly disorientated, at a loss in this strange tourist trampling ground of Oxford. Also an acute sadness that flesh and blood students would never again walk its streets — only the feedies now, playing on and up to the emotions of the tourists in an interminable gestalt reaction. Now it was pastiches of *Three Men in a Boat*, *Dejeuner sur l'herbe* and, down in Christ Church meadow, tableaux in the visual mode of the French Impressionists. Apropos had expected to find a certain anomie, but nevertheless he felt uncomfortable. It was a shame it had to happen in Oxford.

He moved from the bridge's parapet and walked on, past a gaggle of tourists plodding in the wake of a feedie guide. They all wore the peculiar dazed but determined expression that Apropos was to recognise later as the particular stigmata of most cosmopolites in Oxford.

An ice-blue Fiat 850 coupe was parked by the side of the road. Velma sat in the front wearing a white dress. Her skin was white too, like fine porcelain; her hand in her lap was almost invisible, the red-painted nails like spots of blood on the fabric.

"I think it might have been a mistake to come here," Apropos told her as he slid behind the wheel.

"Why *did* we come here, anyway?"

Apropos smiled. "I know why *I* came. What about you? Tired of Jones and Dragon, perhaps? Has the novelty of

your menage-a-trois worn a little thin?"

Velma frowned. "Novelty? What a strange concept. Sometimes I think I don't really know you at all."

Apropos suppressed a grin and started the Fiat. They drove up past University College in the direction of the Carfax, turning right up Cornmarket street.

Yet another dreaming spire, the Oxford Hilton rose with the perfect, horrible symmetry of a sine wave on the grave of the old Randolph. Apropos turned the Fiat into the car park and an attendant with spaniel-soft eyes and a Jerome K. Jerome moustache helped them out and slapped a parker on the car's bonnet. The Fiat rolled away, down into a sunless cavern beneath the hotel. Apropos pressed a tip into the attendant's hand and the man gave them a wierdly contorted grin. Apropos, taking Velma's arm, wondered if the attendant was human or merely another empathetic feedback device. It was becoming difficult to differentiate.

THE HILTON GYMNASIUM was huge, wide and ringing, full of flabby men being crucified on a variety of crosses, some horizontal, some conventionally vertical, some that bent the body into a foetus shape and then — *spang!* — racked it out into a graceful spinal curve. Others threw the body about, rocked it, rotated it, torso and pelvic girdle in opposite directions, neck in another, arms and legs flailing wildly. Apropos made for the door but was caught by a perspiring athlete several times his own size and placed on a pillion that bucked and kicked. It seemed to be one of the milder tortures so he stuck with it. A man a few feet away on a similar device attempted a conversation. It was a courageous thing to do under the circumstances and Apropos had to admire him.

"Certainly ... needed ... this."

The man's words came out like retchings.

"Back ... home ... didn't ... get ... nearly ... enough ... exercise."

"Back ... home?" Apropos found there was really nothing to it. Once he had the sentence formed in his mind it was merely a matter of waiting until the kicking pillion had flushed the words out of him.

"New ... York. You ... English?"

It struck Apropos that the pillion scrambled accents as surely as it scrambled stomachs.

"Resident ... at ... least. How ... do ... you ... stop ... this ... thing?"

Apropos had visions of being trapped on the pillion as the day wore into night and the night wore into morning, the first health fanatic of the new day finding nothing but a jellied heap of tissue and a few bone fragments.

"You don't," said the man and almost immediately his own pillion whirred and began to run down. "Automatic," the man said, dismounting. "You have a few minutes yet."

The man took a towel and padded sweat from his arms and shoulders. Away from the pillion his transatlantic morphology began to reassert itself. A sleek muscled machine of perpetual suntan. A college track star obviously and later one of those businessmen who strode into Manhattan in Bermuda shorts and flitted a Honda (inverted snobbery being the status thing of the time) like a suckerfish shark-escort in between the Cadillacs and the Ramblers and the Dodges. And then up and up to his executive suite and its private sauna and private masseur to steam off and slap down the bits that didn't fit the image.

Apropos' pillion chugged to a standstill and he gratefully dismounted.

"I know an easier way to raise a sweat," he told the



American. "How about a drink?"  
"O.K."

**T**HE AMERICAN'S NAME was John Luther Warburton. His business, it turned out, was films.

"You know," he told Apropos, "Stag films. Blue films I guess you'd call them over here."

"You sell them?"

"And make them. Diversify, that's the keynote. It's an expanding market these days."

They were in the Colonial Bar. Apropos' choice. Trauma and guilt oozed out of the simulated wood, cut-from-the-heart-of-the-pine architecture of the place; its essence hung like a swarm of flies over the musky muzzle of a

stuffed grizzly mounted on the wall. On a small stage, beneath its own miniature proscenium arch, a trio of gymnastic dancers staged a stylized re-enactment of an Appalachian indian massacre to the sound of muted war drums. Apropos had thought the setting might give him some psychological advantage over the American, but Warburton seemed unaffected. Apropos, on the other hand, after a few minutes began to feel as if he were sitting in the middle of a claustrophobic fog. His eyes began to swim as they only ever did when he was under crisis.

"Blue films?" he repeated. "Pornography? I'm not sure I approve."

Warburton's face became animated. "Listen, do you know what true pornography is? I'll tell you. It's anything

that tries to tell you there's really a meaning behind the chaos of existence, that you really do have, as an individual, some kind of relatedness to external events. It's religion. It's marriage. In its most sophisticated form it's what we like to call 'Art'. Now I'll tell you what true art is — art with none of this capital letter shit. It's a representation of the intimate moments of social reality without any overtones of any kind at all. Any kind of reality from a communal balling session among the repressed savages of Greenwich Village to JFK getting his in Dallas. Art is just a bare ass without anybody saying, Gee, what a great ass! or, Man, what a bringdown! How really sick! You only have to take a situation, present it as it happens, without comment, with complete and utter disinterest as a presenter, with no hang-ups and none of the intellectual, aesthetic or moral appendages that the 'Artist' will usually graft on to 'Art form'. You know, nothing that will give anybody short hairs to climb up and say, Man, I'm really making myself a part of this. That's true art — the art of reality. The art that so-called pornographers have been pushing ever since the turn of the century when the representation of the real, through film and photography, first became possible. It's an art that most people can't take. They react against it because it tells them how alone they are."

Apropos tugged at his collar. "That's an interesting viewpoint."

Warburton jugged his rum in its cut-glass goblet, raised it and trickled a little in his throat. "Hey," he told Apropos, "you know you don't look too good."

"It's very close," Apropos said. On the stage one of the dancers was hunched on his knees, impaled on an imaginary spear. His colleagues capered about him. "Perhaps we could take some air?"

Warburton shrugged and finished his drink.

"Are you here on business or for pleasure?" Apropos asked him as they left the Colonial Bar.

"A little of both," Warburton said. "I always travel with a full kit of televideo equipment. I use it as a kind of visual commonplace book. My ambition is to capture someone in the most real, most private and most personal act known."

"You mean sex?"

"No. Sex has become so *unreal* these days. So fantastic. No, I mean the other big S: suicide. Sounds a little grim, I suppose?"

Apropos shrugged. He didn't know whether to take Warburton seriously. The man was a little unreal himself. Anomie, thought Apropos. Its currents shifted around you. You could dabble your toes but you had to be careful not to get swept away, not to lose your bearings. "I don't know," Apropos said. "You may have come to the right place."

**W**ITH A COUGH and a splutter the over-burdened air conditioning finally gave out. A dying draught from one of the hall's ventilator outlets tipped the shuttlecock out of Warburton's reach. It wafted to the ground just inside the back boundary line. As Warburton bent for the shuttle the heat hit him, hot heavy and dry, prickling his thighs and settling across his shoulders like a hot poker. He gasped and tapped the shuttle toward the side of the court. The feedie watched him from beyond the net, expressionless, apparently unaffected by the temperature.

"That's it," Warburton said, the heat now in his throat, his tongue counting the parched ridges on his palate. "Useless to continue. We'll call it your rubber."

"It wasn't a fair win," the feedie said.

"Nonsense. Come on, I need a shower and a drink. In

that order."

The feedie followed him from the basement hall. They took a lift up to the penthouse floor. Warburton's suite was cool and pine-scented. He stepped into the bathroom and called to the feedie, "How about fixing that drink?"

The feedie had bronze hair, a bronzed chest, clean and tight and compact with muscles sharp and angular, carved close to the bone, the whole gleaming as if modelled from pyrites. Warburton thought about that as he showered, eyes closed, the jets prickling on his eyelids. He thought about how right they were for each other, how natural it all was. He was almost prepared to believe that it had been their empathetic link which had drawn him across the Atlantic in the first place. Certainly it had guided his footsteps since he had disembarked at Southampton. Its intuitive command had sent him scurrying immediately northward to a tourist trap that he would normally have avoided. He'd been disturbed to a certain extent to discover that, having located the feedie, their mutual attraction had continued to grow, into total sexual dependency. And still there was a lack of fulfilment, even in the streaming delight of their optimum orgasm. In its worst moments it sent him back to masturbation and a solitary prowling in the empty Oxford colleges, VTR gear slung on his shoulder to capture the dry corners and corridors and their wandering population: tourists, their voices hushed by some phoney, self-propagated and self-propagating atmosphere of reverence; children urinating into dust or leaving other gracious tokens of their presence; shy people holding hands, who would jump in the sunlight if their forearms brushed; private people all, in private moments — the stock of his trade.

He towelled his face dry and stepped out of the shower and into a silk lined bathrobe that stroked his body like soft hands. He licked at the dew of sweat that formed almost immediately on his upper lip. Despite the suite's air conditioning, the heat was mounting steadily. He went through into the bedroom where the feedie was setting up the chess table, arranging the opposing armies of carved mahogany and green jade chessmen. Warburton chose the jade pieces and sat down. The feedie brought him a gimlet and sat opposite him, cradling his own port and lemon. A lot depended on the game: the nature of their roles later that night — even the intensity of their passion would hinge upon whether the game went well or poorly.

"Pawn to king four," Warburton said, sipping his drink and eyeing the feedie's red king covetously. The feedie picked up his own king's pawn and his hand went out over the table. It halted, hovering, trembling slightly. Warburton looked up, frowning.

"What's the matter?"

A faint smile played on the feedie's lips. His face gleamed with sweat. "The outcome of this game is inevitable," he said. "I should like to concede defeat."

"Concede defeat? Nonsense, we've only just begun. Play on."

The feedie shrugged and replaced the piece on the board. Frowning in concentration Warburton considered his next move. A bead of sweat itched on the bridge of his nose, teetered and spilled away down the flesh wall, outward and across towards the corner of Warburton's mouth. Almost without thinking, he took a silk handkerchief from his bathrobe and dabbed at his face.

The game continued.

**A** SLOW TIDE OF dust shifted as Apropos stepped into the room. He traced footsteps in it to the small window and looked out at the stone walls opposite and the

quadrangle below where Velma waited, pacing the gravel paths in a flare of sunlight. He looked around the room. The bed was there, he noticed, the same bed in the same position, now gutted of mattress and stripped to its skeleton. The sensuous brass globes that graced the bedhead had lost their sparkle now, like eyeballs that had glazed. He sat on the bed's steel edge and something twanged beneath him. The whole affair lurched unsteadily as he stood, hastily, brushing rust and dust from his trousers. Apart from the bed the room was empty. Even so, it seemed smaller than he remembered it, more pokey. He wondered how he could ever have lived in it and still felt free, for he remembered that most of all about his days at Oxford, the freedom of spirit which, ironically, resulted from being taken firmly in hand by a firmly four-square educational establishment.

He prowled a little, over the patterns of sunlight and shadow thrown on the floor by the window. In one gloomy corner a roll of names had been scrawled on the wall down the ages. He found his own signature among them although he couldn't recall the act of writing it there. It was in a tight, controlled hand. He noticed that the signatures of later tenants, while bolder and generally more colourful, ran to flourishes and curliques which gave an ultimate effect of extrovert dissipation.

He shook his head sadly and turned to go. Pausing in doorway he took a walnut-sized grenade from his pocket and tossed it into the room. Outside, on the narrow oaken staircase that descended to the quadrangle, he heard the thunder behind him and for several seconds afterwards the rattle of a plaster rain. Dust had returned to dust. He felt a sense of relief. Now, in this small corner of his past at least, there could be no exhumations.

Out in the quadrangle the heat was concussive. As he stepped from the porch of the hall of residence, a house martin fluttered down like a soft felt hat, cartwheeling a few times until it rested by his feet. In kindness he knelt and twisted and jerked its neck until the head hung limp and lifeless. He kicked the dead bird to the side of the path.

Velma had been joined by a feedie with a massive ginger moustache which rose like flames over his flushed cheeks. He wore a hunting jacket and plus fours. Hands on his hips, locked into an attitude of wonder, he gazed up at the wrecked window and the smoke and dust boiling up into the sky.

"I didn't think you'd really do it," said Velma as Apropos joined them. She pointed at the feedie, who hadn't moved and showed no sign of moving. "Look at him. He doesn't know what to make of it."

"It's probably only a heat seizure," said Apropos, frowning.

Heat-seizure or not, he found the feedie's attitude disturbing. It put him in a sombre mood and he took Velma's arm, firmly steering her from the place.

**W**HERE are you? Please. Don't hide. Don't tease me." Warburton pushed between rose bushes, spilling a flurry of pastel yellow petals, heedless of thorns clutching at the thin cotton of his shirt. The botanical gardens were deserted, still, hazed over with heat. He stepped on to the gravel path, was still for a moment to catch his breath, then began to kick the soft, clinging loam of the flower beds from his shoes. He trudged to the pool, the liquid eye at the centre of the mandala formed by the formal layout of paths and privet hedges. In the middle of the pool rose a fount of plaster flowers, unnaturally white, sun-bleached. He sat on the pool's raised, crumbling lip. The water was shallow, thick with clumped, stringy weed. A solitary goldfish, mouth agape, drowning slowly, hung motionless like something set in green jelly. There was something else, too, in the water. Something diffuse that momentarily escaped him. When recognition finally came, after a full minute of dull, entranced silence, it came with the cold-water shock of a *jamais vu*. It was the image of his own face: red, raw and slightly puffy, hair slick with sweat and clustering in untidy spikes across his forehead. He became aware again of the discomfort behind the image, of blood pounding in the dilated veins of his temples, of the blunt, almost physical, impact of the heat.

He made for the shelter of an arbour roofed over and around with trailing vines. Here at last under a flimsy ceiling dotted with dead orchids, their beauty crumpled and shrivelled, he found the feedie. The creature had cut its throat, neatly, deeply, with an archaic razor. The wound, flecked with a magenta mockery of human blood, was like a second mouth, set in an ironic, downward-tilted grimace. Warburton freed the weapon from the still-warm fingers and then stood, the body cradled in his arms. His feelings, at this moment, were profoundly sexual; he was concerned only to feel the feedie's body close to his. He wanted their warmth, their pain, their love to be shared. He began to walk with no clear idea of where he was going.

**A**S THEY CROSSED the Magdelan bridge for the last time Apropos slowed, called something to a man in a colourful, cotton-print shirt moving slowly along the pavement. The man carried a feedie in his arms, its head hanging slackly backwards, gleaming and misty with an aureole of harsh sunlight spun around the golden hair. The man ignored the Fiat.

"Who was that?" asked Velma, huddled down in her seat, away from the sunlight.

"Someone I knew."

"Why didn't you stop?"

"I don't think I could have helped him at all."

They pressed on, winding slowly through suburban Oxford until they emerged finally and comparatively suddenly into open, cooler country. Behind them the city shimmered. It seemed unreal, a mirage.

TWO POEMS, SIX LETTERS  
BY R. GLYN JONES

NINETEEN SAINTS IN A SATIN TENT,  
AS TENSE AS NATANT TIN,  
SEE SATAN'S ASSASSINS TEASE AN ANT:  
IS TESTINESS A SIN?

ANASTASIA SITS IN STATE  
IN A TAN SETTEE;  
EATS ANANAS, SATIATE...  
(STATE IS TENNESSEE).

# SENDING THE VERY BEST ED BRYANT

The year of massive starvations and dying diatoms had scarcely begun when I acutely felt the absence of my lover. I determined to send her a greeting card..Thus I found myself in the appropriate little shop on Wilshire, the 'Hallmark' emblem conspicuously blazoned above the door.

"May I help you, sir?" The clerk hovered just beyond my seeing. His tone was deferential.

"A card, please."

"For a specific occasion, sir?"

I explained.

"Very good. This way, please."

We stood before the black-enamelled wire racks.

"Moving holographic projections, sir. Sixteen-track stereophonic sound. Full sensory stimulation. Infinite replay."

"Impressive," I said. "Your best line?"

"Only the best, sir."

I reached out tentatively, to touch.

"Perhaps if you examined the scenario," the clerk said, handing me

**A EULITANY: The Less-than-Aeolian Harper**

*High on the side of the mountain*

The cauldron of morning boils up behind the trees. Sun fuzzes the stranger's silhouette as he enters the clearing. He approaches the old man cutting words into the granite block and steps into his attention.

*High on the side of the mountain a horse whickers*

"Is she buried here?" the stranger asks.

