THE ASSASSINATION REPORT

Brian Baker

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Chapters of this book have been previously published.

'The Assassination Report', Foundation: the International Review of Science Fiction, vol. 40, no. 112 (Summer 2012), 40-74.
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Apollo Roulette', Ballardian.com, 2012.

'Iterative Architecture: A Ballardian Text', 21: Journal of Contemporary and Innovative Fiction, 1 (Autumn/Winter 2008), 8-30. Republished on Ballardian.com, 2009

'The Nelson Mandala', Vector: The Magazine of the BSFA 236 (August 2004), 16-19.

Introduction

The fictions I write about in this book shuttle between past and future, like time travel stories, like this book, and like myself. They were almost entirely produced between the 'white heat of technology' proposed as the motor for a progressive future in Harold Wilson's October 1963 speech (just a month or so prior to the assassination of Kennedy) and the collapse of post-WW2 economic prosperity of the global North in the wake of the OPEC 'oil shocks' in 1973. Just as Jonathan Green, in *All Dressed Up*, quotes from Anthony Frewin to suggest that 'the Sixties […] didn't really get going until about 1964, and didn't end until about 1972 or 1973' [italics in original], the moment that this book tries to investigate, as though from the inside, is one which encompasses 'the Sixties', from the end of 1963 to 1973.[1] Happily for this book, this also coincides with the editorship of Michael Moorcock of the magazine New Worlds, which attempted to break out of its science-fictional bounds and comment upon the present, the Imperial past and the potentialities for the future, in science fiction which embraced experimentation.

* * *

Jerry Cornelius rides a time-travelling bicycle in the short story 'Dead Singers' (1971). Sent into the future on a 'black Royal Albert gent's roadster' by Bishop Beesley, the gluttonous emblem of rapacious power in the Cornelius universe, Jerry arrives on the South Coast, revisiting once again the territory of Hoopdriver's tour in The Wheels of Chance. Chrono-cycling, for Jerry, puts him in contemplative mood, as he sets off:

To the people living in it, no matter how 'bad' it might seem by different standards, thought Jerry as he pedalled casually along the Brighton seafront, the future will have its ups and downs. Not too good, not too bad.[2]

Stowing the bike in the back of a Mercedes convertible, having avoided the reeking body of an eviscerated old woman, he makes his way through the South Downs 'where the seeds of the disaster had been sown all those years ago. Rural thinking, rural living' (p.260). He drives away from the sea and the Downs to London, where the sound of pulsating music affects the very fabric of the reality of the future: 'Buildings rose and fell like waves. Horses, trams and buses faded through each other. People grew and decayed. There were too many ghosts in the future' (p.262). He abandons the Mercedes and, on the Royal Albert, eventually returns to the 'present'. The metropolis becomes a necropolis, as it does at the end of Wells's The War of the Worlds (1898), where the narrator, like Jerry, is haunted by war, the city made eerie through evacuation and ruin. For Jerry, the war is lost: the forces of oppressive order have negated the future, and 'all the singers are dead' (p.263). Typically sceptical about the revolutionary potential of the counter-culture, in this short story Jerry, equally typically, finds a way to abide; life goes on. As he walks down Ladbroke Grove, watched by birds chained to their branches, 'he had to smile' (p.263). Not too good, not too bad.

* * *

The non-linear forms of Ballard's 'condensed novels' of *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1969), or Moorcock's Jerry Cornelius stories, assert the New Wave's adoption of a much longer history of literary and formal experimentation. In 'Scholia, Seasoned With Crabs, Blish Is', ostensibly a review of several books by the science fiction writer James Blish, John Clute attempts to sketch a 'tonal' reading of science fiction, drawing partly upon Paul Hernadi's *Beyond Genre* (1972) in positing 'two broad tonalities or aspects' of prose fiction: the roman which 'concerns itself with the "representation of events as they emerge and develop in time"'; and the récit which 'concerns itself with "the presentation of past events by a narrator in accordance with the principles of logic and rhetoric"'.[3] The 'roman', suggests Clute, is the 'traditional novel': 'warm, plastic, representational, seamless', whereas the récit idiom is 'chilly, didactic, presentational, disjunctive'.[4] Despite science fiction's devotion to a 'shrill, streamlined mimetic parlance', Clute suggests, inheriting the representational structures of

the roman, even a fairly traditional sf writer like Blish is 'immersed in the récit idiom'.[5]

Drawing upon Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Clute goes on to suggest that while science fiction tends to fall into Frye's category of the 'romance' ('whose "stylized" protagonists "expand into psychological archetypes", and which "often radiates a glow of subjective intensity that the novel lacks'), works such as Blish's could also be identified as a 'Menippean satire or anatomy', a form that diverts from the novel in its stylized characterization, its 'ability to handle abstract ideas and theories', its presentation of 'a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern' and 'violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative'.[6] Clute, to comic and critical effect, suggests that Blish is a writer who aims at the romance or roman and always manages to hit on the 'Menippean satire' or récit. The seeming deficiencies of Blish's works are in fact tonal and affective strategies that (unconsciously) work against the standard forms and modes of science fiction. At the same time, Clute asserts that writers such as the later Wells, Aldous Huxley, John Barth, Thomas M Disch and John Sladek (the last two notable New Worlds writers) work within the récit or Menippean idiom, suggesting that this tonality is always-already present within the generic range of science fiction, but works as a kind of counter-discourse ('writing against the grain').[7]

The critical and creative practice of New Wave science fiction corresponds to wider developments in re-thinking approaches to representation, to the text, to the world itself, which indicated that linear, monovalent, 'organic' works were no longer reasonable or reliable means by which to reflect or understand the world. We might call these strategies Modernist, or Postmodernist. The alternative term Frye gives to the Menippean satire – the 'anatomy' – characterizes both Ballard's and Moorcock's texts, and my own. Frye suggests that the 'anatomy' is a form in which 'human society is studied in terms of intellectual pattern' rather than in terms of character, 'less with people as such than with mental attitudes' and, when merging with the novel, produces characters that 'are symbols of social or other ideas'.[8] The anatomy is a mixed form, of poetry and prose, tending towards fragmented or encyclopaedic structures or towards being an 'intellectual farrago'. I should confess that I fell deeply under the spell of the Anatomy of Criticism when I first read it at university. It might be fruitful to think of this book as an anatomy of New Wave science fiction.

How To Read This Book

The chapters in this book can be read in any order. However, there is a sense of development across the sections. The structure of the book also has an internal logic; section A is re-written by section B, which is in turn re-written in section C. Elements, motifs and figures recur, and the narrative elements of sections B and C in particular are connected.

The book is, in part, an invitation. 'Iterative Architecture' suggests that scissors and glue may be useful to cut up and reconfigure the events in different temporal or narrative orders, and the same can be said of all the chapters, each of which play with chronology and suggest connections through proximity or spacing rather than argumentative logic. The reader is herself invited to cut up the text, to make it new, to produce new texts and formations from re-written and remixed material that can be found within these pages. The reader is not expected to read through the text in linear fashion, but to reconstitute its elements while reading it, to engage in recombinatorial play. This text is meant not only to be an experiment in criticism, or about experimental science fiction, but to offer and experimental method by which contemporary readers (or scholars) might take apart and re-produce a text creatively, as well as critically. Cut up the Word; cut up the tape; cut up the reality film: and put it together again. Yourself.

Endnotes

1 Anthony Frewin, *London Blues* (1997), quoted in Jonathon Green, *All Dressed Up: the Sixties and the Counterculture* (London: Pimlico, 1999), p.ix.
2 Michael Moorcock, 'Dead Singers', *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (London: Orion, 1994), pp.259-263 (p.259).
3 John Clute, 'Scholia, Seasoned With Crabs, Blish Is', (1973) *New Worlds: An Anthology* (London: Flamingo, 1983), pp.331-340 (p.336).
4 Clute, p.336.
5 Clute, p.337.
6 Clute, p.337.
7 Clute, p.338.
8 Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp.309-311.

The Assassination Report

[1] The Primal Scene

I.

In *Oswald's Story*, Norman Mailer offers a magisterial narrative of Lee Harvey Oswald's adult life, particularly his time in the USSR and upon his repatriation to the United States. Mailer's thesis is that, although Oswald was indeed enmeshed in entangled skeins of security and surveillance (KGB and FBI), he was not a 'patsy': Oswald did indeed pull the trigger of his Mannlicher-Carcano rifle on the 6th floor of the Texas School Book Depository building on Elm Street, Dallas. This conclusion has little to do with 'fact', and all to do with Mailer's psyche-portrait of the young man, a 'young intellectual' who ultimately committed himself 'to the most heroic deed of which he was capable'.[1] This reading of Oswald fits into Mailer's metaphysics and his conception of masculinity, in which physical bravery and a kind of psychological self-testing go hand-in-hand. The figure of the 'man on the parapet' identified by Tony Tanner in *City of Words* is the typical Mailer masculinity:

He has to prove that he can negotiate that edge where the worlds meet – capitulating neither to a political nor to a demonized ordering of reality, avoiding the traps of social architecture and the chaotic dissolutions of the pre-social or sub-social dark. To be able to keep his balance is to achieve some degree of liberation from the coercive

powers of both worlds.[2]

The man in the window of the Texas Book Depository is a man on the parapet, and his act is apocalyptic in design. 'The world was in crisis,' Mailer writes, 'and the social need was to create the conditions for recognizing that there had to be a new kind of society' (781). Mailer diagnoses '[Oswald's] intense belief in that fabulous end which would justify all his quotidian means. His deepest despair had to arise in those moments when he could not see himself any longer as the key protagonist in forging a new world' (780). This, in a sense, enables Mailer to sidestep issues of motivation: *why* would Oswald assassinate Kennedy? The answer, for Mailer, lies in symbolism rather than psychology. If Kennedy, a good President, could be assassinated, this provides unanswerable evidence of American society's corruption. The assassination becomes a double sacrifice, of two good men, to bring about a better world.

*

ask not

between what-is
what-is-not
and worlds-to-come
i dream

a sicle moon in a starless sky
bears down upon
a city i do not NO

across the plaza
among th colonels
the boys engage(d)

Inspector O.H. Lee
asks why
i no longer serve
the state i do not

why do i not take
the levy, the levy
takes
the water

*

imagine
Alek James Hidell as sci-fi sky-writer

In a notebook I wrote (some time ago)
'what kind of sf would Hidell write?
a *dystopia*
and would rip off
Nineteen Eighty-Four'
I do not date my notes
but
perhaps I should, because
in the Warren Commission Report
I read 'George Orwell's
"1984" [was] one of Hidell's
favourite books'[3]

Hidell is a Utopist, a
seeker after order
(ideal order)
not found in USMC or CCCP
but in the dream life

in the dream life
nothing is true
everything is permitted
EXCEPT
birthing

seeking *eutopos*
finding NO-where
this Hythloday is
cast out

*

oswald has been shot

January 7th, 1960: I wrote my brother & mother letters in which I said I do not wish to every contact you again." I am begining anew life and I don't want any part of the old".[4]

*

In the walls of the cubicle there were three orifices. To the right of the speakwrite, a small pneumatic tube for written messages, to the left, a larger one for newspapers; and in the side wall, within easy reach of Winston's arm, a large oblong slit protected by a wire grating. This last was for the disposal of waste paper. Similar slits existed in thousands or tens of thousands throughout the building, not only in every room but at short intervals in every corridor. For some reason they were nicknamed memory holes. When one knew that any document was due for destruction, or even when one saw a scrap of waste paper lying about, it was an automatic action to lift the flap of the nearest memory hole and drop it in, whereupon it would be whirled away on a current of warm air to the enormous furnaces which were hidden somewhere in the recesses of the building.[5]

*

here is a bulletin

October 21st, 1959: (mor) Meeting with single offial. Balding stout, black suit fairly. good English, askes what do I want?, I say citizenship, he ask why I give vauge answers, he says he shall check and let me know weather my visa will be (exteaded

it exipiers today) Eve. 6.00 Recive word from police official. I must leave country tonight at. 8.00 P.M. as visa expirs. I am shocked!! My dreams! I retire to my room. I have $100. left. I have waited for 2 year to be accepted. My fondest dreams are shattered because of a petty offial; because of bad planning I planned to much!

7.00 P.M. I decide to end it.. Soak rist in cold water to numb the pain. Than slash my left wrist. Than plunge wrist into bathtub of hot water. I think "when Rimma comes at 8. to find me dead it wil be a great shock. somewhere, a violin plays, as I watch my life whirl away. I think to myself, "how easy to die" and "a sweet death," (to violins) wacth my life whirl away. I think to myself. "how easy to die" and a sweet death, (to violins) about 8.00 Rimma finds my unconcious (bathtub water a rich red color) she screams (I remember that) and runs for help. Amulance comes, am taken to hospital where five stitches are put in my wrist. Poor Rimmea stays by side as interrpator far into the night, I tell her "go home" (my mood is bad) but she stays, she is my "friend" She has a strong will only at this moment I notice she is preety[6]

*

stand by, please

dreaming of his mother
already far below him
into the green waters
the saloon of a sinking ship

they were down there

because he was
up here

died loving him
he did not remember how
such things
could not happen today

the girl with dark hair
her body
white and smooth, but
it aroused no desire in him

grace and carelessness
seemd to annihilate
a whole culture
swept into NOthingness

*

here is a bulletin

June/July 1960: Summer months of green beauty, pine forest very deep. I have become habituatated to a small cafe which is where I dine in the evening the food is generally poor and always eactly the same, menue in any cafe, at any point in the city. The food is cheap and I dont really care about quiality.

August/September 1960: I become increasingly concious of just what sort of a sociaty I live in. Mass gymnastics, compulsary after work meeting, usually political information meeting. Complusary attendance at lectures and the sending of the entire shop collective (except me) to pick potatoes

on a Sunday, at a State coletive farm. A "patroict duty" to bring in the harvest. The opions of the workers (unvoiced) are that its a great pain in the neck. They don't seem to be esspicialy enthusiastic about any of the "collective" duties a natural feeling. I am increasingly aware of the presence, in all thing, of Lebizen, shop party secretary, fat, fortyish, and jovial on the outside. He is a no-nonsense party regular.[7]

*

stand by, please

imagine
Alek James Hidell as a sci-fi sky-writer

reading *Galaxy* and *Worlds of If*
while growing up absurd
and finding in Pohl and
C.M. Kornbluth a supplement
to Marx. What if
he sold his stories
(sub-Mack Reynolds)
to the sf magazines, and by 1963
had published an Ace double
or two?

Hidell's language (naif
or post-Joycean) slips and
stutters/clutters with typo-
graphic strays, repetitions, dropped
stops and caps, a sleight of hand
indistinguishable from *tremens*.
A post-modernist *avant la*
lettre, perhaps, a generic sport, an

error-prone Bester? The typo-
graphic effects 'reveal' to readers
a psyche, a soul
crack'd from side to side, texts
cursed to mis-interpretation.
Is there intention? What does it all *mean*?

*

Jan 4-31 1961: I am stating to reconsider my disire about staying The work is drab the monney I get has nowhere to be spent. No nightclubs or bowling allys no places recreation acept the trade union dances I have have had enough.[8]

*

here's johnny

imagine
Alek James Hidell

who kNOws himself to be
Winston Smith (but unlike
PKD cannot restore
Revelation to sci-fiction) and
seeks out Big Brother, an
O'Brien, to translate the world
into meaning and order. Why else travel
In-tourist, declare oneself a citizen
of NO-where? But he finds NO
fathers in the Motherland.
The CCCP is *boring*, 'no nightclubs or
bowling allys'. Little wonder he declares (to
himself) 'I have
have had enough'

*

from *THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OLIGARCHAL COLLECTIVISM* by Emmanuel Goldstein

[...] as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, human equality had become technically possible. It was still true that men were not equal in their native talents and that functions had to be specialized in ways that favoured some individuals against others; but there was no longer any real need for class distinctions or for large differences in wealth. In earlier ages, class distinctions had not only been inevitable but desirable. In equality was the price of civilization. With the development of machine production, however, the case was altered. Even if it was still necessary for human beings to do different kinds of work, it was no longer necessary for them to live at different social or economic levels. [...] The idea of an earthly paradise in which men should live together in a state of brotherhood, without laws and without brute labour, had haunted the human imagination for thousands of years. [...] but by the fourth decade of the twentieth century all the main currents of political thought were authoritarian. The earthly paradise had been discredited at exactly the moment when it became realizable.[9]

*

heirs of that first revolution

The life of the "Kollective" or rather inter-life, since it often touches upon more than just the work, is the most reflective side of the complex working of the Communist party of the USSR. It is the reflection of mass and organized political activity, deciding the actions of every individual and group, placing upon society a course, so strict, so disciplined, that any private deviation is interpreted as political deviation and the enforced course of action over the years has become the most comprehensible educational and moral training probably in the history of the world. To understand the work and workings of the "Kollective" one must first ask who controls, who leads the "Kollective". [10]

*

II.

more details just arrived

moon on dark water
a city below the sea
awaits
this flood

i will shoot
the dream-gun
shoot the moon i
dis-charge(d)

into the trees
to regaine
what was lost
below the sea

*

The obverse
and condition
of utopia is
apocalypse

for how to constitute
the brave new
world without
destroying the old?

many u/dys/topias
leave a temporal-
spatial *gap*

to found the new
world, an o'er-
leaping or
forgetting, perhaps

*

imagine
Alek James Hidell as a reality hacker

culture jammer, Situationist
dreaming *détournement*, re-
coding the world/word
re-writing, re-
uniting the States

Mark Amerika's *remixthebook*
through COMPOSITION BY FIELD
(Olson) and tech-gnomic incantation
reveals the state(s) of the remix-
ologist, 'flux personae', connect-
ion and conduit of data flows

Remixology is a way of intervening or hacking into the transmission of traditional media discourse and empowers artists to renew all discourse[11]

'dreamwriting/ our futures' (30)
imagining 'an emergent form of novel
togetherness' (67)

*

Winston Smith could be understood as a government-sanctioned reality hacker, a remixologist in the service of doubleplusgood untruth, in the age of pneumatic tubes rather than digital flows.

Day by day and minute the past was brought up to date. In this way every prediction made by the Party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct, nor was any item of news, or any expression of opinion, which conflicted with the needs of the moment ever allowed to remain on record. All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary.'[12]

Winston Smith clips his 'spoken corrections to the appropriate copy of *The Times* and pushed them into the pneumatic tubes' (38), remixing the data flows, re-making history, re-making the world. His notes are dropped into the 'memory hole to be devoured by flames' (39). This proposes the question to the contemporary remixologist: what is the status of the '*becoming instrument*' and the data flows in relation to memory? Does re-coding open up memory holes?

*

Discussing the 'fourth shot', or the conspiracy narrative of a second shooter (on the grassy knoll), Mailer offers this rather magical conception:

When the kings and political leaders of great nations appear in public on charged occasions, we can even anticipate a special property of the cosmos – coincidences accumulate: All variety of happenings race to the core of the event. (779)

Is then Oswald a remixologist, attuned to the data flows and convergences of the time, reshaping the flux of history? If, as Ballard writes in *The Atrocity Exhibition*, 'Deep assignments run through all our lives. There are no coincidences', is he *meant* to be in the Book Depository building, ready to bring a new world into being? Paul D. Miller (aka DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid) cites the work of the 'last of the Lamarckian biologists' Paul Kammerer (who committed suicide in 1926), who spent much of his time into researches into what he called 'seriality'. Kammerer searched for the patterns that he thought underpinned 'coincidence' and synchronicity; Miller connects these to the creative engagement with the 'rhythms of everyday life':

Kammerer would move through his environment collecting examples of simultaneity, marking and registering coincidences with mathematical precision. He searched long and hard for an equation that would describe how things manifested in urban reality, a "law of series or sequences" (which parallels, of

course, how we refer to the elements of a music track these days). Kammerer was looking for the algorithms of everyday life – how patterns appear, how their structures can affect all aspects of the creative act. In other words, patterns ain't just about bein' digital. They are global. They are universal. There are rhythms that hold everything we know and can understand together.[13]

Was Oswald, perhaps, not at the centre of a conspiracy, but of a manifestation of seriality?

III.

later
she couldn't understand
maybe he didn't love her, but
he loved his little girls
enormously

thirty years later she
heard a story
in those last days he was
playing with the grandchildren
of the woman who ran
his boarding house
The children called him Mr. Lee

He asked one of the boys, 'are
you a good boy?' and the kid
shook his head
in the negative

and Lee said
'Never be so bad that
you hurt somebody' [14]

*

the energy

In 'the invisible generation', published as an appendix to *The Ticket That Exploded* (1962/1967), William Burroughs outlines the way in which the then-new consumer technology of audio tape could be used as a means by which to disrupt the pre-recordings of the 'reality studio', the 'control machine' that produces reality. He writes:

yes any number can play anyone with a tape recorder controlling the sound track can influence and create events the tape recorder experiments described here will show you how this influence can be extended and correlated into the precise operation this is the invisible generation [...] playback in the street will show the influence of your sound track in operation of course the most undetectable playback is street recordings people don't notice yesterday voices phantom car holes in time accidents in past time played back in present time[15]

'Anyone can play', asserts Burroughs, offering deconstructive technologies and techniques to anybody who is interested. This text has become a foundational one in new media discourse, where the subversive possibilities of recording and playback have informed a conception of the consumer as *remixologist* (in Mark Amerika's coinage) or *culture jammer* (in Mark Dery's coinage).[16] A conception of democratic, guerrilla art practice *of everyday life* where media products are collaged into new constellations, re-coding revealing the ideological coding of the 'original' media text, underpins much discourse about resistance to contemporary formations of capital and culture, from 'adbusters' to hacktivism to dj culture. In Mark Amerika's formulation, 'remixology envisions the artist as a postproduction medium/ who *becomes instrument* while conducting / radical experiments in unconsciously projected creativity' (58). The displacing of agency in this formulation reveals its deep indebtedness to Deleuze and Guattari's Body-without-organs as nexus of a network of flows.[17] As a form of resistance, however, re-coding seems neither utopian nor apocalyptic: it is a dance performed on a carpet woven from the threads of contemporary media culture, a skein re-textured over the void.

*

Steinski and Mass Media's track 'The Motorcade Sped On'(1986) splices together radio and television materials from 22 November 1963 with a hip-hop sensibility, and is founded on a looped sample of the opening drum pattern from the Rolling Stones' 'Honky Tonk Women'. In the opening seconds of the track, Steinski splices the following:

'Here's Johnny' from the opening of *The Johnny Carson Show*

The opening guitar chord to The Beatles' 'A Hard Day's Night'

'Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your- ' from John F. Kennedy's inauguration speech, January 1961

Three gunshots

The drum sample from 'Honky Tonk Women'

Samples from CBS news and other broadcast media, some repeated: 'Here is a bulletin'; 'Stand by, please'; 'Put me on, Phil, put me on'; 'Something has happened here'; 'many, many motorcycles'; 'Mrs Kennedy's pink suit'; 'Here is the prisoner'; 'Oswald has been shot'

Other phrases from President Kennedy's speeches: 'Ich bin ein Berliner'; 'the world is very different now'; 'we dare not forget today that we are the heirs to that first revolution'

Over the insistent beat of Charlie Watts' drum pattern (overlaid by a drum machine's open and closed hi-hat sequence), Steinski cuts in abbreviated and repeated sentences from (all-male) radio and television broadcasters, reaching a breakdown with Walter Kronkite declaring that 'President Kennedy died/ at 1pm/ Central Standard Time', 'time' being repeated six times.

The song has a clear structure with a refrain which runs:

'More details / Just arrived / Mrs Kennedy jumped up / She called 'Oh, no' / 'Oh, no' ('the energy')/ 'Oh, no' ('the faith')/ 'Oh, no' ('the devotion')/ The motorcade sped on'

Much of this speech is taken from a single CBS news bulletin, as are other sections of the song which form key repeated phrases, lending the song a reiterative structure. Clearly, the structural repetition has a political context: the repeated media discourse surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy evacuates meaning. By staging a forced evacuation of context, Steinski indicates the way in which the 'mass media' (a pointed name adopted for this white label/ NME give-away single) itself dissolves meaning through repetition. Steinski's remix is a kind of parody of the flux of remixing that broadcast technologies have encompassed since the 1960s. There is no nostalgia, here, though (which would indeed be ironic for a remixed hip-hop track) for a 'time-before', the fall from innocence that 'Dallas' very often signifies in contemporary culture.[18]

Steinski as collagist, as *remixologist*, can only point to the techniques by which his own track recapitulates and deconstructs the audio technologies of the late-analogue and early-digital period.

The blank, emotionless tone of the announcer's words plays counterpoint to the emotional impact of the assassination itself, an urgency contained in the dynamism of the drum sample. The removal of the voice samples from context also foregrounds the hollowing out of affect: while the phrases 'more details, just arrived' and 'President Kennedy has been seriously wounded by this shooting' are taken from a CBS television news report that featured a screen with a CBS news logo on a grey background, isolating the announcer's voice, Kronkite's phrase 'President Kennedy died at 1pm Central Standard Time' is, on the television footage, accompanied by Kronkite wearily taking off his spectacles and looking at a clock on the newsroom wall. Kronkite's gesture, minimal though it is, registers pathos, an emotional response even if contained by the gestural range required of the broadcast situation. In its absence on 'The Motorcade Sped On', Kronkite's words have a chilling and staccato finality.

The lack of affect that Steinski's track could be accused of is, of course, thematised in the track itself. The title, 'The Motorcade Sped On', has clear echoes of the ending of Auden's 'Musée des Beaux Arts' and its indictment of emotional and ethical blankness in the face of tragedy:

and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

'On': the imperative to continue, to turn aside, to *forget*, is crucial. The motorcade always speeds on, in television programs, in the Zapruder film, 'time' (x6) captured and replayed but the act of assassination itself irrecuperable, unchangeable, always moving 'on' from that moment in the same direction, forwards (and back) to now.

*

Bruce Conner's *Report* (1967) is a short film that uses broadcast materials

from the period to re-imagine the Kennedy assassination. *Report*, which was made over a period of time and is extant in both 8mm and 16mm forms (differing from each other), takes found footage from the day of the Kennedy assassination and re-works it, repeating key scenes and elements from scenes to powerful effect, overlaid with sound taken from broadcast media. The presidential limousine goes past, for instance: in a repeating sequence of overlapping edits, the automobile edges down the road (across the screen from right to left), returning to a point fractions of a second/ a few yards further on from the beginning of the pervious edit. Time is retarded, the sequence caught in a loop that edges forward very slowly. Stan Brakhage writes:

Repetition, as in "Report," is among the characteristic marks of Conner's films. Yet, he proves that there is no such thing as repetition, in the sense that Gertrude Stein made clear in her book *Making of Americans*. She demonstrates that when you "repeat" a thing, you charge it with another level of energy; so that if you vary it, however slightly, it is dynamic. Conner repeats, speeds up, then interrupts a shot at a different place each time – a little Earlier or a little later, or in a different section of the shot.[19]

The editing is dynamic, yet it is in the service of holding back time itself. In the first half of the film, acts are incomplete: the limousine driving past, the Mannlicher rifle held aloft by a policemen and paraded down a corridor, Jackie Kennedy reaching the door of the ambulance and finding it locked. The moment (of the assassination) is deferred, never reached. Though there are no freeze-frames, the desire encoded in the film is to *stop time itself*, to prevent Kennedy's death, a desire which itself can never be fulfilled; and so the film repeats, reiterates, where it cannot *restore*. The use of sound in *Report* is often contrapuntal. While the film attempts to hold back time, the voices provide narrative of the assassination, linearity set against iteration.

The second half of the film makes its politics clear. Images taken from bullfights propose Kennedy as a blood sacrifice, a victim to the coming world. This world is consumerist and technocratic: Conner splices in images of freezers, modern kitchens. In a final edit of shots, a typist pushes a key marked 'sell': Kennedy himself 'sold', sacrificed on the altar of the commodity. The splicing together of the two halves of the film indicate the directly interventionist artis-

tic practice at work here; *Report* does not memorialise Kennedy, but encodes a political wish to prevent or undo his death. The film could be accused of sentimentality or naivety, perhaps, but the enactment of this desire in repetition places the film at some distance from the nostalgia of Oliver Stone's *JFK*. In its editing practice, *Report* calls up other 'Kennedy films' that have become crucial to the way in which the assassination has been conceptualised, particularly the 'home movies' made by spectators/ witnesses Orville Nix, Mary Muchmore and particularly Abraham Zapruder. The Warren Commission Report indicates the *forensic* processing of the Zapruder film:

Examination of the Zapruder motion picture camera by the FBI established that 18.3 pictures or frames were taken each second, and therefore, the timing of certain events could be calculated by allowing 1/18.3 seconds for the action depicted from one frame to the next. The films and slides made from individual frames were viewed by Governor and Mrs Connally, the Governor's doctors, the autopsy surgeons, and the Army wound ballistic scientists in order to apply the knowledge of each to determine the precise course of events. Tests of the assassin's rifle disclosed that at least 2.3 seconds were required between shots. In evaluating the films in the light of these timing guides, it was kept in mind that a victim of a bullet wound may not react immediately and, in some situations, according to experts, the victim may not even know where he has been hit, or when. (100)

Report uses film that itself becomes evidence in the case against Oswald, posthumously constructed by the Warren Commission. That evidence is labile, though, subject to change through repetition (as Brakhage suggests). Not unreliable, but released from history (*as* history) into the data streams, re-coded *as* re-code-able.

IV.

The landscape he was looking at recurred so often in his dreams that he was never fully certain whether or not he had seen it in the real world. In his waking thoughts he called it the Golden Country. It was an old, rabbit-bitten pasture, with a foot-track wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side of the field the boughs of the elm trees were swaying very faintly in the breeze, their leaves just stirring in dense masses like women's hair. Somewhere near at hand, though out of sight, there was a clear, slow-moving stream where dace were swimming in the pools under the willow trees.[20]

*

October 1960: The coming of Fall, my dread of a new Russian winter, are mellowed in splendid golds and reds of Fall plums peaches appricots and cherrys abound for these last fall weeks I am a healthy brown color and stuffed with fresh fruit. (at other times of the year unobtainable)

*

the devotion

imagine
Alek James Hidell

in Irving, TX
his daughter aboard his shoulders
both reaching out
to catch a falling oak leaf

In November, I too
have played this game, with

my own daughter

it is not a game of reflexes
it is a game of anticipations

calculating just how your hand might
intersect in time & space with
the dipping, curling leaf

*

March 17th, 1961: I and Erich went to trade union dance. Boring but at the last hour as introduced to a girl with a French hair-do and red-dress with white slipper I dance with her, than ask to show her home I do, along with 5 other admirares her name is Marina. We like each other right away she gives me her phone number and departs home with an not-so-new freiend in a taxi, I walk home.

April 30th, 1961: after a 7 day delay at the marraige beaure because of my unusual passport they allow us to registra as man & wife two of Marinas girl friends act as bridesmaids. We are married at her aunts house we have a dinner reception for about 20 friends and neboribor who wish us happiness (in spite of my origin and accept) which was in general rather disquiting to any Russian since for. are very rare in the soviet union even tourist. after an evening of eating and drinking in which uncle Wooser started a fright and the fuse blow on an overloaded circite We take our leave and walk the 15 minutes to our home. We lived near each other, at midnight we were home.