"No," answers the old man from above his asymmetric white beard. "You might call this a cenotaph. Inyan Cara, like any good volcano, was consumed by fire. She is ash riding the wind; perhaps filtering down unannounced over Ireland, or maybe Greece."

*High on the side of the mountain a horse whickers, then vanishes*

"Ireland." The stranger considers it. "Greece. She'll not be back?"

"No, not-unless we try to prevent her returning."

*High on the side of the mountain a horse whickers, then vanishes into the timber*

"You remember her well?" the stranger asks.

"I remember." The sculptor's dim eyes lose focus. "How she loved to dance and swim. Yes, she loved —"

"Yes," says the stranger, smiling crookedly.

*High on the side of the mountain a horse whickers, then vanishes into the timber; the sound*

The stranger laughs at the aged sculptor, but his amusement is gentle. "You are less than original, old man." He pauses. "But you do steal from impeccable sources." The stranger says reflectively, "I steal too." He sighs. "So many times I helped pick thorns from her flesh."

*High on the side of the mountain a horse whickers, then vanishes into the timber; the sound, spectral echo*

The old man continues to chip at the rock as the stranger talks:

"I once glutted the air about her with compliments. Then I realised my error was constant underestimation."

*High on the side of the mountain a horse whickers, then vanishes into the timber; the sound, spectral echo, gallops away*

"There." The old man wearily sets down his chisel. The inscription is complete:

**God's Lioness**

The voice comes from everywhere and nowhere and it makes both the stranger and the old sculptor smile.

"I am *not* a fucking cat!"

*High on the side of the mountain a horse whickers, then vanishes into the timber; the sound, spectral echo, gallops away on the wind.*

"I'll take it," I said to the salesman.



Baby Watson came,  
 8 lbs odd of blood, flesh, muscle and nerve,  
 Came after three days struggle,  
 Crying, don't push me I'll come in my own good time,  
 A very miracle of human engineering,  
 Built to last a good eighty years  
 Without serious mechanical breakdown.  
 Beat that, you engines and devices.

Many wonders there are but none more wonderful than  
 man. Inside the curiously shaped skull of Baby Watson it  
 is all beginning:

Cells move, acids creep, impulses stir  
 The porridge in the skull.  
 First the eyes move, then hands wave, legs thrust,  
 Till the head is full  
 —Surmise, imagination, conclusion, intent, purpose,  
 expectation—  
 And last the image of the self,  
 Baby Watson incarnate.

Who is it? EXPOSITION: It might be ten to two, March  
 3rd, 1959, or Sunday or Wednesday, or midnight, January  
 1st. Failing that, use tribal reckoning and it is the year my  
 feet grew two inches, the year you spent in Bogota, the  
 night the dam broke, the night their hearts broke, the  
 night of the big knockover, Jesus's birthday, the day war  
 broke out, Kennedy was shot, the cat got run over, the  
 day you said that thing to me I never forgot, the day of  
 atonement, the holy hour, the witching hour, the moment  
 of truth.

And also, inside Baby Watson during her present incar-  
 nation, units, tens, hundreds, thousands, millions, billions,  
 trillions and trillions of trillions of Baby Watsons will  
 spring and die before 1980. Who will they be?

Here comes 1941. Since 1936 a vast technological change  
 has taken place in Baby Watson. She is now four feet high,  
 three stone in weight and she pedals her tricycle, tea and  
 bacon in the basket at the back, vigorously home from the  
 Co-Op. There are already a number of different Baby  
 Watsons, the most notable being:

the only child  
 the undetected fratricide  
 the child about whom they were sorry when she was dead  
 the flying child  
 the princess and  
 the changeling

Staring in the mirror now,  
 Pointed ears and hairy brow —  
 In the basket lined with silk  
 When she came down to get the milk  
 Set down on the frosty step  
 She looked inside and back she leapt —  
 My God, a hairy baby's here  
 And where's our Sue with the golden hair?  
 Inside, a note, "We took your Sue  
 And left our little one for you.  
 Beware of giving it a smack  
 For every smack it'll pay you back  
 With dirty tricks and magic spells  
 And breakages and nasty smells.  
 When you go to find a cup  
 You will find it all smashed up.  
 Four, water, custard, lipstick, dates,  
 Soot, paint, cotton, bits of broken plates,  
 All in a jumble, all in a sludge  
 —Don't speak or smack, she'll bear a grudge.

# BABY WATSON

## 1936-1980

Or, The Miracle  
 of Human  
 Existence

by  
 HILARY  
 BAILEY

She can make you faint or die  
 If she just decides to try.  
 All this is done by Royal Command  
 (signed) the Queen of Fairyland."  
 Looking down, the mother gasps  
 And the swarthy changeling bares its teeth and laughs.

Move on, move on, to the late 1940s. Note with aston-  
 ishment the vast increase in the height and weight of  
 Baby Watson, caused merely by the ingestion of various  
 proteins and carbohydrates. She now moves through the  
 mist to school on a two-wheeler bicycle, wheels hissing on  
 the wet streets. As she coordinates her movements in such  
 a way as to propel the cycle she also thinks — detective,  
 cat burglar, child bride, partisan heroine, incendiary and  
 the savior of her brother's life — how grateful they were.  
 She sings:

How the boys in the bar stared and opened up their eyes  
 When into the old saloon  
 Came Baby Watson walking, guns low upon her hips  
 And spat right in that old spittoon.

Refrain:  
 She's the only lady sheriff in the West  
 Got twenty-five bullet holes in her vest.  
 Just see those bad boys run  
 When she reaches for her gun.  
 She's the only lady sheriff in the West.

'Twas in 1882 when the Beale gang hit the town  
 Robbed the bank and that old saloon.  
 Baby Watson gunned them down and when the fight  
 was done  
 Just spat in that old spittoon.

By the 1950s the changes in Baby Watson, however little  
 we may understand them, no longer surprise us. Over the  
 passing years we draw a veil through which may be faintly  
 distinguished:

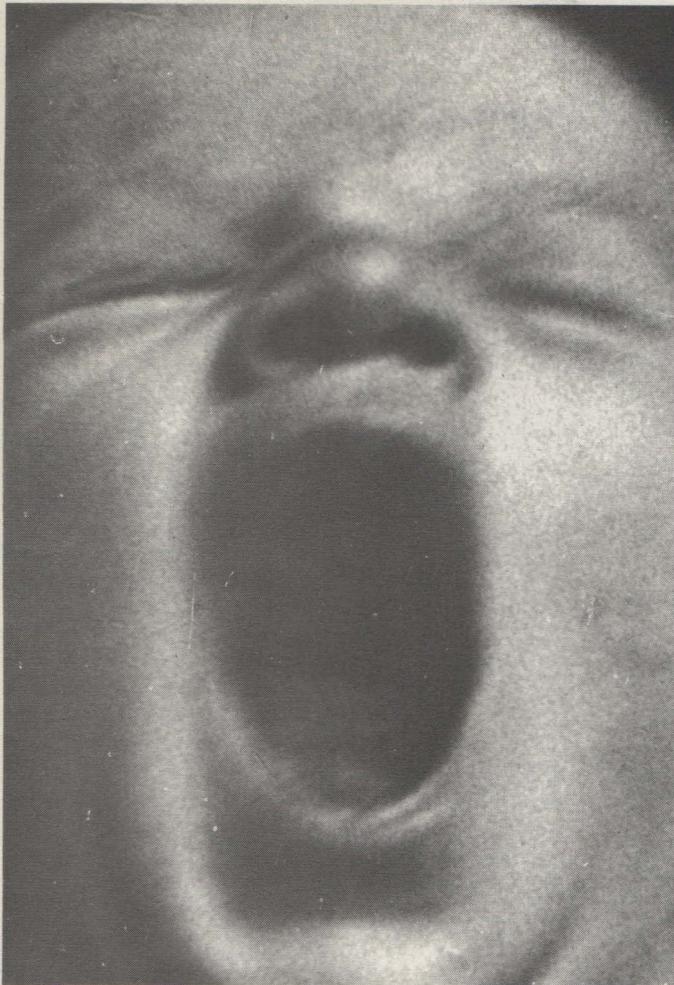
Sadness and madness  
 treachery and lechery  
 frightenment and enlightenment  
 grief and disbelief.

As year succeeds year and event event Baby Watson's face  
 hollows, eyes grow clouded while the world tells its  
 astounding tale to her as it does to all of us. Beams of  
 light through the fog of her confusion reach us as she  
 sings:

Tracy Watson hangs around the chip shop  
 Waiting in the lamplight for her prince to come  
 And knock her up behind the dance hall.

Pippa Watson hangs around in damp fields  
 Waiting on her shooting stick for her prince to come  
 And put an announcement in the Times.

Wendy Watson hangs around the Young Conservatives  
 Handing out rock cakes, waiting for her prince to come  
 And buy charm bracelets for all the bridesmaids.



And she marries, poet or ploughman, prince or ponce, has children. —beat that, you engines and devices. Still, possibilities fill the limitless spaces of her brain. In the guise of peasant at the well she sings:

Hey ho, the nappy-oh,  
Hey ho, the drains.  
I shall meet my own true love  
Sure as ice runs in my veins.  
and:

Dirty slumdweller come by night  
Befouling my home from twelve to six a.m.  
While I'm asleep.  
They come strolling in in their muddy boots,  
Put their filthy fingers all over the paintwork,  
Drink the tea, use up the stores,  
Make themselves snacks  
With never a thought of the washing up.  
They leave sinkfuls of pans  
And dirty marks round collars and cuffs  
Not to mention their smelly socks.  
They put their feet all over the furniture,  
Make nasty stains on the carpet  
They leave doors open  
Fill the wastebucket with foul remains  
Encourage mice, let their cats do their business on the  
floor.  
They use the toilet in a disgusting manner.  
I try, God knows, I try,  
But what do you do about people who live like that.  
It's a never-ending struggle,  
It's a battle,  
It's heartbreaking,  
It's a waste of time you might as well give up.

And look, over there — the late 1960s and Baby Watson, brain cells now dying at the rate of 10,000 a year, is guiding her little car through the traffic, the bags from Sainsbury's loaded in the back. Never mind if all over her body her cells are weeping for their dead companions, she sings:

Lo, see the scholar, seated in firelight,  
Betweeded and booted, greyhaired and grim.  
Outside the wind roareth, battering branches.  
Lo, see the scholar, seated at fireside,  
Lonely and mumbling o'er lore long forgotten.

and dreams again:

Rustle, rustle, rustle, counting through the minutes,  
Cogent comments added, in a tiny hand.  
How the bold Bongoans, bones stuck through their noses  
Will be startled at conclusions from a grey, strange land.

How they'll scatter snakes' ears, dancing in the darkness,  
How they'll chant out magic to the beating of the drum,  
Rattling teeth necklaces, shaking skulls and weapons.  
Look what Baby Watson and her cups of tea have done.

Between Bayswater and Paddington she:  
puts paid to her husband and children  
watches them die of dreadful diseases  
gets elected to Parliament  
puts her head in the gas oven

and on the accomplishment of this most notable of all her merciful acts the crowd assembled detected a most divine and fragrant odour emanating from her person, while all around her, although the day was dark, shone a refulgent light, which all those present — those closest to God and sinners alike — acknowledged as being a mark and special sign of favour vouchsafed to Baby Watson by her Creator and our most holy Saviour and Lord. And again:

Well, the waves of the sea  
Are icy, grey, green.  
They roll in at her feet  
And she boldly steps in,  
One foot, then the other.  
The water, her mother,  
Creeps up and then up.  
From the knee to the waist,  
From the waist to the breast  
And then she's embraced  
From the toe to the head.  
The water takes hold.  
Pale and unbled  
Over she's rolled  
And rolled round and tossed  
In the grey, green water she's lost.

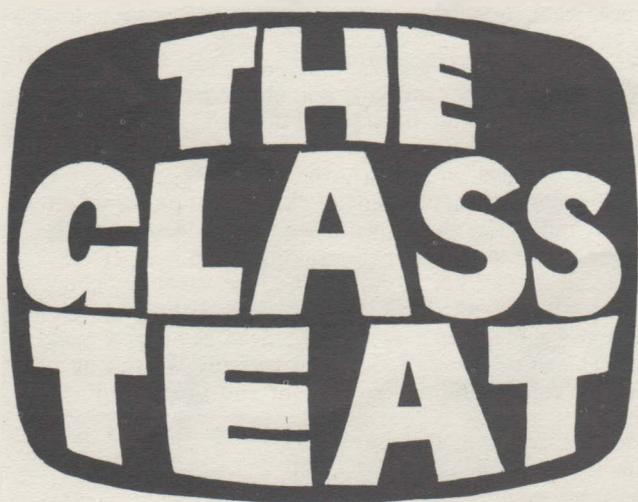
In the country graveyard in autumn Baby Watson comes upon a tombstone, half covered with long wet grass and blown leaves:

BABY WATSON  
1936-1980

A dutiful daughter, a loving mother and a faithful wife.

And later, it is 1980 again, Baby Watson sits in the kitchen and says: Leave the phone number, I want to know where you are; take it back tomorrow it doesn't suit you; I'm sorry, I can't do anything about the human condition. All the while, out of the kitchen door, down the garden path, through the garden gate are waiting the units, tens, hundreds, thousands, millions, billions, trillions and trillions of trillions of Baby Watsons, ready for the call from the pulsing brain cells — ready to fade away like wraiths, if that call never comes.

## HARLAN ELLISON



I'VE RUN OUT of pipe tobacco and I'm getting nervous. Maybe tomorrow or the next day I'll have one of the kids try to slip into Pasadena and rob a pipe store. Maybe I'll do it myself. For those of you who may be reading this — if the printing press hasn't broken down again — you may gather that my wounds have healed sufficiently well for me to consider a smash & grab raid. Yes, your faithful columnist didn't buy it last time out.

But things here in the "underground" (if you'll pardon the pretensions) are not good. The goddamned Good Folks are stepping up their activities. Christ only knows how they can find the money to finance stronger tac squads ... the way their taxes bleed them. But I suppose it's money well spent, from their viewpoint: cleaning out the dissidents. As far as I know, we're one of the last three or four pockets left in Southern California. And they almost brought down Chester Anderson's chopper last week when he made his run to drop the Free Press on LA. But I suppose we're still a pain in the ass, if hardly effective, because Mishkin came back on Sunday with the new wanted posters. My faithful readers will be delighted to know that the price on this columnist has gone up to a full ten grand, plus a year's meat-and-sweet ration points. Now that's what I call critical acceptance.

However, enough personal chit-chat.

My subject for this week is the President's speech on the War carried over the four major networks. For those of you reading this column in shelters and the outback, it won't provide anything more than another taste of the bitter gall

we've grown to know as a steady diet. But for those of you Good Folk — true patriotic Americans — who find one of these newspapers lodged in your eucalyptus or missed being washed down the sewers by the watersweepers, it may offer a moment of doubt in your unshakeable faith. At worst, it can proffer a moment of humour, and god knows you poor fuckers don't have many of *those* these days.

He's wearing makeup better these days. They've managed to disguise the insincerity of the jaw, the deviousness of the eye pouches, the corruption of the jowls, the thug-like stippling of unshaven follicles, the cornball widow's peak.

They've even managed exquisitely to cover the plastic surgery scars and the discoloration left by last December's assassination attempt on him. (I still contend that if Krassner had used a thermite jug instead of that damned Molotov cocktail, he'd have bagged the snake. But, if at first you don't succeed...)

But nothing serves to conceal his dissembling. Nothing works to cover his mealy mouth. Nothing manages to fill in with substance the empty spaces in his endless promises. He used all the time-honored phrases — my fellow Americans, this administration, the search for peace, let us turn our faces away from the conflict, grave concern, you are entitled to your minority opinion — all of them. They were all there; arrayed in shabby tediousness. The War has been going on for seventeen years, my fellow Good Folk: how many times have you heard the Man mouth the words "Peace with honor"?

And he's still wiping his nose publicly, on camera.

He revealed a secret letter he had sent to Premier Mbutu, offering nothing new or conclusive, merely babbling that the United States is anxious to make some progress at the Trobriand Island Conferences. Well, hell yes, gentle readers, he wants to make some progress at the talks. Now that Tanzania and Zambia have joined the "menace" of Black Communism the President tells us is washing its tide over all of the civilized world, he's scared out of his mind that his own American black states — Kentucky, Georgia and Illinois — will get more out of hand. He hasn't forgotten (or by any means forgiven) Governor Gregory; offering sanctuary to Dennis 3X and his militants after what they did in Washington was enough to make the Man declare Chicago ripe for low-yield H bombs.

Of course he wants peace, the snake! He wants peace on terms no one will give him. He wants more mindless flag-waving. He wants us to believe that there is some incredible nobility in our interfering in the internal affairs of seventeen Asiatic and African nations! He wants it all to

go back the way it was, when he was a whey-faced kid in a small Florida town, forty years ago. He wants the death toll that now stands at 355,000 to rise to a nice even half million. And he wants you to swallow higher taxes so the Pentagon can raise its budget and build the spacedrop platform without worrying where its next billion is coming from. Won't that be a charmer gentle readers: your own sons and husbands and brothers dropping straight down out of orbit and into India and Rhodesia.