May Day 1961: Found us thinking about our fu-

ture. Inspite of fact I married Marina to hurt Ella I found myself in love with Marina.[21]

*

the faith

like i was shot
like i was shot with a diamond

the genius of that
the will
perfect, genuine, complete, crystalline, pure

these were not monsters
these were men

who fought with their hearts
who had families
who had children
who were filled with love
but they had the strength

without judgment
because it is judgment that defeats us

*

When I told about the basic features of American military life in the U.S. marine Corp, the ex-soldier I knew usually laughed and said we have no discipline but I'm quite sure the ohs and ahs were signs of admiration when I spoke of our "undisciplined" army, especially the complete absence of political lectures under our system of separation of army and state, and also the fact that at the end of each work day we could put on civies and pile in the car and drive up to town to a movie or a dance, army discipline without a wall, with money in our pockets and our own military obligation clearly understood and in our

own hands.[22]

*

something has happened here

electric is the eye
water is the life
light is the frame

the frame is the light
the life is the gift
the eye is the door

as i stand before the white
arches that frame the elms
a paper bag acrossed my hands

a curtain falls, shadows
on my palms that line the map
the sun is overhead

angls of books and walls
frame the light, hold
the depart

the shame is the life
the time is the son
hope is the breath

the frame is the night
the life is the shift
the eye is the path

*

the motorcade sped on

[2] Death Trip

It was no coincidence, he maintained, that Dr. Hofmann discovered of the effects of LSD shortly after the first nuclear chain reaction was achieved by the Manhattan project. His remarks seems to imply that LSD was some sort of divine antidote to the nuclear curse and that humanity must pay heed to the psychedelic revelation if it was to alter its self destructive course and avert a major catastrophe.[23]

The goal of all life is death, and casting back, the inanimate was there before the animate.[24]

I.

William Blake, 'The Marriage Of Heaven And Hell', *Plate 14 A Memorable Fancy*:

If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.[25]

*

The Source or Creator Vision

When LSD was first introduced to the United States in 1949, it was well received by the scientific community. Within less than a decade the drug had risen to a position of high standing among psychiatrists. LSD therapy was by no means a fad or a fly-by-night venture. More than one thousand clinical papers were written on the subject, discussing some forty thousand patients. Favourable results were reported when LSD it was used to treat severely resistant psychiatric conditions, such as frigidity and other sexual aberrations. [...] The drug was also found to ease the physical and psychological distress of terminal cancer patients, helping them to come to terms with the anguish and mystery of death.[26]

*

The Internal Flow of Archetypal Processes

conscious sentient part of the interrelated machine
making waves outward in Time to the Beholder
displaying its own image in miniature once and for all
repeated minutely downward endless variations throughout all of itself
it being all the same in every part[27]

*

The Fire-Flow of Internal Unity

Then I don't know exactly what time it was, he asked for his tablet and wrote, 'Try LSD 100 intramuscular.' Although as you see from this photostatic copy it is not very clear, I know that this is what he meant. I asked him to confirm it. Suddenly something became very clear to me. I knew that we were together again after this torturous talking of the last two months. I knew then, I knew what was to be done. I went quickly into the cupboard in the other room where Dr. Bernstein was, and the TV which had just announced the shooting of Kennedy. I took the LSD and said, 'I am going to give him a shot of LSD, he asked for it.' The doctor had a moment of agitation because you know very well the uneasiness about this drug in the medical mind. Then he said, 'All right, at this point what is the difference.' Whatever he had said, no 'authority,' not even an army of authorities could have stopped me then. I went into Aldous' room with the vial of LSD and prepared a syringe. The doctor asked me if I wanted him to give him the shot - maybe because he saw that my hands were trembling. His asking me that made me conscious of my hands, and I said, 'No I must do this.' I quieted myself, and when I gave him the shot my hands were very firm. Then, somehow, a great relief came to us both. I believe it was 11:20 when I gave him his first shot of 100 microgrammes.[28]

*

The Wave-Vibration Structure of External Forms

Do you see O my brothers and sisters?

It is not chaos or death -- it is form, union, plan -- it is eternal life -- it is Happiness.[29]

*

The Vibratory Waves of External Unity

The main object of the report is directed toward a different objective [...] Let us call the continuum we are studying [...] Probability A. We know it is closely related to our continuum, which I like to think of as Certainty X. Nevertheless, even superficially, Probability A reveals certain basic values that differ from our own. It is our first duty to examine those values. Probability A's time-flow rate seems to differ from our own, for instance. Instrumentation is being devised so that we can have absolute scales by which to measure such discrepancies.[30]

*

"The Retinal Circus"

NASA reportedly gave hallucinogenic drugs to astronauts in training the way of preparing them for the weightlessness of outer space.[31]

*

"The Magic Theatre"

Charles Joseph Whitman killed 13 people and injured more than 30 on 1 August 1966, firing from the Main Building tower of the University of Texas at Austin. He had killed his wife and mother in separate incidents earlier that morning.

*

The Whitman poems

The father

Between discipline
and punishment
falls shame.

The boy must be
reminded
and she will stand
aside.

In my house and
at my table

I will have
my will
respected.

Flesh of my flesh;
my son.

The diary

'I have thoughts
very much about
the concept of "death".

When it overtakes me
some day I must
remember to observe
closely and see if it is
as I thought it would be'.

The mother

Beaten for unknown
indiscretions,

a middle-aged woman in
a single bed.

Time hollows; relief
may be located

in a measured length
of rubber hose.

The tower

A rectilinear pen, upright,
the nib a carillon room
scratching on the vault:

'Ye shall know the truth
and the Truth shall
make you free.'

A city and a tower,
whose top may reach
unto heaven. Nothing

will be restrained from
them, which they have
imagined to do.

The pilgrim recognized,

the elevator is
restored. ‘Thank you,

ma’am, you don’t know
how happy that
makes me.’

Pitiless as the sun
that rules the summer sky,
he ascends.

The dolly: an inventory

Universal M1 carbine
Sears 12-gauge-semi-automatic shotgun
Green rifle case
Remington 700 bolt-action rifle
4x Leupold scope
Remington model 14 pump rifle
Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum revolver
9mm Luger automatic pistol

(Galesia-Brescia .25 automatic pistol)

The notes [32]

I.

To Whom
It May Concern:

I have just taken
my mother’s life.

I am very
upset over having
done it. However,

I feel that if
there is a heaven
she is definitely
there now.

I am truly sorry.

Let there be
no doubt in
your mind

that I loved this
woman with all
my heart.

II.

I imagine it appears
that I brutally killed
both of my loved ones.

III.

I don't quite
understand
what it is
that compels me
to type this
letter.

I have been
a victim
of many unusual
and irrational thoughts.

I felt come
overwhelming
violent impulses.

I did not consider
this world
worth living in.

IV.[33]

The intense hatred I
feel for my father is
beyond description.

If there exists
A God
let him understand
my actions
and judge me
accordingly.

The observation deck[34]

The over-bright eyes of
Charles Joseph Whitman,
his too-thin skull
a crosshair benediction,
another mirage in the
overheated Texas air.

Climbing his tower like
a man ascending the throne,
to move the world
into the realm of
the unimaginable,
Whitman's act, the world
it ended: a different future.

A low, whimpering report;
an electric lance.

The autopsy

The malignant tumour
microscopically exhibited
the features of
glioblastoma multiforme,

a remarkable vascular
component of a small
congenital malformation, a
palisading of cells.

It conceivably could have
contributed to his inability
to control his emotions
and actions,

although the
destruction of the brain
by gunshot wounds was
so extensive.

'After my death I wish

that an autopsy would be
performed on me to see if
there is any visible physical

disorder.'

The diagnosis[35]

Drug abuse
The tumour
Psychological disintegration
(a) disregard for human life, marine corps; (b) disregard for human life, religious beliefs
Emotional strain
Unhealthy view of firearms as problem solvers
A heart born deceitful
The stars
'maybe he was just mean as hell'
He was mad at the world
He was crazy
He was evil

*

II.

William Blake, 'The Marriage Of Heaven And Hell', Plates 21-22 *A Memorable Fancy*:

I have always found that angels have the vanity to speak of themselves as the only wise; this they do with a confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning.[36]

*

TERRY VALENTINE (Peter Fonda): Did you ever dream about a place you never really recall being to before? A place that maybe only exists in your imagination? Someplace far away, half remembered when you wake up. When you were there, though, you knew the language. You knew your way around. *That* was the sixties. [*Pause*]

No. It wasn't that either. It was just '66 and early '67. That's all there was.[37]

*

The Beatles LP Revolver was released in the UK on 5 August 1966; in the USA, 8 August 1966.

Lying back in the flower-decked limousine, I remembered the frightening compulsions that had filled my last years. I had dreamed of crimes and murders, unashamed acts of congress with beasts, with birds, trees and the soil. I remembered my molesting of small children. But now I knew that these perverse impulses had been no more than confused attempts to anticipate what was taking place in Shepperton, my capture of these people and the merging of their bodies with mine. Already I was convinced that there was no evil, and that even the most plainly evil impulses were merely crude attempts to accept the demands of a higher realm that existed within each of us. By accepting these perversions and obsessions I was opening the gates into the real world, where we would all fly together, transform ourselves at will into the fish and the birds, the flowers and the dust, unite ourselves once more within the great commonwealth of nature.[38]

*

'Tomorrow Never Knows' was produced through the manipulation of tape loops recorded by band members prior to the session. It was the first song recorded for Revolver, but was sequenced as the last track.

After swallowing the mushrooms pills, Ginsberg became slightly nauseous, but his initial queasiness subsided as the drug to command of his being. He and Orlovsky were completely overwhelmed. They took off their clothes and padded around the house, a supernatural gleam in the eyes. Ginsberg was inundated by a rush of messianic feelings.[39]

*

The lyrics to 'Tomorrow Never Knows' were inspired by the Leary, Metzner and Alpert book The Psychedelic Experience (1964), which was based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

The fact of the matter is that all apparent forms of matter and body are momentary clusters of energy. We are little more than flickers on a multi-dimensional television screen. This realization directly experienced can be delightful. You suddenly wake up from the delusion of separate form and hook up to the cosmic dance. Consciousness slides along the wave matrices, silently at the speed of light.[40]

*

The stories contained in Brian Aldiss's Barefoot in the Head (1969) were first published in New Worlds, except the first chapter.

Taking my eyes off the road, I clasped Vaughan's hand in my own, trying to close my eyes to the fountain of light that poured through the windshield of the car from the vehicles approaching us.

An armada of angelic creatures, each surrounded by an immense corona of light, was landing on the motorway either side of us.[41]

*

Barefoot in the Head quoted USAF General Curtis LeMay in its epigraph: 'Tell the Vietnamese they've got to draw in their horns and stop aggression or we're going to bomb them back into the Stone Age.'

Alone now in the sky, I moved in huge strides across the air. I have become an archangelic being of enormous power, at last strong enough to make my escape. Far below me the thousands of stranded birds cowered in the airless streets, helplessly flicking their wings and the scattered bank-notes.[42]

*

Aldous Huxley died on the day of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, 23 November 1963.

The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.[43]

*

JG Ballard's Crash was published in 1973. Notoriously, a publisher's reader reported that the author was 'beyond psychiatric help'. Publication was not recommended.

While he lay within me, his identity fading for ever, I knew that I would never release him, and that his real flight was taking place now across the skies of my body in the rear seat of this limousine. The last modes of his self fled through the dark arcades of my bloodstream, down the sombre causeways of my spinal column, following the faint cries of three children I had taken into me that afternoon.

For a few final seconds he soared within me, as I rode his body through its last night. Riding him, I became an androgyne of multiple sex, an angelic figure raised upon the body of this young man. I embraced him within me as an embraced myself.[44]

*

The twenty-first anniversary of the detonation of the atomic weapon Little Boy above Hiroshima: 6 August 1966.

We live together, we act on, and react to, one another; but always and in all circumstances we are by ourselves. The martyrs go hand in hand into the arena; they are crucified alone. Embraced, the lovers desperately try to fuse their insulated ecstasies into a single self-transcendence; in vain. By its very nature every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude.[45]

*

The twenty-first anniversary of the detonation of the atomic weapon Fat Man above Nagasaki: 9 August 1966.

'Don't jeer at me who's in the family way by you you'll go the way of all saviours and they'll crucify you. They always need another crucifixion. There is never enough for them!' Tears bursting now.[46]

*

Michael Lesy published Wisconsin Death Trip in 1973. It collects newspaper reports of murder, suicide, barn-burnings, madness and dislocation in the town of Black River Falls, Wisconsin, around the turn of the 20th century.

It also collects photographs from the period taken by Charles van Schaik.

The terror comes with the discovery of transience. Nothing is fixed, no form solid. Everything you can experience is "nothing but" electrical waves. You feel ultimately tricked. A victim of the great television producer. Distrust. The people around you are lifeless television robots. The world around you is a facade, a stage set. You are a helpless marionette, a plastic doll in a plastic world.[47]

*

the end
Of the beginning

[3] Report on the Kennedy assassination by Alek James Hidell, his ascension, return and absolution.

Report. In the context of the sentence, 'report' is here used as a noun. It may be defined in three ways: (1) common talk, rumour; (2) account given or opinion formally expressed after investigation or consideration or collation of information; (3) sound of explosion. The first two definitions appear mutually incompatible, the first suggesting rumour or speech lacking veracity or verification; the second a more considered, official, *truthful* use of language. The doubleness of the word is repeated by the pun on 'report' as a gunshot, though this may require a different grammatical construction thereafter to be fully effective. The doubling/ duplicity of the word as noun and verb, 'to report' is enacted in this report doubling that of the Warren Commission on the assassination of President John F Kennedy on November 1963. That there is nothing following this sentence (its intention to report foreclosed) perhaps reveals a critique of the Warren Commission's own lengthy text. The Commission's Report was described by the novelist JG Ballard as a work of fiction:

If it were a novel, you'd say it was a masterpiece. And it may very well *be* a novel [...] It's a whole series of narratives – the account of the assassination seen from different points of view, prepared by various specialists [...] It's an *amazing* book.[48]

'Report' seems to presuppose the definite version of events, the summa,

the 'truth'; but its unstable meanings withhold that possibility. The sentence itself was typed on a Clark-Nova portable typewriter, and analysis has shown that the same machine was used in typing 'Very nice for writing reports' and 'Report on the assassination of Joan Lee by unknown forces' on cards, postmarked 'Interzone', delivered to the campaign headquarters of President Lyndon Baines Johnson and Senator Barry Goldwater in the autumn of 1964, respectively.

On. Both the *Report of the Warren Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy* (McGraw-Hill, 1964) and Brian Aldiss's *Report on Probability A* (1969) were found in the room of Patient A, illicitly removed from the institutional library. The library's holdings and acquisitions policy are currently under investigation.

The. The use of 'the' rather than 'a' in this place seems to be definitive, as though there were only one assassination. This may suggest that the sentence was typed prior to the events of June 1968. An alternative possibility is that a word was redacted and/or typed over, between 'the' and 'Kennedy'. Possible textual variants are 'first', 'second', 'final' or 'next'.

Kennedy. Frustratingly imprecise, the use of this word is at odds with the declarative use of 'report'. Does the sentence refer to John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, or the assassination(s) to come of person(s) unknown? Without knowing which Kennedy victim is being referred to here, meaning is destabilised and unclear. The assassination of President John F. Kennedy is often seen as a primal scene, a moment where American innocence was lost; the death of Robert F. Kennedy the ending of the last political hopes of the counter-culture and left/liberal coalition. Both are enmeshed in conspiracy-thinking, from the narratives surrounding the 'lone gunman' in Dallas to the 'brainwashing' of Sirhan Sirhan, events that seemed to repeat the fictional plot of the 1962 film *The Manchurian Candidate*.

Assassination. Patient A remains unhealthily concerned with the history of political assassination, particularly in the 1960s, and with the figure of the assassin. A distinction should be made here between the *act* of assassination and the assassin *subject*, and it is important to note Patient A's seeming identification with a mythic figure of the assassin. The disputed etymology of 'assassin' is supposed to derive from either 'hashhashin', a derogatory Arabic term for hashish-user, or 'Asasiyun', meaning 'faithful to the foundation of the faith'. The first assassins were led by Hassan-i Sabbah, 'The Old Man of the

Mountain', who controlled his men from a mountain fastness named Alamut. Hassan-i Sabbah is a recurrent figure in the works of William S. Burroughs (barred from the institutional library's collection), and in particular his slogan 'Nothing is true; everything is permitted'. The implications of such an apocalyptic statement upon Patient A's psychic armature is still to be fully examined.

By. Another point of ambiguity. The sentence may read: 'Report (by Alek James Hidell) on the Kennedy assassination [...]'; or, more worryingly, 'Report on the assassination (by Alek James Hidell) of Kennedy [...]'.

Alek James Hidell. The provenance of this name is uncertain, but research has revealed a pseudonymous science fiction writer, one Alek James Hidell, to have published during the 1960s. The entry for Hidell in Clute and Nicholls' *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction* (1993) reads:

> US writer, in UK 1964-67. His debut novella, *The Collective* (**1963** UK) is a dystopia, influenced by George ORWELL and David KARP. Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (**1962** UK) is a precursor of Hidell's 'The Historic Diary' (*NW* **1964**) in its linguistic inventiveness and experimentation, which narrates the journey of a young visitor to the 'Utopia' of the Soviet Union, and his subsequent disillusion, in the first person. Two other stories, 'The Primal Scene' (*NW* 1964) and 'Death Trip' (*NW* 1967) were revised for the experimental *The Assassination Report* (fix-up, **1969** UK), the whole demonstrating Hidell's reading of JG BALLARD's experimental short fictions of the late 1960s. Hidell's work has affinities to ALDISS, *Barefoot in the Head* (fixup **1969** UK), and also to SPINRAD, *The Iron Dream* (**1972** UK).

His. Also ambiguous. Does this refer to 'Kennedy', or Hidell?

Ascension. Decoding this word requires a fixing of the ambiguity of the previous word in the sentence, 'his'. If this refers to President John F. Kennedy or Senator Robert F. Kennedy, it might be read as a conferral of beatitude upon one or other of the brothers. Alternatively, the suggestion of height may be a mythologisation of the perspective of the sniper, looking down through a 'scope from on high. Such a perspective can be found in such films of the period as *Dirty Harry* (1971) and *The Conversation* (1974). If one pursues the path of myth, then there is a worrying implication of transcendence in the act of assassination *for the assassin themselves*.

Return. This word has inevitable connotations of Christ's resurrection and physical manifestation to several of his disciples. While no evidence of such phenomenon in relation to either JFK or RFK has been observed, the word might suggest a wish for the dead President to descend from heaven and inaugurate the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth. Alternatively, the descent of

the sniper from the tower or building could also suggest an imprisonment in the material, a failure of transcendence.

And. This conjunction may be read as a kind of pause in thought, after which will follow the last word, the consummation of this psychic narrative. A determinism or inevitability might be thought to be at work here. This is perhaps the most revealing word in the sentence.

Absolution. The sentence ends with two words beginning with 'A', reinforcing their symbolic circularity, and their connection to 'assassin' (and 'Alek'?). Patient A encodes himself within the text at this point, forcing the reader to see the 'A'. This (scarlet) letter is no sign of sin, rather its inverse; but 'absolution' implies guilt, *the need to be absolved of sin*. The Christian morality in evidence, and its dynamic of transgression, forgiveness and cleansing is at odds with the figure of the assassin, who Nietzsche, in *On The Genealogy of Morals*, wrote:

When the Christian crusaders in the Orient encountered the invincible order of the Assassins, that order of free spirits *par excellence*, whose lowest ranks followed a rule of obedience the like of which no order of monks ever attained, they obtained in some way a hint concerning that symbol and watchword reserved for the highest ranks alone as their *secretum*: 'nothing is true, everything is permitted'. – Very well, *that* was *freedom* of spirit; in *that* way, the faith in truth itself was *abrogated*.[49]

Can absolution be obtained by the assassin? Legend tells that Hassan-i Sabbah presented a 'garden of earthly delights' to his assassins to represent the everlasting pleasures that awaited them in the afterlife, but there seems little trace of Islam in the theological structures implied by this sentence. The sin of murder, of assassination, may not be cleansed. Perhaps Patient 'A' wishes to absolve himself, but of what crimes and transgressions, we are unable, at present, to determine.

1 Norman Mailer, *Oswald's Story: An American Mystery* (London: Little, Brown, 1995), p.783.

2 Tony Tanner, *City of Words: American Fiction 1950-1970* (New York and London: Harper and Row, 1971), p.363.

3 *Report of the Warren Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy* (New York and London McGraw-Hill, 1964), p.365

4 Lee Harvey Oswald's 'Historic Diary', http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Lee_Harvey_Oswald_diary

5 George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p.37.

6 http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Lee_Harvey_Oswald_diary

7 http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Lee_Harvey_Oswald_diary

8 http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Lee_Harvey_Oswald_diary

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Iterative Architecture

Instructions/ Introduction

Readers hoping to solve the mystery of J.G. Ballard's 'The Beach Murders' may care to approach it in the form of a card game. Some of the principal clues have been alphabetized, some left as they were found, scrawled on to the backs of a deck of cards. Readers are invited to recombine the order of the cards to arrive at a solution. Obviously any number of solutions is possible, and the final answer to the mystery lies forever hidden.*

** You may find scissors a useful accessory*

♣♠♥♦

Clubs ♣

Architecture (A♣). Physical space is crucial to the Ballardian imaginary, from the eponymous tower block in *High-Rise* (1975) to the 'gated communities' and science parks of *Super-Cannes* (2000) and *Millennium People* (2003). Counterposed to images of flight and transcendence found in many of his stories, the urban environment is often an imprisoning space. In his online article 'J.G. Ballard and the Architectures of Control', Dan Lockton argues that 'One of the many 'obsessions' running through Ballard's work is what we might characterise as *the effect of architecture on the individual*', while complicating his argument by acknowledging the mutual implication of inner and outer, psychological and environment: this blurring being Ballard's method of 'reflecting the participants' mental state in the environment itself'.[1] Lockton also suggests that '[t]he architecture […] acts as a structure

for the story' in locating the protagonist and 'plot' firmly in an 'obsessively explained and expounded' architecture. I would like to develop this argument by suggesting that the informing structural principles of Ballard's short stories, particularly that of the period beginning with 'The Terminal Beach' (1964) and embracing *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1969) but also later short fictions, are spatial and iterative: geometry and algebra.

Ballardian (2♣). On the BBC Radio 4 arts review programme *Front Row*, presenter Mark Lawson, in introducing a discussion of Ballard's autobiography *Miracles of Life*, suggested that 'he's one of the few writers to have become an adjective — Ballardian'.[2] An author who attains the status of an adjective runs the risk of reduction to culturally received ideas of their work (often erroneous and masking the texts themselves) or, worse still, it makes them the object of caricature or burlesque. To become an adjective suggests a certain kind of cultural visibility (or even cultural power), but also indicates a possible ossification through repetition: another reduction, to a set of representative images, ideas and tropes. In this case, 'Ballardian' signifies a recurrent set of narrative structures, characters, and particularly iconic places and things, many of which were identified by David Pringle in his groundbreaking critical work of the 1970s:

> Such things as concrete weapons ranges, dead fish, abandoned airfields, radio telescopes, crashed space-capsules, sand dunes, empty cities, […] beaches, fossils, broken juke-boxes, crystals, lizards, multi-storey car-parks, dry lake-beds, medical laboratories, drained swimming-pools, […] high-rise buildings, predatory birds, and low-flying aircraft.[3]

To assert a 'Ballardian' imaginary is to suggest a limitation to his work, a finite set of materials out of which a range of texts are worked (and re-worked). It is a critical commonplace to note the 'obsessional' return to key images, objects and concerns in Ballard's work – from emptied swimming pools to a desire to transcend time – that could have reduced his texts to a set of symptoms of an identifiable pathology (and did, in the notorious judgement on *Crash* by a publisher's reader). At best, Ballard's 'obsessional' return to a limited creative palette can be used to articulate a consistent and particular vision of the world – what Mark Lawson, characterising 'Ballardian', called a 'way of looking at the world and describing it' – or is, at worst, a boring and repetitive re-working of the same old material by a 'minor' (genre) writer who lacks a wider engagement with human life. 'Ballardian' is perhaps best understood (a) as a symptom of genre, and the repetition-with-difference pattern of much genre fiction; and (b) as an effect of Ballard's structural reliance on iteration.

Confetti Royale (9♣). The original title of the story collected in the 2001 *Collected Short Stories* as 'The Beach Murders' is 'Confetti Royale', signifying its

intertextual relation to Ian Fleming's *Casino Royale* (1953) and the Cold war spy or espionage narrative. The impenetrable motivations of the characters in 'Confetti Royale' – two Russian agents, on CIA operative, an 'absconded State Department cipher chief' and 'American limbo dancer' (whose actions entirely exceed this belittling characterization) – both anticipate the labyrinthine logic of Le Carré's espionage fiction and compromises the more straightforward and linear adventures of Fleming's secret agent. There has been some recent speculation on the *Ballardian* website about the connection between Ballard and Fleming, particularly with regard to *The Wind from Nowhere* (Ballard's 1962 'disowned' apprentice novel) and its megalomaniacal industrialist Hardoon, who could be seen as a an analogue of the Bond super-villains who seek the chimera of 'world domination'.[4] While 'Confetti Royale' is a playful iteration of espionage fiction, its card-game structure raises to a formal principle the centrality of the game between Bond and Le Chiffre in *Casino Royale*. Here, the 27 textual elements (Introduction plus 26 alphabeticized titled paragraphs) are strewn as 'confetti', compromising the ordering principles of the baccarat tables or Cold War ideologies.

Diamonds Are Forever (6♣). The 1969 James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (*OHMSS*) was the first to be made without Sean Connery. The opening 15 minutes is suffused by a self-reflexivity which marks out the problematic nature of generic repetition-with-difference. The new Bond, George Lazenby, looks directly at the camera at the end of the pre-credits sequence, when the 'girl' he has been fighting for drives off, and says 'This never happened to the other fellah'; the film's title sequence replays scenes from earlier Bond films; and when Bond 'resigns' and clears his office drawer, key objects from earlier films are introduced with *aide-memoire* musical leitmotifs from previous Bond films overlaid on the soundtrack. Anxiety-provoking difference is suppressed by reference to the recognisable and familiar, even at the risk of disrupting the film diegesis. In 1971, not only did Bond return, but so did Connery. *Diamonds Are Forever* is Bond's 'revenge' mission for the death, in *OHMSS*, of Bond's wife Tracey (the 'girl' who escaped him at the beginning), and is largely set in Nixon's USA. A morally rotten, bloated film (featuring two sadistic homosexual assassins as an index of its gender sensitivities), *Diamonds Are Forever*'s main location is Las Vegas, the 'old' Vegas of the Dunes and the Sands, the excessive, corrupt Vegas of Bugsy Siegel and the Mob. *Diamonds Are Forever* plays the megalomaniacal Blofeld – murderer of Bond's wife and manipulator of the diamond trade to create a laser-bearing 'killer' satellite – against one 'Willard Whyte', a helpful billionaire resident of a Las Vegas penthouse suite. This character's good-ole-boy persona fails to mask the fact that he is a Whyte-washed reiteration of a real-life Las Vegas resident, Howard Hughes, who in real life more nearly approximated Blofeld. Unlike Fleming's *Casino Royale* (1953) and the 2006 film version of this Bond narrative, where the high-stakes card games function as a trope for ideological conflict and the dangerous

fluidity of capital markets and financial flows, *Diamonds Are Forever* makes little or no play with the casino chronotope. Ballard's own Las Vegas novel is *Hello America* (1981), the most generically 'science fiction' of his later works. This novel narrates a journey by a European exploratory mission to a depopulated, post-apocalyptic United States, where they find a self-anointed (and self-named) President Charles Manson, who has assumed command of the remainder of America's nuclear arsenal. *Hello America* uses the Las Vegas gambling icon of the roulette wheel, rather than the card table, to critique the logic of Mutually Assured Destruction. As Ken Cooper suggests, 'self-destruction […] is the inevitable payoff of atomic roulette'.[5]

Experimental Fiction (7♣). Ballard's most formally experimental period lies between 'The Terminal Beach' (1964) and *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1969). Although his later novels are iterative in their narrative and textual patterning, they are much closer to 'mainstream' literary fiction's spatial continuity and temporal causality. However, in his short fiction Ballard did return to formally experimental or innovative texts, often playing with textual conventions. 'The Index' (1977) consists of just that, 'the index to the unpublished and perhaps suppressed autobiography of a man who may well have been one of the most remarkable figures of the 20th century', one Henry Rhodes Hamilton, but the mystery of who he was and the status of the text remains unresolved; 'Notes Towards a Mental Breakdown' (1976) consists of annotations to the subtitle of the story ('A discharged Broadmoor patient compiles "Notes Towards A Mental Breakdown", recalling his wife's murder, his trial and exoneration'), each word of which is footnoted; and in 'Answers to a Questionnaire' (1985) the respondent implies that he has assassinated the second incarnation of Christ in 100 'answers'.[6] These texts are organised by absence or ellipsis, the architecture of the stories signifying a missing central element or text that reader must configure or enunciate for herself/himself. Non-linear, spatial in design, Ballard's later experimental short stories are textual games that posit a foundational enigma, a mystery that the reader must work to decode.

Fugue Fiction (5♣). The 'fugue fictions' are three connected short stories that Ballard published around the turn of the 1980s: 'News from the Sun' (1981), 'Memories of the Space Age' (1982) and 'Myths of the Near Future' (1982). A close examination of these stories discloses the iterative principle at work even in Ballard's later texts, where formal fragmentation has given way to more linear narrative models. A paragraph from 'A Question of Re-Entry' (1962) pinpoints the shared emphases of these stories:

> The implication was that the entire space programme was a symptom of some inner unconscious malaise afflicting mankind, and in particular the Western technocracies, and that the space-craft and satellites had been launched because their flights satisfied certain

buried compulsions and desires.[7]

In 'Memories of the Space Age', the protagonist Mallory, a doctor in the NASA program, confesses to his unconscious complicity in the first orbital murder, by a borderline-disturbed astronaut named Hinton. This act produced a kind of 'space-sickness' of fugue-states and loss of temporal awareness that is centred on Cape Canaveral: 'he had torn the fabric of time and space, cracked the hour-glass from which time was running'.[8] The fugues experienced by Mallory and the protagonists of the two other stories are a kind of congealing of time, a transcendence of clock time; in 'News from the Sun', these fugues are explicitly typed as a return to a pre-lapsarian state of consciousness. In 'Myth of the Near Future', the protagonist Sheppard pursues his terminally ill wife to Canaveral, where the time-effect may ultimately revivify her. All three stories are patterned on a triangulation between the protagonist, his wife (or lover), and an antagonist; a fourth figure is present, outside of the primary triangulation, who is either an astronaut or connected to the space program.

'News from the Sun': Franklin-Ursula-Slade (Trippett)
'Memories of the Space Age': Mallory-Anna-Hinton (Gale Shepley)
'Myths of the Near Future': Sheppard-Elaine-Martinsen (Anne Godwin)

The triangulations suggests a geometric/architectural emphasis, but the sense that these three fictions, published in sequence, are reworkings of the same conceptual material and re-deploy the same motifs (flight, the space programme, fugue states and time) signifies their centrality to the Ballardian iterative complex.

Gemini. (4♣) The Space Age is a crucial source for the Ballardian imaginary, from the negotiations of cargo-cult imperialism in 'A Question of Re-Entry' (1963) to the assassination of a messianic astronaut in 'The Object of the Attack' (1984). The icon of the astronaut is central to the 'fugue fictions' and their sense that NASA's manned space programs were a cosmic transgression, an hubristic leap out of biological time which has catastrophic psychological consequences. Many of Ballard's texts are centred on Cape Canaveral, from 'The Illuminated Man' (1964) (itself later incorporated – reiterated – into *The Crystal World* (1965)), where time crystallizes, to 'Memories of the Space Age' (1982), where the Cape is the epicentre of a kind of 'space sickness'. However, it is not Apollo imagery – the Moon landings – that regulate Ballard's Space Age imaginary. His astronauts have orbital trajectories. In 'The Dead Astronaut' (1968) and 'The Cage of Sand' (1962) orbiting capsules containing dead astronauts form a kind of artificial constellation in the night sky, while the protagonists wait at Canaveral for their orbits to decay. It is not Apollo, but the Mercury and Gemini programs

– manned orbital missions that grew in complexity and duration, but stayed within the ambit of Earth – that provide the backdrop for Ballard's Space Age. This is no New Frontier, no ascension to other planets, but a limited, problematic endeavour.