The Man gibbered at you, friends. He said nothing new. He merely tried to pull the fangs of the December offensive you know we dissidents will be mounting next month. He doesn't want a repetition of last year's Grade School uprising. He wants to make certain that the last few of us out here scrounging for canned goods to stave off scurvy don't get any help or succor from "confused, misled Americans who fail to realize that by aiding the dissident elements in our society you are helping to prolong the War". Well, he needn't worry. It's been seventeen years, and those of us who long ago committed ourselves to saving you poor scuttlefish from your own gullibility, we know we won't get any help. We've had our examples. Bobby Seale died in a Federal Penitentiary six weeks ago. Pneumonia. Sure, it was pneumonia. How many of you remember Bobby Seale?

You want some straight talk, gentle readers ... you want to know how we *really* feel about it?

Most of the spark has gone out of us. We can afford to tell you truths like that. We aren't on the same wavelength as those of you who lie publicly to keep up "morale" and buy "public support" with lies. We can tell the truth because nothing can stop us from doing what we have to do. We know we can't win, we know we can't change the course of history. But we do it because it's reflex now. We're resigned to living like animals in those sections of the

Great United States you've called the outback. We're secure in the knowledge that one after another, we'll be picked off and killed. The tac squads don't even take prisoners any more. They got their new orders last year: flatten them.

You don't know, you'll never know. You've let yourselves be lied to so often and so ineptly, you're willing accomplices to your own destruction.

How do we feel about it? We feel that if there is a God he'll hasten the ecological debacle you've permitted to spread. He'll kill off all the diatoms in the ocean faster, and he'll deplete the oxygen supply, and we'll all go under at the same time, gasping for air like beached fish.

But if that doesn't come to pass, here's how we figure it: The Man and "Confucius" Ta Ch'ing and Mbutu will one day say fuck it, and turn loose the doomsday machines. And if — as predicted — it kills off 96% of the population of the earth, that'll be cool. Because you deserve no better.

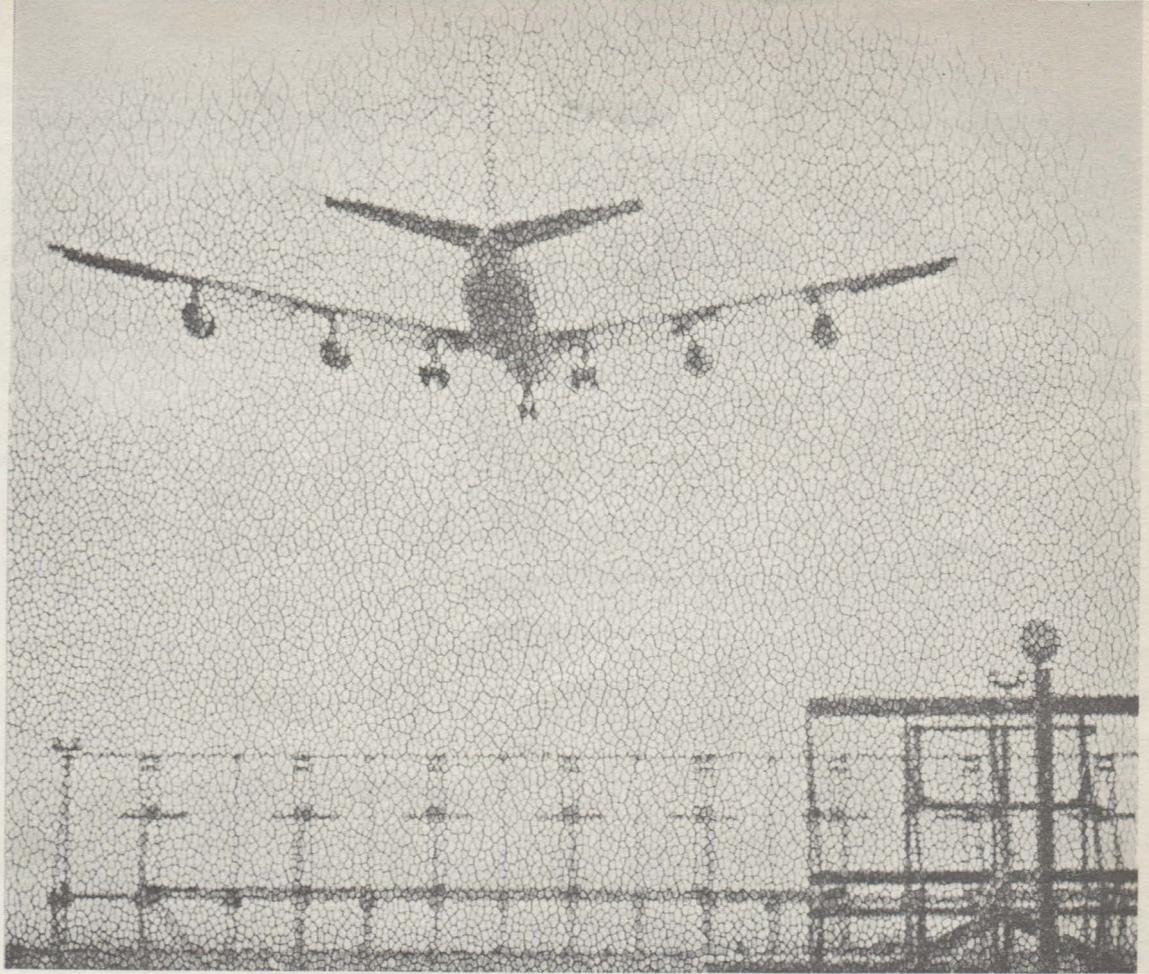
And as for me, I personally look at it like this: if I'm in the 96% that gets zapped, then I'm dead and I'm sleeping and I'm at peace at last and I don't have to fight a fight you scuttlefish never wanted me to fight. If I'm in the 4% that manages to escape alive, well, I've learned how to live in a rabbit warren, and I'll survive.

Either way, I'll be delivered from ever again having to sit and be bored by the TV appearances of a man whose obvious disregard for humanity puts him solidly at the front of a nation that is notable for self-loathing.

My only regret is that I'm out of pipe tobacco. It's funny how little things come to mean so much at the final extreme

Goodbye, gentle readers. I always end my columns these days with those words. Chances are very good that by this time next week one or other of us won't be around.





## WHAT ARE THE RULES OF THE BEAD-GAME?

JOHN CLARK

**D**URING THE 1969 Third International Writers Conference at Harrogate, organised by John Calder, I was asked to speak briefly about the future of psychology. I spoke as follows:

1. Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.
2. This is a mosaic of statements and questions.
3. It lasts exactly three minutes.
4. When everybody works in the leisure industry, everybody will be a creator and, like all creators, everybody will work all the time, in the leisure industry.
5. I own British Rail and a fleet of taxis is at my disposal, night and day.
6. "The pedestrian is automatically suspect."
7. I think, therefore I am a computer.
8. People like us, in the leisure industry, never take it.
9. Children's play is an effective simulation of adult life, until they grow up and don't know how to play it any more.
10. Should we send Mozart to the moon?
11. Learn how to do A, then do what is next to A; for example, learn the violin but always play the cello.
12. 'Whereof we cannot speak' thereof we need a meta-language.
13. When the mystic reaches absolute certainty, everything about which he can be certain disappears, including certainty.
14. The art-machine generates at random and selects five per cent of its output; the ritual destruction of the remaining 95 per cent amplifies the operator's talent in a most mysterious way.
15. What are the rules of the bead-game?
16. Psychology is the soul of study.
17. Psychology is the study of the behaviour of computers and biological computers, by biological computers, and computers.
18. The mystic is right; he knows the truth; but the truth he knows is his brain in a tautology,  $A=A$ ; the meaningless truth of mathematics.
19. Education and entertainment can no longer be distinguished in the fun palace.
20. Feedback systems cannot be described in sentences; only in moving diagrams.
21. Psychology requires two observers; but only one participates.
22. What is the role of Man in the evolution of the computer?
23. Lamarck was right about evolution: the evolution of the computer.
24. The new method in psychology is effective simulation.
25. Only science fiction can describe the present.

MICHAEL  
MOORCOCK

# The Nature of the Catastrophe

## INTRODUCTION

### The One Part Actress

MISS BRUNNER WAS firm about it. With her lips pursed she stood in the school's dark doorway. She knew she had him over a barrel.

Pretending to ignore her, Jerry Cornelius leafed through the tattered copy of *Business Week*. "The future that rides on Apollo 12 ... Hunt for cancer vaccine closes in ... What delayed the jumbo jets? ... New sales pitch for disposables ..."

Miss Brunner moved fast. She snatched the magazine from his hands.

"Look at me," she said. "Look at me."

He looked at her. "I'll be too many people by 1980. By 1980 I'll be dead," he said.

Her nostrils flared. "You've got to go."

His legs trembled. "It'll be murder."

She smiled. "It'll be murder," she said, "if you don't. Won't it?"

Jerry frowned. "It had to come. Sooner or later."

"It'll clear the air."

"What fucking air?" He gave her a hurt look. "Then?"

"Get busy, eh. You've got fifty years to play about in, after all."

"Fuck you!"

"And we'll have no more of that."

In the gym a windup gramophone played *Bye, bye, Blackbird*.

### Le fratricide de la rue Clary

Genes began to pop.

Scenes fractured.

Jerry screamed.

They took his bicycle away. It was a black gent's roadster: "The Royal Albert". He had kept it up nicely.

"Hang on tight, Mr Cornelius."

"I'll bloody go where I..."

"This is it!"

The seedy street in Marseilles disappeared.

He didn't mind that.

### In the Net

There was a drum beating somewhere and he could bet he knew who was beating it. Of all the superstitious notions he had encountered, the notion of 'the future' was the most ludicrous. He was really lumbered now.

## DEVELOPMENT

*The nerve gas plant at Portreath, Cornwall, is a pilot establishment for the Ministry of Defence, which has been manufacturing small quantities of gas for some time. Mrs Compton said the widow of one victim had not been allowed to see the pathologist's report or any other medical papers on her husband.*

*The Guardian, November 21, 1969*

### Fantasy Review

After the gas attack Jerry Cornelius finished the washing-up and went out into the street. A rainbow had formed over Ladbroke Grove. Everything was very still. He bent to put on his bicycle clips.

"Jerry!"

"Yes, mum?"

"You come back and dry up properly, you little bugger!"

### The Impatient Dreamers

June 5, 1928: Fifty two years since Owen Nares and Jeanne de Casalis opened in Karen Bramson's *The Man they Buried* at the Ambassadors Theatre, London. The Daily News had said: "... at the end of all the tumult of life is 'Time and the unresolved hypothesis'.

### People Like You

Jerry groped his way from the car and turned his sightless eyes upward. Sunlight would not register. He was completely blind.

So it hadn't paid off.

Tears began to cruise down his cheeks.

"Mum?"

Somewhere in the distance the chatter of the Graf Zeppelin's engines died away.

He was abandoned.

*Am I blue? You'd be too. If each plan with your man done fell through. Watcha gonna do? Watcha gonna do?*

### World to Conquer

*We regret to say that Prince Jewan Bukhy, son of the late Shah Bahudur Sha, the last titular King of Delhi, is dangerously ill ... He is the last of his race that was born in the purple. He leaves a son, also in bad health, who was born in Rangoon while his father was in confinement. With Prince Jewan Bukht passes away the last direct descendant of the once famous house of Timour.*

*Rangoon Times, July 28 1884*

He struggled out of that.

### Number 7

Jerry stumbled and fell, gashing his knee. He felt about him with his stone cold hands. He touched something as smooth as steel. He stroked the surfaces. A discarded suit of armour? And yet everywhere now were sounds. Engines. Screams.

Didn't he know there was a war on? Was he making it back?

He heard a bus draw up nearby, its motor turning over. He shouted.

There was silence again. A V2 silence.

*Coming in on a wing and a prayer...*

## The Ill Wind

The rush of water.

He was grasping at anything now.

He should never have tried it. A certain amount of diffusion could have been anticipated, but nothing as terrifying as this. He'd been conned.

Distantly: *One o'clock, two o'clock, three o'clock rock...*

## The Adapters

There were strong sexual overtones which only became apparent as he concentrated, speaking aloud into the thinning air:

"Miss Jeane de Casalis, who is the subject this week for our 'Is the Child Mother to the Woman?' series..."

"My father, who came from le pays Basque, had gone to Basutoland for the purpose of scientific investigations in connection with cancer and probable cures for this terrible disease, when a baby was announced..."

"Once the best and most popular fellow at Greyfriars — now the worst boy in the school! Such is the unhappy pass to which Harry Wharton's feud with his form-master leads him! You cannot..."

"Issued July 15, 1931, to be used to prepay postage on mail carried aboard the Graf Zeppelin on its prospective flight to the North Pole. It was on this voyage that the "Nautilus" a submarine commanded by Sir Hubert Wilkins was to meet the Graf Zeppelin and transfer mail from one ship to the other at the North Pole. The "Nautilus" did not keep the rendezvous."

"Long Service Certificate. Presented by the Board of Directors to Ernest Frederick Cornelius of the W.D. & H.O. Wills Branch of the Imperial Tobacco company (of Great Britain and Ireland), Limited, in Recognition of Faithful Service Rendered During the Past 25 Years and as a mark of Appreciation and Goodwill. Signed on Behalf of the Board, Date 28th March 1929. Gilbert A.H. Wills, Chairman."

"Georges Duhamel, who has discovered a serum for cancer, is suddenly stricken with pain. He lives for the rest of the play in dread expectation of death. His whole nature changes ... (He) will not face an operation because that will proclaim to the world that his serum is a failure."

Jerry closed the scrapbook and opened the stamp album. It contained hundreds of Zeppelin issues from Paraguay, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Italy, Iceland, Greece, Germany, Cyrenaica, Cuba, Canada, Brazil, the Argentine, the Aegean Islands, the United States of America, San Marino, Russia. There were also a couple of Spanish autogiro issues and an Italian issue showing Leonardo da Vinci's flying machine.

From the little linen envelope beside the album, Jerry took with his tweezers his latest discovery, a set of Salvador airmail stamps issued on September 15, 1930. The stamps had become so brittle that they would split unless handled with great care. They were deep red (15¢), emerald green (20¢), brown violet (25¢), ultramarine (40¢) and all showed a biplane flying over San Salvador. This issue had just preceded the Simon Bolivar airmail issue of 17th December 1930.

"Jerry! You get down outa there an' 'elp yer mum!"

Jerry was oscillating badly.

## The Merit Award

Jerry wandered over the bomb-site, kicking at bits of

broken brick. The catharsis had come at last, then. But wasn't it a trifle disappointing?

Now he could go for miles and nothing would interrupt him.

Taking an apple from his pocket, he bit it, then spat, flinging the apple away. It had tasted of detergent.

He looked down at his hands. They were red and grey and they shook. He sat on a slab of broken concrete. Nothing moved. Nothing sang.

## Shapers of Men

*Changes in jewellery design styles tend to take place over a period of many years. In the past one could think in terms of millennia, centuries or generations, at the very least. Not so today.*

*Brian Marshall, Illustrated London News, November 22nd, 1969*

## Coming Next Issue

Jerry wondered why the scene had got so hazy. A few buildings stood out sharply, but everything else was drowned in mist. He put the Phantom X into reverse.

He wished they'd let him keep his bike.

How little time you were allowed for yourself. Twenty-five years at most. The rest belonged to and was manipulated by the ghosts of the past, the ghosts of the future. A generation was a hundred and fifty years.

There was no escape.

A rocket roared by.

*When the red, red robin comes bob, bob, bobbin'...*

## Prisoner in the Ice

*By 1979, industrial technology will make the sixties seem like the dark ages. Automatic highways — computerized kitchens — person-to-person television — food from under the sea. They are ideas today, but industrial technology will make them a part of your life tomorrow... Our measuring devices are so accurate they're used by the U.S. Bureau of Standards to measure other measuring devices. Our fasteners were selected for the space suits on the men who walked the moon. Our plastic parts are in almost every automobile made in the USA.*

*In these ways, and more, we help make today's ideas tomorrow's realities.*

*U.S. Industries Inc., ad., New York Times  
October 16 1969*

"The waterline length is 1,004 ft., and when completed her tonnage will probably exceed 73,000. The Queen Mary's maiden voyage (from Southampton to New York) begins on May 27 1936..."

"Britain's toy soldiers have been..."

"By 1980 there will be..."

His voice was hoarse now. Fifty years was too long. He had no one, and no one to blame but himself.

*Little man you're crying; I know why you're blue...*

## Lucifer!

A hundred and fifty years itched in his skull and yet he could not get back to the only year in which he could survive.

From time to time his sight would return, allowing him horrifying visions — fragments of newspapers, buildings, roadways, cars, planes, skulls, ruins, ruins.

"MUM!"

“DAD!”  
 (CRASHED CONCORDE HAD RECEIVED FULL  
 OVERHAUL)  
 “CATHY!”  
 “FRANK!”  
 (MARS MEN BACK IN DOCK)  
 “GRANDMA!”  
 “GRANDPA!”  
 (CHINESE MAKE FRESH GAINS)  
 “JERRY!”  
 (METS DO IT AGAIN — TEN IN A ROW!)  
 “Je...”

His voice whispered into near vacuum.  
 If only he had been allowed to bring his “Royal Albert”  
 bike. It would have seen him through. It would have  
 been an anchor.

But he was alone.