Hearts and Minds (8♣). The title sequence of the 2006 *Casino Royale* plays with the centrality of the card game and the casino to its narrative. In motion-capture animation (where computer-generated graphics are overlaid on live action), a silhouetted polygon Bond fights, shoots, and is finally shown (in a live-action 'reveal') to be Daniel Craig, the 'new' Bond. The roulette wheel becomes a sniper-scope target in these graphics, as clubs, diamonds and spades become weapons embedded in the torsos of antagonists, 'blood' flowing across the screen from their wounds. Bond is himself 'cut' by playing cards in one animated sequence, but is invulnerable; no blood seems to flow there. The interrelationship of the casino, the roulette wheel and the playing card with the neo-colonial adventurism represented by the Bond imaginary invites us to read the film itself as a kind of spectacle or game, masking its ideological premises.

Iterative (3♣). Crucial to the idea of a 'Ballardian' text is patterning or what I have suggested as *iterability*. It would be difficult to deny that Ballard returns to similar ideas, or narrative structures throughout his work: it is the *effectiveness* of the patterning that is crucial, the combination and re-combination of elements to work through a coherent world that provides Ballard's texts with imaginative power. David Punter, in *Modernity*, concurs, stating: 'What is most significant […] is that Ballard is a repetitive writer, a writer of repetition.'[9] The first formally 'iterative' Ballard short story is 'The Terminal Beach' (1964), in which the textual fabric of the story is fragmented, split into 22 sections (21 of them subtitled), echoing the psychological fragmentation of the protagonist Traven (the earliest incarnation of the 'T-' figure who recurs, as 'Tallis' or 'Talbot' or 'Trabert') who can also be found in Ballard's iterative masterwork, *The Atrocity Exhibition*. 'The Terminal Beach' and particularly the *Atrocity Exhibition* texts are non-linear and non-causal in terms of narrative; in 'The Terminal Beach', the concrete blocks of the nuclear testing site Eniwetok Island form a maze, 'their geometric regularity and finish [seeming] to occupy more than their own volumes of space, imposing on him a mood of absolute calm and order.'[10] Here the spatial ordering of the text is more properly geometric rather than algebraic (iterative), but the repetitive, disorienting regularity of the field of blocks is a figure for a space that repeats itself endlessly. This motif can also be found in the more classically dystopian short story 'The Concentration City', where the urban 'build-up' has no boundary, no end, and a train journey to find its limits returns the protagonist to the starting point is a regressive, looping trajectory; and in the repeated face of Cordobès on the deck of cards placed upon Quimby's balcony table in 'Confetti

Royale'.

James (10♣). J.G. Ballard's first names are James Graham. Only in his *Crash* alter-ego is Ballard 'James', a knowing self-implication in that text's transgressive sexual material; he was 'Jimmy' as a boy, 'Jim' to his adult friends. The diminutive, 'Jim', humanises Ballard, and it is this name which is given to his 'autobiographical' selves in *Empire of the Sun* (1985) and *The Kindness of Women* (1991). Opposing this is the self-alienated 'J.G.', a not-quite *nom de plume* that masks the 'real' Jim Ballard. Ballard's textual interrogation of unitary subjectivity is reflected in this circulation of names, and the surnames of his protagonists – Sheppard, Maitland, Franklin, Sinclair – are themselves iterative signs. James Bond, by way of contrast, is never 'Jimmy', 'Jim' or 'Jamie': always 'James'.

Kennedy (J♣). After his assassination in 1963, President John F. Kennedy's name was given to the Cape where the NASA space program still has its operational base: Canaveral. This naming has now been reversed, but the Space Center still bears JFK's name. It is Kennedy who is seen to be the 'author' of Apollo, giving the political and economic impetus to reach the Moon through the rhetoric of the 'New Frontier' and a sustained arms race (symbolically as well as militarily), though it could be argued that it is Lyndon Johnson who was most committed to the American space program in the 1950s and 1960s. Kennedy's assassination is, in some sense, a 'ground zero' for contemporary American culture, and he looms large in the algebra of icons that Ballard constructs in the period of *The Atrocity Exhibition*, along with the president's widow, Jackie. The implication of glamour, celebrity and violent death is embodied in the icon of JFK; in 'The Assassination of John F. Kennedy Considered as a Downhill Motor Race', a key text in *The Atrocity Exhibition*, the moment of assassination also becomes a fatal game.

Lunghua (Q♣). With the publication of Ballard's autobiography, *Miracles of Life* (2008), it became apparent that, as much as I would like to resist a biographical reading of Ballard's work, it is Ballard's own childhood that has had a fundamental regulatory effect on the Ballardian imaginary. In *Empire of the Sun*, Ballard playfully encouraged the reader to 'spot' the Ballardian icon in an autobiographical context – the drained swimming pool, the crashed plane – while simultaneously denying that autobiography provided any kind of key or code to understanding his work. His life, as represented in both *Empire of the Sun* and *The Kindness of Women*, is filtered through the medium of fiction. In the light of *Miracles of Life*, I would now like to suggest that it is Lunghua, the resettlement camp into which he, his parents and his sister were interned during the Japanese occupation of Shanghai in World War Two, that is the model for the Ballardian social environment. Lunghua is enclosed, fenced off from the outside world; it is a place where work is scarce; where a system of social codes and conventions regulate personal interaction; where games,

hobbies, organised events schedule the lives of its inhabitants; and where existence shades inevitably into a slow decline unto death. A place to rebel against, if space can be found; a space to escape from, if escape is possible. Lunghua is the model for the high-rises, gated communities, science parks and suburban dormitory towns of Ballard's later fiction.

Metacriticism/ metatext (K♣). 'What is distinctive about *The Arcades Project* – in Benjamin's mind, it always dwelt apart – is the working of quotations into the framework of montage [….] the transcendence of the conventional book form would go together, in this case, with the blasting apart of pragmatic historicism – grounded, as this always is, on the premise of a continuous and homogenous temporality. Citation and commentary might then be perceived as intersecting at a thousand different angles, setting up vibrations across the epochs of recent history, so as to effect "the cracking open of natural teleology." And all of this would unfold through the medium of hints or "blinks" – a discontinuous presentation deliberately opposed to traditional modes of argument.'[11]

Spades ♠

(A♠) Macro-economic tidal systems. B sat down in the oak-panelled room of state opposite Sir Richard Markham. Markham assessed this loose-limbed man in the ragged flying jacket. A constellation of scars around his mouth and jaw-line traced the trajectory of his chequered history as an agent. Markham accepted the logic of the situation – an agent lasted a few years in the field, no more – but B had gone further than most, much further in many ways. The grey, haunted eyes that looked through Markham scanned the ocean bottom of his psyche, cut adrift from the time system of Whitehall.

'You've been away, B,' said Markham.

B's eyes refocused.

'In a manner of speaking.'

(2♠) Auto-intentional displacement. B realised, as he stood on the moving walkway in the inner hub of Charles de Gaulle airport, that the geometry of the architecture expressed a latent psychopathology. The concrete tunnels of the travellators indicated a profound desire to return to the amniotic peacefulness of the womb, the octagonal central atrium and suspended Perspex walkways revealing a fascist worship of the late General in the form of an architectural homage to his nasal septum and zygomatic arch. B found himself profoundly identifying with the unknown would-be assassin who had missed his opportunity to be the French Oswald in 1965. It was clear to him that the French, for all their insistence on grands projets like CDG, inhabited a fundamental and psychotic cultural landscape in which the tension between their embrace of modernity and their nostalgia for empire went unresolved.

(3♠) Goldeneye. As he dipped the clutch of the Aston and thrust the gear-stick into fifth, B remembered the death of his wife. It was, he now understood, a special form of automobile accident. Blauveldt and Blunt, whom he had previously recognised as enemies, were in fact the agents of an underlying logic of necessity. Since the death of his wife, B had slipped further and further out of time, occupying fugue states where hours slipped by. Now, as blades of sodium light accelerated across his windshield, B felt himself again returning to the fugue state that had plagued him since her death, the Aston congealing in a viscid block of time.

(4♠) Operation Grand Slam. B opened the attaché case. In it he found what Markham had called his 'assassination weapon'. It consisted of: (a) reproductions of Marcel Duchamp's 'Nude Descending a Staircase'; (b) a pulp spy novel by one Richard Markham; (c) Eadweard Muybridge's series photographs of horse and rider; (d) soft inner flying helmet and communication rig of B-29 navigator, USAAF issue; (e) November 1963 edition of Time magazine; (f) an unused prophylactic wrapped in a tin foil sachet; (g) black-box voice recording of co-pilot, Concorde air disaster, Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris; (h) .25 Beretta pistol.

(5♠) Heliotropic. Dr Catherine Penny waited in the secure car park of the Jodrell Bank radio telescopes, as the man in the ragged flying jacket paced the grounds, where the massive volumes of the dishes sprouted like some monstrous alien crop. Dr Penny thought of B's grey, haunted eyes, and turned the heating in the MGC up a notch. What B was looking for, he could not find amongst the files and despatch boxes of Whitehall. Could he find it here, among the constellations?

(6♠) Index of Alienation. B calculated the angle between Dr Penny's rigid torso and her splayed thighs, as she sat like an ill-propped mannequin on the edge of his bed. The conjunction between her naked body, the vintage bottle of Bollinger and the torn foil of the prophylactic sachet brought back disconcerting memories of the buckled armcove on Monaco race day. He turned back to the light box he was building to display x-ray plates of his own fractured clavicle, femur, and kneecap.

(7♠) Quantum theory. 'Pay attention, B,' said Quinn, the head of the special quartermaster stores. 'One day these things could conceivably save your life.'

He placed another card on the desk and invited B to respond.

'Come on,' said B. 'What will it be next? Solitaire? The Tarot pack?'

'This is for the good of your health, not mine,' replied Quinn, 'though God knows it's difficult enough to tell the difference these days. How did you find Switzerland?'

B smiled. 'The facilities were excellent. The doctors pronounced me

in fine physical shape.' The lie was automatic, almost unconscious, thought Quinn.

B's eyes defocused, the deck of cards indecipherable sigils beneath his hands.

(8♠) Beretta .25. Sitting on the balcony of his room in the Loew's hotel in Monte Carlo, B watched the workmen fix road markings for the motor racing that would take place next week. The late afternoon sun painted the harbour with gold as he finished the club sandwich and drained the last of the glass of Johnny Walker Black Label. On his knees was the conference pack of the neurosurgery symposium he was attending, where he hoped to catch up with Blufeldt. Blufeldt had assumed the legitimate identity of a specialist doctor and had attached himself to a radical clinic in Bern, Switzerland. He was giving a paper on neurology, brain injury and fugue states. B stood up, brushed the crumbs from his knees, and pinned his identification tag onto his shirt. At least the others would know who he was supposed to be.

(9♠) Jackie O. As B entered Catherine Penny from behind, he registered the way her hips, flaring out from the waist, repeated the sensual curves of the mouthpiece of the telephone. Her back, bent rigidly over Markham's desk, echoed the planes of the reclining chair that sat, as in a psychiatrist's consulting room, to one side of the grand office. As he moved inside her, B thought of the coil that sat in Catherine's womb like an ironic plastic echo of the DNA double-helix. He held Catherine's hips as if he were piloting the Aston at high speed down the A555 autobahn between Köln and Bonn.

(10♠) Neverland. 'Blaufeld is in Florida,' said Markham, looking at B carefully. 'Down at the Cape, the disused launch site. We don't think he's interested in the physical possibilities of the gantries, but…'

'I always wanted to be an astronaut,' said B. 'The NASA program drew a lot of astronauts from Navy fliers, like Sheppard. I met him once. A difficult man. He told me flatly that no Royal Navy Commander could ever make NASA grade.'

'Space,' Blaufeld had said, 'is money.'

(J♠) Solar Transits. The strip lighting haloed from Bluffield's large, pink, shaven skull as he looked up at B from under cerebrotonic brows.

'You've never understood my work, James. God knows I've tried to explain. But I knew you'd come. Particularly here, of all places.'

B looked out of the office windows and saw the rusted, half-ruined gantries propped like a disused stage-set against the Florida sky. He could feel the .25 Beretta in its clam-shell holster beneath his left arm, but knew he would never use it now. The cool afternoon seemed to stretch forever, like the nearby glades.

'How long have you been having these fugues, James?' asked Bluff-

ield.

(Q♠) Restitution. Karen Blunt sat astride the Yamaha, revving it slowly, her aviator shades reflecting the parking lot where B sat in the open-top Pontiac. One side of B's face was turning coral in the intense afternoon sun, as he lived out a waking dream, his memory tapping out the algebra of his past. Karen's dark hair cascaded onto her sturdy shoulders and chest, which were buttoned up in a grubby NASA flight suit scavenged from Kennedy. Here at Cocoa Beach, outside the bar where the astronauts once dreamed of flight, B and Karen pitched in the oceanic tides of time.

(K♠) Pinewood to Shepperton. In the attaché case B found his instructions from Markham, consisting of a sequence of defaced postcards posted to B by Bloveldt, from Cape Kennedy, Florida; the Alamagordo testing grounds, New Mexico; Utah Beach, Normandy, France; and Fort Knox, Kentucky. They read, in date order: '(1) Maiden flight of Concorde (2) *Abbey Road* (3) Rolling Thunder (4) Apollo 11 astronaut Neil Armstrong walks on moon (5) *The Wild Bunch* (6) Inauguration of President Richard Milhous Nixon (7) *Medium Cool* (8) d.o.b 20 March (9) *Let It Bleed* (10) *The Stones in the Park* (11) *Tommy* (12) The election of French President Georges Pompidou, succeeding General de Gaulle (13) Woodstock (14) Altamont Speedway (15) *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (16) *The Atrocity Exhibition*.'

♣♠♥♦

The Joker. The Joker in the pack is the card that, in some games, can replace (or substitute for, take the place of) any of the others. In this sense, the Joker is the empty sign.

♣♠♥♦

Hearts ♥

(A♥) Time Drill. 'I don't remember much about my father,' replied B.

'No, I'm sorry, you misunderstand,' said Bluefield. 'I meant Markham, Sir Richard Markham.'

'Ah…' B looked a little confused, then passed a thin, sunburnt hand across his eyes. Bluefield thought B looked exhausted after his ordeal in the Pontiac. Karen Blunt had finally rescued the half-blistered scarecrow figure in his ragged flying jacket, and at least the soft flying helmet had prevented too much sunstroke. Even now, after a week's rest and medical attention, Bluefield could see the sores around B's dirty neckline, beneath the leather collar of his jacket.

'Are you really a doctor?' asked B, looking up.

'Of a special kind.'

(2♥) Unwritten histories. 'You've been in Florida before?' asked Karen. B was surprised to hear her speak in light, rather melodious accentless English.

'Yes, some time ago. I met a man by the name of Scaramanga.' Blowfield smiled gently and looked down at his large, soft hands. Pink and scrubbed, they looked out of place on the dusty grey melamine table-top. They sat in a red vinyl horseshoe-shaped booth in the abandoned diner, three Coca-Colas in green bottles growing ever closer to blood heat in front of them.

'I read that case,' said Blowfield. 'You weren't quite yourself to begin with, I recall.'

B's eyes flickered as he began to enter another fugue.

'And who am I now, doctor?'

(3♥) Whisky and soda. The fugues seemed to take the place of any true dream sleep, but that afternoon B drew up a sun-lounger beneath an overgrown palm, and drifted to sleep by the side of the drained swimming pool. He dreamed of flight. Propeller blades flashed from his shoulders in the golden sunlight as he ascended into the Florida sky, below him the gantries and concrete aprons of Canaveral. A space-age archangel, clothed in light, he rose until he could see the curvature on the blue rim of the earth and the vault of the sky deepened to a crushing black. Turning on his back, in coronation armour flashing like a new star, he awaited blissful deliverance.

(4♥) Kuomintang. B sat in the wrecked Aston, its red leather trim burst like a rotten scarecrow. He toyed with the broken instrument stalk as he stared at the cracked dials and buckled binnacle, the Aston's instruments frozen at the crash speed of a hundred and twenty. Feeling his cracked kneecap, B pressed down on the accelerator pedal and saw, through the frosted windshield, the roads of the International Settlement in Shanghai, where he sat on his father's lap as they drove down empty boulevards in the grandiose Packard that his father bought to impress high-ranking Chinese officials.

(5♥) Viennese Benediction. 'Who do you want to be, James?' asked Blovelt.

'Is it a matter of choice, doctor?'

'For you, it's a matter of necessity,' said Blovelt, drawing aside the Styrofoam cup of coffee.

'I think you may have the question wrong, if I may say so,' said B. 'It's not a matter of who do I want to be, but why?'

Blovelt slowly traced the parabola of his pink skull with his left palm.

'Have you seen her, again?'

B seemed, with an effort of will, to come to himself, and looked searchingly at Blovelt, certainty and horror at home in the grey eyes.

'She's out there on the gantries, doctor,' said B. 'She keeps escaping

me, and I don't have much time left. But I'll find her.'

(6♥) X-1. In one of his increasingly rare periods of physical activity, B walked towards the Apollo gantry and heard the spluttering engine of the Cessna. Through the cockpit window, as the aircraft circled the gantry, B could make out the habitual white coat, red shirt and pink skull of Blyfield, the man who had murdered his wife, but who had now somehow brought her back to him. Blyfield was waving, pointing to the top of the gantry, and as B looked up, he saw a figure clambering among the rusted geometry of the access platforms. There she was. As B made his way to the stairwell on aching, sore legs, he heard the Cessna's engine cut out, and watched as Blyfield wrestled the aircraft to a controlled crash landing on the concrete apron.

(7♥) Cobalt Blue. B and Blueweldt met in the mezzanine of the Monte Carlo convention centre, which presented itself as a provincial casino without the formal wear. The foyer was crowded with middle-aged men in light summer suits.

'Dr. Blueweldt, I assume?' asked Bond, peering at a name tag.

'My dear James! How lovely to see you here!' Blueweldt warmly clasped B's hand. 'How have you been?'

B looked searchingly into Blueweldt's eyes for signs of dissimulation.

'Have you been to any of the panels?' asked Blueweldt ruefully. 'Second rate, to a man. As you can see, they all look like middle-management executives. Appearances, in this case, are not deceptive.'

Blueweldt's own light-blue three-piece blended him in perfectly with the crowd, but B's worn leather jacket, cracked aviator glasses and khaki pants identified him either as a media don or a stray patient. B opened his conference pack and scanned the schedule of panels.

'Nothing of interest next, doctor. Shall we step outside for a sun-downer and a talk?'

(8♥) Yarrow Stalks. As he finally stepped onto the access platform near the top of the rusting Apollo gantry, legs shaking and a fugue beginning to come on, B saw his wife looking at him from a pool of silver sunlight. His wife pointed away from Canaveral, out into the light and air. He wondered if she was beckoning him to step out into the æther and join her. He edged further along the platform towards the open end, feeling the pull of the light airs that breathed past the gap. As he approached, time slowing, he realised what his wife was pointing towards – there he seemed to see, in the far distance, the light shining on the Everglades, a burnished mirror of the sun. He stared, the reflected light searing an image onto his retina. Turning, slowly turning, he realised that his wife had gone.

(9♥) Dilation of the Iris. Ordinarily, B only found motor vehicles inter-

esting if he was behind the wheel, and despite the glamour of the grand prix circus that had now arrived in Monaco, this week was no exception. He had lost track of Blaufield some time before the end of the neurology conference, having become bored by the presentations of the delegates and unimpressed by the exhibits and displays. He had drifted off into strolling the streets of the city principality, unwilling to return to London and admit – perhaps to himself most of all – that he had lost the urgency of the hunt. He haunted the harbour, obsessed with the Mediterranean light playing upon the water and the large white motor yachts that now filled the marina. Time, here in this piece of France that was not France, seemed to stretch into a long, martini-filled afternoon.

(10♥) Emergency Procedures. Using his conference accreditation to flash the security staff, B made his way with the crowd onto the deck of a large motor launch and accepted a glass of champagne from a waiter. His worn leather jacket and aviator sunshades gave him just the right kind of down-at-heel glamour so that the crowd accepted him as an out-of-work American character actor or throwback racing driver, scion of a far less technical and bureaucratic age. Bored by the upscale small talk, he drifted to the stern rail of the launch and looked back across the marina. At his elbow, a young woman in matching aviator glasses coughed slightly, and said, 'Thinking of jumping?'

He turned and looked at the self-possessed young woman in the pale blue silk dress who leaned into him, looking up, and saw his own rather ragged features reflected in her glasses. She was a head shorter than B, but held herself with a kind of rakish confidence that marked her difference from the crowd behind them.

'No, of flying,' he said.

'You're not a race driver, then?'

'I can't say I'm much of anything.'

'You do, however, have a name?'

'It's James. James B.'

(J♥) Facts in the Case. They stood arm in arm as the fumes from the high-octane engines hazed the sidewalk, pressed as it was with spectators. Their ill-timed stroll had locked them into the very circus they had hoped to avoid. The falsetto roar of the factory-team racing cars blasting past the barriers stilled their conversation, and they communicated by way of near-hysterical mime, raised eyebrows, pointedly directed eye movement and clasps of the hand. Both wore smiles that the crush and the noise could not erase. B motioned with his head to cut past the end of a run-off area to walk away from the crowds and up into the town away from the circuit. As they disengaged themselves from the crowd and walked past a race marshall frantically waving a red flag, B was suddenly conscious of a blast of engine-hot air that lifted him bodily then slammed him back onto the asphalt. Time and space wheeled like a burst tyre. His ears full of the roar of the dying high-per-

formance engine, he turned his head to the right and saw her propped up against the buckled armcove, smiling slightly at him and tenderly brushing away the drops of blood that spilled from a graze in her scalp onto the white cotton dress.

(Q♥) Left Luggage Office. 'Come in,' said Markham.

'Thank you,' replied Professor Blowfield with a slight bow. 'You would like to discuss the case of James B?'

'Yes. Although when he came back from Switzerland, he professed the desire to return to active service, his behaviour has been erratic to say the least. Here is a record of the surveillance that one of our top female operatives has been conducting.'

Blowfield took up the file that had been slid across the desk to him, and scanned down the list of B's movements and activities. His eyebrows, beneath the dome of his naked forehead, raised in surprise once, then again. 'Here?'

M smiled ruefully. 'I thought that once B's dalliance with a wife had been ended, he would come back to us. It seems he has, in fact, gone much further away. Is there anything else we can do?'

Blowfield winced, and dipped his head. Looking up at Markham, he said, 'There's one more thing we can try. After that…'

(K♥) Zoëtropic. B drove out to one of the abandoned small towns on the edge of the glades, looking for an airboat. He finally found one in the late afternoon, one that started after a little tinkering, and seated high in the driver's chair, he powered up the caged propeller and swung the airboat out into the middle of the reed-choked creek. He throttled back and let the engine idle as the boat skimmed out into the glades proper, skirting the causeway he had driven on. Once out into flat water, he opened the airboat up, skimming at a speed that seemed literally unearthly, a dream of flight, airborne on water, airborne on light. He glanced to his left and saw his wife sitting beside him looking forward into the sun, dark hair streaming behind her, light cotton dress swept against her breasts and torso. He looked ahead, feeling the fugue coming on him again, and pointed the airboat towards the sun that dipped molten gold into the Everglades.

Diamonds ♦

New Worlds (6♦). Under Michael Moorcock's editorship from 1964, New Worlds magazine became the home of the science fiction 'New Wave'. The archetypal New Wave science fiction story was textually experimental and formally and/or generically self-conscious; alienated from the mores and conventions of contemporary mainstream culture (and mainstream 'literary' writing); and infused with a cynical, dystopian or counter-cultural politics, signified in the recurrent use of the scientific concept of entropy.

Moorcock has written about New Worlds:

> Style and technique was merely a means to an end – frequently a very moral means to some very moral ends. We were looking at the Vietnam War, Kennedy's assassination, the computer revolution, the armaments industry, the manipulations of the media, the profound hypocrisies of the liberal bourgeoisie, the appalling condition of the majority of human beings on the planet, the useless currency of outmoded or inappropriate political language. But our response was scarcely a puritan one and neither did we recoil from *experiencing* our subject matter. We relished and embraced change, we celebrated the advent of new technologies and theories which opened up the multiverse for further exploration, which helped us understand our own behaviour and which provided us with some profound and spectacular metaphors! If the world was going to hell, we were determined to see how, but we were also determined to enjoy it while it was happening. Our curiosity was considerably greater than our uncertainty.[12]

The iterability of Ballard's work makes him a central player in the 'New Wave' and in *New Worlds*.

Out There (8♦). James Bond is crucially implicated in the social and ideological practices of tourism and consumerism; but Bond is 'at home' anywhere, as in From Russia, With Love, where he is accepted in the Turkish gypsy caravanserai as a kind of 'brother' and is even accorded the honour of judging the outcome of a dispute between women. As Vivian Halloran notes in 'Tropical Bond', the issue of 'passing' for local recurs in Bond texts which consistently, she argues, 'complicate Bond's whiteness'; following Edward Said's argument about Kipling's Kim in Culture and Imperialism, I would like to stress here that Bond can 'pass', even as a non-white other, where the ethnically troubling 'villain' (from Dr No onwards) most assuredly cannot.[13] Ballard's protagonists are alienated everywhere, even 'at home'; the fragmentation of the Traven/ Talbot/ Tallis figure is of a different order to the disguises that Bond affects, under which the 'real' James Bond still exists. In *The Atrocity Exhibition*, there is no such foundational unitary subjectivity. Where the Ballardian protagonist travels to different parts of the world, he only 'passes' in that the indigenous people recognise such a radical psychological dislocation in him that he is not really there at all.

Pleasure Periphery (7♦). Ballard and Fleming share an interest in what Michael Denning calls the 'pleasure periphery', 'the tourist belt surrounding the industrialized world': the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, or certain parts of East Asia. The centrality of tourism and travel to Bond texts is echoed in such Ballard texts as 'Having a Wonderful Time' (1978) or, more importantly, Cocaine Nights (1996). Denning writes, after quoting from a

scene in Fleming's From Russia, With Love :

> Here we find the epitome of the tourist experience: the moment of relaxed visual contemplation from above, leaning on the balustrade; the aesthetic reduction of a social entity, the city, to a natural object, coterminous with the waves of the sea; the calculations of the tourist's economy, exchanging physical discomfort for a more "authentic" view; and the satisfaction of having made the 'right' exchange, having "got" the experience, possessed the "view".[14]

It is no coincidence, argues Denning, that the Bond narratives find their location in the 'pleasure periphery': Fleming's texts articulate the 'tourist gaze' (analysed by John Urry), the mobile gaze of consumption embodied by jet-age travellers to 'exotic' tourist destinations.[15] In Ballard's fictions, the 'pleasure periphery' is the location for what Andrzej Gasiorek diagnoses as 'a world dominated not by work but by leisure', although in *Kingdom Come* (2007) and elsewhere, the 'pleasure periphery' has now been imported to the centre.[16]

Queens and Kings (3♦). In 'Confetti Royale'/ 'The Beach Murders', Quimby, who is identified several times as the 'dealer' of the deck of cards that 'he set out […] on the balcony table', both plays a card game alone (with which he 'amused himself in his hideaway') *and*, by extension, with the other characters in the story.[17] Each card has two aspects: the number or face upon it (denoting its value), and on the reverse or back, a picture of the bullfighter Cordobès, whose image is thereby repeated fifty-two times across the table, another figure of iteration. There are no easy homologies between Queen, King and Jack and the characters in 'Confetti Royale', however (even though there is a Princess): what is important is the role of the dealer, and the game itself. The game as metaphor for espionage informs this short story as it has the spy genre since Kipling's *Kim* (1901) and the colonial 'Great Game' played by Britain and Russia for domination of the Indian subcontinent. Kim's fluid and liminal subjectivity is an index of the instability of the spy-subject at the centre of espionage narrative: the secret agent becomes the 'double agent'.[18]

Reified Subjects (4♦). David Punter, in *The Hidden Script*, identifies the centrality of subjectivity to Ballard's concerns in his fiction. Punter writes:

> The long tradition of enclosed and unitary subjectivity comes to mean less and less to him as he explores the ways in which person [*sic*] is increasingly controlled by landscape and machine, increasingly becomes a point of intersection for overloaded scripts and processes which have effectively concealed their distant origins from human agency.[19]

Punter's assessment of Ballard's critique of subjectivity can be exemplified most clearly in *The Atrocity Exhibition*, where the Traven/ Tallis/ Talbot figure, whose 'breakdown' is materialised in the fragmented form of the text and in the iterated ('obsessional') motifs, is a liminal or fractured subject. Ballard's critique of contemporary life is articulated largely through his destablisation of unitary subjectivity, a fragmentation which leads to the release of 'unconscious' forces and desires which remain obscure (as conscious 'motivation') to the subject that enacts them. Figures for the fragmented or replicated subject can be found in 'Confetti Royale', for instance, in the repeated image of the bullfighter Cordobès on the backs of the cards, or in the first paragraph, where Princess Manon sees herself in the mirrors: 'In the triptych of mirrors above the dressing table she gazed at the endless replicas of herself'.[20] Ballardian subjects are rarely agents in their own narratives; agency is displaced on to the 'provocateur' antagonist, Vaughan or Wilder Penrose, the third point in the Ballardian triangulation.

Secret Agent (5♦). Fleming's Bond, by way of contrast with the Ballardian subject, seems *all* agency, however 'secret'. Bond, though, is *acted upon* in the death of his wife in *OHMSS*, and is subjected to a beating of his genitals, administered by Le Chiffre, in *Casino Royale*. There are limits to Bond's agency. Also in *Casino Royale*, Bond is at first 'defeated' by Le Chiffre and the cards and is only saved in his mission by the offer of 'Marshall aid' (American finance) by the CIA operative Felix Leiter. His rescue from Le Chiffre is also *ex machina*, as a Smersh agent enters and kills Le Chiffre and his crew, only to leave Bond alive as he has no orders to kill the British agent. The fantasy of total agency represented by the figure of Bond, an expression of Cold War and decolonisation-era anxieties about Britain's geopolitical role and influence, is destabilised by the texts themselves.

The Beach Murders (2♦). At the missing centre of 'Confetti Royale', the 1966 short story that was renamed 'The Beach Murders', is Quimby, the 'absconded cipher chief' from the US State department, who is the 'dealer' of the pack of cards that feature throughout the narrative. Quimby is an encoder, the master of this textual game, though he himself remains an enigma (his motivations obscure even to himself: 'what these obsessives in Moscow and Washington failed to realize was that for once he might have no motive at all').[21] The retitling of the story – the text becoming its own double – emphasises the murders rather than the Cold War espionage milieu, placing the enigma 'who killed?' at the heart of the generic recoding: the text becomes a detective fiction rather than a spy fiction. As the 'Introduction' to the text suggests, the form of the story is an invitation to the reader to decode the narrative, recombine the 26 alphabeticized paragraphs and narrative events to resolve the text by identifying the murderer(s). No such

resolution can take place. Of the murders, the following can be stated:

1. the Russian agent Kovorski murders the Romanoff Princess Manon (with certainty: her death is described).
2. the 'American limbo dancer' Lydia is killed (accidentally) by a bomb planted in the CIA agent Statler's Mercedes by Kovorski (paragraph ends at the point at which she presses the starter and sets off the device)
3. Quimby kills the Russian agent Raissa (less certain, but probable)
4. Kovorski is shot and killed by an unknown assailant
5. Statler is killed in an unknown manner by an unknown assailant
6. Quimby and Sir Giles are left alive at the end of the narrative (probable, because there is no narrative of their deaths)

Of the murders, then, one is known; two are probably ascribable; two remain mysteries. The fate of two characters, including Quimby the 'dealer', is unknown. The recombinatory game 'fails' because there is, and can be, no solution to this criminal narrative. We might suspect that Quimby, as the 'dealer', is responsible, but the murderer(s) might also include Sir Giles or other (unknown) figures. The 'Introduction' also suggests that the textual game of deduction is doubled: the 'solution' to the 'mystery of the Beach Murders' requires a 'key', perhaps the very phrase that Lydia lifts from Kovorski's Travel-Riter ink ribbon. As the text foregrounds from the very beginning, 'any number of solutions is possible, and a final answer to the mystery […] lies forever hidden.'[22]

Upwardly Mobile (10♦). James Bond is a curiously classless figure, despite the over-coded aristocratic connoisseurship purveyed by the Roger Moore film incarnation. In the film of *Casino Royale*, Bond and Vesper Lynd travel by high-speed train to Montenegro (the re-location of the casino). After dinner, the two swap character assessments/ character assassinations. After Bond essays a rather trite analysis of an anxious, beautiful-but-brainy femininity, Lynd reverses the trick: Bond is an orphan, the product of a public school and Oxford education (where he never 'fitted in'), and MI6 via the SAS. Lynd then asks how his lamb was for dinner; 'Skewered,' says Bond. 'One sympathises.' Bond may be embarrassed by the ease in which Lynd is able to 'skewer' his character, but its detail signifies how dis-located he is in terms of social structures: he is an outsider, 'maladjusted', a status which in fact generates his mobility as a secret agent. Bond's popularity can partly be read as a reflection of the aspirational, economically mobile, consumption-oriented imperatives of the British middle class in the 1960s and afterwards – the period of the Bond film phenomenon. Ballard's own life history echoes Bond's: not an orphan, but with distanced parents and Chinese servants *in loco parentis*; public school in England post-war (the Leys School in Cambridge), then Cambridge University; a short spell in the RAF, then marriage and life as a professional writer. Ballard's connection to, and insight into, the mores

and aspirations of the affluent British middle class is clear throughout his writings. Ballard is, in some ways, as exemplary a twentieth-century Englishman as is Bond, even though both are 'outsiders'.

Vesper Lynd (Q♦). The second point of the Ballardian narrative triangulation, the wife or lover, is often unfaithful or even lost to the protagonist. Even *Crash*'s Catherine Ballard is no *femme fatale*, however; sexual infidelity is less a matter of betrayal than of a mirror-image of the protagonist's own personal trajectory of (self)alienation and (self) discovery. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, drawing upon the critical work of Rene Girard in her text *Between Men*, writes of an 'erotic triangle' in texts, where the (unspoken) relationship between two rival males predominates over, and regulates, the relationship each has with the 'third' point of the triangle, the female. The female thus becomes a counter or marker in a system of exchange: a medium or locus of repressed male desire.[23] Ballard's triangulations are a geometry of homosociality and homoeroticism, made most explicit in *Crash*, but present everywhere.

War Fever (J♦). The title of Ballard's last short story collection, 'war fever' symbolises the underlying pathology at work during the Twentieth century: an implication of desire, destruction and death.

X = ? (A♦). Ballard's texts tend to work particularly through the recognition of the component. This is most evident in *The Atrocity Exhibition*, where each chapter is itself a 'condensed novel' and each titled paragraph thereby a 'chapter'. Here, the architectural/ iterative imperatives of the Ballardian text are at their fullest extent. Brian McHale, in *Postmodernist Fiction*, suggests that 'a pattern of repetition-with-variation' is a central compositional motif in Ballard's 1960s disaster fiction, and goes on to propose that 'a fixed repertoire of modules, many of them repeated from the earlier apocalyptic novels, are differently recombined and manipulated from story to story'. 'All this suggests,' argues McHale, 'the game-like permutation of a fixed repertoire of motifs – "art in a closed field"'.[24] Ballard's 'modular' texts are therefore devices to work another iteration on the Ballardian algebra, the triangulation of protagonist, wife and provocateur/antagonist. Where *P* is the protagonist, *A* is alienation, *V* is the provocateur, *W* is the wife, and *T* is time:

$$X\,(\text{Transcendence, Escape, Death}) = ((P/A \times V) +/- W) - T$$

It is not the aesthetic of the fragment that is central to the Ballardian text; it is the algebra of the iterative component or module.

You Know My Name (9♦). The title song of the 2006 *Casino Royale* was written by Chris Cornell and David Arnold, and performed by Cornell.

Its rock dynamics give the title sequence a kinetic edge, and is one of the more memorable of recent times. Its title and refrain, 'You Know My Name', signifies that the Bondian imaginary, like the Ballardian, is recognisable without (necessarily) being explicitly named.

Zones of Transit (K♦). The Ballardian protagonist is often in movement, physically and metaphysically; between one place and another, between one state and another. Cast in the role of detective in *Cocaine Nights*, *Super-Cannes* and *Kingdom Come*, what is revealed by the protagonist's investigations is of less importance than the progressive shedding of the layers of repression, self-delusion or unknowingness that constitute the protagonist's world-view, compromised by the experiences the investigation leads him into. Just as there is no solution to 'The Beach Murders', only a game to be played, Ballard's texts remain unresolved, in transit.

♣♠♥♦

The Joker. There are two jokers in the pack; like Gemini, twins, red and black. They do not conform to one of the four suits, but take their colours. They are part of the pack but not part of it, always present but unused in many card games. The extra two cards, a kind of supplement, disrupt the seductive numerology of 13 that otherwise attends the 'French deck' of cards: 52 cards, in 4 suits, 13 to a suit; 13 x 2 = 26, the letters in the alphabet; 13 x 4 = 52, the number of weeks in a year; 13 is the number of disciples present at the Last Supper, the unluckiest of numbers. The extra two cards, the jokers, the twins, indicate that all this significance is but a game. The jokers are the fly in the ointment, the empty sign, the absent code.

♣♠♥♦

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Apollo Roulette

Double Zero Wheel. He clicked the cartridge into the chamber of the service revolver, carefully closed the cylinder, and placed the mouth of the barrel against his temple. What was it he had said to Markham? 'I understand that double-O's have a very short life expectancy.' He wondered now how many of those deaths were suicides. Somehow the service revolver seemed right, for doing the decent thing. He had killed too many men with the Walther, and didn't want to be a notch on his own gun.

The Gernsback Continuum. At the beginning of Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971), the narrator and his attorney are on the way to cover the 'fabulous Mint 400' in Las Vegas. The text famously begins: 'We were somewhere around Barstow on the edge of the desert when the drugs began to take hold. I remember saying something like "I feel a bit lightheaded; maybe you should drive..." And suddenly there was a terrible roar all around us and the sky was full of what looked like huge bats, all swooping and screeching and diving around the car, which was going about a hundred miles an hour with the top down to Las Vegas' (3). Thompson is driving along the former Route 66, now known as Interstate 15. To the west of Barstow is Edwards Air Force Base. Edwards was the site of the X-plane testing program in the 1950s, which eventually gave way to the 'spam in a can' astronautics of the Friendship, Mercury and Apollo programs. The men of Edwards Air Force Base, 'folk heroes of our time' according to Lyndon Johnson,[1] inhabited a variant of frontier masculinity appropriate to Edwards's desert setting, and was exploited in Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff* and its screen adaptation. Thompson, driving east of Edwards towards Barstow, experiences an hallucination, a *fata morgana*, a common desert phenomenon. Brought on by the desert light and psychotropic drugs, Thompson hallucinates what William Gibson, in 'The Gernsback Continuum', would call 'semiotic ghosts', 'semiotic phantoms, bits of deep cultural imagery that have split off and taken on a life of their own'.[2] In this story, the narrator encounters a vision of 'the air thick with ships: giant wing-liners, little darting

silver things [...], mile-long blimps, hovering dragonfly things that were gyrocopters [and] smooth silver shapes like beads of running mercury' (8-9). He sees Tucson as 'a dream Tucson thrown up out of the collective yearning of an era' (9), 'an idealized city that drew on *Metropolis* and *Things to Come*' (8). Thompson sees not a fascist utopia, but bats; and not bats, but UFOs; and these UFOs are the semiotic phantoms of the American Space Program made manifest by a cocktail of narcotics and desert speed.

One, Two, Three. No, not yet. He lowered the gun and placed it gently on the glass-topped table by his right hand, where it settled with a hard double click. His hand went automatically to the shaker and poured the last of the vodka martini, but he already felt nauseated by the two glasses he had downed before. Dutch courage? He shuddered. He really was finished if he needed help to pull the trigger. Some of his fellow agents, he knew, had descended into a whiskey-sodden fugue before the inevitable end had come, a danger to themselves and to others and their deaths ultimately something of a mercy. When the instrument begins to feel, he thought, it's past time for the Service to hone the edge of a new blade.

Algebras of chance. In Ballard's *Hallo America*, the roulette wheel becomes the means by which the deranged President Manson decides which of the ruined cities of America to target with the remaining stockpile of cruise missiles and ICBMs. In the words of President Manson, Ballard diagnoses the 'American dream' of migration and aspiration as a gamble, with Las Vegas the latter-day cradle of the modern USA. 'Europe doesn't exist for me any more, Wayne – except that I see that it is waking now like an old dog, smelling us here and trying to get its snout into this new America I've built. It was a gamble, Wayne, a gamble with my own life. I put everything on the one spin of the wheel each of us is given, a small stack of dreams and hopes' (153). Manson's is a materialist vision, lacking the transcendent: even hopes and dreams are but small chips in an unwinnable game.

Clouds. Doctor Bluffield stood at his office window and gazed across the piazza of the clinic, which opened towards the saucer-shaped water tower that blazed white in the southwestern sun. The clinic was a plate-glass spacecraft fallen among the green knolls of the science park. The sculpted gardens reflected the serenity of purpose of the bio-medical corporation under whose aegis the clinic operated. The clinic's main building incorporated a heat-reflective skin which maintained a carefully-controlled temperate environment within. Outside, the heat was well over a hundred degrees, according to the monitor on Bluffield's desk. In the piazza, by the fountain – an indulgence in this climate, as were the lawns – a man in a loose-fitting, white tracksuit was calmly proceeding though a T'ai Chi warm-down sequence, like some kind of swaddled and articulated mannequin.

Fata Morgana. Vermillion Sands is a desert resort that is the location of a sequence of short stories that were collected in the 1971 volume *Vermillion Sands*.[3] In the fantastical desert space of the resort and its outlying desert villas, Lagoon West and Lizard Key, glider pilots carve cloud formations into mobile sculpture, flying 'sand rays' are hunted akin to the Albatross in Coleridge's 'The Ancient Mariner', and the pathologies of the resort's inhabitants – movie stars, poets, glitterati – are made manifest. In 'The Thousand Dreams of Stellavista', a psychotropic house, in which a film star murdered her husband, 'recalls' these emotions and causes the relationship of the new inhabitants to disintegrate. In a sense, 'Stellavista' is a ghost story,

a haunted-house narrative. The emotional 'ghosts' are technological revenants; the house itself takes on the psychosis of its owner as a kind of pathological prosthesis, and itself becomes murderous. The pathology of the male narrator also becomes aligned with the trauma encoded in the house's psychoactive circuits and the phantasmal 'presence' of the *femme fatale*/ murderess, Gloria Tremayne. 99 Stellavista is a classic Ballardian pathologised technology that threatens but 'beckons more and more persuasively from the margins of the technological landscape'.[4]

Two Tribes. In the morning B hired an open-topped Corvette Sting Ray and put the hiking gear in the trunk, using the Swiss passport and a sheaf of soft dollar bills he had won at blackjack two nights before. It certainly wasn't baccarat at the Royale, but the sharp spike of adrenalin, even dressed in casual clothes among these holidaying Midwesterners, so anxious to lose their roll, as they called it, was gratifying. It was even something of a relief. If it wasn't the pleasures of the roulette wheel in the warmth of a Mediterranean evening, at least it wasn't sitting alone with a loaded revolver at his right hand. The heat was oppressive on Highway 15 as it spooled north from the city limits. The resort shrank like a discarded postcard in the rear-view mirror, and like those other desert cities, Phoenix and Reno, seemed as unreal as a *fata morgana* once left behind. Runnels of sweat slicked his white linen shirt to his back, and he had to blink away salty droplets behind the incognito of his glasses. The desert called to him, but the still-rational remainder of his mind worried that the Corvette might not prove reliable. He didn't like the idea of buzzards and coyotes picking at his bones. It reminded him too much of what he did for the Service.

Synchronoclasmique. 'The secret affinity between gambling and the desert: the intensity of gambling reinforced by the presence of the desert all around the town. The air-conditioned freshness of the gaming rooms, as against the radiant heat outside. The challenge of all the artificial lights to the violence of the sun's rays. Nights of gambling sunlit on all sides; the glittering darkness of these rooms in the middle of the desert. Gambling itself is a desert form, inhuman, uncultured, initiatory, a challenge to the natural order of value, a crazed activity on the fringes of exchange. But it too has a strict limit and stops abruptly; its boundaries are exact, its passion knows no confusion. Neither the desert nor gambling are open areas; their spaces are finite and concentric, increasing in intensity toward the interior, toward a central point, be it the spirit of gambling or the heat of the desert – a privileged, immemorial space, where things lose their shadow, where money loses its value, and where the extreme rarity of the traces of what signals to us there leads men to seek the instantaneity of wealth.'[5]

Three Days of the Condor. He awoke in the passenger seat of the Corvette, parked under some scrub out of sight of the highway. He had tried to limit his water intake in order to preserve his supplies for his hike to Groom Lake, and had taken the salt tablets, but still he felt drained by the sun. The relative coolness of the evening revived him slightly as he climbed out of the automobile and retrieved his gear from the trunk. Night was falling over the Range like a soft rain. A bar of gold light at the horizon faded as he looked up at the enormous sky, the constellations seemingly close enough to touch. He had heard that other lights, other shooting stars, had been seen in the Tikaboo valley and by motorists on Route 375, but he dismissed these reports as black propaganda. Since the demise of the Sky Flash program, British involvement in advanced aeronautics had been limited to client status, and the Service would dearly have liked to obtain hard information about

what research was being pursued at NAFR. His trespass would not be the first by a British agent, and he often wondered what side he was meant to be on. This intrusion, however, had its own agenda.

Survival Kits. Throughout *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1969), a collection of experimental short-story 'condensed novels', there are references to a group of items (photographs, documents, physical objects) called a 'kit': there are eleven in total.[6] Kits are also found in 'News from the Sun' and 'Myths of the Near Future'. In 'News from the Sun', the kit is a 'shrine' left for the doctor Franklin by Slade, the would-be astronaut whom Franklin refused to allow on the space program on psychological grounds. The kit consists of: a fragment of lunar rock; a photograph of Marion Franklin in the shower; a faded reproduction of Dali's *Persistence of Memory*; a set of leucotomes; an emergency brain donor card (1016). The function of such a kit is made much more explicit in 'Myths of the Near Future', where Sheppard suggests that the kit is a 'machine, of a kind. A time-machine' (1077). It consists of: 'a framed reproduction of Magritte's *The March of Summer*, a portable video-cassette projector, two tins of soup, a well-thumbed set of six *Kamera Klassic* magazines, a clutch of cassettes labelled *Elaine/Shower Stall I-XXV*, and a paperback selection of Marey's *Chronograms*' (1068).This 'survival kit' ('of a special kind') is quite typical in its references to Marey, Surrealist art, sexual experimentation or transgression, and visual technology. These are themselves condensed representations of key Ballardian icons and concerns: time, sex, vision.

The Four Horsemen. It had been simple enough to evade the guards in their pick-up, though the warnings about the use of deadly force on the 'Restricted Area' signs had given him some pause. Trespass was one thing, but shooting dead an American serviceman, even an armed one, was something else entirely. He kept tramping in the cool desert air, his body responding as of old to exertion and deprivation. He felt the straps of the backpack on his shoulders, but the discomfort was familiar and welcome. The first fingers of dawn light were haloing the horizon off to his left, and so he had perhaps an hour until he needed to find a hide, from the sun and from surveillance. He wasn't far from Groom Lake now, but would wait until tonight to try to penetrate the area proper. Until then, he would manage his body's needs, and his thoughts.

Signs of the mineral. 'Why [...] are the deserts so fascinating? It is because you are delivered from all depth there – a brilliant, mobile, superficial neutrality, a challenge to meaning and profundity, a challenge to nature and culture, an outer hyperspace, with no origin, no reference points.'[7]

Space/Time Crisis. As he walked down the main staircase, Bluffield could see the man in white framed in the large windows that let polarised light into the atrium of the clinic. The man was a rather troubling patient, but there was little enough to distinguish him from either his fellow patients or the clinicians. Bluffield left the building by the large plate-glass doors and immediately began to perspire. He stepped across the paving to where the man went through his warm-down exercises.

'How are you with muscle strains, Professor?' asked the man. 'Do they come under your area of expertise?'

'I'm afraid not,' said Bluffield.

'So you can mend complicated machines,' said the man, indicating his forehead suggestively, 'but not simple ones?'

'I don't really consider myself an engineer,' said Bluffield.

'The metaphysical rather than the material?' asked the man. 'Well, never mind, I'll persevere.' He continued with his slow, graceful articulations.

'Two o'clock,' said Bluffield brusquely, somewhat nettled by the man's self-possession. He resumed his walk across to the car park. The water tower cast a dark shadow in the morning light. The fronds of the palms, moving in the slight breeze, whispered some secret arboreal language to the desert air.

Alamagordo. 'The first atomic-bomb test against the backdrop of White Sands, the pale blue backcloth of the mountains and hundreds of miles of white sand – the blinding artificial light of the bomb against the blinding light of the ground.'[8]

Saturn V. His chest screamed as he ran in ballooning strides down the scree slope, a tiny avalanche of dust and gravel ploughing ahead of him. The hammering blades of the helicopter broke waves of pulverizing sound upon his head as he dashed sideways out of the searchlight beam, a jack-rabbit fleeing the hunter's gun. He felt he was being flushed towards a trap, but exhaustion and terror dulled his reactions. Time became a chain of moments as he hopped from rock to rock, scuttled from brush to brush in a vain attempt to deceive his pursuers. He ran up a cleft in the rocks, a small island on the desert floor, hoping for some crevice into which he could push himself, some tunnel into which he could bolt. As he jumped down the other side, he saw several guards standing in the beams of their pick-ups, and he knew the chase was over. He stumbled towards them, heaving for air, and then fell to his knees. After a few seconds, he found a small, scratchy voice. 'Where are you going to take me?' he asked. A man in a dark suit came forward through the blinding beams of light, offering a hand to help him onto his feet. 'We're going to take you to our leader,' he said, smiling.

A simultaneous structure. In the 1971 film *The Andromeda Strain*, directed by Douglas Trumbull, a 'crystalline' alien virus lands in the American desert attached to a meteorite, and causes catastrophic effects on the human circulatory system. The focus of the narrative is to find a solution for this virus through scientific means: by understanding why a very young baby and an alcoholic old man did not fall victim to the virus that devastated a small desert town. A group of scientists descend 5 'biologically cleaner' underground levels of a top-secret base until they arrive at a secure and sterile environment in which to study the alien life form. This base is located at Lake Mead, Nevada, south-east of Las Vegas and on the opposite point of the compass to the Groom Lake testing grounds. Its location places the base in a clear relation to both underground nuclear missile silos and secure Cold War 'bunkers' used to protect military chains of command in the event of a nuclear war. The security of biological hygiene is short lived in *The Andromeda Strain*, however: the virus also corrodes the flexible seals that close off 'secure' spaces. It is not by human agency that the virus is rendered harmless: it mutates into a non-lethal form, and it is the *failure* to 'destroy' the virus by a nuclear detonation (that would have caused exponential mutation and growth and widespread dissemination of the virus) that is the major human achievement therein. *The Andromeda Strain* is a diagnostic text for Cold War science fiction in its discourses of hygiene and security, and its near-phobic coding of the alien as biological other. In Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove* (1964), the insane SAC General Jack D. Ripper's paranoia migrates from Reds-under-the-bed rhetoric to phobias about his own body: he avoids fluoridated water (and sexual orgasm) as he is concerned to protect the integrity of his own 'precious bodily fluids' from

contamination. This discourse informs *The Andromeda Strain*, as it does Ballard's *Hallo America* (1981), where the (again, insane) 'President' Charles Manson reveals to the protagonist Wayne his use of the remaining American nuclear stockpile after an environmental catastrophe has rendered the USA half desert, half jungle:

> 'I had to take them out, Wayne, there was a threat of plague in the east. I used the old cruise missiles. Before his breakdown my partner renovated the warheads and guidance systems. They're slow but reliable, like homing pigeons going back to a hot supper. Think of it as a necessary prophylactic measure.'[9]

The 'plague' is the threat of the eastern seaboard of North America being re-colonised from Europe: the discourses of infection and 'cure' are deployed to rationalise the destruction of a threat of invasion.

Six of One. The dark-suited man offered little in the way of conversation as they sped along Groom Lake Road in the pick-up, but his body language was unthreatening, even friendly. The other guards had gone about their business, leaving him alone with the suited man, although he had been asked, politely, to hand over the Walther. The police-band radio squawked occasionally on the dash, but there seemed little else going on in the Range. The sun was coming up behind and to the left of them, and the desert was emerging from the night in grey and blue and ochre. The pick-up slowed as it approached what seemed to be an abandoned desert diner, a dusty roadside shack with wooden porch and lettering on the roof, an old Burma-Shave sign out front, and long dark shadows painted across the blacktop. Parked at an angle to the porch was a clean, black government-issue Cadillac, the kind of car that Agency officers drove, not without a sense of irony, around Langley. As they pulled up in a volume of dust, he wondered who the driver could be.

L'Amerique sidereal. The military-industrial complex, a phrase coined by President Eisenhower in a jeremiad delivered on his leaving office, is crucial to the post-war economy of Southern California. According to Dale Carter:

> Simultaneously, by transferring over $17.5 billion to the southern and western United States between Fiscal years 1962 and 1969, the space agency's budget made a proportionally greater contribution to what was ultimately the more painful mechanism, not only of the Rocket State's growth but also of its eventual succession. The contribution itself had two distinct yet related dimensions. On the one hand, the more than $13 billion worth of prime contracts and subcontracts which initiated the rapid growth of the Cape Canaveral region and secured the prosperity of the Houston and Los Angeles industry and commerce during the 1960s indirectly helped elevate new generations of Florida real estate speculators, California construction firms, and other Sunbelt entrepreneurs and financiers: a new community of interest born of the Vietnam war boom whose relative independence from the power elite's east coast operational core would allow them to ride out the recessions of the early 1970s and underwrite the rise of the New Right during the rest of the decade. On the other hand, vast prime contracts awarded to companies like Boeing and North American Rockwell by NASA during the 1960s directly fuelled corporate giants which, while more closely aligned with the Republican establishment or pro-military Democrats than

with the New Right's highest circles, were nevertheless integral to Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 (234-5).

The American 'rocket state', in which the space program (and especially Apollo) acts as the spectacle element in the economic system of the Cold War, is most in evidence in the prosperity of Southern California and Florida, both critical sites for Ballard's short fictions.

***

Now: Zero. On an American roulette wheel, there are 36 numbers, 18 red and 18 black, from 1 to 36. There are also two green sections of the wheel: Zero (0) and Double Zero (00). Both pay the house.

***

Seven Days to Noon. Strangely, the dark-suited man used some kind of electronic card-reader and keypad to open the door of the diner, which led directly down a short flight of steps. He blinked in the bright overheads as he took in a modern institutional canteen, in brushed steel, white melamine and glass. Several men, Special Agents by the cut of their jackets, were collecting food at a self-service counter, while others sipped coffee, chatted or scanned documents at an archipelago of small tables. At one, a tall chestnut-haired woman in a midnight-blue trouser suit stood up and faced them, as the dark-suited man guided him by the elbow to her table. Now he knew he the driver was. 'Felicity Vespertine,' he said, smiling. 'Why are you here?' 'B,' she said warmly, clasping his hand firmly and pulling him toward her, kissing him on both cheeks. 'Howard,' she said to his companion, 'could you grab a couple of coffees for us before you go, and a sandwich? B here looks famished.' 'I think the word you're looking for, Felicity,' said B, 'is finished.'

Macrocosmic Null-X. In *Hallo America*, the young protagonist Wayne finds himself, towards the end of the narrative, in a mocked-up 'War Room' at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, in which the deranged President Manson spins a roulette wheel to determine which 'infected' North American city will be targeted by what remains of the Cold War nuclear arsenal. Reluctantly, Wayne throws:

> *Zero.*
> Wayne watched the ball circle the illuminated bowl, safe and defused in its empty niche. No city was marked against it!
> With relief he blurted: 'Mr President, there's nothing there, no city – '
> Manson laughed affably, the chuckle of a conjuror who has just deceived a small child.
> 'Zero pays the house, Wayne.' (215-6)

In his article "'Zero Pays the House": The Las Vegas Novel and Atomic Roulette', Ken Cooper suggests that Las Vegas and 'the bomb' are inextricably intertwined, not only by the city's proximity to the Nevada testing grounds, but through metaphor: '*everyone* is a subject of the nuclear state; we are all in the same casino. So, to extend the metaphor, How do we get out of the casino when we're tired of playing atomic roulette?'[10] The 'game' of MAD is a game of chance, but all outcomes are ultimately that of defeat. Wayne in *Hallo America*, however, flees the city by 'Sunlight

Flier', a fleet of crystalline human-powered aircraft that provide an irresistibly surrealist gloss on Ballard's motif of flight as transcendence. The dream of Las Vegas inhabited by Wayne, that of a 'past America [and] city of antique gamblers' (236), is itself the final victim of the logic of the Cold War.

Vapours. Patient B had arrived at the clinic in Vermillion Sands some three months ago, after a long convalescence in Geneva. The Swiss clinicians had performed exemplary work on B's physical injuries – on cursory examination, one would hardly notice the fractured tibia, cracked hip, two broken patellas and contusions around sternum and ribcage – but B's physical condition was of less concern to Bluffield than the psychological. B was clearly a highly intelligent individual, but his strongly practical cast of mind caused him to disengage from Bluffield's approaches, or even reject them outright. B had no interest in the problem, it seemed, no insight into his own psychological processes, and Bluffield had failed to interest his patient intellectually in the clinical models at work. B seemed content to live in a quotidian world of regular exercise and small-scale concerns. To explain that, Bluffield knew, there was no need for recourse to deep theoretical structures.

Helios. Apollo, the Greek and Roman god of the arts, but also of rationality and architecture, became increasingly identified with Helios, the sun god, in Hellenic times. Why is Apollo, the sun-deity, named for the NASA *moon* programme? Perhaps the reason is that Apollo is patron of the arts *and* of philosophy, of music (of the spheres) and science. Apollo is also an oracular god, implicitly a deity of *what is to come*. More troublingly, perhaps, Apollo was the centre of a cult of masculine youth. With goddesses Artemis/ Selene more properly identified with the moon, is the NASA Apollo program a conquering, or erasure, of the cosmologically feminine?

Serenity. Patient B had been driving his Aston Martin convertible towards La Tzoumaz on a clear, sunny early summer's day. According to the Swiss police reports appended to the file Bluffield had received from the Service, there were signs of a second automobile in the vicinity of the accident, but the Aston was the lone vehicle found at the crash site. The car had ricocheted from the stone balustrade and careered across the road, impacting against the wall of the mountain road almost head-on. The passenger in the car, Theresa B, his wife of some 4 days, was killed instantaneously. Despite impact fractures to knees, leg and hip, B escaped major trauma to vital organs, although blood loss was marked. B had remained conscious while Swiss paramedics and emergency rescue teams had reached the crash site an estimated 90 minutes after the incident, and was also conscious while being extricated from the crushed cabin of the Aston. He was airlifted to a private clinic in Geneva, while his wife's remains were returned to her family in Marseille.

Viva Las Vegas. In 'Myths of the Near Future', Sheppard finds his resurrected wife Elaine in what was once 'no more than a park-keeper's hut, some bird-watcher's weekend hide transformed by the light of its gathering identities into this miniature casino' (1082). The impacted, 'annealed' images of itself project the hut into some kind of ideal state, just as Sheppard had encountered the elderly images of a roadside hamlet transfigured into younger, idealised versions of themselves earlier in the story. Sheppard mis-recognises the co-presence of multiple identities as Las Vegas neon, a profane city of light illuminating Cold War deserts.

When Eight Bells Toll. 'You could have *asked* me, B, instead of sneaking around

like a thief in the back yard,' said Felicity as they drove in the Cadillac towards Groom Lake. 'I think we've found our mail has gone unanswered lately,' said B, trying not to sound affronted. 'And in any case, my trespass is not exactly, well, official.' Felicity looked over at her long-time friend and colleague, and saw a ragged, rather bruised man, and not from his recent ordeal. 'We'd heard that you'd had an accident, or that you'd gone rogue,' she said, frowning. 'Licence revoked?' 'No, not exactly,' he said, looking back at her ruefully, 'but it's more than what you'd call a holiday. I think they wanted me to take a little rest in a village they have set up on the coast, but I needed some answers first.' As they drew up to the checkpoint, B asked, 'Do we have clearance?' 'Not to worry,' said Felicity. 'Forget the Official Secrets Act. You're in God's Own Country now. Welcome to Wonderland.'

Fugue Time. J.G Ballard's paired stories 'News from the Sun' and 'Memories of the Space Age', plus 'Myths of the Near Future' have analogous structures.[11] The protagonist, a doctor, undergoing the effects of 'space sickness' connected to the NASA space program, searches for a 'door in the universe' out of time itself. The protagonist's wife, emotionally or sexually involved with a provocative, perhaps unbalanced male antagonist, precedes her husband into the zone of transcendence (symbolically if not literally). In 'Myths of the Near Future', this is figured as a kind of resurrection. Mallory, in 'Memories of the Space Age', a flight-physician once attached to the Shuttle program, travels back to Florida to confront the meaning of the space sickness, and the former astronaut Hinton, whose murder of a fellow astronaut in orbit precipitates the time-crisis. Hinton now occupies the Cape Kennedy launching grounds. Mallory suffers from, and gradually starts to embrace increasing periods of 'fugue time', when he enters a kind of fugue and time coagulates, then solidifies around him. This is most iconic in the 'block' of water is suspends himself in when submerged in Gale Shepley's swimming pool: 'Once he immersed himself in the pool, delighted to be embedded in this huge block of condensed time' (1059). In his musings about Gale's pet cheetahs, or the tiger kept in a nearby cage (whose door he would like to open) there is something Edenic about Mallory's appreciation of fugue-time: the lion can indeed lie down with the lamb in 'condensed time'. As in 'News from the Sun' the space/ time-sickness is a doorway to transcendence, precipitated by the space program but superseding it. At the end of 'News from the Sun', the doctor Franklin (who had worked at a clinic treating astronauts and other who exhibited fugue symptoms, as he does himself) and the astronaut's daughter Ursula Trippett speak a kind of infant 'babble' in fugue, an index of a return to human existence *prior to* the fall of language (Babel) or even the structuration of the subject. While an earlier story, 'Mr F is Mr F' narrates a male protagonist's return (literally) to the womb, this is figured as vampiric, and the story ultimately descends itself into misogyny. In the 'fugue time' stories, the return to a uterine pre-subjectivity is cast as a polyvalent, multiple continuity with a revivified nature (where even the desert is restored by endlessly multiplying palm trees, reproduced perceptually in, and out of, time).

Level 9. As they entered facility 51, two technicians in white protective suits barred their way into the atrium. 'Sorry,' said Felicity. 'I'm afraid they'll give you the full decontamination treatment, as you've never been here before. We have some, ah, *friends* in this facility that might catch a cold. I'll go through and see you downstairs.' She left him to be guided into a booth, where he undressed and threw his clothes into a chute to be incinerated. His body was inspected, enumerated, diagnosed. His skin, cleaned, depilated and abraded. His brain, scanned. His torso and vital organs

monitored, his internal fluids filtered. His hair, cropped; his chin, chest and genitals shaved; his eyes, inspected by a senior ophthalmic surgeon; his mouth, investigated by an orthodontist; his anus, probed by a noted proctologist. At each cleansing, at each scan, he descended down a level, from red, to yellow, to purple, to grey, to white. As he cleared Scanning, dressed all in white, his body glowing, he felt altogether a new man.