“M...”

Rootless, he was dying.

The cold was absolute. His body fell away from him.

The resurrection, if it came, would be painful.

### A Kind and Thoughtful Friend

“It boils down to a question of character, doesn’t it?”  
 Miss Brunner said. “Character. Character.”

She always knew how to get to him. She always chose  
 a moment when his energy was at a low ebb.

He looked miserably up from the desk, hoping to  
 touch her heart.

She knew he was confused. “And if I told your  
 mother...”

He lowered his head again. Maybe it would all blow  
 over.

### It’s a Beautiful, Glamorous Age

It had all gone now, of course. He’d used up the last of it.  
 No more past to draw on. He felt at his skin.

“Smooth,” he said.

“You see.” She held her thin body in an attitude of  
 triumph. “It was all for the best.”

## CONCLUSION

### A Man of Qualities

“That’s a boy!”

“That’s what you say.” Jerry had had enough of it all.  
 He shivered.

They unstrapped him from the chair. “Don’t you feel  
 better now?”

Jerry glanced around the Time Centre. All the chrono-  
 graphs were going like clockwork. “I told you it didn’t  
 exist,” he said, “because I don’t exist. Not there.”

“It was worth a try, though, wasn’t it?”

Jerry bunched himself up and tried to stop shaking.

### Other texts used:

- The Sketch, January 13 1926
- The Bystander, October 5 1927
- T.P.’s Weekly, November 26 1927
- Daily Mail, December 15 1927
- Le Petit Marseillais, October 22 1930
- The Story of Navigation, Card No. 50, published by  
 The Imperial Tobacco Co., 1935
- Standard Catalogue of Air Post Stamps, Sanabria, New York, 1937
- Modern Boy, July 9 1938
- The Illustrated Weekly of India, July 6 1969
- Vision of Tomorrow, November 1939

# FOUR CROSSWORDS of graded difficulty

## 1. Clock

cl ck cl ck cl ck  
 cl ck cl ck cl ck  
 cl ck cl ck cl ck  
 cl ck cl ck cl ck

## 2. Molybdenum Children Enclosure

n enclosure molybdenum childre

## 3. Tom V

Or, The Crumbling Rumanian Rhubarb Pie

ck ru mbl ania  
 n rhubarb ie  
 tch f un k id  
 entity

# by THOMAS M. DISCH

## 4. The Sea

books scuba myrrh de form  
 ity bitty yellow banala  
 choler ester ormandy  
 evasion  
 finge touc an op st

# COITUS 80

During their evenings together in the apartment

The female breast — reduction mammoplasty. The reduction in size of the female breast presents a surgical challenge of some magnitude, particularly if the nipple is to be retained as an oral mount. Many considerations should be taken into account: the age of the patient, the degree of enlargement, whether the condition is one of pure hypertrophy, and finally the presence of any pathology in the breast itself. Pedicle operations are best avoided, and amputation with transposition of the nipples as free grafts is adopted as the procedure of choice. In dealing with very large breasts in younger subjects, it may be necessary to reduce the huge volumes of breast tissue in two stages. It should always be borne in mind that after the age of 30 years breast tissue may behave in a very unfortunate manner.

Vaughan became increasingly aroused

Location of the nipple. The most important step before reduction mammoplasty is to ascertain carefully the site proposed for the new nipple. Measurements must be made in the ward before the operation with the patient sitting up. Steadying the breast with one hand, the assistant draws a line directly down to the nipple itself. The new nipple should fall on this line  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the suprasternal notch. The nipples should be checked to ensure that they are not more than 8 inches apart. The entire skin of the chest wall is then cleaned with soap and water and wrapped in sterile towels.

by the body of the young woman.

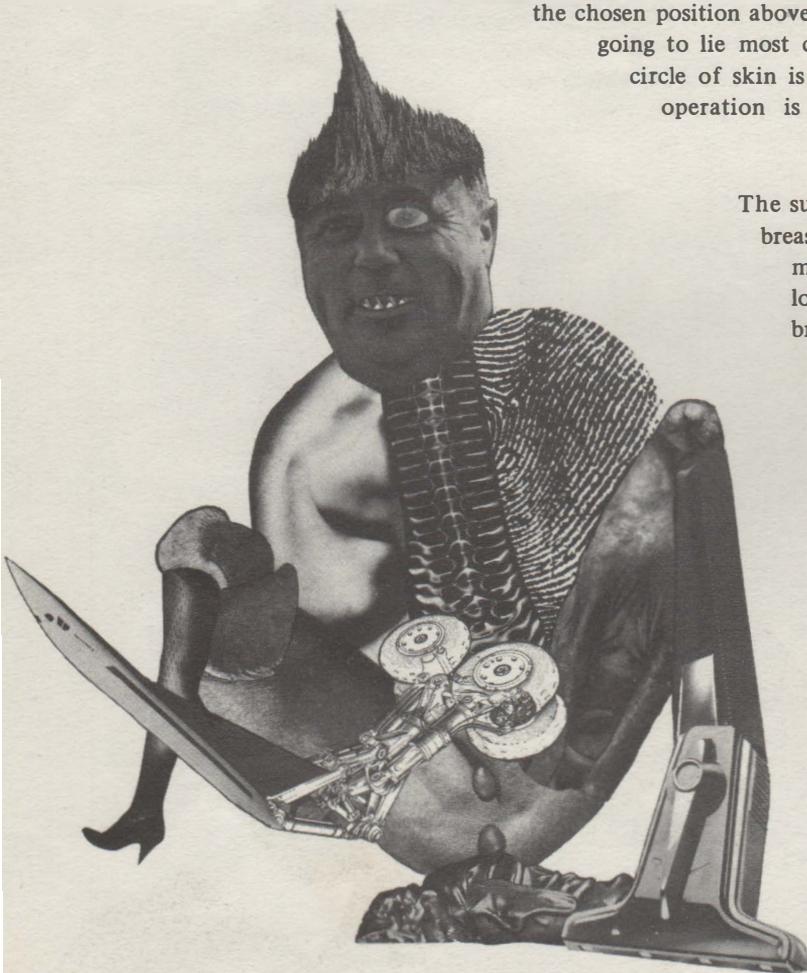
It is possible to perform the whole operation with the knife only. An incision is carried straight down from the nipple to the submammary sulcus, allowing the breast skin to be turned back as flaps. The breast should then be brought forward and laid on a board of wood. A large breast knife is carried down from above, cutting very close to the nipple. The remaining tissue of the breast is then folded round to judge whether the breast forms an acceptable shape. Care should be taken with the sutures. A suture wrongly inserted here may pull the nipple too far laterally. The skin covering is now arranged to fit snugly over the newly formed breast. The result is a roughly repaired wound from the new nipple down to the infra-mammary sulcus. It remains merely to bring the nipples out through a new hole, at the chosen position above the vertical suture line. Having found where the nipple is going to lie most comfortably and with the most desirable appearance, a circle of skin is excised. The nipple is then sutured into this circle. The operation is a lengthy one and very often causes surgical shock.

Their acts of intercourse were marked

The sutures around the nipple are removed in 7 days. The breast must be firmly bandaged to the chest wall, using a many-tailed bandage, firm pressure being applied to the lower half of the breast. It will be some time before the breast reaches its final proportion and shape. The patient's brassiere should have a deep section and the cups should be of adequate size. Subtotal amputation with transplantation of the nipple is reserved for very large breasts. There should be no urgency about trimming scar lines or operating on the new breast until at least six months have passed.

by an almost seraphic tenderness,

Augmentation maminoplasty has proved extremely satisfactory in relieving the chronic anxiety caused to many women by flat or asymmetric breasts. With the patient lying on her front, two elliptical incisions are marked out on the right and left buttocks, running upward from the natal cleft. Each ellipse should be 3 inches wide and 7 to 8 inches in length. A huge wedge of skin with the underlying fat is then removed. The wound is closed in two layers; drainage is advised. The patient is then turned on her back, and the breasts are thoroughly cleaned and towelled off.



**a description  
of the sexual act  
in 1980**

by J. G. Ballard

An incision is made in the inframammary sulcus on each side, down to the deep fascia under the breast. The fat grafts from the buttocks are pressed into the wounds in such a way that the dermal surface faces toward the wound. The incision is then closed with interrupted sutures.

**transits of touch and feeling**

Finding the vagina. The more contact one has with the many types of vagina involved, the more confused one becomes. It is preferable therefore to confine oneself to the technical problem of investigating and finding a vagina, should one be present. Experience suggests that where a vagina is being sought, a laparotomy may also be necessary. With one assistant working from the abdominal cavity and the other from the rectum, each can assist the other, particularly where there is difficulty in finding a vagina that may well be absent.

**as serene as the movements of a dune.**

Many ingenious attempts have been made to construct a vagina with loops of intestine, or with flaps from the thigh. In general, the epithelial mould-inlay technique is the safest and most effective procedure. The essential point in the operation is to have prepared a hollow mould of perspex or vulcanite measuring 5 by 2½ inches, approximate in shape to that of an erect penis and, if possible, with a tube of reasonable width running down its entire length. The patient is placed in the lithotomy position and a thin graft is cut from one thigh, sufficient to wrap around the mould. A transverse incision is then made in the perineum and a plane reached between the bladder and rectum which is opened up until a tunnel of dimensions adequate to take the mould has been formed. The formation of the tunnel requires great care if the rectum and urethra are not to be damaged. The labia minora are then incised at the introitus and sutured together across the lower end of the mould, leaving a small opening posteriorly for the escape of any discharge. Every effort must be made after the operation to see that the mould cannot be extruded.

**Outside, the traffic on the flyover**

The period during which the mould is retained by the patient varies a good deal with the degree of graft 'take'. With a good 'take' the graft contracture is even all around the mould and there is less tendency to extrusion. Even so, it is difficult to persuade the patient to hold on to her mould for more than 3 months. Having decided that the mould can be discarded, the union of labial tissue below the mould must be divided, the mould removed and careful cleaning of the new cavity performed. Tendency to further contracture is difficult to control. The only sure way is the physiological one of regular intercourse, and often this is felt to be tedious, undignified and ineffective by the patient. The ultimate results of this procedure with regard to sexual function are unknown.

**mediated an exquisite and undying eroticism.**

Penile hypospadias — before any attempt is made to perform a reconstruction on this group of cases, careful attention must be paid to the sexing of the patients. As often as not, the penis far more resembles a clitoris and, although large, it is completely hooded over and bound down. The scrotum is usually cleft and often empty. The straightening procedure must always be performed well ahead of any attempt to reconstruct the canal, and may or may not be accompanied by a meatotomy. The cosmetic result of this operation is not always perfect. There may well be an excess of tissue at the distal end of the penis resembling a wing on either side of the shaft. At least 6 months should be allowed for the patient to get over the worry about re-admission to the hospital. These wings can then be trimmed away and the organ made to look more shapely.

In the experience of this surgeon, skin is never in short supply.



brian w. aldiss



The Lady of Shalott Manchester City Art Galleries

# THE SECRET OF HOLMAN HUNT AND THE CRUDE DEATH RATE

1980 saw the dawn of a new era for mankind — an era of hope and salvation, when it became possible for the first time for a human being to be truly human! Not only was it the year the world economy started to recover, the worst of the famine period being over, and the year those brave British mountaineers climbed Everest blindfold. It was also the year I found a new use for the human mind.

To put it as simply as possible, I used what I call infra-externality: a form of stillness in spatial dimension which allows the mind fullest range — mind being formed of the brain/memory components, and therefore in part time-functional; full function is greatest when movement is least. This principle I first stumbled upon when studying a chronologically arranged collection of 774 impersonations of the American film actor, James Cagney. Examining these impersonations, which range from the nineteen-thirties to the nineteen-seventies, I became aware of how vocal range has fluctuated during this half-century. Here was a vital clue to the reality-value of different periods, suggesting that the external world is itself composed of fluctuating sense-impressions.

What I needed for corroboration was similar data from an earlier period, preferably from a subject who, like James Cagney, made no attempt to diagnose or master the elements of his contemporary environment.

The evidence I required arrived from what may perhaps be regarded at first as an unlikely source, in the sketches, watercolours and chalks of the Pre-Raphaelite painter, William Holman-Hunt. It may be helpful to the reader to see some of this data himself. The following figures are in centimeters:

Apple Harvest, Ragaz	Pencil	39 x 44.2
Study of Dr. Bloxam <sup>1</sup>	Chalk	19.7 x 23.2
The Pearl	Silverpoint	44.5 x 28

Study of Drapery <sup>2</sup>	Black chalk	24.4 x 22
Christ Among the Doctors	Watercolour	64.8 x 125.7
The Nile Postman	Watercolour	17.2 x 24.8
View of Corfu	Watercolour	17 x 24.7
Sketches on Magdalen Tower <sup>1</sup>	Watercolour	24.4 x 34.3
Hilary as a Baby	Silverpoint	24.8 x 34.3
Nude study: Annie Miller's Thighs <sup>2</sup>	Indian Ink	24.2 x 28
Study of a Candlestick with Flowers <sup>2</sup>	Pencil	35.5 x 25.4

1: studies for the oil painting May Morning on Magdalen Tower

2: studies for the oil painting The Lady of Shalot

There is no need to prolong the list. The figures cannot be disputed; matched against the chronology of Hunt's life they relate well to a cyclic waning of universal entropic dynamism. I was greatly helped at this stage by the cooperation of Professor Benedict Nightwind, the specialist in nineteenth century economic history. We matched birth/death figures for England and Wales over six decades, balancing them against the tell-tale ratio — indicated by Rostow some years ago — between the figures for houses and dwellings erected in Europe and the numbers of emigrants from Europe to North America during the equivalent period.

Gradually we built up a scheme which at first seemed pure fantasy, it indicated clearly enough the complete fallaciousness of our old ideas about the relationship between mind and matter. To clarify by analogy: just as

**Heat Source + Frying Pan + Egg + Fat = Fried Egg**

was hitherto supposed to represent a natural progression, both in terms of temporal flow and cause and effect, we now understand that the very converse is the natural progression. It is the demand for the fried egg that activates the heat source. The fried egg we eat lies at the apex of a pyramid of technological endeavour called into being to provide the fried egg. This, at bottom, is what the second Industrial Revolution is all about. And so with the external world.

It will immediately be seen to what further conclusion I was led. The brain/memory system operates best when not in pursuit of its own chimerae. From this observation has developed my system of infra-externality.

But a more alarming fact also emerged. If a brain/memory system has influence — weak, but nevertheless measurable under our new scales — over externality, then clearly the more plentiful the brain/memory systems, the greater their influence. The unit of measurement of this influence is the *pom*, after Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruitfulness. Numerous tables already calibrated showed a high pom-effect — although naturally the compilers of these tables were compiling their data with other intentions in mind, being unaware of differing reality-values. Here is one such table, showing alterations in the Crude Death Rate expressed in percentages for six developing countries over five decades:

Country	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
Mexico	23.2	16.2	11.4	9.5	7.1*
Costa Rica	17.3	12.2	8.6	6.9	5.1
Chile	21.6	15.0	11.9	11.1*	7.7
Venezuela	16.6	10.9	8.0	4.3	3.2
Singapore	20.9	12.0	6.3	4.2	2.9
Japan	16.8	10.9	7.6	3.7	1.8

\*These figures would doubtless be appreciably lower, were it not for the war in Mexico and the earthquake in Chile

The high pom-effect revealed here is manifested, in the main, by brain/memory systems in agitated motion, which induces a consequential weakening in the reality principle. Eventually, the external world may be expected to disappear entirely, just as sleep tends to evaporate from bedrooms within audible distance of airports and motorways. This weakening, to my mind, entirely accounts for the disappearance of the planets Mercury and Venus at 0259 hours GMT on Monday 28th July 1982 — the abstruse new theory of celestial gravitation is nothing to the case.

What calamity will next befall us if many millions more do not adopt my system of infra-externality? Beyond assuring ourselves that whatever happens will be the fault of those too idle or wicked to heed warnings, we must admit that it is useless to speculate. But perhaps even the two brief tables shown here may give us a clue to catastrophes in store. Both tables show the brain/memory system's tendency to *diminish* things. We must not suppose that Dr Bloxam 'really' measured only 19.7 x 23.2, that a postman on the Nile was 'really' of no greater stature than 17.2 x 24.8; or even that Annie Miller's thighs could 'really' be accommodated in a space of 24.2 x 28; the Victorians, as far as all medical evidence shows, were of approximately our dimensions. Nevertheless, by such reductive thinking as the restless Hunt's, a real diminution was set in process as Nature imitated Art (which is, incidentally, a Victorian perception and one that immediately foreshadows my own discoveries).

When we turn to the second table, the one showing Crude Death Rate, we are struck by the same process of diminishment, here at work in different ontological territory. A simple extension of the figures into the future is sufficient to prove that death rates in all of the listed countries except Mexico and Chile will have reached zero by the year 1995 and that Mexico and Chile will probably have reached zero by 2000. *The process is a continuous one until people adopt my famous infra-externality method.* By the year 2005, all six countries (and of course many more besides) will have a minus quantity death rate.

What are we to do with all these resurrected bodies when they appear from their graves to reproach us? To many of my followers, this coming event represents The End of The World (or the Last Trump, which was a Biblical way of representing the eventual complete collapse of external reality). I tell them otherwise. I tell them that these resurrected millions are the very people we need to further our cause. To them, who have undergone the process of death, the principles of stillness in spatial dimension upon which my amazing system relies will be readily apparent.