The winged man. Flight is a recurring motif in Ballard's *oeuvre*, and Gregory Stephenson notes this in relation to *Crash*:

> The imagery by which the transcendent character of the experience of automobile collision [...] conveyed in the novel is that of light and luminosity, of ascension or flight.[12]

This imagery is found throughout Ballard's writing, most notably in the stories 'News from the Sun', 'Memories of the Space Age' and 'Myths of the Near Future', but can also be found in the novel *The Unlimited Dream Company* (written around the same time, and published in 1979, but set in Ballard's own locale, Shepperton). There, the protagonist Blake crashes a light aircraft into the Thames at the beginning of the novel, but achieves a curious kind of resurrection. He brings with him fantastical powers to transform the suburb of London. At one point in the narrative, he attempts, Pied Piper-like, to draw the townsfolk into the air:

> The sky was brightening as we rose through the cool air. I felt the townspeople lying serenely within me, sleeping passengers in this ascending gondola propelled by some profound upward dream. They were carrying me away towards the sun, eager to lose themselves in a communion of light'.[13]

This ascension ultimately fails, but in the contemporaneous stories, the flight imagery is indeed connected with an escape from time. They also have an evolutionary dynamic. In 'Memories of the Space Age', Hinton, the astronaut-murderer, is first seen flying WWI biplanes. As the narrative progresses, the aircraft 'descend' the evolutionary ladder in terms of powered flight: 'as every day passed these veteran machines tended to be of increasingly older vintage' (1041). Like Kerans in *The Drowned World,* whose consciousness descends back 'down the spinal column' as the novel goes on, evolution in Ballard's texts is typed both in terms of a kind of *de*-evolutionary imperative for the human psyche (towards the liberation or transcendence offered by the 'macrocosmic zero') and in terms of the false 'progress' of evolutionary mis-steps. The NASA space program is itself figured as an 'evolutionary crime' in 'News from the Sun' (1019), one that 'cracks the hour-glass of time' and causes the fugues and 'space sickness'. By contrast, human-powered heavier-than-air craft are typed as benign: Gale Shepley, the murdered astronaut's daughter, pilots one in 'Memories of the Space Age'; Martinsen flies a 'cat's cradle of plastic film and piano wire' (1063) in 'Myths of the Near Future'; and in *Hallo America*, the fleet of crystalline aircraft that appear above Las Vegas at the end of the narrative indicate most clearly the fragility of this image of flight as transcendence. The mythic, metaphorical imagery of flight always supersedes human attempts to traverse the heavens, from Kittihawk to Cape Kennedy. The image that encapsulates this is at the beginning of 'Myths of the Near Future', where Sheppard sits in the cockpit of a crash-landed Cessna on Cocoa Beach. After being rescued from the stranded craft, Sheppard realises that Martinsen has drawn a massive Aztec bird upon the sand,

which grasps the Cessna symbolically in its talons. Soon after, the light aircraft is caught by the tide and broken into pieces.

Islands. Bluffield found it difficult, in fact nearly impossible, to penetrate the psychological armature patient B had erected. He would not talk about his wife, nor about the crash itself. In exchange for the run of the clinic and its park, B had agreed to keep a journal. Bluffield had hoped that the estranged form, the distance between writing and reading, might allow B to slip his armour, inadvertently perhaps. Any signs or clues would be an improvement on the impassive non-engagement Bluffield faced on a daily basis. Bluffield lit a cigarette and opened B's journal. He found there technical drawings, calculations, a series of versions of da Vinci machines, worked through again and again, compulsively, exactingly. It provided little enough evidence of anything but the precision and determination B had demonstrated throughout his career. Bluffield was not surprised, but still, a little disappointed.

On his second read-through, Bluffield thought he had indeed found what he was looking for. On a page dominated by a drawing of an aero-screw, covered almost entirely by mathematical equations, a compulsive palimpsest, Bluffield read: 'Report on the assassination of Theresa B by unknown forces.' Bluffield looked for a continuation throughout the journal, but found nothing. The phrase itself was illuminating, revealing a high degree of paranoia; the seeming externalisation of guilt as outside agency; the ascribing of malign purpose in the word 'assassination'; and once more, the desire to estrange and distance in the objective 'report'. But was there a connection between the phrase and the drawings?

Double constellations. In his essay 'The Solar Anus', Georges Bataille conjures images of circularity which are bound up both with elemental (natural) forces and with sexuality, figured as an excessive dream in which a man lying in bed with his female lover inhabits some kind of cosmological pattern of arousal: 'trees bristle the ground with a vast quantity of flowered shafts raised up to the sun. [...] From the movement of the sea, uniform coitus of the earth with the moon, comes the polymorphous and organic coitus of the earth with the sun'.[14] The phallicism of masculine desire is arrayed against the liquidity of the feminine: 'The sea, then, has played the role of the female organ that liquefies under the excitation of the penis' (7). The essay encodes a growing *excitation*, with the sexual images becoming more extreme and violent, until the penultimate paragraph in which the narrator declares 'I want to have my throat slashed while violating the girl to whom I will have been able to say: you are the night' (9). Sexuality and violence (violation) are a crucial connection for Bataille, as a kind of overflow or excess (a key term) which countermand the imperatives of taboo that order and regulate work towards work and reason: 'there is in nature and there subsists in man a movement which always exceeds the bounds, that can never be anything but partially reduced to order'.[15] This excess does not equate with transgression, however, for '*transgression does not deny the taboo but transcends it and completes it*' (63). Transgression, paired with taboo, are organised into a social system that regulates expenditure and consumption. The sun, for Bataille, becomes what Fred Botting and Scott Wilson call 'the supreme solar giver. Giving heat, light, life, the sun signifies the purest form of the gift, pouring out energy with no thought of return.'[16] This expenditure is the type and source of excess or overflow, and in 'The Solar Anus' is explicitly marked as violent: 'The Sun exclusively love the Night and directs its luminous violence, its ignoble shaft, toward the earth, but finds it incapable of reaching the gaze or the night, even though the nocturnal territorial expanses

head continuously toward the indecency of the solar ray' (9). The Sun is the frustrated lover of the Night, the night which finds its own material image in the anus of the young woman. Defecation is (though the image of the volcano) opposed to, yet is analogous to the orgasmic expenditure of the sun's ejaculation; love, screaming in the narrator's throat, is 'the filthy parody of the torrid and blinding sun' (9). Parody, however, *connects*: 'each thing is a parody of another' (5). At the beginning of the essay, the narrator screams 'I AM THE SUN' (5), but the rest of the essay marks the inability of that sun/subject to achieve orgasm, remaining in a state of excitation. The Sun, the desiring male subject, desires the night, the anus of the young female lover, but ultimately the opposition between sun and anus, transcendent overflow and base materiality, collapses into the palindrome of the sun/anus: 'the *solar annulus* is the intact anus of her body at eighteen years to which nothing sufficiently blinding can be compared except the sun, even though the *anus* is the *night*' (9).

The Tenth Circle. Hand in hand, B and Felicity, dressed in identical environment suits of bright white cloth, wandered into the Garden, a habitat of gymnosperms, ferns and bryophytes, located on Level 9. Kneeling by the side of a pathway was a small man in a white labcoat, digging with a hand-trowel in the tilth. Hearing them, he stood up, brushed his hands together to remove the earth, and waited for them, both hands extended in welcome – or benediction. 'How are our friends?' asked Felicity. 'All is well,' replied the man, in English with a light European accent. 'Introductions,' smiled Felicity. 'B, this is Doctor Bluffield, the Director of our Institute of Xenogamy here at the facility. Doctor, this is B, a visitor.' 'A visitor?' repeated Bluffield. 'Are we all not visitors here, at the centre of the Earth?' Bluffield moved to B's side, interlocked his arm, and began to walk them through the Garden. 'I think you must have come a long way to find us, my dear B. What is it that you want?' 'Certainty,' said B.

Apostles of the Prismatic Sun. In Ballard's *Crash*, the terminal transgression occurs when the narrator 'James Ballard' sodomizes Vaughan, the renegade scientist. Ballard meets Vaughan for the last time in "the mezzanine lounge of the Oceanic Terminal [...] this house of glass, of flight and possibility".[17] They then both take LSD, and embark on a drive through London. The city is transformed into a tableau of light, and this vision is accompanied by both physical intimacy and images of transcendence:

> Taking my eyes off the road, I clasped Vaughan's hand in my own, trying to close my eyes to the fountain of light that poured through the windshield of the car from the vehicles approaching us.
>
> An armada of angelic creatures, each surrounded by an immense corona of light, was landing on the motorway either side of us. [...] With my right hand I parted his buttocks, feeling for the hot vent of his anus. For several minutes, as the cabin walls glowed and shifted, as if trying to take up the deformed geometry of the crashed cars outside, I laid my penis at the mouth of his rectum. [...] As I moved in and out of his rectum the light-borne vehicles soaring along the motorway drew the semen from my testicles. [...] Sitting together, we were washed by the light flowing in every direction across the landscape (21: 199; 202).

The sun/anus is achieved through a consummation of the act of sodomy deferred in Bataille's 'The Solar Anus', but this transcendence is only temporary. At the be-

ginning of the next chapter, Ballard experiences a vision of a 'retinal horde', a veil of flies that returns him to the base material, the excremental: 'Flies crawled across the oil-smeared windshield, vibrating against the glass. The chains of their bodies formed a blue veil between myself and the traffic moving along the motorway. I turned on the windshield wipers, but the blades swept through the flies without disturbing them. Vaughan lay back on the seat beside me, trousers around his knees. [...] The flies covered Vaughan's face, hovering around his mouth and nostrils as if waiting for the rancid liquors distilled from the body of a corpse' (22: 204). Transcendence, visions of angels and of light, collapse back into the pit. The excremental vision is also found in Ballard's *The Drowned World* (1963), where London, transformed into a post-catastrophic lagoon, is drained: 'Veils of scum draped from the criss-crossing telegraph wires and tilting neon signs, and a thin coating of silt cloaked the faces of the buildings, turned the once limpid beauty of the underwater city into a drained and festering sewer'.[18] For Ballard, beneath the visions of light there always lurks the materiality of shit.

Ocean's Eleven. 'I want to know what is really happening', said B. 'Is this really happening?' asked Bluffield. 'Why, where do you think you are?' 'In Wonderland...' said B, gazing at this primeval Garden folded deep within the Earth. 'Dr Bluffield, will the visitors..?' Bluffield smiled patiently. 'Return your wife to you? Perhaps only if you do not look over your shoulder on the way back to the surface.' Bluffield guided them through the Garden towards a portal, where he stopped, stood before B and took his hands. 'I cannot tell you what you will find', he said. 'It may be the answer you seek. It may be a doorway into a very private hell. Do you wish to continue?' B nodded slowly. 'You are sure, I can see. Very well, my dear B. I envy you.'

News from the Sun. '[I]t seems entirely reasonable to think that every now and then the energy of a whole generation comes to a head in a long fine flash, for reasons that nobody really understands at the time [....] And that, I think, was the handle – that sense of inevitable victory over the forces of Old and Evil. Not in any mean or military sense; we didn't need that. Our energy would simply *prevail*. There was no point in fighting – on our side or theirs. We had all the momentum; we were riding the crest of a high and beautiful wave.

So now, less than five years later, you can go up on a steep hill in Las Vegas and look West, and with the right kind of eyes you can almost *see* the high-water mark – that place where the wave finally broke and rolled back.'[19]

Majestic Twelve. 'Come with me,' Felicity said as she punched the code into the portal lock. As the door ascended in its frame, they entered an enormous space, like an aircraft hanger the size of a landing field. He looked behind him to see control booths and a large screen; before them, lights receded into the darkness. As they began to halo and evanesce, he looked up into the darkness of the roof space. Stars constellated the darkness, and as he watched, they began to move and congregate, patterning onto whorls and galaxies and spiral arms. The lights expanded, moved downwards. Time cooled. Amber, cobalt and scarlet balls floated above the apron, sentient, glowing. He watched as a large presence, dark light, extruded from the vault, extended downwards, and pulsed halfway along the runway. He looked down and saw his hands sparkle, flaked with gold, flickering with crystalline images of themselves, a diamantine body occupying the same space as himself. His clean, pure body rang with celestial song. Felicity smiled, her head Madonna-like, eyes burning with divine fire. He watched in wonder as angels began to drift down from the

stars, their beauty a thousand suns. He raised his arms and began to ascend into the air, his body encased in a celestial coronation armour. He embraced the secret and benign inhabitants of the air, their love a star that filled him with white.

Thirteen to Centaurus. In total, there were eleven manned Apollo missions 'proper'. Apollo 7 to 10 were training and testing flights, two in Earth orbit, two in lunar orbit. Apollo 11, crewed by Neil Armstrong, 'Buzz' Aldrin and Michael Collins, were the first Apollo mission to land on the surface of the moon, in July 1969. Apollo 12 was crewed by Pete Conrad, Alan Bean and Richard Gordon, who, at the charismatic Conrad's instigation, wore identical Hawaiian shirts and bought identical sports cars when training. Apollo 12's Saturn V was struck by lightning – twice – on takeoff, but the crew managed to avoid aborting the mission. Al Bean subsequently left NASA and now paints highly colourful painting of lunar landscapes, incorporating actual moondust and pieces of his mission patches. Apollo 14's Commander, Alan Shepherd, the only one of the original 'Mercury Seven' astronauts (commemorated by Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff*) to command an Apollo mission, took a golf club with him and played on the lunar surface.[20] Apollo 17 was the last lunar mission, in 1972. Apollo 18-20 were cancelled due to budgetary constraints. Apollo 13's mission nearly ended in disaster. An explosion aboard the craft on the way to the moon meant that the landing was aborted, and the lunar module used as a 'life raft' to get the crew back to Earth. However, these would not have been the first casualties of the Apollo program. Apollo 1 (as it was later designated) never launched. Its crew, Virgil (Gus) Grissom, Ed White, and Roger Chaffee, were killed on the launch pad when a fire swept through the Command Module in a test situation. There are two plaques remaining on the launch pad where the disaster occurred. One reads: *LAUNCH COMPLEX 34, Friday, 27 January 1967, 1831 Hours. Dedicated to the living memory of the crew of the Apollo 1: USAF. Lt. Colonel Virgil I. Grissom, USAF. Lt. Colonel Edward H. White, II, U.S.N. Lt. Commander Roger B Chaffee. They gave their lives in service to their country in the ongoing exploration of humankind's final frontier. Remember them not for how they died but for those ideals for which they lived.* The other reads: *In memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice so others could reach for the stars,* Ad astra per aspera, [*a rough road leads to the stars*] *God speed to the crew of Apollo 1.*

Storms. Doctor Bluffield set down the sheaf of case notes and walked to the large window of his office. As he stood and watched two nurses hurry across the afternoon furnace of the piazza, he realised the futility of his work with Patient B. B's refusal to engage in discussion about the death of his wife, his refusal even to acknowledge it, indicated some deeper trauma. 'He clearly feels a deep-seated guilt about the death of his wife,' said Bluffield, 'but I simply cannot reach him. Perhaps it is time to consider a more radical form of therapy.' He turned and smiled at his female colleague, who was sitting in the Eames chair opposite his desk. 'I know you've published on psycho-drama and role-play, Felicity. What is your clinical opinion about its possible effectiveness in patient B's case?'

Coda: Apollo 13. He woke up in his room at the Stardust. It was dark. He fell off the bed, groped to the bathroom and turned on the light. In the mirror he saw a shaven man, stubbled skull, naked, eyes a scorched blue. A straight razor had been dropped in the sink. He closed his eyes and pressed his hands together. Clearly he would find no answers in Las Vegas, nor in the desert. He would have to go to the launching grounds at Canaveral. Perhaps, among the gantries and the detritus of the Apollo program, he would find peace, and find her again.

Endnotes

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The Revolution Sonata

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Exposition

Whether one sees the New Waves of science fiction of the 1960s, constellated around Michael Moorcock's editorship of *New Worlds* magazine between 1964 and 1971 and the Harlan Ellison collection *Dangerous Visions* (1967), as an efflorescence of late Modernism or as a parallel development to literary Postmodernism, it remains true that New Wave writers are marked by a willingness to experiment with form and genre. Moorcock has written about the *New Worlds* group of writers:

We celebrated the work of William Burroughs and invoked the names of surrealists, romantics, imagists, allegorists. Borges, Hesse, Peake, Calvino, Kafka, Wyndham Lewis, Vian (then hardly any of them available to an English

public) were called upon as examples not necessarily because they were admired but because their techniques, their angles of attack, were different. *New Worlds* evolved into an avant-garde magazine through necessity, not through any abstract ambition to be different'.[1]

This experimental literary heritage was meant to shake science fiction out of what Moorcock perceived to be a cosy, unambitious orthodoxy (shared by writers and critics of science fiction like Kingsley Amis and Edmund Crispin), to enable the genre to deal with urgent political, social, sexual and cultural changes occurring in the 1960s. Moorcock also wrote that: 'In common with a number of writers associated with the magazine I was obsessed with discovering useful non-linear techniques which would enable us to develop our ideas'.[2] The purpose of the non-linear forms and experimentation was to attempt to represent, and critique, the changing world facing Moorcock, Ballard, Aldiss and others:

We were looking at the Vietnam War, Kennedy's assassination, the computer revolution, the armaments industry, the manipulations of the media, the profound hypocrisies of the liberal bourgeoisie, the appalling condition of the majority of human beings on the planet, the useless currency of outmoded or inappropriate political language. But our response was scarcely a puritan one and neither did we recoil from *experiencing* our subject matter.[3]

The seriousness of the New Wave project is revealed in Moorcock's statement: 'Style and technique was merely a means to an end – frequently a very moral means to some very moral ends.'[4] Formal experimentation was not only meant to reinvigorate the genre, but also to enable it to take on the challenges of representing the post-war world, though metaphor, imagination, the fantastic.

In the Jerry Cornelius short story 'The Dodgem Decision', published in *New Worlds* in 1969, Moorcock uses fictional form as vehicle for critiquing the 20th-century English novel: 'It was not their accomplishments that Jerry disliked so much as their attitudes [...] Attitudes that aimed at reinforcing opinions rather than analysing them, at preserving conventions rather than expanding them'.[5] In typically ironic fashion, the story narrates Jerry's journey by his Phantom VI along the South Coast of England, speculating upon the condition of the English novel. At one point he turns and glances 'at the copy of NEW WORLDS on the seat beside him. The slogan for that month read:

"What do you need?"' The search for 'the new fiction' is itself 'but a label':

Jerry wondered why there should be a need for a new fiction. Were there really new ideas circulating? New subject matter? Probably. But even if there were not, it was always better to try to extend the range of fiction. Stylistic revolution always preceded the contextual revolution and that was already in progress. Though few admitted it, the revolution was as good as accomplished.[6]

This gesture goes beyond mere self-referentiality, games with textuality, with *New Worlds* inserted into the story as a kind of *mise-en-abyme*. The formal experimentation of the 'story' itself, which is really a critical/ creative hybrid, critical reflection using the form of narrative fiction, *enacts* what it grasp discursively: the possibility of a 'new fiction' (or new criticism). Moorcock's rhetorical gesture, in 1969, offers a point of departure for the present book, enacting what it critiques, in non-linear form.

Following Burroughs, the non-linear forms of Ballard's 'condensed novels' of *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1969), of Moorcock's (and others') Jerry Cornelius stories, or of Aldiss's *Barefoot in the Head* (1969) assert the New Wave's adoption of a much longer history of literary and formal experimentation. In 'Scholia, Seasoned With Crabs, Blish Is', ostensibly a review of several books by the science fiction writer James Blish, John Clute attempts to sketch a 'tonal' critical placement of science fiction, drawing partly upon Paul Hernadi's *Beyond Genre* (1972) in positing 'two broad tonalities or aspects' of prose fiction: the *roman* which 'concerns itself with the "representation of events as they emerge and develop in time"; and the *récit* 'concerns itself with "the presentation of past events by a narrator in accordance with the principles of logic and rhetoric"'.[7] The 'roman', suggests Clute, is the 'traditional novel': 'warm, plastic, representational, seamless', whereas the *récit* idiom is 'chilly, didactic, presentational, disjunctive'.[8] Despite science fiction's devotion to a 'shrill, streamlined mimetic parlance', Clute suggests, inheriting the representational structures of the *roman*, even a fairly traditional sf writer like Blish is 'immersed in the *récit* idiom'.[9]

Drawing upon Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Clute goes on to suggest that while science fiction tends to fall into Frye's category of the

'romance' ('whose "stylized" protagonists "expand into psychological archetypes", and which "often radiates a glow of subjective intensity that the novel lacks'), works such as Blish's could also be identified as a 'Menippean satire or anatomy', a form that diverts from the novel in its stylized characterization, its 'ability to handle abstract ideas and theories', its presentation of 'a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern' and 'violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative'.[10] Clute, to comic and critical effect, suggests that Blish is a writer who aims at the romance or *roman* and always manages to hit on the 'Menippean satire' or *récit*, meaning that the seeming deficiencies of Blish's works are in fact tonal and effective strategies that (unconsciously) work against the standard forms and modes of science fiction. At the same time, Clute asserts that writers such as the later Wells, Aldous Huxley, John Barth, Thomas M Disch and John Sladek (the last two notable *New Worlds* writers) work within the *récit* or Menippean idiom, suggesting that this tonality is *always already* present within the generic range of science fiction, but works as a kind of counter-discourse ('writing against the grain').[11]

The identification of some modes of science fiction as 'Menippean satires' (and an overt connection to a Postmodernist writer such as John Barth) both legitimates experimental sf in terms of older (and more critically respectable) forms and helps place the New Wave's 'avant-gardism' in a different context: *New Worlds* writers are only developing what was always there in science fiction, and their formal experimentations can be seen as parallel to those in more 'mainstream' fiction. (Moorcock refers, somewhat scathingly, to Barth and Pynchon 'clumsily [...] trying to achieve results already achieved in *New Worlds*'.)[12] During the same period, Roland Barthes developed his theory of the 'text', which suggested that the very literary artefact (and its *production* during the process of reading) was no longer an organic whole, or even 'a fragment of substance [...] the Text is a methodological field'.[13] The very conception of the artform (book, poem, film, musical piece) is radically altered to align with experimental literary practice:

The metaphor of the Text separates from that of the work: the latter refers to the image of an *organism* which grows by a vital expansion, by 'development' (a word which is significantly ambiguous, at once biological and rhetorical); the metaphor of the text is that of the *network*; if the Text extends itself, it is as

a result of a combinatory systematic.[14]

The text is not an efflorescence of genius or organic whole, but a signifying system, a tissue of quotations, a network of endlessly deferred denotations. Moorcock's sense that the New Wave celebrated 'the advent of new technologies and theories which opened up the multiverse for further exploration' (introducing that crucial concept in Moorcock's work, the multiverse) is reflected in the plural or multiple sense of textuality that Barthes outlines:

The Text is plural. [...] The plural of the text depends, that is, not on the ambiguity of its contents but on what might be called the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric.) The reader of the text may be compared to someone at a loose end (someone slackened off from any imaginary); this passably empty subject strolls – it is what happened to the author of these lines, then it was that he had a vivid idea of the text – on the side of a valley, a *oued* flowing down below [...]; what he perceives is multiple, irreducible, coming from a disconnected, heterogeneous variety of substances and perspectives.[15]

The critical and creative practice of New Wave science fiction corresponds to wider developments in re-formulating approaches to representation, to the text, to the world itself, which indicated that linear, monovalent, 'organic' works were no longer reasonable or reliable means by which to reflect or understand the world. In collage, in media, in the disjunctions of film; in the network; and in experimental fiction, the world as it was (and the psychologies and subjectivities of human beings living in it) could be more nearly approached. The critical and creative practice in this book, then, is both an appropriation of the hypertextual emphases of new wave SF and an attempt to map those formal emphases on to literary and cultural analysis, *and* a reflection of contemporary digital culture and its appropriative approach to 'sampling' textual elements from a diverse multiplicity of extant cultural production.

In writing about Jerry Cornelius, John Clute, in 'The Repossession of Jerry Cornelius', refers to the *pasticcio*, which he characterises as 'a collection of works by various hands, all in the style of some original composer'.[16] Clute suggests that Moorcock's creation of the Cornelius narrative operates as a kind

of *pasticcio*:

Easy to read, linearly plotted, full of sf twists and turns, this novel introduced to the sf world (and in fact seemed to donate to some of its writers) a new kind of infinitely malleable template for myth-making called Jerry Cornelius, simple to hum and easy to remember, a sexually ambivalent, amoral (but exceedingly oral) portmanteau anti-hero who was part saint and part devil, and instant myth of the pop sixties whose tastes in music, clothes, cars, drugs, wombs, technology and apotheosis all seemed to make him an authentic emblem of Swinging London and (more narrowly) of the New wave in sf which Moorcock had instigated by giving space to its writers in his magazine, which soon became notorious. As did its mascot. Moorcock encouraged his fellow writers to use Cornelius as a template in stories of their own. There may not have been fifty of them, and NEW WORLDS hardly became a *pasticcio*, but all the same it was pretty clear – indeed advertised – that *The Final Programme* [Moorcock's first Cornelius novel] was being used, sometimes very competently, as the initial theme for a whole series of mythopoeic variations, whole multiverses of riffs, on Jerry himself; on Miss B, his collaborator in instant Messiah-hood; on Frank, his shifty, scrounging brother; and on Catherine, the sister he's deeply in love with. (328-9).

For *New Worlds*, then, the Cornelius stories worked as a template[17] or a kind of 'set' (of characters, stages, motifs, ideas) that could be used as a kind of narrative assemblage, just as with the *Commedia dell'arte* that becomes increasingly important to the Cornelius novels.

M. John Harrison's three Cornelius short stories, 'The Ash Circus', 'The Nash Circuit' and 'The Flesh Circle' are, as their names suggest, iterations. In 'The Nash Circuit', an 8-section narrative, Jerry travels back to the Mesozoic era in section 1 ('Albert is Lost') and encounters a rather lost and wandering Albert Einstein; three paragraphs from this section are repeated verbatim in the final section ('A Trip to the Zoo'), ending the story. At the end of 'The Flesh Circle', Jerry dies and is buried at sea; the beginning of 'The Ash Circus' has Jerry buried at sea, his coffin retrieved from the water and Jerry revived by the insertion of a medicinal/ narcotic suppository. The three Harrison stories, while riffing on Cornelius tropes of entropic disintegration of Jerry's identity,

a war-ravaged or post-apocalyptic Britain, and the attempts of an order-fixated female character (here Dr Naw, whose likeness to Miss Brunner is emphasised several times) to fix Jerry, time and space through some form of institutionalised violence (here, the lobotomization of Shakey Mo Collier and Miss Brunner), form a kind of three-ring circuit/circle/circus.

Harrison's stories, Moorcock writes in the Preface to the 1993 Orion reissue *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, 'were influential on books like *The English Assassin* (whose title is borrowed from Harrison) and are my particular favourites.' The stories by Harrison, Brian Aldiss, Norman Spinrad and others 'were all written spontaneously, usually without any reference to me'.[18] Cornelius became a means by which the *New Worlds* writers could respond to contemporary crises and events in fictional form. The conceptual importance of Cornelius as a figure to be taken up by others is the subject of a witty mock-introduction to the collection *The Nature of the Catastrophe* by 'James Colvin' (one of Moorcock's pseudonyms):

The 'reality' – or lack of it – of Jerry Cornelius has been the subject for dozens of articles, essays and theses, not least among them Jorge Luis Borges's famous piece and, of course, Cornelius has been used as a character in much twentieth-century fiction (Thomas Mann's *Disorder and Early Sorrow*, Kipling's *Two Kopjes*, Borges's own *The Immortal*, Storm's *Umeå 32*, and the unpublished but brilliant Disch manuscript *Heart of Darkness* – so dreadfully treated by Conradians in spite of overwhelming proof that Disch and Conrad never met, did not even correspond – where Cornelius is described as a 'first-class agent' and 'a very remarkable person' and which the compilers are not allowed to publish in this volume for reasons which have become all too familiar to readers of the popular press![19]

According to Moorcock, Thomas M. Disch did indeed write a Cornelius text called *Heart of Darkness*, which consisted of Conrad's narrative given entire. It was not published, as Moorcock thought that Disch may have had fatally misconceived the Cornelius form, which had been successfully taken up by Aldiss, Spinrad, and Harrison among many others. Curiously, Disch's unpublished *Heart of Darkness* is itself a kind of *pasticcio*, defined by Richard Dyer thus:

The word [pastiche] comes from the Italian 'pasticcio', which, in its earliest recorded use, meant a pie. [...] The idea of a mixed dish – meat and vegetables plus pastry – was then applied to art. In this usage, pasticcio referred to paintings produced by one painter using the motifs of another and presented as the latter's work. (8)

The idea of a 'mixed' work is formally important to Moorcock's writing, particularly in the Cornelius texts; *The Entropy Tango* (1982), for instance, was intended to be issued with an LP of music. In this light, Dyer's consideration of other musical *pasticcio* forms is illuminating:

There are numerous varieties of theatrical performance that involve some combination of speech with music, song, dance and comedy: *commedia dell'arte*, the Elizabethan court masque, the Spanish *zarzuela*, the German *Singspiel*, the American musical.[20]

The *Commedia dell'arte* becomes increasingly important thematically in Moorcock's Cornelius texts, as I noted above. The *Commedia dell'arte* was a theatre which involved a character set of masked 'types', often improvised along themes of love, adultery, old age and jealousy. The characters included Pierrot or Pedrolino, a naive and trusting servant, likeable and honest; Harlequin or Arlecchino, a mischievous clown or trickster, in love with Columbina, the crafty and clever female counterpart of Harlequin who only makes fun of him; Il Capitano, a swashbuckling, bold if not particularly brave military figure, opportunistic and greedy; and Il Dottore, an obstacle to the young lovers.

In the Cornelius texts, Jerry first appears to be Harlequin, but is revealed to be truly Pierrot, in fateful and dolorous love with Catherine, who is a version of Columbina. Harlequin is in fact Catherine's other lover, Una Persson, another chrono-adventurer. In *The Entropy Tango*, Jerry, Catherine and Una find themselves on tour in the North of England, playing the *commedia* to unresponsive crowds. The importance of the *pasticcio* form of the commedia and its array of masked types is crucial to the developing conception of the Cornelius texts; neither they, Moorcock seems to suggest, nor any other kind of narrative, is innocent or 'original', but a reworking, a *pasticcio* of other works, other texts.

Port Arthur Jail, Van Diemen's Land, 1844

C stood at the rail of the *John Barry* as they passed the basalt rods of Cape Pillar, the black walls of this adamantine coast looking like the very entrance to the city of Dis itself. Exhilaration and *mal-de-mer* lurched with the swell. Behind, rain clouds massed above the Tasman Sea. A light rain mixed with the salt spray to douse his long dark hair. He watched as ship turned into the bay, and the wind slackened, the swell eased. It had been a long few days from Sydney.

He handed Miss B down the gangway at the quay. Before them lay the lawns of Port Arthur, and the massive bulk of the penitentiary. 'Look at this,' Miss B said. 'A marvel of the modern world. Discipline, my dear C, discipline is the future.'

C felt queasy as he walked up to where the Commandant awaited them. C was here to debrief John Frost, one of their operatives, who had led a band of Welsh miners against Newport back in '39, during the Chartist upheavals. He hoped the poor man had survived the ordeal, among these convicts. There were a few 'politicals' to keep him company, as always.

'Mr Booth,' said Miss B enthusiastically, as the Commandant took her hand. 'How wonderful it is to be here, to see your marvellous facility in real life. I've heard so much about it.'

'I'm sure you will be impressed by our emphasis on discipline, Miss B,' said Booth, a stolid middle-aged man, dressed in a dark suit. 'It is the most regular operation that you could possibly imagine. As our founder, Sir George Arthur, set down, "The most unceasing labour is to be exacted from the convicts and the most harassing vigilance over them is to be observed."'