All of them will join — as you can, today — in the Campaign for Scientific Infra-Externality (C.S.I.E.). Certainly, many unenlightened people may object at first to the multitudes of semi-decomposed Mexicans and Costa Ricans squatting among them, but conviction will ultimately triumph. The world will be saved. Everyone, everywhere, will be sitting still. And we will, in addition, get Mercury and Venus back.

That victory will be mine! But it can be yours too. It is still not too late to join C.S.I.E. Put your brain/memory system at my service. Send me five pounds immediately. You will receive in return a fifty-page brochure entitled, "Sit and Conquer! Meditate Your Way to Mastery!", containing preliminary details of my methods, a signed certificate to frame, a mat to sit on (inflatable), and a 3D photograph of Holman-Hunt sitting on the shores of the Dead Sea. Later, men from our organisation will call on you.

And this is only the beginning. The secrets of the ages could be yours. From my personal experience I know that once you have gained control of yourself, you can control the world!

# 198., A TALE OF 'TOMORROW'

Ernest thought it would be fun to let his computer call up Frank's computer on the telephone.

"Good to hear yours, too! But hey, do you know what a.m. it is out here?"

Al is seen glancing at his watch. Thanks to a vibrating quartz crystal in it, this watch keeps very, very accurate time. He looks from its Swiss face to the American face of Dot, his wife, out in the back yard eating a piece of fruit that has been picked the day before yesterday in the Orient. Will miracles — or anything — ever cease? The digital clock reports a new minute.

"I met you," Al said into a portable tape recorder no larger than a package of cigarettes, "a year, three days, seven hours and forty-three minutes ago, through that computer dating service. You had brushed your teeth electrically, using stannous fluoride toothpaste to prevent decay. I had just had dacron veins put in.

"Times change, You now have someone else's liver and kidney; I have ridden on an atomic submarine."

On the atomic ship, Al will notice an interesting article about LSD, a drug commonly supposed to cause visions and insights. He would reproduce this article by xerography, a fast electrostatic process making use of powdered ink.

Al called Bertha, his ex-wife, on the hall video phone.

"I just took a stay-awake pill," she said. "I've been so sleepy ever since the sauna I took, on the airbus from —."

"What's new?"

"I'm pregnant again, due to the fertility drug I'm taking. Ah, and I have a new non-stick milk saucepan. See?" On the screen she cuts open a tetrahedral carton of milk which was sealed for almost a year, then pours some into a special pan. The pan has previously been coated with a compound to prevent sticking and burning. So Bertha, wife of Ernest, was pregnant!

She and Al soon fell into their old argument about riot control. She favoured tanks with aluminium armour, while Al defended the judicious use of Mace, a gas which irritates the mucous membranes.

"What's new with you and Dot?" she asks.

"Oh, I've been sterilized. Dot has this detached retina, but luckily they can now weld it back on with lasers."

They spoke of Dot's trip to the Orient, on a ballistic, supersonic plane. There Dot makes the acquaintance of an amateur biologist named Frank, who's all keyed up about the isolation of the gene. His real business is the manufac-

polio, once a dread crippler and killer of children. She only hoped it would grow up to be a president like the one she now watches on colour TV, announcing the landing of men on the moon (this president had not yet been assassinated). O Frank, Frank! Where are you?

Frank had given up smoking, drinking and excessive eating since his heart-lung transplant. Yet here he is, enjoying a cigar, a martini, and what looks like boef Stroganoff! What can possibly be the explanation of this?

It was a photograph of Frank made many years before, to demonstrate a process that made colour prints, right in the camera, seconds after the photo was snapped. Dot became a secretary. As she rode the helicopter to the Pan Am building, she typed on her personal portable plastic typewriter. The ride compared favourably with her former trip on the 125 mph train from Tokyo to Osaka, where she met Frank. Unforgettable Japan! She revisited in memory that factory where thousands of workers began the day with the company song, followed by "Zen jerks" to limber up mind and body for the assembly of portable record players.

Such as the one Clem now listened to as he avoided the draft. He did not want to die in Vietnam, but stay here, taking LSD. He saw God, was God, felt God, left God.

Frank was at this moment crossing the English Channel on a hovercraft. He liked unusual means of motion: In Paris he had stood upon a moving sidewalk. In London, he meant to ride on one of the famous "driverless" Underground trains. Back in the U.S., he tries sitting on the beetle-like back of his robot lawnmower, as it mows its random pattern. Travel was his vice. Like Ernest's drinking.

Ernest had thank God been cured of his drinking by aversion therapy. One by one, all the pleasant stimulus-response mechanisms linking him with alcohol were broken down. In real time, Al ponders life after death.

He had engaged a firm to freeze him soon after death and thus maintain him until such time as science should come across a way of reversing whatever killed him. Ernest would live longer than otherwise on account of his "pacemaker", an electronic device to regulate the heartbeat of Ernest. In a programmed novel, he might or might not have this pacemaker; it all depends on the reader.

Al dialled Ernest's number in another city. "Dialled" is not strictly accurate, for the clumsy dial on Al's phone had

been replaced by pushbuttons and musical tones. They get into a heated discussion of missile defence systems. Ernest certainly presents his case fairly, but Al wouldn't listen to reason. Dot counted her contraceptive pills, 20 of which must be taken each month. She also changed her paper panties. Clem receives a picture of Frank by almost magical means!

Bertha puts the picture into a machine and places the receiver of her phone upon it. Far away, Clem copies this motion, then finds the picture in his duplicate machine. Eagerly, he gazes on the familiar lineaments of his real father.

Dot notices how much plastic there is around: Her plastic necklace, her boss's plastic tie, Al's plastic credit cards, which he claimed were displacing money in the realtime world — could there be any connection with that island where they issued bright plastic coins? Dot saw what she must do, later. Now—

She maintains that the "golfball" typewriter, a high-speed machine using interchangeable spherical type fonts, is a pain in the ass. The reader, Al, may choose...

Bertha took a new antibiotic tablet, while Ernest explained again the difference between "Quasars" and "Quarks":

"'Quarks' are mathematical entities proposed to explain certain behaviour in subatomic particles. 'Quasars' are quasi-stellar radio sources which have often puzzled astronomers." Clem tore Frank's picture into thirty-two pieces. Why can't the others share time, the whatyoucallem, the computer makers, the peoples? On a radio small as a pocket watch, Clem heard the news:

They had invented a polymer of water which, if uncontrolled, could turn all the water of the world into plastic.

Dot and Frank are in bed when Al

No, Dot is at home, Al dies of heart failure in his office, slumping across the digital calendar. "A black and white picture!" muttered Clem, as his heart begins to beat. "What do they take me for?" Dot and Ernest are in the vibrating bed. Clem hears of a plan to widen the Panama canal with atomic blasts. Dot and Ernest are vibrating when Al walks in with the electric carving knife in his hand. This carving knife could run as now on batteries. Alternatively, it could use house power, ultimately derived from a distant atomic pile.

ture of cosmetics for men, in factories he claimed were 97% automated.

#### LIFE AFTER DEATH? —AL WONDERS

Ernest took a tranquilliser before he called Dot on the teletypewriter. They were lovers, not to Al's knowledge. This was a conveniently private mode of communication, not often used by spirit mediums, though.

As they "spoke", Ernest drank coffee that had been percolated, frozen, vacuum dried and packed in jars. A spoonful of this substance to a cup of boiling water, while Dot watched the five-inch screen of her portable television set; there is a baseball game in far-off Texas, played on nylon grass beneath a geodesic dome, and she is part of it. When they have said the private things lovers must, Dot took a sleeping pill and slept.

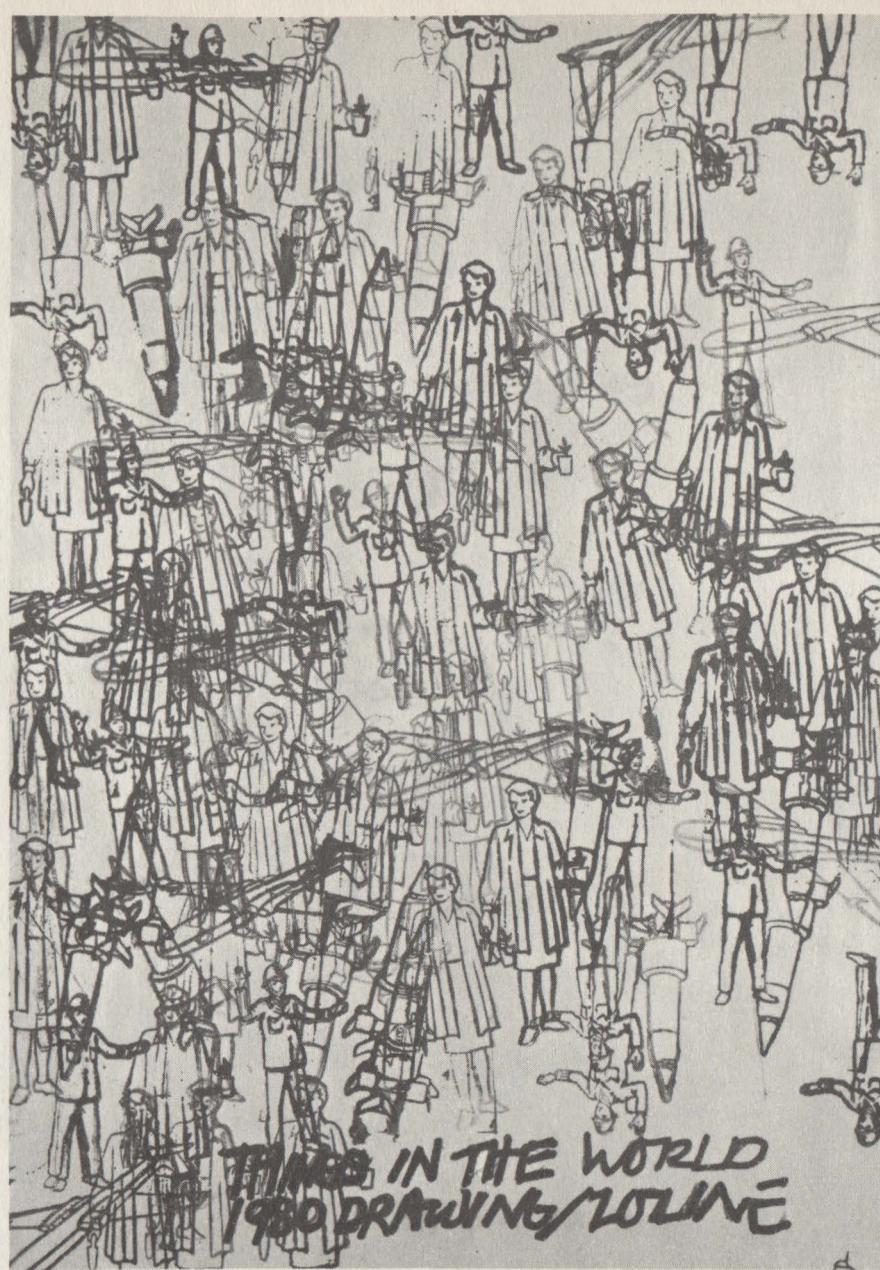
Clement, or Clem, was Al's son by a previous marriage. Next day he fuelled his car at a coin gas station, dry-cleaned his clothes in a similar manner, and fell foul of a peculiar police arrangement: At one end of a bridge police read the licence numbers of all passing cars into their radios. The computer at headquarters checks these for old violations.

Clem lived avoiding the army in a module apartment house, which has been made up at a factory in complete, decorated rooms, then bolted together at the building site. When he gets home he tries to call Bertha, his former step-mother, by means of a telephone message relayed through a communications satellite many thousands of miles, but she is at the hospital, having her third child.

Bertha's first child was now a bright little five-year-old, using an unusual teaching machine to learn to type and spell at the same time. This machine would give an instruction, then lock all but the necessary keys. If only life could be like that, Al thought, with no chance to err! In a programmed novel, the reader determines the ending.

Her second child was very intelligent, possibly because Bertha wore a suit pressurised with oxygen during the brain-growing months of pregnancy. Her present delivery is difficult. The child has worked down too far for a Caesarian yet not far enough for forceps. What is the obstetrician to do?

He used a new suction device to grip the child's head and draw him from the womb. Soon it cried, and before long, Bertha knew, it would be joining its siblings in immunity to



by  
**JOHN T.  
SLADEK**





George Orwell's grand paranoid vision: the spectre of geographical inundation; artificial cultural overlay; Little England (or Airstrip One, as it's known in the book) as a flip-flop in the Oceanic Bloc machine; an ersatz language; the endless cardboard-cigarette breadline; the incredible war-economy bleakness of it all — it's a bit shabby. Possibly because, during rationing, he couldn't engage the concept of a rich dystopia. It would be easier to do today.

Nineteen Eighty-Four lacks subtlety — Orwell was too frightened, totalitarianism was too fresh in the mind. He saw the means, and the control

mechanisms, but lacking the experience of the past twenty years, he missed the important thing: you don't use these on the people, you have to educate the people to use them for themselves. Certainly they're coming along much more quietly these days: Orwell, after the tight-knit, belligerent self-awareness of WWII, could hardly have envisioned a population that *wanted* to be turned anoetic. In that respect, Huxley was nearer the target: pleasure's the effective ring, through the scrotum, the tympanum or the retina, never through the nose.

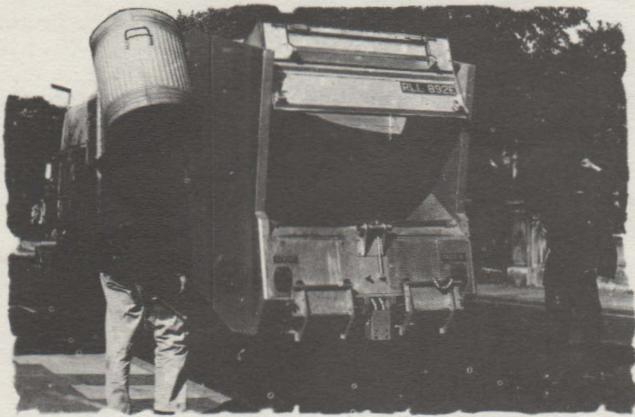
In 1947, a coven of working ladies

attacked a girl in a Paris street because she was wearing Dior's filthy new line, skirts above the lower calf. Fashion: things shift so quickly, there hasn't been time to build such claustrophobic administrations (cumbersome is something else). Even his politics have gone out of fashion; they're too monolithic, too enduring; it's the chameleon keeps the marks blinking.

"Airstrip One" has furniture by Habitat and folk music by John Pearse; a freaky room extracts the confession so much quicker than rats; and it's anomie instead of varicose ulcers.

# JACK TREVOR STORY

## THE WIND IN THE SNOTTYGOBBLE TREE



### The Story So Far:

You can buy the previous two issues of *New Worlds* from our back issues department at 4/- each. Or you can catch up with what has happened so far in our serial by reading the following synopsis:

Marchmont was an ordinary sort of bloke, and his life was uneventful until he lost his driving licence on a breathalyser test. Suddenly, he found he was bored; he started counting lamp posts; measuring the number of steps he walked each day to his job at a travel agency in Ruislip.

And he invented a make-believe identity. Pretending to be an international spy, he started giving holidaymakers who used his travel agency mysterious little packages to be delivered to other holiday makers, in Iron Curtain countries. The packages contain nothing but nonsense poems or old cigarette packets; but as Marchmont says, it was good for a giggle.

Until he suddenly found himself involved in a real-life espionage set-up. A bomb in his bed-sitter was the start of a nightmare in which he is hunted by Chief Detective Inspector Marcus, who leads a squad of secret police who are quite unconvinced by Marchmont's protests that his little messages were 'nonsense'.

Meanwhile, there are others who for some reason are on Marchmont's side. Kiki, who works on the underground magazine "Hunchback"; and Blattner, a secret agent who wants to retire to his business of landscape gardening, but first must try and save Marchmont's life. Then there are the innocent parties involved: Marchmont's friends Arthur and Miss Bartholomew.. And a mental patient who believes himself to be the Pope. What part does he play in the plot, if indeed there is a plot? It is all very mysterious.

Meanwhile, cornered by Inspector Marcus and a gang of dustmen in his bed-sitter, Marchmont faces the task of

proving he is merely an innocent bystander, uninvolved with the business of espionage. But all the evidence is against him.....

### Chapter Four

1 The sinister underbelly of modern society is well represented by the happy, laughing, shouting, swearing, angry and violent men known to the distressed gentility as *Les Scavengers*. Guardians of the inevitable graveyard toward which everything must slowly or swiftly move, they yet manage — unlike the pensioned killers of Chelsea, the grave diggers, the police and services & morgue keepers and social security inspectors — to preserve an illusion of life.

Dustmen appear to be part of the metabolism of living. Their horrors are conducted somewhere out of sight.

Marcus's dustmen closed in when it appeared likely that Marchmont would say nothing more incriminating or informative (for his room was bugged to Marcus's police car) and it also appeared likely that he was about to make a getaway in Arthur's jeep.

Arthur, Miss Bartholomew, a jeep full of jazz band and a banner which proclaimed in gold playbill on a scarlet backing:

THE ROCKENTIMER FELLOWSHIP BAND  
had just arrived outside Marchmont's digs.

"Give him a bugle call!" Miss Bartholomew shouted through to the boys at the back and the trumpet player, Gordon Wright peeled off the merry first major-chord notes of Bugle Call Rag.

This sounded to Marcus like a pre-arranged signal.

This also sounded to Blattner like a pre-arranged signal.

This also sounded to the cricket team like a pre-arranged signal.

The silver notes of the Selmer trumpet heralded the

massacre of the County Cricket Ground much as other massacres had been heralded in the city and were now marked and made respectable and even important by various plaques placed on battle sites where now stood Woolworths and Boots and Lloyds Bank; blood-soaked ground and martyr knolls now housing boutiques.

*The Duke of Beaufort was slain on this spot.*

*Boadicea here led the Icenie against the French.*

*Here was executed the first Christian Martyr Alban.*

Marchmont knew all this and belonged to it since he had lost his licence and could no longer drive out to the Ancient Briton for a jar.

Marchmont knew but had forgotten as he tried to flush Oliver Mapplebeck's unsinkable dossier down the lavatory pan.

It kept going down and coming up again.

"Mr Marchmont!" Miss Bartholomew called, but there her. Did Marchmont live with his grandfather? It was surprising how little she knew about him now she came to think about it. "You go and fetch him," she told Arthur. about it. "You go and fetch him," she told Arthur.

But Arthur had turned pale looking at the house. There was something about it he couldn't quite remember.

"Get out, sir!" said Det. Chief Inspector Marcus. "And you, madam!"

Arthur tried to drive away but two dustmen dragged him from behind the wheel while two more put a dirty dustbin over his head and shoulders.

"Bring 'em inside," Marcus said. Then he looked at the five-piece Rockentimer Fellowship Band who were sitting in the back, and he instructed them, breezily, "Play something bright, lads!"

They struck up, as quickly as they could, with That's No Bargain, for it seemed the brave thing to do.

## 2

"All right," Detective Chief Inspector Marcus told his dustmen, "uncover him."

The dustmen started lifting the dustbin off Arthur's head.

"Who's that?" Marchmont asked Miss Bartholomew.

"That's Arthur," she said. "Look at all the muck on him!"

It was true; where they lifted the dustbin right off there remained on top of his head a residue of rotting refuse.

"Are you all right, Arthur?" she said. Then at Marcus: "What you want to do that for?" And to Marchmont: "I got him to call for you. He didn't want to after last night. We're on our way to Ivinghoe." And about the music outside she said: "That's the Rockentimer Fellowship Band. I thought you might like a little outing." And about the Pope now lying in the window, she said: "Who's that poor old chap?"

Having failed to find anything useful in all this, Inspector Marcus now turned to Marchmont. "Mr Marchmont?" He shook hands. "I'm Detective Chief Inspector Marcus of the special branch."

"How d'you do?" Marchmont said nervously.

"Sit down," Marcus said. He sat down himself on the one chair available, since the dustmen had taken the other and the edge of the bed. A couple of uniformed police officers had also drifted in and were looking around the room. He said: "We might as well be comfortable. What are you working on exactly, sir?"

Marchmont said: "Who, me? Nothing. I'm with Trade Winds Travel Agency in the High Street."

Arthur, trying to wipe muck off his corduroy jacket and pull bits of tomato skin out of his beard, had a glazed look in his eye. He had been punched quite hard in the abdomen.

Miss Bartholomew put an arm around him.

She said: "If you're going to be busy do you mind if we pop off? The Ding-a-Ling starts at three o'clock. Susan Harper's going to be there."

"Shut up, madam," Marcus told her. And to one of the uniformed sergeants: "Lock the door." And to a dustman: "Sit him on the dustbin." This was about Arthur; the dustbin was turned upside down and he was sat on it. The in-

spector now turned his attention back to Marchmont.

"The quicker you talk, Mr Marchmont, the quicker we'll get it over with. Who are your associates? I want a complete concise and accurate list." When he'd said this he did a peculiar thing; he smiled. It was a little swift grimace of a smile that lifted the corners of his mouth, wrinkled his eyes and vanished. It was like a benevolent twitch, a concession to the humanities.

It was a marble smile.

Marchmont laughed but not very convincingly. He clapped his hands and walked up and down the room, three paces each way. It was an attempt to make what was turning into a nightmare situation a little more informal.

"Look," he said, "Can I say something?"

Everybody waited for him to say something. At a nod from Marcus one of the sergeants had taken out his notebook and held the pencil poised. This unnerved Marchmont and spoiled what he had to say.

"There's been a terrible mistake," he said. "I'm not a secret agent—"

"Just a minute sir," Marcus said. He clicked his fingers at one of the uniformed men who now opened what had looked like a hairbrush case but turned out to be a tape recorder. Marchmont's voice came hairbrush-thin into the room: "I'm a secret agent," it said.

"How delightful ... I'm the Pope."

Miss Bartholomew was looking at Marchmont with loathing. "That's you!" she said. She was shut up by a brisk blow from one of the policemen.

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

Marcus leaned over and switched off the recorder himself. "You rotten devil," Miss Bartholomew told Marchmont, "getting us into all this trouble. You aren't half deceitful."

"I was kidding," Marchmont told her. "That old chap's a bloody lunatic. He's from Cell Barnes. He thinks he's the Pope."

Miss Bartholomew said, disbelievingly: "What about them parcels and letters? What about Oliver Mapplebeck? What about that chap?"

"That was just a giggle—!"

There was a loud crack and Marcus, who had quietly got to his feet while Miss Bartholomew was firing the questions, had now punched Arthur in the face and knocked him backwards off the upturned dustbin.

"This is what we shall do to you if you don't answer the young lady's questions, sir," he told Marchmont. Then, getting Arthur restored to the dustbin and held firmly by two dustmen ready for the next blow, he gave Miss Bartholomew the nod. "Try again, miss."

But Miss Bartholomew was shocked. "Don't hit Arthur! Arthur hasn't done anything!"

One of the sergeants explained: "It's vicarious torture. It's really him we're getting at. You watch him every time I hit your friend." He punched Arthur again and Marchmont winced.

"Now then, sir," Marcus said, now that the system was properly explained. "Who are your associates?"

"I haven't got any—"

Biff! Arthur got the sergeant's foot in the groin and Marchmont doubled up with pain. Arthur could not double up but his eyes had closed and he had turned grey-green.

"Now. Try again. Who are your associates?" Marcus switched on his little electric smile and switched it off again.

Marchmont felt that anything he said would result in Arthur getting another killing blow. Suddenly Marcus turned and slapped Arthur's face rapidly first one way and then the other.

"That's for not replying," he told Marchmont.

The violent smacking had opened Arthur's eyes. He looked at Miss Bartholomew, but seemed incapable of speech.

She said: "Why not tell them what they want to know?"

Marchmont said: "Everybody I know's in my files. Mr Parfitt, Mr Christian the bank manager..."

Crash! Marcus hit Arthur so hard the dustbin shifted along the floor.

"You'll kill him!" Miss Bartholomew cried.

"It doesn't matter," Marcus told her. "Everything we do to Arthur we're going to do to you and then to the old man and finally to Marchmont. Unless you can persuade him to give me the names."

"What are the names?" she shouted at Marchmont.

"I haven't any names," he said. "I made it all up—"

As he spoke the policemen started slogging into Arthur until such a time as Marchmont chose to tell them what they wanted to know. Arthur's nose was now bleeding, his eyes closing up and his knees were drawn up to cover the agony of his testicles. Outside, the Rockentimer Fellowship Band was striking up a new tune in a different key. One of the policemen now came in from the bathroom where he had gone to pee and gave Marcus the Mapplebeck dossier which he had found down the pan.

"That was planted in my file!" Marchmont told them. "I don't know Mapplebeck. I read about him disappearing in the paper. It's just a game."

"He's lying," Miss Bartholomew told Marcus.

"I know he is," the Inspector assured her.

"He sent a parcel to Mapplebeck yesterday," the girl said. "He's staying at the Villa Makarska near Dubrovnik."

"What was the messenger's name?" Marcus asked her.

"Carroway. George Carroway. He works for the Gas Company."

"Good. Good." The Inspector was writing it down. "Now we're getting somewhere." And he said to Marchmont: "Who pays you?"

"Nobody. Parfitt. Trade Winds—"

Arthur was hit again.

Marchmont said: "I lost my driving licence. I got bored. I pretended I was a master mind. A master spy. I just pretend the customers are my foreign agents."

Arthur was being steadily beaten throughout all this and Miss Bartholomew was crying for him. Over by the window, unnoticed, the Pope was beginning to revive.

"Sometimes I go and sit in my car and pretend I'm being chased," Marchmont told Marcus.

"Your car? Which car?" Marcus snapped.

"It's an old Riley. Round by the lockups."

"Siddons!" The Inspector snapped at one of the sergeants. "I thought you'd searched everything."

Nobody knew Marchmont had a car. It seemed to be a serious mistake. They had stopped punching Arthur because of it. Three of the policemen were detailed to search it and Marchmont told them where to find it.

"It's exactly one hundred and twenty yards from here, including the stairs," he said.

Marcus smiled and lit a cigarette for Marchmont after the police had gone out. "I see you share my passion for exact detail," he said. "You should work with us."

"I tried to join when I left school," Marchmont told him. "I failed on chest measurement."

Detective Chief Inspector Marcus laughed. "It's ironic, isn't it? Now it's cost them all their top Russian spies." And as one puzzled professional to another: "Why do they want Rapollo? He's Mafia, isn't he?"

"I'm not sure," Marchmont admitted.

Behind them, while the professional chit-chat went on, Miss Bartholomew tried to ease Arthur's suffering.

"I'm not sure!" laughed Marcus. "You're a card, you are, sir!"

### 3

Sergeant Siddons and his colleagues came back after searching Marchmont's Riley with all they had found contained in one envelope. It was an AA envelope, large, with a tin fastener on the flap. It held various AA documents and forms of membership and advantages and also Marchmont's road documents for the car: log book; insurance certificate; MOT test certificate, now out of date; an application form

for new road tax, not yet filled in.

Siddons said: "That's very foolish leaving your log book with the car. Anybody knocked it off and they're legal owners. There's no redress."

"Don't talk balls," his superior officer told him, cheerfully. "Mr Marchmont knows what he's doing, don't you sir?"

Marchmont agreed, for he wanted to keep in his good books. It began to look from Miss Bartholomew's efforts as if Arthur would never be able to walk again. Also he had noticed that some of the dustmen were sorting through his possessions separating the brass from the bottles as if they were real dustmen and as if he'd soon not be needing anything.

"Now then, sir," Marcus said, "where is it?"

"Eh?" said Marchmont.

Marcus said, patiently: "We've searched the room, the house, your files — checked everybody out. I've had all documents X-rayed and all full stops microcised and Fullo-metered. We've had a filter on your telephone and your mail and a twenty-four-hour watch on you and your POCs (points of call). Now, what I'm looking for must be contained in this AA envelope." He turned and called to Siddons: "Get that broad away from Arthur and get ready to kill him." And to Marchmont: "I don't have to tell you I mean this."

He threw the envelope to Marchmont and waited.

Marchmont took out the documents and started sorting through them, hopelessly. Nothing he said was going to be any use. The band had stopped playing outside and now the Pope, still lying on the floor but with a dustman's boot on his chest, began to incant in Latin: "Hanc etiam, Maece-nas, a spice partem." It sounded like the last rites.

Miss Bartholomew, now being held away from Arthur, was sobbing to herself.

"Give me the information and they can all clear out," Marcus said.

Marchmont said, "What about me?"

"I've bot a black on you. You know I have, sir."

"A black?"

"Surely you're not surprised. You pulled a master stroke. I can think of at least three governments with red faces, not counting the Vatican." He became confidential; he was obviously rather proud to be associated with Marchmont even as executioner. "I don't mind telling you now, sir, we had a black-plus until noon today."

"Oh?" Marchmont said. He was hopelessly scanning the page of previous owners in the log book.

"It was a straightforward extermination, no mucking about," the Inspector explained. "It was lucky I missed. There was a new proviso made on Rapollo's release. They want him exchanged..." he checked his watch. "...my how time flies!" He gave his twitchy smile. "He went across the border into Finland at two o'clock this afternoon."

Marchmont said: "What's that got to do with me?"

Marcus said: "He was picked up by a Dakota at Helsinki and flown to guess where?"

"Iceland?"

"Exactly!"

Marchmont could have bitten his tongue off for guessing correctly. He had hoped he could show his ignorance of the whole obscure operation.

"From Reykjavik he went aboard an American B22."

"Oh yes?"

"It took off at precisely the same time as the Pope's Al Italia flight left Rome airport."

"Did it?"

Detective Chief Inspector Marcus said: "You know it fucking did, sir. Don't under-rate me, Mr Marchmont. We know the half of it. That's how we got on to you. Mapplebeck has cracked."

"Couldn't he tell you everything you want to know?"

"He doesn't know everything. Who does? We've got to work our way through the ring. First it's you. Now you tell me who's next before I have to kill this gentleman."

At this moment through sheer desperate necessity Marchmont had an inspiration; it came from the list of previous

owners of his old Riley. He threw the book down open at the relevant page. "There they are," he said.

Marcus looked at the half-dozen names and addresses on the narrow page and his face turned bright pink with excitement. "How bloody ingenious!" he said. He looked up at Marchmont admiringly. "And yet, beautifully simple!"

Marchmont shrugged modestly.

"Are they As or Bs?" the Inspector asked with a collector's interest.

"Oh, you know — some of each," Marchmont told him.

There was a Mrs G. Harrison of Well Walk, Hampstead; a Peter Guy Gittings of Watford Road, Aldenham, Herts; there was a Smith and a Barraclough, a Rogers and a Delmaine and finally the only owner who taxed the old car only 4 months at a time: James Balfour Marchmont.

"You've got a great front here," Marcus congratulated him. "Seedy, squalid, hard-up, ordinary, believable."

"What will you do about these?" Marchmont asked concerning the ex-owners of the car.

"They'll be wiped out," Detective Chief Inspector Marcus said, comfortably. "As you probably know, our people are worried about the Pope. It wouldn't do to have him assassinated in this country."

"Who's after him, then?" Marchmont asked.

Marcus smiled his twitchy smile, quite sure that Marchmont knew more than he did. "It could have been the Mafia ten years ago — they'd been through prohibition, Hollywood, gambling, protection. Vatican City was their next obvious choice — that's why Rapollo infiltrated for them. Nowadays, of course, especially since the birth control edict, it's anybody's guess. Australia, Iceland, Canada — some place with a population problem."

"You don't half talk a lot of rubbish," Miss Bartholomew said. She had been half listening to them, half applying first aid to Arthur, who appeared to be unconscious. And she said specifically to Marcus: "Mr Parfitt's written to the Chief Constable about you."

The policemen and the dustmen all laughed at this.

Marchmont said, "It's all right, they've never heard of you."

"Oh?" Detective Chief Inspector Marcus seemed a little hurt, but then he said: "Well, I've never heard of them." And to Miss Bartholomew: "You can go now and take your friends with you. I don't want to see you again."

This alarmed Marchmont. He did not want to be left alone with the policemen and the dustmen. The dustmen were now sorting through his wardrobes and choosing suits and shirts and ties. Marchmont did not like this easy acceptance that he was to be murdered.

"Can't I go with them?" he asked, while Miss Bartholomew was trying to get Arthur to his feet and Popey was being stood upright. "You've got all my information."

"How can you go with them," Marcus said, "if I am to carry out my instructions?" He seemed genuinely interested in any solution Marchmont might be ingenious enough to come up with, so long as it included Marchmont's death.

Marchmont couldn't think of anything. He kept looking at Miss Bartholomew and trying to put over the idea to her that she should go and get help for him: dial 999 or rouse the neighbours. But she was just concerned with Arthur.

"He can't walk," she said. "He's unconscious."

"Well you'll have to carry him, won't you darling?" one of the dustmen said. He was wearing Marchmont's white linen Nassau jacket over his dirty blue dungarees.

"Here, let me," the Inspector said.

He went to Arthur as Miss Bartholomew was holding him upright and suddenly coned the fingers of his right hand and struck them viciously into some region of Arthur's back, under his kidneys. Arthur jumped two feet into the air, with a wild scream. When he landed his eyes were wide open and he was quite conscious.

"There you are, dear," Marcus told her kindly.

"What did you do to him?" she said.

"That's Etarak," Marcus told her. "Marchmont knows all about that. It's karate spelled backwards. The only anti-

dote. You've got to know exactly where to strike. It works even after you're dead. As long as there are no irreversible changes in the brain."

Judging by Arthur's face, a number of irreversible changes had taken place since he bought Miss Bartholomew a snowball at the jazz club.

When the door was opened for them to leave, the Rocktimer trumpet player, Gordon Wright, stood there holding his instrument and looking curiously into the room.

"If we don't go now, Arthur, we'll miss the opening."

"Help me with him, then," Miss Bartholomew said. She looked back at Marchmont. "If I miss Susan Harper I'll blame you."

Marchmont hoped she was hiding her real intentions to get help so that the police wouldn't stop her leaving, but this did not appear to be what was on her mind at all.