C could see that Miss B had herself been transported. Booth turned to C as they walked, and asked, 'Do you hunt, sir? There is fine shooting to be had on the Peninsula.'

C smiled. 'Hunt, sir? Not the kind you mean, I'm afraid.' Booth turned and gestured them towards the massive door in the side of the jail, a hell's mouth from which few men returned alive. Before they entered the penitentiary, C stepped back and looked back across the lawns and out into the bay. 'Where do you bury your dead, Commandant? I see no graveyard.'

Booth smiled slightly, grateful for the opportunity. 'We bury them upon

an island in the bay; there, sir. The "Island of the Dead" we call it, if you will forgive the whimsy. We may take the bodies of these men from the mother-land, sir, but,' he said, raising his chin, 'all their graves face England. Their souls still belong to God, and to the British Empire.'

Lobau Barracks, Paris, 1871

As C dropped the cigarettello onto the sandy floor of the yard, and ground it out beneath the toe of his boot, a volley rang out from another part of the compound.

'Won't be long now,' said the Captain, running a finger around the dirty rim of his collar. 'I wish they'd let us have a wash and brush up first.'

'You're so bloody English,' said C, smiling.

'Look who's talking,' retorted the Captain. As C leaned against the brick wall, the Captain paced slowly up and down on the pale, sandy gravel, his brown suit dirty and torn. 'If it wasn't for your bloody Byronic romanticism, I'd be at home in Cheltenham, smoking a cigar and thinking about what Mrs. King would be making for my supper.'

C put his hands in his trouser pockets. He had no jacket, only a white chemise spotted with blood, but he didn't feel cold. 'You can't win them all.'

'Did you think we had a chance to win this one?' asked the Captain.

'A chance? Yes, there's always a chance when wars come to an end. You'll see.'

The Captain groaned. 'I don't think I'll ever get used to it. Waking up with Miss B looming over me, as if she were sharpening her appetite for dinner.'

'Forgive him, Lord, for he knows not what he says,' said C, smiling.

The Captain passed a dirty hand across his sandy hair, then scrubbed at the soup-strainer moustache he was sporting. At last, he managed a wan smile. As he did so, the sound of heavy keys turning in a dead-lock echoed across the yard, and two Versaillais appeared at one corner, beckoning to them both.

'It's time,' said C.

Stratford, 2012

C sat on the bed. In one of the last blocks of social housing to survive the right-to-buy, redevelopment and the Games, he stared at the car coat and needle gun laid out on the counterpane. His sister stood in the doorway and watched him.

'Which one is it?' she asked.

'Which one?' replied C. 'I don't know. Does it matter?'

Izmir, 1923

The Captain was sobbing as the ruins of what had been Smyrna fell into the bay. The smoke from the inferno had blackened his face, except for the white patches around his eyes protected by the field-goggles, and now the pale streaks of tear-tracks. Directing the column of relief troops from Kemal's reserve, the Captain had been standing in the turret of the armoured car for hours and it felt as though his legs would betray him at last.

What he had seen had appalled him, then made him numb. Today, he had seen the end of Smyrna, the city of Homer. God knows what would rise from its ashes, if anything.

C had gone ahead with Kemal, pushing the Greeks further and further back towards the Aegean, where they were desperately taking troops off from the small port of Çeşme before the inevitability of defeat. Such were the ends of wars, but the Captain felt particularly troubled by this one. It might have been a sentimental attachment to the classics he had had dinned into him at prep school, but he couldn't but feel that this war was a family affair, two brother peoples tearing asunder with the sword what had been held together for thousands of years with the pen. Homer's *Odyssey* rode with him in his hip pocket, untouched, unread; his own romantic dreams of changing the world had died in the ashes of Smyrna. Now, like Odysseus, he wanted to go home, even if he had no Penelope to return to, and Cheltenham was certainly no Ithaca. He would leave C to sail beyond the gates of the known world. The Captain only wished to sit before a banked fire in his drawing-room, his time-travelling days behind him. Or was it, he thought with a shiver, ahead?

Munich, 1972

It's monstrous!' shouted the Captain, pacing the small living room of the Obersendling apartment. 'It's sheer bloody murder, man! A complete fiasco!'

'It couldn't be helped,' said C, slumped in a velveteen armchair. 'But after that mess at the Airport he's totally discredited now. Finished.'

The Captain stopped and stared, his face the colour of watermarked paper. 'Is that all you can think about? Him?'

'Sometimes I wonder whether I made a mistake involving you in all this,'

said C, wearily. 'As my old Mum used to say, if you don't want to get fucked, stay out of the bedroom.'

The Captain flushed red, then a bloodless white. He ran to the chair and punched C on the ear, neck and shoulder, shouting incoherently. C struggled to rise. As he did so, he tried to clamp the Captain's arms by his sides.

'Will you stop?' he asked. 'Oswald, man, stop. Will you stop? Stop, will you? Stop. Will you stop? Stop. Please stop. Oswald, stop. Please. Stop.'

At last, C let the body of his limp friend stumble into the chair, where he fell awkwardly and, winded, crouched on all fours on the floor.

'Oswald, I... You don't understand. This is Munich, Oswald. Munich.' The Captain looked up and saw his friend's eyes were full of tears. 'Understand? This is Munich.'

Paris, 1794

'Thomas!'

'Captain! How happy I am to see you! And my dear friend C.' Paine clasped each of their hands in turn.

'I do hope we're not inconveniencing you,' said C. 'I'm sure you're still very busy.'

'Friends of liberty are always welcome.'

'Indeed,' said the Captain. 'We took the *liberty* of bringing some viands, the best Mme Rougerie could furnish at such short notice.' He fished in his canvas *vade-mecum* and produced a ham hock terrine, some cheese, bread and a bottle of wine.

'Splendid,' said Paine. 'Friends of liberty bearing supper are even more welcome.'

They sat in Paine's cell and the Captain distributed the food and wine.

'How have you been, Tom?' asked C. 'Have the Americans been to see you?'

Paine scowled. 'That villain Morris. I suspect him of conniving with the Montagnards in my incarceration, you know. I have hopes, however, that the administration may be prevailed upon…' He tailed off, as though not fully believing in his own rhetoric.

'Von Bek has fled,' said C.

'Do you tell me so?' cried Paine.

'He was pursued to Mirenberg, I believe,' replied C.

'These damned Jacobins,' said the Captain. 'They go altogether too far.'

'Oh, yes, indeed, my good sir,' said Paine, 'entirely too far. But in many ways not nearly far enough. New tyranny has followed hard on the heels of liberation.'

The three men ruminated over the wine. The light began to fade, and C could hear the jailor beginning to make his rounds.

'It's time for us to be going, Tom, old friend,' said C, rising. 'We hope to see you soon. In America, perhaps.'

'My friends,' said Paine regretfully, turning back to his writing to make the most of the failing light.

As they reached the threshold of the cell, C noticed a sigil chalked upon the inner face of the door.

'Do you mark that?' he murmured to the Captain. 'Our friend is bound for an appointment with Mme la Guillotine on the morrow. I wonder…?'

Ushering the Captain outside, C called to Paine. 'Hallo there, Tom, I'll close this door for you, to keep out any *other* unwanted visitors,' then pushed the cell door to. The chalk mark was now hidden. 'It might just turn the trick,' C said to himself, head bowed.

Looking up at the Captain, C said, 'It's time for us to leave this place, my friend. We'll settle with Mme Rougerie and post down to Toulouse in the morning. I have some Basque friends who will help us into Spain, where we can take passage. To lose our lives in revolutionary Paris once might seem like misfortune; twice would appear mere carelessness.'

Development (b): Revolutions [2]

Staat's Model School, Pretoria, 1899

The Captain stuffed the bowl of his pipe with what was very nearly the last of his tobacco, lit it with a precious match, and scrutinised the chess board through rank gouts of smoke. He and C sat on rickety folding chairs in the courtyard of the school. Between them stood a square camp table on which the borrowed set was precariously placed. Other officers idled in the afternoon sun, yarning to each other or chatting to the guards. A few huddled together, attempting to make sense of an Afrikaaner news-sheet. After further deliberation, and further puffing on his pipe, the Captain moved a bishop.

'It appears that you have me in a tight spot, my dear C,' said the Captain.

'Not for the first time.'

C smiled. 'It's a way of passing the hours.'

'Strange how you always seem to win,' said the Captain, mock-hurt.

'Not this time,' said C ruefully. 'Have you heard the phrase "concentration camp"?'

The Captain looked disgusted. 'There you go again. It is *not* the same thing. And anyway, this little war is nothing, nothing at all. I was sent to Lucknow in '53, you remember? The First War of Independence? I saw what it was like at the Residency. This is a holiday by comparison. And what happened afterwards, the revenge. Our side. What *we* did. The British, I mean,' said the Captain, faltering, looking down. 'You don't have to tell *me*.'

'*Our* side,' said C, wonderingly. 'I think you might be getting a little confused, Captain.'

'That would come as no surprise to me,' said the Captain. 'Confusion seems to be the order of the day. What day this *is*, exactly, though…'

His voice trailed off and he appeared to look into the middle distance, but then C saw the Captain's eyes focus again. 'Have a look over there,' said the Captain.

C turned and squinted through the sunlight. A young man was talking to a guard at the railing.

'It's young Winston,' said the Captain. 'What's he up to?'

'Trying to buy his way out of here, I would wager,' said C. 'An option no longer open to us, I'm afraid, my dear Captain. We'll have to play the waiting game. Speaking of which - check.'

'Oh, hell and damnation,' said the Captain, peering at the board, sucking on the embers of the tobacco. 'What was it you said about concentration?'

London, 1954

The Captain stood in the back garden of the safe house in Luard Street, sipped his tea and watched as the man next door, distraught and distracted, cast yet another item onto the bonfire. The smoke flagged the sky as the man began to break up a large brown leather sofa with a hammer, throwing hide and springs and timber and all onto the fire. He had been at it for hours, and the Captain could only conclude that the man was emptying the entire house.

C strolled out of the door to the scullery and stood next to the Captain.

'What's going on?' he asked.

'That man lost his wife a week ago,' said the Captain. 'I thought I hadn't seen him or his sons for a few days. Now this.'

'The bonfire?'

'Mmm. A forgetting, I would say,' said the Captain. 'Something that our friend B doesn't seem to be able to do, unfortunately.'

'The situations are hardly comparable,' said C.

'No?'

'No. It's not as though she was really even B's wife.'

'But you sent her to him,' said the Captain, face flushing. 'And now she's dead. Don't you feel *anything*?'

C shrugged. '*C'est la guerre*.'

'*C'est la guerre*?' The Captain threw the remains of his tea on to the sparse, greyish clumps of grass that grew in the garden. 'You're a rotten fellow, you know, C. If you had a heart to burn, we might as well have thrown it onto the fire with all his other mementoes. But I suspect you stopped feeling a long time ago. You're a terrible, rotten man.'

Washington D.C, 1973

C sat behind the desk in the Chief of Staff's office, sipping bad coffee into which he had jolted a shot of the Chief's whiskey, and propped up his feet. He wore his habitual hipsters, Cuban-heeled boots and 3-button jacket which flared over the hips from a tight waist, but he reflected that even terminal squares like Haldeman and Erlichmann were affecting such garb these days. He badly needed a change of scene.

He made no attempt to remove his feet when Bluffield walked into the office, closing the door behind him.

'Looking for the Chief of Staff?' asked C.

'No. Can we talk?' Bluffield asked, looking around him.

'My dear Professor, you're becoming as paranoid as all the others.'

Bluffield sat heavily in a chair and ran a hand down his ashy face. 'I'm looking for an escape route,' he said. 'I know you have certain, ah, *contacts*. I hoped that you might be able to help me.'

C pondered. 'How is Henry?'

'Ach, Henry,' said Bluffield dismissively. 'He's trying to negotiate a Chair at Columbia, with his usual charm. At the same time, he's stoking the President's paranoia. Typical of the man.'

C noted how Bluffield's accent became more clipped when he spoke of his great rival, and he wondered whether Bluffield's name had been anglicized somewhere along the way.

'Switzerland,' said C, at last. 'A private clinic. Neurology suit you?'

Relief swept across Bluffield's features. As C guided him to the office door, the Professor asked, 'How can I thank you?'

'We may ask you to do a service for us in the future, Professor,' said C. 'Until then, enjoy Switzerland.'

He closed the door on Bluffield's retreating figure, and went to stand in front of the office windows, looking out over the White House lawns. Talk of escape routes was timely. He was ready to activate his own.

Dealey Plaza, 1963

C and the Captain stood on the overpass and watched as Security Servicemen patrolled the sparse crowd. The Captain was downcast, greenish around the eyes, looking out from under his sandy fringe. C, long hair curling over the collar of his Nehru jacket, tapped the concrete with the toe of his Chelsea boot.

'Won't be long, now,' said C. He took a stick of grass from the jacket pocket and lit it, sure that no one would notice the fragrance, not here. He offered the joint to the Captain, who blanched.

'Is he up there by now, the other one?' asked the Captain.

'The patsy? Yes, it's all arranged.'

'Poor devil.'

'You could always take his place, my dear Captain. Swap one Oswald for another.'

'I find that to be in remarkably poor taste,' said the Captain.

'Don't take it personally,' said C, breathing out cloud of smoke.

'Easier said than done.'

'My dear old Captain,' said C. 'Taking it personally is your greatest flaw as a temporal adventurer. It is also why I love you.'

The Captain offered a pale smile. 'And you never take things personally? What about B down there?'

'Him on the knoll?' C peered down, leaning on the parapet. 'All in good time, Captain, all in good time. It's a very long game we're playing.'

'Too long for me, I'm afraid,' said the Captain. 'Shall we go?'

'Yes, let's. We'll go catch a plane. Get the car, will you? I'm in the mood

for Love.'

New York City, 2001

'So we failed?' asked the Captain.

'Yes, we failed,' replied C, 'just as we did in Paris, in Memphis, in Beirut… everywhere. That's our lot.'

The Captain stared fixedly out of the window of the Brooklyn brownstone.

'You can't see it from here, can you?' he asked.

'No.'

'Thank God.'

C finished his tea and put the porcelain cup down upon the glass surface of the table.

'I take it you would rather *not* be here to see it?' asked C, checking his watch.

'Very much so.'

'Then we'd better be going.'

C went into the master bedroom and punched the code into the console to fire up the shifter. The Captain followed him into the bedroom, looking defeated and old.

'I don't think I can stand much more of this,' he said.

C looked at his friend wearily, but with a deep affection.

'It's hard to take, I know,' said C, 'but stand it we must. It's time to step back onto the Brooklyn ferry, old friend.'

'Whitman,' said the Captain, smiling. 'I'd like to meet him.'

'Then you shall,' said C, cheering up. 'We'll head back to Centre, then you can have a little free time with Walt. Watch yourself, mind. He has wandering hands.'

Three lights showed on the console. The air hummed around the shifter.

'Our ferryman awaits,' said C.

'But who is paying the fee?' asked the Captain, as they stepped, arm in arm, into the vibrating air.

Recapitulation: The End

a face from the ancient gallery

In 'The Repossession of Jerry Cornelius', John Clute describes the Cornelius figure as an 'infinitely malleable template for myth-making'.[21] Jerry himself

is surrounded by a 'cast' or set of recurrent characters who play emblematic roles in the narratives, and three characters (Jerry, Catherine and Una Persson) are ultimately identified as types of *Commedia dell'Arte* characters, namely Pierrot, Harlequin and Columbine. This recursive staging/ collapsing of 'identity' is identified by Clute as the key theme of the Cornelius texts: 'because authenticity in the city is a costume drama, how can any late twentieth-century city dweller acquire and maintain an identity strategically capable of constituting urban life?' (330). Subjectivity is performance, and each of the characters plays out a version of their designated role in the 'drama'. Miss Brunner, for instance, the arch-manipulator and computer technician, is emblematic of an overarching desire for order, or more particularly *system*, and Jerry fluctuates between collaborating with her and working against her; Shaky Mo Collier, a character actually invented by M. John Harrison, is a working-class Londoner, cast as a helper or roadie or drummer (but who sometimes succumbs to the easy way out); Frank Cornelius, Jerry's brother, is a trickster figure but malignant, often working with Miss Brunner on the side of totalization and repressive order; and Mrs Cornelius, their mother, is an earthy and all-too-human avatar of life's multiplicity: gluttonous, crude, and sometimes embarrassing, she also typifies a kind of unquenchable spirit and lust for life that only dies at the very end of *The Condition of Muzak*. The Cornelius 'set' of figures are, in a sense, archetypes, a set of components that can be recombined in different patterns and shapes to produce variations on the main theme. Where Ballard's principle of iteration approximates the workings of the literature machine, Moorcock's own work tends towards the condition of music (though haunted by its anxious alternative, *muzak*). As indicated by Clute's language in 'The Repossession of Jerry Cornelius', where he suggests that the main theme of the Cornelius short stories and *The Final Programme* are revealed 'to have been a variation; only as *The Condition of Muzak* reaches apotheosis do we hear the real tune in its entirety' (330), Moorcock works variations throughout the Cornelius texts. Music recurs throughout, in references to late 1960s heavy rock tracks, to Hawkwind (the band Moorcock performed with in the early 70s), and to muzak itself; a later 'coda' to the tetralogy, *The Entropy Tango* (1981), has sections that consist of song lyrics and was originally intended to be published with an accompanying vinyl lp of music;[22] and at the beginning of *A Cure for Cancer*, a 'Note to the reader' suggests that

This book has an unconventional structure and, like the other books in

the tetralogy (like the overall tetralogy itself), is developed and resolved in something approaching sonata form: Introduction; Development (1 and 2); Recapitulation; Coda.[23]

The overall structure is then recursive, a sonata-within-sonata form that reinforces repetition across scale. This motif is particularly apparent at the level of a narrative detail towards the end of *The Condition of Muzak.* Clute notes that in the scenes set in the Cornelius family's seedy flat in Ladbroke Grove, where Jerry is just an aspirant youth dreaming of being a rock star, the balcony above the front porch that Jerry imagines turning into an ornamental conservatory 'grounds the roof garden at Derry & Toms in the same way that roof garden grounds most of the exotic locations (like Angkor Wat) of the entire trilogy' (335). *The Condition of Muzak* is then an exercise in *reduction*, where the recursive symbolism of the texts is exposed by proximity to reduced versions of themselves: Angkor Wat to Derry & Toms to the balcony. Characters suffer the same reduction: Miss Brunner appears as the systematiser who desires world order, as a teacher of 'the Maharajah of Guildford's children' (787), and then as a tawdry school mistress accused of sexual impropriety. For Jerry, reduction takes him from the rock and roll Messiah/ English Assassin, to Jerry the wannabe rock guitarist with The Deep Fix, to the most basic type, Pierrot. (At the end of the cartoon strip that ran in the *International Times* in the late 60s, 'The Adventures of Jerry Cornelius', scripted by Moorcock and Harrison and drawn by Mal Dean and R. Glyn Jones, this reduction is even more painful. At one point, all hope lost, Jerry decides that the only way out is to 'go soft': he then turns into Elric. At the conclusion of the strip, Frank, Jerry and Catherine flee Miss Brunner, and then the scene suddenly shifts upon the entry of Mrs Cornelius, who shoos away the 'bullies' menacing her children. In successive panels, the three siblings get younger and younger, and in the last panel are revealed as three schoolchildren sitting in embarrassment at the dinner table as Mrs Cornelius prepares to carve the Christmas turkey. The Cornelius stories are exposed as the playground games of three junior-school children.)[24]

At the level of narrative event, two crucial gatherings form another symbolic reduction. Towards the end of *The Condition of Muzak*, Jerry awakes from a long period of comatose inactivity to find that he has indeed become a kind of Messiah, and undergoes a coronation as King of Utopia. The scene shifts to a costume party held in a building on the site of the old Poor Clare's Nunnery

in Notting Hill, a recurrent location throughout the novel; all of the characters of the Cornelius texts (and some from elsewhere in the Moorcock multiverse; a guest-list is given earlier in the text) are present. To emphasise the *Commedia dell'Arte* symbolism, Jerry is dressed as Pierrot, while Catherine is Columbine; Una Persson, who develops from a minor role as Jerry's Swedish wife in *The Final Programme* to a temporal adventurer in her own right, takes on the role of Harlequin. Frank is also dressed as Harlequin, but is a fake one, indicating his displacement from the central sibling triad in *The Final Programme* to the more benign triangle of desire between Jerry, Catherine and Una. The party embraces a spirit of happiness, a celebration that is absent elsewhere in the texts:

Laughter washed from the hall as a band played a sprightly Lancers and the guests danced in long columns, up and down the ballroom, round and round the tree, clapping and whistling, leaping and pirouetting, fingers on hips, wrists raised, bowing, prancing, arm in arm, hand in hand, shouting with merriment and good humour: the ballroom shook to their feet as figures in elaborate silks and velvets, in laurel, in Lincoln Green, in cloth-of-gold, in brocades, in motley, in animal heads, in scarlet and black moleskin, in hoods, capes, cloaks, tabards, doublets and hose, in leather and lace and metal, masks and powder cosmetics, wigs and false noses, silver- and bronze- and gold-gilding, whooped and giggled and bents their bodies in the ritual of the dance. (785-6)

Moorcock piles on detail after detail in one long sentence, a whirling evocation of the delights of the dance. The language is intoxicating, intoxicated; it rushes and repeats, intensely visual and material but at the same time performative, self-consciously language that *enacts* the dance itself. Elsewhere in Moorcock's work, the festive atmosphere is found overtly in *Mother London*'s most celebratory chapter, 'Variable Currents 1970', where the characters come together just as the 60s and the counter-culture is disintegrating, to ride a carousel at a London fair: '"The Gypsy Baron" gives way again to "The Emperor" and Time does not so much stand still as reach and then repeat its apotheosis. If they could they would all gladly live this instant forever.'[25] Unfortunately, they cannot; the carousel goes round; time does not stand still.

The festivity in *The Condition of Muzak*, though real and felt, is also undermined. Una Persson, as Harlequin, retreats before the dance, seeing its real nature: '"better the myth of happiness," Harlequin murmured, "than the myth

of despair"' (786). The costume party is itself a myth, a performance, another variation on the Cornelius Quartet's music, its dance; but it is only a fantasy. Even Jerry knows it: '"I used to believe I was Captain of my own Fate. Instead I'm a character in a bloody pantomime"' (792). The recursive patterning of the novel brings Jerry close to an understanding of his own status as a fiction: even the grounded 'real' is a fantasy, and can be reduced once again to a more basic level. In the section 'Tuning Up (5)', that ends the Recapitulation, Jerry, his family and others 'celebrate' New Year in a grotty Notting Hill pub, the Blenheim Arms, as they wait for a charabanc to take the party to Brighton: 'Hooters, whistles, rattles clattered and cawed and shrieked as, baying, the party surged out into the old year's last night' (811). Here, festivity is drunkenness; the whirl of the dance is a coach trip to the South Coast, singing rude songs. Jerry despairs of the scene until Catherine invites him round to her flat as an escape route; as Pierrot and host of the Christmas party, Jerry lacks agency, but here, he is pathetic, and is ultimately saved by his sister. The pathos of the lovelorn Pierrot is reduced to the pitiable moroseness of a depressed young man.

picture what will be

One of the ironies of *The Condition of Muzak* is that, although Jerry has spent four novels and many short stories in maintaining the 'equilibrium', the future Utopian London of the festive party comes about entirely without his help. As in the third novel, *The English Assassin*, where Jerry is comatose and hauled around in a coffin for large parts of the narrative, in *The Condition of Muzak* Jerry becomes increasingly dazed and disconnected with his own identity, passive rather than active, a talisman or symbolic Messiah rather than himself an agent. In the chapter called 'The Mirror; or, Harlequin Everywhere', London becomes a 'Victorian' fantasy of itself, remade into a festive wonderland, its carnival nature echoing the party about to take place within the Palace of the Enchanted Dale:

London, England: the time is Christmas Eve, probably during the nineties, and from the black night sky drop flakes of soft snow, covering roofs and walls, trees and streets, giving into the air the silence, a taste at once damp, fresh, and salty; and with the flakes, from the huge darkness, the descends a flattering, indistinct figure his feet touch the flat top of a tall, deserted building, the new Derry and Toms. [...] Harlequin moves quickly into the broader canyon, the renewed Kensington high street. Here, beneath arcades created by overhead pedestrian galleries climbing, step by step, into the black and white sky, among

the elegant towers with windows of glittering gold and silver, whose tops of lost high above, between moving sidewalks, packed with shoppers, other warm lights of more stalls: stalls piled with vegetables, with meats, toys, and sweets; stalls burdened with fowl and game, salmon and trout, pine branches, bunches of heather, holly, and laurel; and behind the stalls are coffeehouses, where men and women of every nationality – Hindoos, Russians, Chinese, Spaniards, Portuguese, Englishmen, Frenchman, Genoese, Neapolitans, Venetians, Greeks, Turks, descendants from all the builders of Babel, come to trade in London – seek the warmth alike, joining there in friendly intercourse. (780-1)

Again we see the paratactic strategy found in the party itself, the piling up of detail in a cavalcade, a festive swirl of the city instantiated by a swirl of language. This is an ideal city, in a sense, a heterotopia where all are equal and joined in a community of shared enjoyment, of food, snowballing, carolling, and gift-giving. It is Utopia as cornucopia, as dream. The references to aerial walkways and later, airships travelling to London from 'thousands of such tiny states, most no bigger than Surrey, some no bigger than London which, itself, is independent, maintained by the pragmatism and the sentiment of a million survivors of a half-forgotten Age of Empires' (783) seem to signify the same kind of proto-steampunk found in the Oswald Bastable novels and in other parts of the Cornelius Quartet, but here finds its most benign aspect. This is London as *omphalos*, a vision shared by Josef Kiss in *Mother London*:

It is as if the rest of the nation is perpetually in motion on the city's periphery, as if London is the hub around which all else revolves, the ordering, civilising, progressive force which influences first the Home Counties, then the entire nation, ultimately the Empire and through the Empire the Globe itself: a city more powerful than all cities before it, perhaps more powerful than all cities ever will be.[26] (221)

London itself is redeemed in *The Condition of Muzak*. Ravaged by war throughout the preceding novels, succumbing to entropy, to ruin, the city is revivified as something which is at once apart from Imperial discourses of the city and which redeems them: London as centre, nurturer, utopia. Earlier in the novel, Jerry has a vision of an apocalyptic London which all of its guises, its masks, are visible:

In the evening light the city was phosphorescent, like a neon wound; it glowed beneath a great scarlet sun turning the clouds orange and purple. And

Jerry was filled with a sudden deep love for his noble birthplace, the City of the Apocalypse, this Earthly paradise, the oldest and greatest city of its Age, virgin and whore, mother, sister, mistress, sustainer of life, creator of nightmare, destroyer of dreams, harbourer of twenty million chosen souls. (641)

In a sense, the Cornelius novels refuse urban teleology, the life and death of the megalopolis. If London is revivified in the overt fantasy of 'The Mirror', it only reflects what is always-already there, London's own multiplicity, an inset multiverse-within-the-multiverse. If, as John Clute suggests, the Cornelius novels offer a 'paradigm set' for contemporary strategies of urban living, the resources for that set are always-already found *within the city itself*.

Take a chance with us

The apocalypticism of the Cornelius texts is deeply implicated in its critique of messianism. Jerry is a version of what Adam Roberts identifies as one of the crucial tropes of science fiction in the 1960s, 'notions of the messiah', produced in part by the 'determining logics of the genre itself'.[27] Roberts downplays Cold War nuclear anxieties to suggest that the extension of technology had, by the 1960s, reduced the possibility of the imagination of transcendence, so that science fiction returned to 'one of its core, originary anxieties: all we have learnt, all of our new science and technology, all that we know now about the cosmos – does this not fatally degrade the uniqueness and effectiveness of the idea of the messiah?' (233). In Moorcock's 'Behold the Man', Karl Glogauer *performs the role* of Christ, but does not achieve transcendence; in the figure of Jerry Cornelius, the Messiah is reduced to the weeping, passive Pierrot. In *The Condition of Muzak*, the apocalypse is resolved with a party, the 'myth of happiness', but this fantasy is soon abandoned, and the narrative ends with the death of Mrs Cornelius. In this scene, the vulgar life of Jerry's Mum is extinguished, but not before she outlines a kind of genealogy for Jerry, in which generations of Cornelius children (always two brothers and a sister) marry with Brunners, Beesleys, Krapps, Perssons and Colliers, making the entire Cornelius narrative a kind of family story. Incest remains key to reproduction, and after Mrs Cornelius dies, Jerry drives through the rain to find Catherine, 'the bearer of bad news for the mother of his unborn son' (836).

This is, for Jerry, the *real* end. Although he consoles himself with the fantasy that '"old Corneliuses never die – they just fade into someone else"' (834), he is, at last, confronted with the fact of death. All the resurrections of

the preceding narratives come to a stop. However, something must come after, and the 'unborn son' hints, at least, at renewal. The genealogy that Mrs Cornelius offers suggests a circular, recapitulating model of time, recurrence rather than apocalypse: a beginning as well as an end. In this, Moorcock draws upon non-Christian eschatological narratives, and the failure of a certain kind of messianism (and its rebirths/ resurrections) underpins the cyclical implications of the Cornelius genealogy. In the Norse myth of Ragnarok, mentioned several times in the Cornelius texts, the apocalyptic battle between Gods and Giants, where 'the nine worlds will burn and the Gods will die [...] men and women will die, elves and dwarves will die, giants will die, monsters and creatures of the underworld will die, birds and animals will die [and] the earth will sink into the sea' is followed by a new world, neither heaven nor hell:

The earth will rise again out of the water, fair and green. [...] Lif and Lifthrasine [two humans who hid in Yggdrasil, the world-tree, during Ragnarok] will have children. Their children will bear children. There will be life and new life, life everywhere on earth. That was the end and this is the beginning.[28]

Clearly we can see analogies to Edenic myth both here and in the figures of Jerry and Catherine, but there is no myth of the fall at work, no sin to be redeemed at Judgement Day. Instead, we find a cycle of life; instead of eschatology, recurrence.

Time itself, in the Cornelius texts, is multi-linear. Or, rather, time is not linear at all, but is co-present, a kind of space. In *The Condition of Muzak*, Miss Brunner find Jerry in the deserted Poor Clare's convent. As Jerry dresses, Miss Brunner

discovered a huge perfectly cut diamond and was holding it up to the green-shaded light blub. "This is real." She inspected the facets, one by one. "Where did you get it?"

"It's only a model." He put his legs into a pair of purple bells. (648)

This is where the chapter ends. A model of what? The answer is given some hundred pages later, where Jerry, Una and Mo Collier discuss order and discernible patterns to events.

"It's a perfectly easy shape, I think," said Una Persson. "But it – well, it shifts. It's a prism. A classically cut diamond, perhaps. It isn't strictly linear. By selecting a linear pattern from the larger design you certainly distort things. I think that's what you mean, isn't it, Jerry?'

Mo belched. Then he farted. 'Pardon,' he said.

Jerry gave up. "All I know is that there's too much going on at once and I've had about enough. All the bleeding possibilities occurring at the same time. That's not what I joined for. I wanted a simple life. I remember. I wanted a nice straight set of tracks from A to B. And what did I bloody get?" (744)

Time is a diamond, a prism, but Jerry is nostalgic for the comforts of linearity. Eschatology is too simple, a 'distortion' of the multi-faceted nature of time (the multiverse); the apocalypse is fantasy. '"Nobody wins. Nobody loses"', says Una; '"That's life," said Mo Collier' (744). The problem for Jerry, then, is not only to devise and inhabit a strategy for urban living, it is to properly embrace the ongoing flux of life, abandoning linearity and messianism as a means by which to make sense of the world. The destructive, indeed vampiric nature of these illusions is outlined in the parodic transcendence at the end of *The Final Programme*, where Jerry and Miss Brunner undergo a merging that results in 'Cornelius Brunner', an entity that traverses Europe at the head of a crowd of millions which finally 'poured into the Black Sea [where] within hours, only one head remained above water': Cornelius Brunner itself (139). In the final lines of the novel, having blown up the Cornelius family mansion in Normandy, the 'world's first all-purpose being' strode eastward: '"A tasty world," it reflected cheerfully. "A very tasty world" (142). To this monstrous new Messiah, the world itself is to be consumed.