"She had *her* nose altered," she was saying to the trumpet player as they took Arthur away. "I want to see if she's got any tips."

Marcus told the Pope: "Off you toddle."

"God bless you," said Popey as he followed the others.

"And you, mate," said one of the dustmen.

The door closed, and Marchmont was alone with his executioners.

#### 4

Mr Blattner was glad to see the girl and her friend come out and drive away with the band. Glad to see the Pope appear. There was a time when the more innocent bystanders you killed, the stronger your position; when in fact one preferred to kill people not in the profession. Espionage is a kind of brotherhood, be it friend or foe; each operator represents hard work, training, expertise and is difficult to replace: whereas the populace at large is fairly expendable. But now Mr Blattner with a landscape gardening business had become part of the populace at large, just as policemen turn into publicans.

"Popey!" he called, softly. The Pope walked across to the cricket ground gateway where Blattner had a wheelbarrow standing; under the pile of straw was a machine gun. "Is Marchmont still alive?"

"Which one is Marchmont?" the Pope asked. "The young secret agent?"

"Yes."

"He's still alive, but they're going to kill him."

"Are they going to do it here, or take him away and do it?" Blattner asked anxiously.

"That I can't tell you," said the Pope.

"All right. Did they question you?"

"No," said the Pope.

"Good," said Blattner. "Now I want you to get back to The Vatican as quickly as possible."

"Is it going to become dangerous? Will anybody be killed? You might need some last rites," said the Pope.

"No, it's call right, they'll be killed outright," Blattner told the old man. "Get up to the bus station, get a 347 bus and tell the conductor to put you off at Ayot St Peter."

"But I haven't got any money," said the Pope.

Blattner felt into his pockets and produced two pounds for the exact fare, which he gave to Popey. Then he scribbled the amount into his pocket book and got the old man to sign for it. Otherwise, he would never get it back.

Blattner watched the Pope toddling slowly away alongside the tall cricket ground wall, getting smaller and smaller.

On the cricket ground itself the players still stood around the wickets, but they were not playing. They were waiting.

It was now three-thirty on Thursday afternoon.

#### 5

Sergeant Siddons tied Marchmont's hands behind his back while one of the dustmen made a blindfold out of a cravat which none of them had liked.

"Are you going to shoot me?" Marchmont asked.

"British police don't carry guns, you know that, sir," Marcus told him. "It's bad for our image. We're going to incinerate you."

Marchmont said nothing. His throat had gone dry.

"Your ashes will be tipped out with the refuse on Sandridge Meadows where they're filling-in for the new housing estate."

Marchmont said: "Are you joking? You're not art students, are you?"

He still couldn't really believe it. His imaginings had never gone as far as this. Peter Lorre always seemed to escape at the last minute — or was he the one who always met a rather ugly death? He could see nothing through the rayon except a slight area of light where the window was. Supposing he ran for it and jumped?

"What if they find his bones and it comes out in court?" This was Sergeant Siddons talking nearby to Detective Chief Inspector Marcus, just as though Marchmont wasn't there.

Marcus said: "We'll say he tripped and fell while resisting arrest. Donnell, McDonald, you'd better get that in your notebooks now. The rest of you didn't actually see it happen but two or three of you heard him cry out or thought you heard him cry out. Depends who's on the bench. Old Uppers'll get it all corroborated." Then louder: "Mr Marchmont, step inside this dustbin. We're going to carry you out with the lid on. One leg at a time, sir, that's right."

Marchmont stepped into the dustbin and crouched down while they put the lid on him. The smell was appalling.

"Sorry about this, sir," Marcus called, "But we had to let the other chap go for this last bit."

This last bit was the bit in his instructions.

TLB was the killing.

## 6

The first burst of machine-gun fire killed three dustmen and two policemen. When Marchmont in his little bullet-proof can crashed to the ground it was a soft crash for the dustbin fell on the body of the man carrying it. It rolled off, spun round and the lid fell off and Marchmont tipped out. Amid the racketing of the gun and the bullets, the screams and swearing, he heard his name being shouted.

"Marchmont! Marchmont! This way!"

There was a low garden wall with several men shielding behind it. Blindfolded, he walked the length of one of them, tripped over the wall and fell flat on his face on the pavement.

"Come on! Run!"

Mr Blattner squatted behind his wheelbarrow and swung the machine-gun to cover Marchmont's escape. He had to go carefully with the ammunition; there was only the one belt and only a hundred bullets in it. The police and the dustmen had taken what shelter they could find, some caught in the little gardens of the terrace, some under the

Corporation dustcart. Several had produced guns, in spite of Marcus's proud assurances to Marchmont, and two dustmen were taking hand-grenades from the scrap metal sack hanging at the back of the dustcart.

"Hurry up!" Blattner shouted. "Not that way! This way!"

Still sightless, his hands tied behind his back and his nose streaming blood from his fall, Marchmont weaved his way towards the sound of the voice. The sound of the gun was also located in the same place and he was expecting to be killed at every step.

"Bear right and run!" Blattner shouted.

This instruction took Marchmont through the gateway into the cricket ground. Oddly at this moment he heard Mrs Pierce shouting from the house.

"Mr Marchmont! Mr Marchmont! The police are looking for you!"

Blattner fired at the men with the grenades and caught them in mid-throw. One of them fell with the primed grenade underneath him and was blown to pieces. The machine-gun ammunition ran out. Blattner left the wheelbarrow and ran back into the cricket ground, flung himself upon Marchmont who was just about to blunder through a bed of newly planted asters.

"Keep still!" he told Marchmont.

Marchmont kept still while Blattner pulled off the blindfold.

"Are you Marchmont?" Blattner said. "I'm Blattner."

"Ow d'you do," Marchmont said in his Yorkshire voice.

"Follow me and keep right on the hosepipe," Blattner told him.

"What about my hands?"

The answer was a bullet which passed between their two noses as they stood face to face. The police and the dustmen were coming through the gateway and over the wall, guns popping. Marchmont followed Blattner along the twisting hosepipe, across the flower beds, across the lawns, through the shrubbery and out onto the cricket pitch proper.

Behind them the landmines began to explode as their pursuers followed them. The bed of asters went first taking Sergeant Siddons' head. In this county cricket minefield which Mr Blattner had so expertly laid the hosepipe was the only safe path and on the other side, kneeling in their immaculate whites like soldiers against the Zulus, the cricketers opened fire with their stumps and bats.

"Are they ours?" Marchmont gasped to Blattner as they reached safety.

Blattner was not answering questions at this stage. He had turned round and was pulling the hosepipe after them. Marcus's men who had perceived the situation and were following the same safe path now stooped and held the pipe. The result of this was that the pipe straightened and was therefore useless. They let go of it, unable to run backwards or forwards or sideways; the cricket field was populated with men who were terrified to move a step.

The holes in the Cumberland turf were surrounded by dead and wounded. To Marchmont's horror the cricketers started picking off, one by one, the stumped policemen and dustmen.

Marchmont cried: "Stop it! They've given up!"

Blattner said, "They can't give up, they know that."

Nearby a cricketer pulled the pin out of a cricket ball and threw it; it exploded between a group of three dustmen. By this time, Blattner had retrieved the end of the hosepipe, turned on a tap and struck a match. A great jet of orange flame went shooting out across the minefield. The policemen and dustmen were lost in flame and smoke as Blattner swept it first one way and then the other. One or two risked mines and ran; one man was blown clean over the wall into the road outside.

Others were burning where they stood, caught between two horrors.

Blattner smiled at Marchmont reassuringly: "We can only cope with bodies. There's nowhere to put prisoners in



a cold war."

"I see," Marchmont said.

Marchmont felt sick.

Blattner turned to the cricketers. "Who's captain?"

A man put up his hand.

"Start mopping up," Blattner said.

"We'll have to hurry," said the captain. "We're in Worcester tomorrow."

"You come with me," Blattner told Marchmont.

"Keep your eye open for Inspector Marcus. I think he got away."

Marchmont was wondering desperately how he could get to a telephone and call the local police station and ask for Police Constable Couper.

"Long road," Mr Blattner puffed, again glancing at his watch. He was dressed in a shabby blue suit and his black clerk shoes were worn down at the inside heels; the shabbiness was too comfortably familiar to be a prop of espionage.

"Eight hundred and fifty-six yards," Marchmont said, abstractedly.

Mr Blattner glanced at him as though in a new light. Marchmont had not cut much of a dash till now, seemed squeamish about the most extraordinary trivialities, yet he probably had some of the attributes of a genius to be as important as he was now. Mr Blattner was delighted that he had got Marchmont; more delighted that he had got him from poor old Marcus.

"And what brought you into the business?" he asked Marchmont chattily. "A young fellow with everything to live for?"

Marchmont said, "I lost my driving licence."

Blattner grew thoughtful.

## Chapter Five

### 1

IRMA BLATTNER'S DINNER, unfortunately for Marchmont after the slaughter house he had just survived, was stuffed hearts.

"I hope you don't mind them, my boy," Blattner mumbled as he tucked in, gravy and blood running down his chin.

"No, no, lovely," said Marchmont, slicing his very thinly to make it look like ham

"Hearts is cheap, Mr Marchmont," said Irma, flashing her beautiful eyes at him, and her husband chuckled.

"At Christmas we stick a feather in 'em and pretend it's turkey. Mind you, they are cooked in dripping from the Royal Kitchen. Our neighbour — did you see the Bentley? Agent for the Royals. What a sinecure!"

"What a house!" Irma exclaimed. "What a garden! What clothes!"

"Expense no object, travelling, pension. Lucky old Schutt." Mr Blattner sighed, then proffered his own blessings: "Still. All that long grass and early mornings." He explained: "He does very little real espionage. Most of it's round the racing stables —" and at a sudden tangent to bring Marchmont into the sphere of mutual friends: "Schutt's son is engaged to Kiki. You've met Kiki."

Marchmont remembered now that Kiki was eating bread and dripping for breakfast. It chilled him to think what he had done to the fiancée of the son of the Royal spy.

Irma looked at her husband, sharply. "Is this where you are all night long? Kiki's?"

"Outside, my sweet —" and suddenly he remembered. "I had an erection!"

"I don't believe you!"

"But I tell you I did! Here, smell my hand!" He smelled it himself but the smell had gone with all the hard work on the cricket ground. "Never mind," he told her. "It gave me an idea. You sleep with Marchmont tonight and I'll sit by the bed — I think it'll work. You don't mind, Marchmont, do you?"

Marchmont was quietly choking on his heart. He said at last: "What's the matter with you, then?"

Irma explained: "It is the work. Spies are like cats — they live nine lives. Torture, imprisonment, bombs, bullet-proof underwear. It is a great strain."

"I imagine it is," Marchmont said.

"You imagine it is! You *know* it is!" said Blattner.

"Ah, but I'm not married. Besides, I'm younger."

"Younger?" It was obviously a touchy subject with Blattner as with so many ageing men with their young wives. "How old do you think I am, Marchmont. Don't be polite."

Marchmont shrugged, thought of a number and deducted five in exchange for the hospitality. "Sixty?" he hazarded.

Blattner laid down his fork, offended. "I am twenty-seven."

Marchmont began to laugh but then stopped; Irma Blattner was nodding. She said: "I am three years older than Fritzie — thirty."

"Good God!" Marchmont exclaimed. "What happened?"

"You ask me what happened? Every day has been like today. Today we killed twenty-two policemen and dustmen," he told his wife.

"Goodness — you must be tired out. Eat up, both of you. Then put up your feet. I'll make you some coffee."

Marchmont began to think that if he could just meet P.C. Couper and the window cleaner again and chat to them on the street the whole thing would be wiped out.

Soon, as you shall see, Marchmont had an excuse to use the telephone.

### 2

After the dinner and the coffee, and while it was still no more than seven-thirty of a summer evening in Ruislip, Middlesex, Mr Blattner took Marchmont for a turn around the garden while Irma Blattner got on with some sewing. Have you ever had the feeling that you are being kept out of the way? Marchmont had that feeling.

Marchmont had the feeling that he was not supposed to look too closely at the Singer sewing machine which Irma was using in the bay window at the back of the house. Each time they strolled past, smoking and chatting, Irma gave her husband a little wave.

However the garden was pleasant and reminded Marchmont of his boyhood and summer holidays at Hertfordingbury with his Aunt Bess and Uncle Moses. In the garden, not too formally bedded, were asters, simple English marigolds, delphiniums, lupins (not Russels), Canterbury Bells, dahlias (simple single red dwarfs not yet in bloom) with sticks and upside-down jars ready to catch snails and slugs, some craggy bits of white/green lavender hedge alive with bees and blossoms and fragrant as Miss Bartholomew's bath water (what a splendid name for lavender); and roses in all their June profusion: American pillars, tea roses, climbing standard and bush roses.

Mr Blattner was picking off the blown ones and Marchmont did the same, for it took him back to helping his Uncle Moses.

"If you like you can feed the rabbits," Blattner told Marchmont as they came up to the shed and outbuildings which housed the equipment for the landscape gardening business. "I'm just going to pop in," he added, once Marchmont was busy with some big outer lettuce leaves, pushing them through the wire netting to the rabbit.

Once again Marchmont felt sure that his host was up to something, but he was not greatly worried. Blattner had saved his life (if it was his life and not just a dream); it was unlikely that he intended him any harm.

The rabbit he was feeding was a handsome and sleek and rather over-weight Havana Rex and it seemed to like Marchmont. Marchmont, who had bathed and changed since coming out of the dustbin, talked to the rabbit and told it what a good uncomplicated life it led supplied as it was with sex and lettuce.

Marchmont felt happy at this moment. The old worm-eaten wood sheds and outbuildings and lean-to's and the bit of rusty corrugated iron keeping the dead leaves out of the rain butt seemed to hold all the warmth and aroma of

the summer day and none of the horror. A trailing marrow plant had crept in from the compost heap and big yellow flowers all floppy like Ascot hats lay across a pile of sacks that smelled of Malt.

It brought into his mind the poem he had sent by way of a package-holiday maker to Ajacio addressed to someone who had vanished while on a walking tour:

Frilly petalled trumpet flowers  
blowing out of town  
Like a bunch of pretty girls  
upside down

“Major!”

Blattner’s voice came suddenly from he couldn’t see where. Then he spotted him smiling down from a trapdoor above the hutches.

“I could have shot you!” said Mr Blattner, climbing down on to the sacks and then jumping the last little bit. *Major?* Marchmont thought. *What now?*

“I’ve just got your clearance,” Blattner now explained. “I teleprinted your photo and prints through Hunchback and we’ve just got a reply through the sewing machine. Perhaps you’d like to come and see?”

As they walked back to the house Blattner said: “You realised what we were waiting for, I expect.”

“Yes. At least, I knew there was something.”

“Good,” Blattner said. “I relied on that. Had you been one of theirs you would have followed me back to the house and been blown up.”

“Oh?” Marchmont said.

“You see, I put this bucket on the path and this notice on the lawn.” He was moving them away as he spoke. The notice read, simply: ‘Keep Off The Grass.’ “You would have disobeyed that automatically had you been working. It’s all mined, of course. That’s really my thing as you may have gathered.”

He smiled rather proudly as he stood back to let Marchmont enter the doorway first. “Psychology!”

Marchmont was quietly sweating.

### 3

“Switch it to repeat,” Blattner told Mrs Blattner.

The sewing machine was not an ordinary one. The material, white and silky, which could have been the skirt of a summer dress, zipped its hem under the needle when Irma pressed the button, but instead of just stitching a straight line it stitched a row of dots and dashes.

Marchmont had to look quite closely at the little red stitches to realise this.

“You need spectacles,” Irma laughed.

It was true; he did.

“It’s the job,” Blattner told him. “Soon your smell and taste will be affected, then your reflexes and then your prostate gland. Do you want to decipher it or shall I?”

“Do you mind?” Marchmont asked.

Stitched along the hem it was pretty, but deciphered it was even prettier. To begin with, for his exceptional and brave services to the revolution Marchmont had been promoted to Major in The Field. In the spy game this was usually a posthumous rank.

“Office of origin Prague, of course,” Blattner said. “That’s where it all seems to be happening at the moment, doesn’t it?”

“So it seems,” Marchmont said.

Blattner went on, transposing into clear straight from the stitched hem: “Goods in perfect order. Recommend you secure immediately at any cost. Transfer enclosed draft to major account—” Blattner picked up the hem of the garment and showed Marchmont a row of tiny stitched hieroglyphics. “There, you see — ten thousand. That’s nice.”

“Ten thousand what?” Marchmont couldn’t immediately see the value of ten thousand anything in red stitches on a bit of rag.

“Roubles, Mr Marchmont!” Irma said. “You are rich!”

“They could have paid more. Look what they’re getting — the Kragers, Bernstein and Rapollo. They were offering a hundred thousand alone for the Kragers last year. Take it and cash it before they get them back across the border.”

“Where is it?” Marchmont asked.

“It’s here,” Blattner said. “Cut it off for him, Irma.”

Marchmont watched dumbly as Irma Blattner took her scissors and snipped off the piece of hemline containing the stitched hieroglyphics. She gave it to Marchmont.

“Cash it at any branch of Lloyds, or pay it straight into your Giro,” Blattner said. “Now tell me the secret. Sit down, have a cigar.”