The killer awoke

If the events, characters and spaces in *The Condition of Muzak* are 'grounded' by their relation to a prior version (Angkor Wat, Derry & Toms, the balcony) then the ground of Utopia is London on a summer day in 1966. In 'Harlequin Invisible; or the Emperor of China's Court', Jerry wanders the streets of Chelsea, the King's Road another version of Cornutopia found later in the novel:

King's Road was crowded with pretty people, with music, food-stalls, hawkers of disposable clothes, fortune-tellers, prostitutes of every possible persuasion, beautiful buttons and blossoming bows; soft bodies brushed against his on all sides, delicious perfumes swam into his nose; his flesh sang. [...] there was no doubt about it, thought Jerry, Utopia had been worth hanging on for. Everyone was happy. *Here, There and Everywhere*, sang the Beatles As he passed a day-time disco; they were the poets of paradise. *Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream...* (759)

Both Beatles songs are from the *Revolver* lp, released in August 1966,

a strong temporal marker. The scene in this chapter takes place *prior to* the events of the Cornelius short stories and the novels: when he bumps into Miss Brunner, uncomfortable in her modish gear, she reveals that she has just been trained as a computer programmer, and when she says that she cannot remember when they last met, Jerry replies: '"Neither can I [...] Perhaps it hasn't happened yet?"' (760). Here, Jerry is 'happy', deeply embedded in the 'myth of the golden present', here figured as a kind of sexual dream-world: he has just risen from sex with Mitzi Beesley, and proceeds to slide his hand up Miss Brunner's shorts. Miss Brunner's cold response indicates the coming shadows over Utopia: as she rejects his advances, a flight of F-111 fighter-bombers head towards Barnes to drop their bombs. Miss Brunner is a dissident in this particular Utopia, a malcontent who believes in science rather than sexual pleasure (she uses sex as a kind of rite elsewhere in the stories), and who believes that

"A properly organised technology is the only hope for the world unless we are to plunge into total decadence and from decadence into death [...] If we act now, we can save almost everything of value. Don't you see?" Her circular shades were cocked at an earnest angle. "If we can somehow produce a program, feed in all the facts, we can get a clear idea of what we must do to prepare for the future. Imagine – the whole future in a single chip." (761)

Miss Brunner, in the middle of the fourth Cornelius novel, anticipates the narrative of the first, *The Final Programme*. The future she sees is ordered, technocratic, but is produced from a profound rejection of the pleasure-oriented principles of London-as-Utopia: '"Don't you realise the world's rotting about your ears? Haven't you got eyes? Can't you smell the corruption? Can't you feel the whole world going out of kilter? Where's your sense?"' she rails at the end of the chapter, turning the sensory discourse of the Cornutopia on its head. Her darkly sarcastic parting shot, exclaiming 'Fun!', seems to place Miss Brunner as a Scrooge-like grotesque, bizarrely at odds with 'the languid street, still crowded with the festive and the free' (762); but she offers real danger to this Utopia, and as Moorcock has suggested, anticipates what would succeed the 'golden present': 'If, though Miss Brunner, we conjured [...] Mrs Thatcher, I apologise. I still feel a little chilly when I note how close Miss Brunner and her primitive programmes, her briskly simple-minded solutions, were echoed in the words and policies of the Petite Caporale as we knew her in her hey-day'.[29]

The final anticipation, of the English Assassin himself, is also a reduction. Before Miss Brunner leaves, Jerry tells her: '"I was thinking of going into the

assassination business. You know what a dreamer I am. Would it be too much of a hit and myth operation, do you think?"' (761). The bathetic joke reveals the deep implication of assassination and myth in the Cornelius texts as well as reducing it to an awful pun. It is no coincidence that Jerry is a 'dreamer' as well as an aspiring assassin: while the 1960s dream of the 'myth of the golden present', the 'myth of happiness', the world is full of violence, from war in Vietnam to police riots in Chicago, from the bomb to the deaths of John and Bobby Kennedy, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Patrice Lumumba and (in the decade's aftermath) Salvador Allende. For Jerry Cornelius, lovelorn Pierrot, daydreaming youth, Rock and Roll Messiah, to be an assassin signifies that he is truly an expression of the 1960s, an Everyman who enacts the signs of the times.

Coda

[The three aspects of pastiche]: First, a pastiche work is based on putting together elements taken from elsewhere [....] Second, this involves the quotation/imitation of prior works, which leads to the notion of pastiche as a kind of imitation [....] Third, pasticcio painting involved the unacknowledged and deceitful use of combination and imitation, and this negative association has also clung to pastiche.[30]

Our culture no longer bothers to use words like *appropriation* or *borrowing* to describe those very activities. […] Today, an endless, recombinant, and fundamentally social process generates countless hours of creative product (another antique term?). […] [T]he recombinant (the bootleg, the remix, the mash-up) has become the characteristic pivot at the turn of our two centuries.[31]

'I believe Time to be like a faceted jewel with an infinity of planes and layers impossible to map or to contain.'[32]

Endnotes

1 Michael Moorcock, 'Introduction', *New Worlds: An Anthology* (London: Flamingo, 1983), pp. 9-26 (pp.14-15).

2 Michael Moorcock, 'Introduction' to *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, Michael Moorcock and Langdon Jones, eds., (1993) (London: Orion, 1997), pp. vii-x (p.vii).

3 Moorcock, 'Introduction' to *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, p.viii.

4 Moorcock, 'Introduction' to *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, p.viii.

5 Michael Moorcock, 'The Dodgem Decision', *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, Michael Moorcock and Langdon Jones, eds., (1993) (London: Orion, 1997), pp.100-109 (p.100).

6 Moorcock, 'The Dodgem Decision', p.101; p.103.

7 John Clute, 'Scholia, Seasoned With Crabs, Blish Is', (1973) *New Worlds: An Anthology* (London: Flamingo, 1983), pp.331-340 (p.336).

8 Clute, p.336.

9 Clute, p.337.

10 Clute, p.337.

11 Clute, p.338.

12 Moorcock, 'Introduction', *New Worlds: An Anthology*, p.16.

13 Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text', *Image Music Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), pp.155-164 (pp.156-7)

14 Barthes, 'From Work to Text', p.161.

15 Moorcock, 'Introduction' to *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, p.viii; Barthes, 'From Work to Text', p.159.

16 John Clute, 'The Repossession of Jerry Cornelius', *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (London: Orion, 1993), pp.328-337 (p.328).

17 Clute elsewhere draws upon the critical writing of James Blish (who reviewed as William Atheling) with regard to the idea of the 'template. In 'Scholia, Seasoned With Crabs, Blish Is', published in *New Worlds*, Clute describes Blish's 'Okie' narratives as 'the best template series science fiction had ever seen' (John Clute, 'Scholia, Seasoned With Crabs, Blish Is', *New Worlds: An Anthology* (London: Flamingo, 1983), pp.331-340 (p.331)). Blish used the term in respect of *Star Trek*, for which he wrote novelizations of episodes during the 1970s. A 'template' story, for Blish, meant a series in which there is no temporal development or story arc – the episodes can be shown in literally any order. In relation to Cornelius, the short stories can be seen as 'templates',

whereas the Moorcock novels are not. Clute's argument in 'The Repossession of Jerry Cornelius' is that Moorcock takes Cornelius back from his colleagues to work out the 'true' theme: 'how can any late twentieth-century city dweller acquire and maintain an identity strategically capable of constituting urban life?' (330).

18 Michael Moorcock, 'Introduction' to *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (London: Orion, 1993), pp. vii-x (p.x).

19 James Colvin [Michael Moorcock], 'Introduction to the Original Edition', *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (London: Orion, 1993), pp.xv-xvi (pp. xv-xvi).

20 Richard Dyer, *Pastiche* (London: Routledge, 2007), p.10.

21 John Clute, 'The Repossession of Jerry Cornelius', in Michael Moorcock and Langdon Jones (eds), *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (London: Orion, 1993), pp. 328-337 (p.328).

22 Michael Moorcock, *The Entropy Tango* (1981) (London: NEL, 1987).

23 Michael Moorcock, *A Cure for Cancer* in *The Cornelius Quartet* (London: Phoenix House, 1993), p.144.

24 Michael Moorcock, M. John Harrison, Mal Dean and R. Glyn Jones, 'The Adventures of Jerry Cornelius', *International Times*, reprinted in Michael Moorcock and Langdon Jones (eds), *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (London: Millennium, 1993), pp. 65-70, 90-94, 126-129, 144-147, 156-159, 188-190, 226-229 (p.157; p.229).

25 Michael Moorcock, *Mother London* (1988) (London: Scribner's, 2000), p.371.

26 Michael Moorcock, *Mother London* (1988) (London: Scribner's, 2000), p.221.

27 Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.232-3.

28 Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The Norse Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), pp.175-6.

29 Michael Moorcock, 'Introduction' to *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, p.ix.

30 Richard Dyer, *Pastiche* (London: Routledge, 2007), p.9.

31 William Gibson, 'God's Little Toys: Confessions of a cut-and-paste artist', *Wired* 13.07, July 2005, <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.07/gibson.html>. Accessed 22 April, 2010.

32 Michael Moorcock, *Mother London* (1988) (London: Scribner's, 2000), p.486.

The Ring Cycle

L'important dans la vie ce n'est point le triomphe, mais le combat, l'essentiel ce n'est pas d'avoir vaincu mais de s'être bien battu.[1]

The Time Machine

In the Jerry Cornelius story 'Dead Singers', Bishop Beesley, a monstrously fat figure of authority, sends Jerry into the future to check whether the 'clean-up' had been successful. The nature of this 'clean-up' is undisclosed, but the information that Jerry brings back is that '"All the singers are dead"'.[2] In a future London in flux – 'nothing stayed the same' (262) – a Hawkwind song declines into Tom Jones and thence into Cliff Richard, an entropic process by which Jerry 'knew he was absolutely lost' (262). Jerry travels in time, like Wells's Traveller, on a kind of chrono-cycle. In 'Dead Singers', the time machine is a 'black Royal Albert gent's roadster' (259) which, by the end of the story has 'taken as bad a beating as he had': it was 'scratched and rusty [and] its tyres were flat' (263).[3] Like the Palace of Green Porcelain in *The Time Machine*, but unlike the Traveller's Machine itself, Jerry's chrono-cycle itself becomes subject to the passage of time, and more specifically to physical corrosion and destruction. The London of 'Dead Singers' is itself a kind of further vision, a city of ghosts, time compressed into space so that 'Buildings rose and fell like waves.[...] People grew and decayed' (262). Jerry puts the bike into the back of a Mercedes car, but finds speed makes entropy worse: 'the bike was his only real transport' (260). He finally jumps out of the car, taking the bike with him,

at the Eros statue at Piccadilly Circus, the *omphalos* of this particular mandala.

Wells's Traveller begins his narrative by offering a description of how it *feels* to use the machine:

'I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback—of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the flapping of a black wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. [...] The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then, in the intermittent darknesses, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous greyness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous colour like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.'[4]

The Traveller sits upon a 'saddle' as he traverses time, and the sensation appears to correspond to the experience of riding a bicycle. *The Time Machine* itself appeared in a decade in which there was a 'craze' for bicycling, and Wells himself wrote a novel based on the phenomenon, *The Wheels of Chance* (1896). In *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, Stephen Kern notes how the rise of the safety bicycle led to the production of literary and other texts that represented 'the sheer pleasure of movement, enhanced by a sense of mastery over the environment'.[5] Kern quotes the 'popular French writer Paul Adam [who] wrote that [cycling] created a "cult of speed" for a generation that wanted "to conquer time and space"'.[6] The effect of the bicycle was not only time-space compression (the speed of the machine allowing for far greater distances to be travelled during a day) but a loosening of social convention: 'the bicycle also bridged social space', and in the conception of some journalists at the time was an instrument of social equality.[7] The bicycle was then not only a means by which to traverse physical *and* social space, it was attendant with anxieties to do with social and gender egalitarianism, in particular their use by women

(the bicycle was often found in 'New Woman' fictions) and the working classes. Mobility is not just a technological function of the machine: it opens revolutionary possibilities in human relations. Little wonder, then, that Wells uses the bicycle as a model for his Time Machine, in a narrative that focuses on social division transformed into the evolutionary dynamic.

In *The Time Machine*, the Time Traveller explains the theoretical side of time travelling as follows: '"Scientific people," proceeded the Time Traveller […], "know very well that Time is only a kind of Space"'.[8] Time is the 'Fourth Dimension'. He goes on:

'It is simply this. That Space, as our mathematicians call it, is spoken of as having three dimensions, which one may call Length, Breadth, and Thickness, and is always definable by reference to three planes, each at right angles to the others. But some philosophical people have been asking why *three* dimensions particularly – why not another direction at right angles to the other three? – and have even tried to construct a Four-Dimensional geometry. Professor Simon Newcomb was expounding this to the New York mathematical Society only a month ago.'[9]

In *The Time Machine*, space and time are 'fixed', both static worlds to be explored. The Time Traveller seems to be able to move about in time without major disturbance either to the path of evolution or to historical 'time'. If we take further the metaphor of time as space, then for *The Time Machine*, time is an empty room. The Traveller can move about in it, observing and interacting with it, without disturbing its fabric. For C. Howard Hinton, the 'Fourth Dimension' is somewhat more ætherial. Hinton's conception of the 'fourth dimension' is what Bruce Clarke has described as 'an instantaneous connective space beyond material constraints'.[10] 'In Hinton's scientific cosmos,' adds Clarke, 'to go behind the long chain of energic transformations is to emerge on the far side of the æther'.[11] Clarke shows that Hinton's speculations were plausibly grounded in James Clerk Maxwell's (then) current work on field physics, but in intention, go well beyond them. For reaching the fourth dimension was an act of mental discipline, brought about by strenuous mental exercise: 'The cognition of higher space called for and called forth a higher form of consciousness. Thus the individual pursuit of the fourth dimension was a moral act with collective evolutionary consequences'.[12] Time, in Wells, is the fourth dimension; for Hinton, the fourth dimension is a higher state of consciousness.

In Alfred Jarry's 'How To Construct a Time Machine' (1899), the project of constructing such a machine is taken as a given, and a large part of the text is given over to a mechanical and philosophical description of how a time machine would work, ironically an explanation that is notable only by its absence in Wells's novel. Jarry's starting point for his speculation is that 'Space and Time are commensurable'; 'being of the same nature, [Space and Time] may be conceived of as different physical states of the same substance, or as different modes of motion'.[13] Jarry proposes a machine that is insulated from time, a *Machine of Absolute Rest* (116) that 'in order to move in duration, must be shorter in duration than Time, its containing medium – that is, it must be more immobile in the succession of events' (120). This is indeed a 'pataphysical solution: mobility can only be achieved by an absolute *immobility*. Notably, Jarry's time machine, powered by three gyrostats mounted 'in the three perpendicular planes of Euclidian space [...] consists of an ebony frame, similar to the steel frame of the bicycle' (118).

The effect of Jarry's machine is to *split time*. 'The Machine has *two Pasts*: the past anterior to our own present, what we might call the real past; and the past *created by the Machine* when it returns to our Present and which is in effect the reversibility of the Future' (121). Such a conception seems far in advance of Wells's (self-)limited conception of Time as Space, and 801,702 as an adventure-space to be traversed by the Traveller. Jarry goes on to suggest:

Since the Machine can reach the real Past only after having passed through the Future, it must go through a point symmetrical to our Present, a dead centre between future and past, and which can be designated precisely as the *Imaginary Present*. (121)

Such a conception is foundational to Stephen Baxter's official sequel to Well's novel, *The Time Ships* (1995), where the Traveller meets and travels with both a sympathetic Morlock from an alternate time-line and a version of his younger self across a multiplicity of worlds. Baxter's text in fact returns the Traveller to his own time and space through the very far future, where the Universe is re-booted in a Big Bang manufactured by super-intelligent sentient machines. This image of circularity consciously or unconsciously echoes Jarry's conception of Time beheld by the Traveller as a 'curve, or better a closed curved

surface' (121), an '*Ethernity*'. The apprehension of the true nature of the (Luminiferous) Ether. Made possible by the machine, this is a kind of revelation, albeit an imaginary one, and the implications of this model of *Ethernity* are suggested by two complementary sentences given at the very end of the text: '*Duration is the transformation of a succession into a reversion*' and ('in other words'): 'THE BECOMING OF A MEMORY' (121). The metaphorical, as well as philosophical and 'pataphysical uses of the Time Machine are laid bare here, as the scientific discourse collapses into a psychological one. The real Time Machine is one that exists in the human mind: memory itself, an internal fourth dimension.

For Jerry Cornelius, time travelling is not the achievement of Hinton's higher state of consciousness. Rather, 'fucking about with time' is catastrophic and is used by agents of authority, like Bishop Beesley, to control the flux of the world. However, if, as Prince Lobkowitz tells Jerry, '"the war is endless"' (261), then all attempts to ultimately control time are equally doomed. Life, like the war, like Ethernity, goes on.

The Spin Cycle

Zurich, April 1943: - Herr Doktor Hofmann, eyes goggling, gingerly swung his leg over the cross-bar and sat upon the saddle. His assistant looked across nervously, astride his own bicycle. 'On the way home, my condition began to assume threatening forms. Everything in my field of vision wavered and was distorted as if seen in a curved mirror. I also had the sensation of being unable to move from the spot. Nevertheless, my assistant later told me that we had travelled very rapidly.'[14]

Geneva, September 2008: - 'Successfully steered around the 27 kilometres of the world's most powerful particle accelerator at 10:28 this morning, this first beam of protons circulating in the ring marks a key moment in the transition from over two decades of preparation to a new era of scientific discovery. "It's a fantastic moment," said the LHC project leader Lyn Evans, "we can now look forward to a new era of understanding about the origins and evolution of the universe."'[15]

London, May 1895: - The Captain pedalled harder on his new Rover to

get past the coal cart on Kensington High Street. He was aware that he would be late for his appointment at the Museum. 'There's a feeling exactly like one has upon a switchback – a helpless headlong motion. I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash.' The lines were etched on his memory. He would ask the great man whether he was a bicyclist, too. Traversing an internal time and space, the Captain failed to see the large pothole ahead and plunged over the handlebars. Sitting in the gutter, he felt his collarbone. Not broken, anyway, this time.

Assassination and Apocalypse

Near the beginning of the track 'Apocalypse', on *Dead City Radio*, William Burroughs asks the listener to:

Consider an apocalyptic statement – "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted." Hassan-i Sabbah, the Old Man of the Mountain. Not to be interpreted as an invitation to all manner of unrestrained and destructive behaviour – that would be a minor episode, which would run its course. Everything is permitted *because* nothing is true: it is all make-believe, illusion, dream, art.

The capacity of art to break the frame of categories and significations is central to Burroughs' understanding of the potentialities of apocalypse, 'a basic disruption of reality'. This is attuned to Burroughs' program elsewhere in his works, the 'storming of the reality studio' to tamper with the pre-recordings. In this track, Burroughs uses the idea of apocalypse as *revelation*, the rending asunder of the veil, the moment in which we see the world as it truly is (the naked lunch). Hassan-i-Sabbah is a recurrent figure in Burroughs' fictions, and the pirate utopia of *Cities of the Red Night* (1981), the Wild Fruits Gang of *The Place of Dead Roads* (1984) or the communities of *The Wild Boys* (1971) are versions of Hassan-i Sabbah's Assassins, the cult based at the mountain fastness of Alamut during the 11th and 12th centuries. The intervention of the Assassins in the political life of Persia, Syria and elsewhere in the region is used, in Burroughs' work, as a revolutionary emblem, but is bound up in a faith in the transcendent or apocalyptic possibilities of assassination: to change reality.

In *Apocalypse Now*, when Willard (Martin Sheen) penetrates Kurtz's compound, he finds the 'insane' US Special Forces Colonel (Marlon Brando) in darkness. At the end of their first interview, Kurtz asks Willard: 'Are you an

assassin?' 'I'm a soldier,' is Willard's reply. Kurtz's dismissive conclusion of the interview, 'You're neither. You're an errand boy, sent by grocery clerks, to collect the bill' is deliberately deflating, a bathetic emphasis on the mundane nature of Willard's mission that is at odds with the difference asserted in Willard's voice-over narration earlier in the film, that he felt different about killing 'an American, and an officer'. Ostensibly, Willard is sent to 'terminate the Colonel's command' because of Kurtz's action to use assassination as a political strategy, placing him outside the pale of 'acceptable human conduct'. Here, in fact, the moral or ethical categories have themselves been corroded by the war in Vietnam. The absurdity of the basis of Willard's mission – 'like handing out speeding tickets at the Indy 500' – is more than just institutional 'bullshit', however: it is an index of global failure of the American mission in Vietnam itself, morally, politically and strategically.

Juvenal's phrase *Quis custodiet ipsos custodies?*, 'who watches the watchmen?', is transformed in Kurtz's radio broadcast to 'what do you call it, when the assassins accuse the assassin?' Kurtz has gone beyond the 'lying' morality of his superiors (the 'nabobs'), articulated in the General's speech to Willard: 'there's a conflict in every human heart, between the rational and irrational, between good and evil, and good does not always triumph. Sometimes the dark side overcomes what Lincoln called the better angels of our nature'. This binary no longer pertains to Kurtz; like Conrad's Marlowe, he hates the 'stench of lies', and understands the world to be one in which both love *and* the capacity for atrocity exist side by side, without contradiction. For Willard, assassination is itself revelation, of a personal kind. By the time he kills Kurtz, he is 'not even in their fucking army any more'; he does so because everyone, including Kurtz (and the jungle), 'wanted him dead'. By the film's end, then, Willard acts out a ritual assassination, a symbolic one as well as a physical (mortal) one, and this itself brings down the 'apocalypse'.

As the quotations from Eliot's 'The Hollow Men' suggest, however, apocalypse is under revision. While ending with a whimper rather than a bang might suggest an entropic decline, or a state of terminal corruption and dissolution, Kurtz's death offers the possibilities of renewal, an end followed by a beginning.

The Twin Circles

Les Mistons. He awoke to a rhythmic drumming on the bathroom door. He opened the door, smiled blissfully, and walked down the curved space of the corridor towards the living room, where the faces of political pundits migrated from the television screen across the white walls of the flat. A large drunken group of his friends were talking excitedly as he entered the room, trousers around his ankles. 'A glass of red?' asked the Doctor, pressing it into his hand. 'You're just in time for Goldsmith.' The Captain laughed and fell face-first onto the wine-stained carpet.

Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head. 'Linguistic constraints, for their part, granted their arbitrary exigencies, directly create a sort of "great vacuum" in to which are sucked and retained whole quantities of elements which, without this violent aspiration, would otherwise remain concealed. It is thus the paradox of writing under constraint that it possesses a double virtue of liberation, which may one day permit us to supplant the very notion of inspiration.'[16]

Jour de Fête. 'A visit to Manhattan,' C had said, eyes twinkling through marijuana smoke and the bottom of a highball glass. He scheduled a few days leave in Atlantic City first, now the European theatre was finished. One last walk along the seafront, the boardwalk as the Yanks called it, although much of it had been damaged during last September's hurricane. The Captain signalled to his driver standing next to the staff car, waiting to take him to the Cape May station. And then, by God, the long flight out to Los Alamos, the secrets of the universe, and Trinity.

At The Races

In many of his texts, whether they are fictions, essays or 'speculations', Alfred Jarry appropriates and thereby satirises particular discourses: science in 'Visions of Present and Future' and 'How to Construct a Time Machine'; journalism and sport in 'The Passion Considered as an Uphill Bicycle Race'; and legal discourse in *Exploits and Opinions of Dr Faustroll, Pataphysician*. In fact, one could take *'pataphysics* as a project – defined as 'the science of imaginary

solutions' – as a means by which to open up certain discourses to their inherent absurdities, through appropriation and mimicry, up to and including Christianity and Western metaphysics.[17] Few critics mention the explicit influence of Jarry upon the New Wave, and in particular J.G. Ballard. Ballard's method, depicting extreme situations and psychological states through a linguistically restrained, 'objective' and 'scientific' mode of narration, seems particularly attuned to the kind of effects that Jarry achieves. This is most explicit in Ballard's re-writing of Jarry's 'The Passion Considered as an Uphill Bicycle Race' (1911), which becomes 'The Assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy Considered as a Downhill Motor Race', collected as the final chapter in Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1969).

Jarry's short text begins with a description of the beginning of a cycle race. Barabbas (scratched from the race), Pilate (the starter) and Jesus (who 'got away to a good start') are named, but then the text suspends the narrative when Jesus 'had a flat [tyre] straight away', after which 'the two thieves [...] took the lead'.[18] Following this, the text gives an extended description of the kind of bicycle used: 'the machine was constructed of two tubes soldered together at right angles. It was generally called the right-angle or cross bicycle' (122), upon which Jesus 'rode flat on his back in order to reduce wind resistance' (123). The blasphemous conjunction of crucifix and bicycle, as well as Passion and cycle race, is not intended simply to shock, or to ridicule the Crucifixion; rather, the text 'pataphysically opens up the Christian myth of sacrifice and redemption to scrutiny in a way unimagined even by Nietzsche. For Jarry's Christ is not absurd: he struggles *uphill* in an echo of Dante's image of the Purgatorial mountain, reinforcing the sense of individual struggle and suffering. If the machine is largely the focus of the text, rather than the story of the Passion itself, this reveals the central triangulation at work between 'The Passion Considered as an Uphill Bicycle Race' and 'How to Construct a Time Machine': bicycle – time machine – crucifix. The race rider, struggling over the mountain stages of the Tour de France, becomes an avatar of Christ's suffering, his own bicycle a machine of torture, a frame upon which his pain is stretched. The cyclist, culture-hero of the age of the 'craze' (roughly 1890-1910) becomes an everyman, traversing space and (symbolically) time in his endeavours. The 'Golgotha course' is a circuit, closed by the symbolic suffering of Christ and rider, one mapped on to the other.

That Jarry's re-imagination of the Passion leaves in place both individual

suffering and agency (crucial to a Christian ethics of struggle and redemption) is emphasised by Ballard's further re-writing, which focuses very little on the machinery but instead re-reads the *events* of 23 November 1963 through the lens of the Passion. Where Jarry's Christ rides *uphill*, Ballard's martyr, President Kennedy, is carried *downhill* by the Lincoln convertible he rides in. Agency is evacuated. Ballard envisions a different kind of 'rider': events affect the protagonists, rather than the other way round. In Ballard's story, the Passion becomes Assassination, Pilate becomes Oswald, and Christ becomes Kennedy. The centrality of martyrdom then becomes part of Ballard's textual politics and practice: in re-writing Jarry's 'blasphemous' re-imagining, Ballard interrogates the discourses that place President Kennedy as a kind of sacrificial figure (as seen in Bruce Conner's *Report*, 1963/7), or his death the moment at which American 'innocence' was lost. Ballard's Downhill Motor Race is no primal scene: Kennedy is just another driver in the political stakes, albeit one who suffers a 'deplorable incident'.[19] Where Jesus got off to a good start, Kennedy gets off to a bad one, and 'went downhill rapidly' (172), and is overtaken by Johnson, who wins the race. While Jesus races largely against himself, suffering on the bicycle/crucifix, Kennedy is located in a political contest, albeit one marred by 'widespread reports of irregularities and foul play' (173).

The different focus of Ballard's revision of Jarry's text is nowhere more clearly articulated than in the endings of both texts. In Jarry's text, the 'deplorable accident' (the Crucifixion) leads to a startling final joke: 'we know that he continued the race airborne – but that is another story' (124). To treat Christ's ascension to heaven as an air race scales even greater heights of absurdity (and scandal), and evacuates the suffering central to the uphill bicycle race, a kind of salvific levity that earths the transgressive power of the story. Ballard's ending is very different: 'without doubt Oswald badly misfired. But one question still remains unanswered: who loaded the starting gun?' (173). That the text ends on an unanswered question emphasises the lack of closure offered by the debates and discourses (and investigations such as that of the Warren Commission) that followed the assassination of President Kennedy, a disquieting undecidability that would only be emphasised by the assassinations later in the decade (Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy). Ballard's reading of the Kennedy 'martyrdom' offers no 'solution' to the outcome, merely the statement that Johnson 'won' but that questions remain. It does not offer conspiracy as a salving/ solving/ saving grace, though it nods in that direction, and seems to

absolve Oswald, the 'starter' who 'misfired'. The final question refuses closure, and points outwards, beyond the frame of the text; it is a kind of invitation to the reader, to further decode or deconstruct the myth(s) of the Kennedy assassination, and its meaning.

Revolutions [3]

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'"Well, like everything else, the future is relative. Time moves at different 'speeds' in different sections of the galaxy. What takes place at the centre of our galaxy affects the past as well as the future. Like ripples extending out from a dropped stone, you know?"'[20]

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London 2012 (1980 (1940) 1969) 1997

As C stepped into the Spanish Garden on the roof of Derry and Toms, he saw the old writer sipping from a cup of tea under the shade of a pergola. The writer waved as C picked his way across the garden, wondering whether he should take off his car coat in the spring sunshine.

The writer gestured to a chair and C sat down, flinging out his legs and balancing the Cuban heel of one boot upon the toe of the other. He looked over at the writer and smiled.

'Tea?' asked the writer.

'No, thank you.'

The old writer was a burly man, impressive, thoughtful. Under a dark broad brimmed hat a large brushed-out beard lent the air of a Victorian sage, or perhaps Edward Teach. C wasn't sure about the cape, buckthorn walking stick and biker-boot combination, however.

He leant back in the chair and stuck his hands in pockets of the car coat. Always best to present the image of insolence at all times, even if you don't feel it, he thought.

'I've been waiting for you to come,' said the writer.

'So I see.'

'What took you so long?' The writer smiled, eyes crinkling in amusement.

'I lost track of the time.'

'Ah,' said the writer. 'Time.'

'Yes,' said C, sitting up straighter. 'That's what I wanted to ask you about.'

'About time?'

'Yes. Yes, it is.' C smiled at his own weak joke. 'Gardens. Time. I read a story, very short...'

'About a spy. An assassin. The Chinese intelligence agent, Yu Tsun. I know it well,' said the writer.

'I have it here,' said C, and pulled a battered paperback from his pocket. On the cover was a painting by Portocarrero. He turned to a dog-eared page and read: '"Time is forever dividing itself toward innumerable futures and in one of them I am your enemy."'

The writer smiled. 'Have you come to assassinate me?'

C sniffed. 'Hardly. But I was struck by this idea.' He paused, locating a passage. '"An infinite series of times, in a dizzily growing, ever spreading network of diverging, converging and parallel times." Does this sound familiar to you? It does to me.'

'Yes, of course,' said the writer, 'but the path doesn't fork. The path we stand on is itself multiple. An infinity of worlds. A Multiverse.'

'In one of them I assassinate you.'

'But not this one,' said the writer, finishing his tea. 'And anyway, what with? A paperback book?'

C looked sheepish, and for a moment, very young. He returned to the book to his pocket and leaned forward, forearms resting on his knees.

'Sometimes I wish for a simpler life,' he said.

'Singular?' asked the writer.

'You know what I mean,' said C. 'All this... travelling. I lose touch with who I am.'

'And who is that?' asked the writer.

'Exactly.'

The writer put his cup and saucer underneath his chair, picked up his stick and leaned his chin upon it.

'Another writer, a good man, once had a character say that the basic human condition was to violate one's own identity. Now, that's true, but also not true. I am not one, but many. Not identity, but multiplicity.'

'Yes, I know. "I contain multitudes."'

'Yes, that, but also the idea of violating your identity doesn't work if you

have more than one. Life, dear C, is inviolable. It's vicious, exciting, rotten, marvellous, joyful, cruel, sexy, all those things. And as Allen so often says, holy.'