“What secret, Blattner?” He must remember that he was now an MIF (Major in The Field).

There was admiration in Blattner’s regard; partly sexual in the case of his wife, still sitting at her machine.

Blattner said, “How did you trap Oliver Mapplebeck?”

“Ask me something else,” Marchmont said.

“All right, tell me this, Major.” Blattner sat down; Irma held his hand.

The cat came in with a dead mouse and started playing with it under the table.

“Tell me this,” he said again, as though some tiny thing had put him off. “Why is Rapollo flying back to England? Exchanged prisoners are under order of instant deportation. If they come back and are caught — the original sentence stands. You know that.”

“I’m afraid I can’t talk about that,” Marchmont said, with absolute truth.

Blattner said: “It is no coincidence perhaps that in one hour precisely...” He stopped and adjusted his watch. Marchmont also adjusted his watch and Irma got up and put the clock right. “In one hour precisely the Pope and his retinue land at Heathrow airport——”

Blattner broke off and listened intently. They all listened. There was no sound but the ticking of the clock and the sound a cat makes playing with a mouse, which is scarcely any sound at all. Suddenly Blattner jumped up, took the clock from the mantelpiece and rushed out to the kitchen.

“No, Fritzie! No!” Irma shouted. She followed him out and Marchmont, alarmed, rushed after her.

Blattner was at the sink holding the marble clock in the pan of water and potato peelings.

“Oh, Fritzie!” Irma said.

She took the clock out of the water, opened the back, allowed him to look inside. Water and potato peelings came out. It had stopped ticking forever.

“It is our third clock this week,” she told Marchmont.

Marchmont said, kindly: “I’ll buy you some.”

Blattner was still listening, unrepentant, looking around and out into the garden, walking on his toes, ears and eyes instant for trouble. “Keep talking,” he told Marchmont.

Irma made another little face at Marchmont as they followed the veteran agent back to the sitting room; it was not an easy life.

“Talk, talk,” Blattner urged Marchmont when they were sitting by the sewing machine again.

Marchmont said: “Had you thought perhaps the Pope is coming because he knows Rapollo is going to be here?”

Both the Blattners looked at Marchmont.

“Perhaps I’ve said too much,” Marchmont said, accurately.

Irma said: “The Pope is attending the World Council of Churches——”

Blattner smacked his hand across her mouth and held it to stop her talking. Then he put his finger to his lips:

“Sshhh!”

“Ssssh?” she said. *My God*, she thought, *he never stops working*. Mr Blattner had become a very edgy person to be with, yet he was usually right.

He suddenly threw himself under the table and grabbed the cat by the throat.

“Not Tibby!” Irma cried. “She’s innocent!”

But all he was doing was taking the mouse away from

the cat. He now stood up and lay the dead mouse on the table and prodded it with his finger. To his wife:

"Quickly — your knife."

"Darling, it is too late. It is dead." But she produced a long stiletto from a sheath strapped to her thigh.

Marchmont pretended to take an interest in the Evening Standard, which he had brought in with him, as you do if your married friends start some little squabble or have an embarrassing in-joke. He looked squarely at what Blattner was doing when he heard him mutter:

"As I thought!"

Mr Blattner had cut the mouse open and was now extracting a small shiny button-like object from its insides. He laid it gently on the floor and stamped his worn-out heel on it; could Marchmont have seen it, there were many marks on the rubber heel where it had stamped on many radio bugs.

Blattner now looked at Marchmont and there was a strong smell of disaster. "I'm sorry — we've been bugged. This is unforgivable. You could have me shot."

"I'm not blaming you," Marchmont told him. He looked at the squashed mouse-bug. "This is very ingenious."

"Whoever's been listening can tell them you're here — and why you're here."

"I wish he'd tell me," Marchmont said.

"Your life won't be worth that," Blattner told him, "Unless you can get immediate reinforcements. Who do you know at the top?"

"I know the Pope," Marchmont said helpfully.

"That's no good," Irma said. "He won't be here until—"

Her husband again held her mouth for a moment. When she was freed she objected:

"Everybody knows about the Pope getting switched — Ingrid was talking about it at Joe's stall today while I was buying the potatoes."

Blattner said: "You bought potatoes at Joe's stall?"

"Of course — Oh dear!"

"What's the trouble now?" Marchmont asked his host.

Blattner however was busy checking the bullets in his gun. "Irma betrayed you. Joe knows we don't eat potatoes. He knew we had someone with us. He bugged the mouse and gave it to the cat — now they'll link you with Mapplebeck, Mapplebeck with Rapollo and Rapollo with the Pope."

To Marchmont's embarrassment he took careful aim at his wife's head. He told her: "You have jeopardised the future of civilisation as it exists on this planet today."

"I know," she said.

It all seemed most improbable to Marchmont, but there seemed nothing he could do. Irma gave him a brief brave smile and closed her eyes and crossed her fingers as though at some inner religious compromise. Blattner's finger tightened on the trigger.

"Stop!" Marchmont suddenly rapped.

They both looked at him, surprised.

"I forbid this," Marchmont said. "I am your superior officer."

"He must shoot me," Irma said.

"You only bought a few pounds of potatoes," Marchmont told her.

Blattner, the gun still unwavering, said: "We have friends serving a life sentence for less than that, Major."

"Look, I tell you what," Marchmont said. "I'll ring Downing Street; talk to the P.M. We'll let him settle it."

"I agree with that," Blattner said. "How about you, Irma?"

Irma seemed reluctant to abandon the situation. She said: "It will make no difference."

"It might. Having our own Pope is bound to alleviate the position in Ulster — he's got Major Marchmont to thank for that. The telephone's in the hall, Major."

"Okay — you stay here and keep her covered."

"Tell the Prime Minister how many policemen we managed to kill today!" Blattner called as Marchmont went out.

In the hall Marchmont was swiftly dialling 999.



TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

# BOOKS

## M. JOHN HARRISON: the wireless school

THE PUBLISHING TRADE'S application of the word 'modern' is traditionally peculiar: until recently, it came as no shock to discover that an anthology of modern verse began with Hopkins and ended with Brooke, or that the crest of the fictional wave was represented by Somerset Maugham. Penguin Books, apparently wearied by the effort of their *Modern Poets* innovation, have returned thankfully to old customs with *Penguin Modern Stories*.

The second volume in this series, at four shillings, contains material by John Updike, Sylvia Plath and Emanuel Litvinoff. On page 121, we have the lines: "Most people were getting wirelesses in those days and everyone was crazy about dance-band music." (Litvinoff, *The Battle for Mendel Schaffer*).

Wirelesses?

Perhaps it would have been wise to apply a less general adjective (for instance, that the majority of the fiction here is 'contemporary' is as undeniable as it is unfortunate): certainly, use of the word 'modern' in any sense other than that of currency isn't much less than a fib. The offerings of Updike and Litvinoff preside with maudlin inefficiency over ritualistic subject matter — the Jewish gestalt, the growing pains of adolescence, the dreariness of marriage — and images which lost their relevance with, if not before, World War II. They take the mundane for the durable and rake over the old, old conflicts that have simply ceased to relate. The only piece of real fiction here (its effects being independent of redundant social parameters or the 'literary' attitude) is Sylvia Plath's *The Fifteen Dollar Eagle*, a sadly comic short story that subtly reveals the fantasy life of a Madigan Square tattooist called Carmey.

Hutchinson, however, are well on the upswing. Langdon Jones' anthology, *The New SF* (Hutchinson, 30s) is modern fiction. Style, subject matter, and angle-of-attack of stories by (among others) Sladek, Disch, Zoline, Moorcock, Gordon and Sallis reveal

that the vigour always to be found in the sf field can be channelled to produce enjoyable 'hard' fiction; poetry by MacBeth and D.M.Thomas moves pleasantly away from the trickery and evasion current in that field; an interview with J.G.Ballard details his disillusionment with accepted forms, and his development of the emotionally and imagistically loaded 'condensed novels'.

Possibly the most important feature of the anthology is this: despite (or because of) the new forms and approaches, the reader is neither barred by erudition nor bored by naturalistic representation of the utterly mundane; he can become deeply involved with the shared mythology of Moorcock and Sallis in *The Peking Junction* and *The Anxiety in the Eyes of the Cricket*; can laugh like a drain or shake with paranoia while reading Sladek's farce *The Communicants*; and can empathise with the protagonists of Aldiss's *So Far From Prague* and Platt's *Direction*.

It is a pity, to echo Michael Moorcock's introduction to *The New SF*, that Langdon Jones didn't include one of his own stories in the book.

Moorcock's first Jerry Cornelius novel, *The Final Programme* (Allison & Busby, 25s) has already been reviewed in *New Worlds*, but it is worthwhile to point out that the long-awaited British edition of the book, with illustrations and a colourful cover by Malcolm Dean, is the complete and original text. For extremely odd reasons, Americans, it seems, have been reading a book chopped about by its publisher. For instance, where the Allison & Busby edition reads:

*He was wandering the grassy paths ... on his way to keep a date*  
The American version has it that

*He was walking the grassy paths....*

The reason for the change of verb was apparently written on Moorcock's manuscript, and ran something like this: "If somebody has a set destination in mind, he cannot be 'wandering', which implies aimlessness."

Which implies busyboding on quite an ambitious scale. Together with certain changes of idiom (excusable on the grounds of the good old Transatlantic Drift), these piddling little amendments affect the character of the delivery, an important factor of the Cornelius myth.

Thorns (Rapp and Whiting, 25s), by Robert Silverberg, is a very well constructed and executed novel about pain.

Minner Burris, a space traveller whose body has been taken to bits with no malice and rearranged to no specific purpose by some aliens, is forced into close contact with Lona Kevin, who, having been patsy in an external fertilisation experiment, has produced a hundred children without seeing one of them. Each is isolated

by the various kinds of pain incurred. Brought together by an obese emotional culture who offers her a child and him a human body in exchange for full rights to the media coverage of their marriage and honeymoon, they react to one another with growing violence, a freak show for the TV viewers.

This might have been a run-of-the-mill sf novel were it not for Silverberg's careful prose, discerning sympathy and tight control. The ending, in which pain is seen to be a cohering emotional force, is tart but not bitter; the science doesn't get in the way; and Silverberg's portrayal of Chalk the vampire, probably the trickiest part of the book to manage without toppling into excess and melodrama, is handled superbly.

Willis E. McNelly, academic essayist in *Nebula Award Winners 1968* (Gollancz, 35s) is obsessed by a book that didn't even make the runners-up list; Poul Anderson, editor of the anthology, is concerned that science fiction should not involve itself with 'the neuroses of some snivelling faggot': between them, they sum up the fiction presented, which is thin, diffuse, and doesn't make much contact with anything. *Mother to the World*, Richard Wilson's winning novelette, is post-disaster stuff, halfway between *Earth Abides* and *The Giant Stumbles*, missing the point of disaster, which is that things change; Kate Wilhelm's *The Planners*, which took the short story award, is about RNA and monkeys — and she makes that old comparison; *Dragonrider* is a bit more of Anne McCaffrey's interminable novel *Dragonflight*.

The sole outstanding story of the collection is *The Dance of the Changer and The Three* by Terry Carr, mainly because he doesn't explain everything as if he's writing for an audience of educationally subnormal children.

## JOHN CLUTE: gonorrhoea and logorrhoea

EVERYONE CATCHES GONORRHEA in Jill Neville's otherwise harmless new novel, *The Love Germ* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 25s) set in the Paris of the 1968 student revolution. Gonorrhoea is a metaphor of the ambiguities of infectiousness, the heroine gets both the germ and a sense of the vigorous springtide of anarchic life from her radical lover; who can tell

the clapper from the clap. A reasonable insight into the way of the world, though not particularly alarming, as Polly, the protagonist of this slight story, is a silly creature, a sort of alumna of the Passion-Flower Hotel, and the author comes perilously close to convincing the reader that she is supposed to be taken straight, that her meagre aperçus are supposed to illumine life as it is. Chapter headings are coy and interminable, and seem to lack ironic detachment from the mental processes of the heroine, which they mirror accurately, as does much of the book itself, without a hint of the necessary distance from this sort of foolishness:

*The drawn curtains and the smoke from his cigarette gave the cold white studio the atmosphere of a nightclub where it is always midnight and the cold morning never comes to reveal streaky makeup and streaky hearts.*

*"Put on some music," he said, and she filled the room with Bach and later, in another mood, blues. Music, that day, was the soul's geography.*

Every once in a while Penguin Books stem the decline of their fiction list by releasing a few previously unavailable minor classics, three of which have come into view over the last couple of months. Herbert Read's *The Green Child* (Penguin, 5s) dates from 1935, wraps into a very few pages a meticulous and finely crafted vision of the consequences of the urge to utopia. In his 1947 introduction Graham Greene seems to link the transcendence of the flesh that closes the novel with a return to childhood, but this may slight the political and social critique Read offers so quietly in his ambiguous, self-contained parable. Read presents two kinds of utopia; a political state in Latin America, complete with detailed constitution; and the underground inhuman society of the green child, in which harmony also exists. For Olivero, who discovers the green child in England after abandoning the utopia he created in Latin America, both systems of harmony lead to a kind of death, the first a political stasis which he finds stifling, the second a personal transcendence underground, in the second kingdom, where he loses his human passions and drives, and turns, at the end of the novel, to coral. I took the negative view of this transcendence, felt that Read had presented a critique rather than an apologia of utopia; but the extraordinary balance and restraint of his presentation keeps one from insisting on a particular view, under different lights a jewel has different facets.

Giuseppe Berto's *Incubus* (Penguin, 10s) from 1964 is a confession in the tradition of Zeno's, presents an obsessive, garrulous, hypochondriacal sinner who in this case speaks in the first person as though to a psychoanalyst;

Berto's style is run-on, supple, very swift, ideal for logorrhea (though he has used it in fact in other books); the incubus of the title is the narrator's dead father, who metaphorically mates with the guilt-delinquent narrator, driving him under.

The first two novels of de Montherlant's tetralogy *The Girls* (Penguin, 7s) appear in one volume with no signal from the publisher as to when the set will be completed. Epistolary, cutting, cunningly crafted, decidedly incomplete.

The requirements of genre writing tend to elicit an even professional performance from science fiction writers, so it is surprising to see Piers Anthony, whose *Chthon* was arch and involuted, and whose slovenly *Omni-vore* was reviewed in *New Worlds* a few months ago, do a fine, controlled piece of work in his latest novel, *Macroscope* (Avon, 1 dollar 25 cents). What's more it's a space opera, and except for the pages and pages of astrological codswallop mucking up the climax, it follows space opera rules without condescension, or camp, or the shoddy coy-baroque of the previous novel. At 480 pages it may be a little long; not only the astrology but a lot of the potted expositions of popular science could have been trimmed. But the story itself is naturally long-limbed, and Anthony tells it as though he believes it. The macroscope also picks up messages, one of which, called the Destroyer, makes idiots out of anyone intelligent enough to understand it.

Because the protagonist is the schizoid spin-off of a submerged genius, he can by-pass the Destroyer, picks up advanced technologies, and when forced to flee the solar system with the macroscope does so by turning Neptune into a starship. Very enjoyable; the texture is closely worked; by the end of the novel, as we should be in this sort, we are extragalactic and superhuman.

Robert Silverberg is not so surprising. Like a couple of dozen others, *Nightwings* (Avon, 75 cents) is digestible, serenely unexceptional; good reading. A chronicle in three parts, it imposes a rebirth theme on to a Jack Vance dying earth seen through the eyes of a Watcher who's the first to detect the alien invasion which ends the first section. The Watcher goes on to become physically and spiritually rejuvenated at 'Jorslem' from whence, at the novel's close, he fares forth to teach the aliens love.

Frederik Pohl's *The Age of the Pussyfoot* (Ballantine, 75 cents) is at his level of competence, but is a sad little book. Despite a portentous foreword and an ample author's note, the book says little new or unnerving about extending life or immortality through freezing, and his sarcastically presented protagonist is such a cluck, the pitfalls he stumbles into so patent (like for instance he thinks he's rich from his insurance without checking on what things cost, and is soon broke) that it was very hard to pay much attention to social comment and the like — Mr Pohl's established forte.

### Obituary: The Man who Nobody Knew

Many readers will be saddened to hear of the death of James Colvin, the science fiction writer who contributed actively to *New Worlds* while it was



Colvin at a science fiction convention: one of the few pictures ever taken of this little-known writer

under the editorship of John Carnell, and who went on to write progressive fiction and regular book reviews, after Michael Moorcock took over as editor in April 1964.

Two of Colvin's best stories were *The Mountain* (NW 147) and *The Pleasure Garden of Felipe Sagittarius* (NW 154). His novel, *The Wrecks of Time*, was serialised in NW 156 to 158, and a collection of his short stories, *The Deep Fix*, was published by Compact Books.

Colvin was born in 1941 in Surrey, came to London and lived on his own in a Kensington bed-sitter. He avoided personal encounters, and was seldom seen by his colleagues.

Tragically, a heavy filing cabinet full of manuscripts fell over, crushing his chest, early in November 1969. After two weeks in hospital he died from pneumonia and other complications associated with a punctured lung.

As one of the few people who knew Colvin personally, I feel the science fiction field has lost a talent which never quite came to fruition. To the end, Colvin was a man who nobody really knew.

—William Barclay.

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