'So whatever I have done...?'

'I'm not your confessor,' said the old writer.

'No. Indeed, you're not,' said C, standing up and stretching. 'But tell me: what are the consolations for multiple me?'

'Where you find them,' said the writer. 'Every day.'

'Mmm.' C stepped out of the shade of the pergola, and peered up at the pale sun. 'Once I dreamed of helicopters attacking this place.'

'You didn't dream it,' said the writer. 'I did. Or rather, I wrote the scenario.'

'So that's it,' said C. 'All I am, in search of an author. How disappointing.'

The old writer pushed himself up on his stick and went to stand beside his friend, the assassin. He put his hand on C's shoulder, and gripped hard.

'That's our lot,' he said. 'Why should you be any different?'

'But that was the dream, wasn't it?' asked C. 'To be different?'

The writer smiled. 'Or to do different. And we try. We try.' He adjusted the brim of his hat and took a step forward. 'Say hello to your old Mum when you see her.'

'I will,' said C. He watched as the old writer walked slowly along the path, tapping out a familiar rhythm with his stick. Before he went out of sight, he turned to give C a wave. C returned the salute, and smiled.

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Though the structure of *Mother London* is concentric, it does not narrate time flowing linearly towards and from 1940. Rather, the events of the Blitz are like a stone dropped into the canal, and the ripples of its significance move forwards to the present and back again.[21]

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Gotterdammerung

She started the engine of the Riley. 'What were you trying to do with the stars?'

'Just hoping to get everything over quickly. Ragnarok, of sorts.'

'You are fond of Wagner? I, too, am ... Well, maybe not so fond. The end

of the world. Is that why you were making all those converts? To take them over with you?

'Something like that. But you can't impose love...'[22]

This dialogue takes place between Jerry and Karen, formerly in the employ of Bishop Beesley, immediately before Jerry disintegrates her with his vibragun: 'Poor woman. [...] What had she wanted that she had called 'Love'? [...] Death? Perhaps, in the end, he had been merciful' (346). The connection between love and death, the suggestion that a return to the inanimate, suffering-free state of ash is what Karen may really have wanted, opposes the language of mythic ends-of-the-world and transcendence ('take them over with you') earlier in the scene. For Karen, there is no afterlife; only disintegration. Another reference to Ragnarok can be found in *The Final Programme*, where Jerry constructs a party at his Ladbroke Grove home in order to stave off entropy. Caught momentarily in paramnesia – where he suspects he has met everyone, and said everything before – he exits this state talking to a fat bishop (perhaps a forerunner of Beesley):

'To study the similarities between the ragnarok theme and the second law of thermodynamics.' Jerry's mind jerked back on to its normal wave length. 'You know: the gods and men against the giants; fire against ice – heat against cold. *Ragnarok and the Heat Death of the Universe*, my next paper.'[23]

The Bishop takes this as a joke and waddles off to tell an 'embroidered anecdote' about his host. The seemingly throwaway lines express, however, a crucial motif in *The Final Programme*, one that precedes the *Commedia dell'Arte* patterning of the later novels: the apocalyptic battle that results in cataclysm, then rebirth.

This, and the reference to Wagner in *A Cure for Cancer* suggests that Ragnarok, the apocalyptic battle in Norse myth between the Gods and the Giants, where only two humans survive by hiding within Yggdrasil, the world-tree, signifies that in the Cornelius texts Moorcock has something other than a Christian eschatology at work in his conception of apocalypse. Wagner's Ring Cycle stages this Norse mythology, of course, and these operas were offered by Wagner as a fulfilment of his desire to present a *gesamtkunstwerk*, a 'total' artwork or synthesis of the arts. He expressed these ideas in two essays, 'Art and Revolution' and 'The Art-work of the Future', both published in 1849. At their time of writing, Wagner had been personally involved in the political upheavals

that followed the 1848-9 Revolutions across Europe, including the Paris Commune. Peter Marshall, in *Demanding the Impossible* (1992) writes that:

Wagner joined Bakunin on the barricades in the Dresden uprising in April 1849. He shared Bakunin's apocalyptic vision and in *Volksblatter* declared that "the old world is in ruins from which a new world will arise". He considered revolution to be "ever-rejuvenating ever-creating life" which will destroy "the domination of one over many ... the power of the Almighty, of law, of property". He called for an ideal community made up of natural alliances or associations brought about for the sole purpose of satisfying common need. At this stage, Wagner seemed explicitly anarchist'.[24]

Wagner's political ideals are reflected in important essays on art that he published that same year. In 'Art and Revolution', Wagner begins with a survey of Greek culture and, in particular, Greek drama, which Wagner raises to an ideal, and contrasts it with the cultural phenomena of the Christian era: 'Where the Greeks, for their edification, gathered in the amphitheatre for the space of a few short hours full of the deepest meaning: the Christian shut himself away in the life-long imprisonment of a cloister'.[25] Wagner goes on to decry the 'hypocrisy' of the Christian ethic, and instead valorise an art which 'blossomed [...] forth as the living utterance of a free, self-conscious community' (41). Wagner's conception of Greek art, and in particular Tragedy (as the highest point of Greek dramatic achievement) is of an art that is produced directly out of the shared experience of a community, 'the noblest principles of a people's consciousness' (47); his *revolutionary* conception of the art-work is then one that is produced out of, and speaks to, the everyday experience of all people within that community, necessarily produced *from* 'the conscience of private persons, the public *un*-conscience recking nothing of it' (51). There is clearly a Romantic inheritance here, with the contemporary artist conceived of as a Shelleyan 'unacknowledged legislator'; the revolutionary possibilities of the art-work, according to Wagner, are in the very exclusion of the artist, because in the debased era of modernity (Christianity), art's very existence is revolutionary because it is 'opposed to the ruling spirit of the community' (52). The problematic nature of this Romantic inheritance is revealed when Wagner declares: 'Only the *Strong* know *Love*; only Love can fathom *Beauty*; only Beauty can fashion *Art*' (57). In 'The Art-Work of the Future', Wagner develops these ideas at much greater length, but the idea of community, and the artist's connection to it, is still central to his thought. 'Only from a life in

common, can proceed the impulse toward intelligible objectification of this life by Art-work; the Community of artists can alone give it vent; and only in communion, can they content it'.[26] The 'Performer [...] raises himself to the rank of *Poet*, of artistic *Lawgiver* to the fellowship; from this height, again, to descend to complete absorption in the fellowship' (201); the 'dictatorship' of the poet-performer is an expression of the collective will of the community, the 'Folk', which is the true 'Artist of the Future' (205).

Frederick Nietzsche, once close to Wagner, later in life turned against his former friend, and in two works in particular – *The Case Against Wagner* (1888) and *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* (1888) – took Wagner to task. Nietzsche's 'case' was that Wagner betrayed his earlier revolutionary, or even Utopian desire to overthrow the contemporary world and replace the 'hypocritical' Christian ethic with something else, as expressed in the Ring cycle; later works, such as *Parsifal* (1882), returned to Christian rather than Norse myth. In *The Case Against Wagner*, Nietzsche 'relates the story of the *Ring* [...] a story of redemption':

Half his life, Wagner believed in the revolution was as much as ever the Frenchman believed in it. He searched for it in the runic writing of a myth, he believed that in Siegfried he had found the typical revolutionary.

"Whence comes all misfortune in the world?" Wagner asked himself. From "old contracts", he answered, like all revolutionary ideologists. In plain: from customs, laws, moralities, institutions, from everything on which the old world, the old society rests. "How can one with the world of misfortune? How can one abolish the old society?" Only by declaring war against "contracts" (tradition, morality). *That is what Siegfried does*. He starts early, very early: his very genesis is a declaration of war against morality – he comes into this world through adultery, through incest. – It is not the saga but Wagner who invented this radical trait; at this point he revised the saga.

Siegfried continues as he has begun: he merely follows his first impulse, he overthrows everything traditional, all reverence, all *fear*. Whatever displeases him he stabs to death. Without the least respect, he tackles old deities. But his main enterprise aims *to emancipate women* – "to redeem Brunhilde". – Siegfried and Brunhilde; the sacrament of free love; the rise of the golden age; the twilight of the gods for the old morality – *all ill has been abolished*.[27]

Nietzsche praises Wagner's earlier music (and perhaps, his revolutionary

anarchism and iconoclasm) for its 'expression of a Dionysian power of the soul': I believed I heard in it the earthquake with which a primordial force of life [...] finally vents itself'.[28] However, 'since Wagner had moved to Germany, he had condescended step by step to everything I despise – even to anti-Semitism. [...] Wagner, apparently most triumphant [...] suddenly sank down, helpless and broken, before the Christian cross.'[29] For Nietzsche, it is a kind of betrayal, of Nietzsche's faith in Wagner's work, and of Wagner himself, a turning away from what was vital and powerful to the old categories, contracts, 'truths'. The Romantic revolutionary turned reactionary is a well-known 19th-century figure, but it is not Wagner's politics (though he clearly detests Wagner's anti-Semitism) that is the cause of the real break: it is the failure to continue to imagine 'the other of what is', the truly revolutionary (or Utopian) striving for what lies beyond what Nietzsche characterised as the 'decadent' culture of modernity.

In the long quotation from 'The Case Against Wagner' above, the characterization of the *Ring* cycle is one that itself encodes revolutionary striving, on Siegfried's part; Ragnarok, the battle between Gods and Giants that results in a general cataclysm that sweeps away the old order, brings about a new world where '*all ill has been abolished*': a true revolution. If one substitutes 'Jerry Cornelius' and 'Catherine' for Siegfried and Brunhilde, it can also stand is a good general description of *The Final Programme* and elements of the subsequent Cornelius novels. The incest between Jerry and Catherine places them significantly outside the moral order of the 'old contracts', and this 'sacrament of free love' is consummated many times across the novels; Jerry's seemingly destructive travelling across time and space is meant to liberate and secure the 'twilight of the gods' (*Gotterdammerung*).

The Five-Ring Circus

[1] The Captain sat in the library of the Wellcome Institute, glad to get away from the circus being orchestrated down in Stratford by the PM. Some scholar, clearly a devotee of science fiction, had annotated every page of the book with imaginary footnotes referring to Hofmann's career as President of the European Union, and as inventor of the first time machine. You didn't need an alternate-worlds hypothesis you find the latter plausible, thought the Cap-

tain. In fact, he had his own time machine in his document case. He reached in, tore a square from the blotter, and placed it carefully on his tongue. He wondered where he would find himself next.

[2] What a damp squib, the Captain thought, as he folded up that morning's *Le Monde*. They turn it on and it leaks like a broken-down washing machine. At his pavement table at the café Charlot, the Captain watched the morning bustle along the rue de Bretagne, these happy Parisians completely oblivious to what was going on just some few hundred kilometres from here. He sipped his tepid coffee and picked at the croissant, before checking on yesterday's cricket scores. So much for the end of the world, he said to himself. That's the last time I place any faith in scientists.

[3] 'You English love your rules and regulations,' said de Coubertin. 'How many games have you invented? I lose count. But it is we French who create the institutions. What we ourselves have done with the Olympic Games, my friend Jules and the football World Cup – these are *le vraiment* testimonials to our internationalism.' 'And how we need that spirit today, Pierre,' said the Captain. He waved his arm to indicate the shoppers on the Kurfürstendamm. 'Bread and circuses, Pierre, bread and circuses. These Games are an abomination. It's going to end very badly.' Smiling sadly, the Baron raised his glass. 'In which case, a toast: *carpe diem*.'

Ecce Homo

Hear me! For I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else.[30]

One of Moorcock's most celebrated texts of the 1960s did not belong to a wider sequence of narratives. 'Behold the Man' was published as a novella in *New Worlds* in 1966, and was expanded for novel publication in 1969; the title is taken from Pilate's words when he sees Christ adorned in purple and a crown of thorns.[31] (The Latin phrase, 'Ecce Homo', was taken by Nietzsche as a title for a text that critically revisited his own published works in a kind of autobiography.) Moorcock's novella reflects his recurrent concerns during the later 1960s and early 1970s: the nature of time, the apocalypse, the messiah, and martyrdom, and it narrates the journey of Karl Glogauer, a rather troubled

young bookseller who steals a time machine and travels back to the time of Christ to try to approach the 'truth' of his religious sensibilities. Moorcock begins his narrative with Glogauer arriving in Galilee in 'a sphere full of milky fluid in which the traveller floated, enclosed in a rubber suit, breathing through a mask attached to a hose leading to the wall of the machine'.[32] Glogauer's time-travelling is far from the bicycle 'trip' made by Jerry Cornelius in 'Dead Singers', or even the translations in time suffered by Oswald Bastable; the emphasis on the detail of the tube emphasises the suffocating discomfiture suffered by the traveller, and when Glogauer arrives, the sphere cracks and he break some ribs in the impact. Physical suffering is a recurrent motif in this narrative, and is contrasted with the emotional or spiritual suffering that Glogauer undergoes in his 'present-day' life before his journey to the time of the Emperor Tiberius.

Moorcock intercuts scenes of Glogauer's arrival in Galilee, his entry into the Essene sect, and his meeting with John the Baptist with elements from Glogauer's own personal history. It begins with a parodic version of the Passion played out in Glogauer's childhood, where he was forced by some other children to take on the role of Christ, bound to the wire netting of a playground fence. Glogauer is Jewish, and Austrian, a childhood immigrant to Britain; when a teacher interrupts the game, the distraught Glogauer pretends to have fainted, and 'felt the triumph' (72) when lifted up and taken away. Moorcock sets up a deep-seated emotional and intellectual predisposition in Glogauer to both suffering and to the transcendent 'feeling' generated by martyrdom. As the personal narrative continues, we find the older Glogauer, now a bookseller, involved in what seems like a masochistic relationship with Monica, 'ten years older than he was, ten years more bitter. As an individual, of course, she had far more dynamism than he had; but as a psychiatric social worker she had just as many failures' (77). Monica brings both her psychiatric training and a militant materialism to bear on her discussion with Glogauer, in which she is often the aggressor; her atheism and belief in science modulate her cynicism with regard to Glogauer's more spiritual yearnings. His attraction to Jung is derided by Monica, who calls Jung 'that old rationalizer of his own mysticism ' (77), significantly diagnosing a psychological motivation behind Jung's more speculative work.

While the sexual relationship between Glogauer and Monica seems to function 'normally', and is preceded by verbal sparring as a kind of foreplay,

there is a sense of futility to their interactions: 'their argument was, as ever, pointless' (78). The motivation behind carrying on seems deterministic, even fatalistic: '"Why must we do it?"' asks Glogauer, to which Monica replies, '"Because we must [...] What else can we do?"' (78). The near-Beckettian circularity and negativity in evidence in their relationship – Glogauer and Monica as Lucky and Pozzo, waiting – requires some kind of reaction, or both remain caught in a material everyday that offers no hope, no redemption. While Monica 'wins' the verbal duels with Glogauer, his discourse reveals a desire or yearning for something else, and a willingness to bring this into being: '"Jung knew that the myth can also create reality"', he tells Monica (78). Monica's dead-end materialism is, in a sense, a political quietism, for it suggests that nothing can be changed: the 'what is' remains irrefutable, empirical, real. Glogauer is more nearly on the side of Moorcockian flux, grasping for the ability to effect change. The negative aspect of this is charged by the scene from childhood, however: Glogauer is infatuated with martyrdom. '"All men have messiah-complexes,"' claims Monica, suggesting that the figure of Jesus Christ is a historical accident, coincidentally bearing the myth when many other messiah-figures had been present in Galilee at the time (98). Glogauer too, of course, is bound by this messiah-complex; but he wishes to find out for himself that there is meaning to Christ's martyrdom, that it is not simply an effect of historical synchronicity. What Glogauer actually finds is that his own messiah-complex will substitute for a historical Jesus who is incapable of fulfilling the mythic role (the son of Mary and Joseph is physically and mentally disabled).

Glogauer's narrative repeats, or perhaps one should stay instantiates, the historical and Gospel record of Jesus Christ's adult life: he meets John the Baptist, is baptized by him, spends time wandering (tempted) in the desert, gathers disciples about him, and eventually journeys towards Jerusalem. In searching *for* 'the Nazerene', Glogauer *becomes* the Nazarene, becomes the bearer of the myth, and in a classic time-travel paradox, tells (invents) the parables that he vaguely remembers from his own Bible reading. In this process, 'Karl Glogauer' is dissolved:

For the first time in his life, Karl Glogauer had forgotten about Karl Glogauer. For the first time in his life he was doing what he had always sought to do as a psychiatrist.

But it was not his life. He was bringing a myth to life – a generation before that myth would be born. He was completing a certain kind of psychic circuit.

He was not changing history, but he was giving history more substance.

He could not bear to think that Jesus had been nothing more than a myth. It was in his power to make Jesus a physical reality rather than the creation of a process of mythogenesis. (103)

The deepest irony is that Glogauer's successful attempt to materialise a historical Jesus Christ only proves that that there was no such man; only Glogauer himself. As he dies on the cross, Gloagauer says: 'It's a lie...' (His words are themselves reported and misinterpreted to mean 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?') What is a lie? His performance? The historical 'man', Jesus of Nazareth? Christianity itself, which takes Christ's sacrifice as a symbol? Or is it his response to Monica's remembered words: '"It's weakness and fear, Karl, that has driven you to this. Martyrdom is a conceit. Can't you see that?"' (118). The ambiguity at the end of 'Behold the Man' leaves no doubt of the 'reality' of Glogauer's journey and suffering, but renders undecidable the *meaning* of that suffering. Monica would argue for a psychological diagnosis, that martyrdom is produced from deep-seated complexes and anxieties, and the childhood scene early in the narrative provides evidence for such a reading. However, Glogauer seems to transcend his own subjectivity in his submission to the myth of Christ. If Glogauer's journey is to find out who he really is, then the answer is: someone else.

The words of one of the Roman soldiers seem to suggest that even the Disciples bow to the symbolic and historical inevitability of the Crucifixion: '"Yesterday they were worshipping him. Today they seemed to want us to kill him – even the ones who were closest to him"' (118). Martyrdom is not a 'conceit', but an immensely powerful symbol, and although Moorcock has written that 'too many visionary idealists have died in this century because their private visions have been judged incompatible with the terrifying orthodoxies they have helped establish', and that individuals have been 'manipulated and destroyed by the demands of a powerful public will', this text offers no simple reading as to Glogauer's significance.[33] Glogauer is not simply the emblem of the individual crushed by the state, found throughout dystopian fictions and in contemporaneous 1960s texts such as *The Prisoner*; nor is his sacrifice redemptive, but one filled with horror, suffering and pain. Glogauer does become a tragic figure, though. As Christ, he speaks the Dionysian human experience that is central to Nietzsche's understanding of tragedy; Glogauer is a man in-

deed, and beholding his suffering is itself an affirmation of *life*.

Endnotes

1 Baron Pierre de Courbetin: 'The important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle, the essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well'.

2 Michael Moorcock, 'Dead Singers', *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (London: Orion, 1993), pp.259-263 (p.259).

3 In 'The Roumanian Question', Jerry also uses a chrono-cycle: 'The time machine was a sphere of milky fluid attached to the front lamp-holder of a Raleigh 'Royal albert' Police Bicycle of the old, sturdy type, before the corruption had been made public.' 'The Roumanian Question', *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (London: Orion, 1993), pp.427-453 (p.429).

4 H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (1895) (London: Heinemann, 1911), chapter III.

5 Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1910* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 111.

6 Kern, p.111.

7 Kern, p.216.

8 H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (1895) (London: Heinemann, 1911), p.5.

9 Wells, *The Time Machine*, p.4.

10 Bruce Clarke, 'A Scientific Romance: Thermodynamics and the Fourth Dimension in Charles Howard Hinton's "The Persian King"', *Weber Studies: an interdisciplinary humanities journal*, 14:1, Winter (1997), *supplement to ebr, Science Technology and the Arts* (accessed 7 June 2004). <http://www.altx.com/ebr/w(ebr)/essays/Clarke.html>, par.12.

11 Clarke, 'A Scientific Romance', par.11.

12 Clarke, 'A Scientific Romance', par.2.

13 Alfred Jarry, 'How to Construct a Time Machine', in *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*, Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor (eds) (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980), pp.114-121 (p.114).

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18 Alfred Jarry, 'The Passion Considered as an Uphill Bicycle Race', in *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry*, Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor (eds) (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980), pp.122-124 (p.122).

19 J.G. Ballard, 'The Assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy Considered as a Downhill Motor Race', *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1969) (London: Harper Perennial, 2006), p.172.

20 Michael Moorock, *Dr Who: The Coming of the Terraphiles, or, Pirates of the Second Aether!!* (London: BBC Books, 2010), p.29.

21 Brian Baker, 'Maps of the London Underground: Iain Sinclair and Michael Moorcock's Psychogeography of the City', *Literary London*, vol 1, number 1, (March 2003). <http://www.literary-london.org/>

22 Michael Moorcock, *A Cure for Cancer* in *The Cornelius Quartet* (London: Phoenix House, 1993), p.346.

23 Michael Moorcock, *The Final Programme*, in *The Cornelius Quartet* (London: Phoenix House, 1993), p.99.

24 Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A Short History of Anarchism* (1993) (London: HarperCollins, 2008), p.480.

25 Richard Wagner, 'Art and Revolution', *Prose Works*, vol.1, (1895), trans William Ashton Ellis, pp.23-65 (pp.38-9). http://users.belgacom.net/wagnerlibrary/prose/wagartrev.htm, accessed 8 April 2012.

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27 Frederic Nietzsche, 'The Case Against Wagner', in *Basic Writings*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), pp. 603-654 (p.619).

28 Frederick Nietzsche, 'Nietzsche Contra Wagner' in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Penguin, 1976), pp. 661-683 (p.669).

29 Nietzsche, 'Nietzsche Contra Wagner', p.676.

30 Frederick Nietzsche, 'Ecce Homo' in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), pp. 673-800 (Preface, section 1, p.673).

31 *John*, 19:5.

32 Michael Moorcock, 'Behold the Man', in *Moorcock's Book of Martyrs* (London: Mayflower, 1981), pp.70-118 (p.70).

33 Michael Moorcock, 'Introduction' to *Moorcock's Book of Martyrs* (London: Mayflower, 1981), pp.7-10 (p.8).

Annular Eclipse

Annular Eclipse

T-12

B sat on a stool by the bar of the empty *Astronaut's Rest* and gazed blankly at the photographic portrait of Armstrong. He sipped from a glass of Johnny Walker, a case of which he had looted for a private residence a few days ago. Cocoa Beach had emptied steadily since the disaster, until eventually Curtiss had tossed him the keys to the bar, put a holdall and a case of white rum in the trunk of the Chevrolet, and headed north. Now, dust accumulated on the booths and the barstools, a sign of the Cape's entropic fate.

James Bond's science fiction imaginary

The intersection between James Bond and science fiction is a curious one, and goes beyond the grand spaces of the Ken Adam sets. In Ian Fleming's *Moonraker* (1955) the villain Drax is an industrialist whose company makes the 'Moonraker', a nuclear missile. Bond investigates some goings on and discovers that Drax (who cheats at cards - always the sign of a villain, like Goldfinger) is in fact an ex-German Army commando officer who is bent on revenging the Third Reich by using the Moonraker to destroy London. The Moonraker is essentially an upgraded V-2 rocket, and the shadow of Peenemunde is long over the Cold War and Space Race. It was Wernher von Braun, of course, the famous former V-2 rocket scientist, who was the architect of NASA's post-war ambitions to journey into space, and both Americans and Soviet military and scientific establishments co-opted former Third Reich rocket scientists into their own missile programs. The American Rocket State, as Dale Carter named it, was driven by V-missile technology.[1] For Britain in the late 1950s, remaining a player in the changing geo-political landscape of superpower conflict and Cold War (and low-intensity combat theatres) was contingent on the prestige and status accorded a 'nuclear power'. Britain obtained and detonated a nuclear device in 1952, but the dreams of an independent nuclear deterrent were laid to rest with the cancellation of the Blue Streak missile in 1960. Fleming's Moonraker missile is a clear analogue of the Blue Streak, and the narrative surrounding it in his novel attests to his usual mixture of geo-political adventurism and the anxieties attendant on the withdrawal from Empire, ongoing throughout the 1950s.

The film of *Moonraker* (1979) begins with a Space Shuttle being transported to Britain on the back of a 747, echoing NASA publicity footage of the late 1970s (before the Shuttle's first orbital mission in 1981). The Shuttle was made by Drax Industries, and when the 747 crashes (but no trace of 'Britain's shuttle' can be found) Bond is sent to the United States to investigate Sir Hugo Drax, played by Michael Lonsdale. The Cold War missile imagery in Fleming's *Moonraker*, has a political urgency entirely absent from the film. What exactly would the British government *do* with a Shuttle? They couldn›t launch it. It becomes a status symbol *ad absurdum*, an entirely redundant piece of technology that could only be piggy-backed around airshows on a converted 747.

The Shuttle is a bit like Bond, in fact. The notorious closing gag of the film, a *double entendre* on the word 're-entry', emphasises the superannuated phallicism at work in the space program and in Bond himself. By 1979, Britain's imperial dreams are reduced to the image of an orbital plane which could most usefully be deployed as a giant paperweight, and Bond attempting zero-g orgasm.

The first Bond film to really use NASA imagery is 1971's *Diamonds Are Forever*, although 1967's *You Only Live* Twice features a Gemini-capsule-swallowing SPECTRE spacecraft.. *Diamonds Are Forever* is largely set in Las Vegas: the testing grounds of Groom Lake, and Edwards Air Force base, are close at hand.[2] This is why, perhaps, along with the desert imagery that often accompanies NASA-inspired films (such as *The Right Stuff* or *Capricorn One*), that Bond in *Diamonds Are Forever* breaks into an aerospace facility, trespasses across a mocked-up lunar landscape (while dodging slow-motion 'moonwalking' men in environment suits) and finally steals a kind of moon buggy, outrunning security cars and trike-riding goons in his getaway across the dunes. *Diamonds Are Forever* was released while the Apollo missions were still ongoing, and while the 'old' Las Vegas of the Mob and the Rat Pack still stood, and *Diamonds Are Forever* - very much an American film - feels like the decadent days of a grand power going to ruin. The grand power is no longer Britain, and its narrative of post-imperial ‹decline›, but the USA.

T-11

Abandoned cars, filmed with dust, punctuated the parking lot of the motel as B stumbled back from the bar in the hot afternoon. He had siphoned all of the gasoline from these lost automobiles already. Part of each day was taken up with ever-wider sweeps of the Cape and Titusville in search of gas and grain alcohol. Usually, on his journeys back to the motel, the interior of the car was filled with the sloshing of the jerry-cans or the clinking of bottles.

He opened the motel room door and wandered inside. The room looked like the store cupboard from some strange expedition: tinned goods, bottled water, beer, spirits. B was careful to dispose of the used food tins in a dumpster at the end of the parking lot, and while water still ran from the faucet, he only occasionally used it to wash off the worst of the dust, and never drank. If he were to poison himself, he preferred cirrhosis to cholera or botulism.

Geometry of the Space Age[3]

Underlying JG Ballard's use of the icon of the astronaut is the sense that the NASA programme is a biological, or evolutionary, mistake, a kind of grand transgression against nature which produces unforeseen psychological consequences. In 'Memories of the Space Age' (1982), one of three connected stories from the early 1980s which return to similar ideas and images (the others being 'News from the Sun', 1981 and 'Myths of the Near Future', 1982), the protagonist Mallory, a doctor in the NASA programme, confesses to his unconscious complicity in the first orbital murder. He had allowed a borderline-disturbed astronaut named Hinton to go into space, where he had murdered one of his colleagues. This act produces a kind of 'space-sickness' of fugue-states and loss of temporal awareness that is centred on Cape Canaveral: 'he had torn the fabric of time and space, cracked the hour-glass from which time was running' (Ballard 2001: 1049). The disaster is an evolutionary one, a hubristic giant leap out of the biological scheme, and out of time. This is made explicit in 'News from the Sun': 'By leaving the planet and setting off into outer space man had committed an evolutionary crime, a breach of the rules governing his tenancy of the universe, and of the laws of time and space' (Ballard 2001: 1019). All three stories feature the 'space sickness', fugues, empty swimming pools and 'doors out of time': like extended versions of the ideas and themes of *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970), together they act as a collage of Ballard's recurring fascination with time and the subject.

T-10

Later, as the sun began to sink behind the palms and cast long shadows across the lot, B sat in a lounger beside the drained swimming pool and sipped from a warm bottle of beer. He watched the shadows move across the floor of the pool like a cube-shaped sundial. Desiccated palm leaves, dust and crushed beer cans formed an archipelago on the white tiles, strange sigils of previous occupation. He got up from the lounger and walked to the shallow end of the pool, where a ladder extended most of the way to the tiled floor. He descended and stood among the litter as if they were standing stones. The patterns of the palm leaves, like the musculature of sand-ripples on tidal flats, seemed to him to express a new arrangement of time. This henge of litter and leaf was a shrine to the strange gods who had ascended into the sky from the Cape, a trace of the time before.

The Time Traveller

In Wells's *The Time Machine*, the Time Traveller explains time travelling as follows: "Scientific people,' proceeded the Time Traveller […], 'know very well that Time is only a kind of Space".[4] Time is the 'Fourth Dimension'. He goes on:

'It is simply this. That Space, as our mathematicians call it, is spoken of as having three dimensions, which one may call Length, Breadth, and Thickness, and is always definable by reference to three planes, each at right angles to the others. But some philosophical people have been asking why *three* dimensions particularly – why not another direction at right angles to the other three? – and have even tried to construct a Four-Dimensional geometry. Professor Simon Newcomb was expounding this to the New York mathematical Society only a month ago.'[5]

In *The Time Machine*, space and time are 'fixed', static. The Traveller seems to be able to move about in time without major disturbance either to the path of evolution or to historical 'time'. For C. Howard Hinton, author of other 'scientific romances', the 'Fourth Dimension' is somewhat more etherial. Hinton's conception of the 'fourth dimension', in contradistinction to Wells, is what Bruce Clarke has described as 'an instantaneous connective space beyond material constraints'.[6] 'In Hinton's scientific cosmos,' adds Clarke, 'to go behind the long chain of energic transformations is to emerge on the far side of the æther'.[7] Clarke shows that Hinton's speculations were plausibly grounded in James Clerk Maxwell's (then) current work on field physics, but in intention, go well beyond them. Reaching the fourth dimension was an act of mental discipline, brought about by strenuous mental exercise: 'The cognition of higher space called for and called forth a higher form of consciousness. Thus the individual pursuit of the fourth dimension was a moral act with collective evolutionary consequences'.[8] In Wells, is the fourth dimension is time; for Hinton, the fourth dimension is a higher state of consciousness.

T-9

Since the time of the disaster, B, like everyone else at the Cape, had begun to experience increasingly protracted fugues, minutes of consciousness lost in some kind of cosmological reverie. As he stood on the floor of the swimming pool, B began to feel the familiar slowing of his pulse, the beat of the burnished sky tuning to a lower frequency. He had to be increasingly careful while driving, and found bars of light crossing the windshield, as he passed a line of palms or telegraph poles, to be a particular trigger. Standing still, sun low above the rim of the pool, B allowed himself to dissolve into time.

Nomads in Time[9]

Michael Moorcock's *The Warlord of the Air* begins a trilogy of novels — *The Warlord of the Air* (1971), *The Land Leviathan* (1974) and *The Steel Tsar* (1981) — that feature the protagonist Oswald Bastable, who we find as a captain in the 53rd Lancers in Edwardian India, policing the northern frontier, attempting to negotiate a peace with an insurrectionist local King. When the labyrinthine temple that he negotiates in is destroyed in an earthquake, Bastable finds himself removed from his time and place, becoming a 'Nomad of the Time Streams'. *The Warlord of the Air* begins on Rowe Island, in the Indian Ocean, but the narrative of Oswald Bastable starts on the frontiers of Northern India, traverses London, the West coast of the United States, the Pacific, Sydney, Calcutta, Saigon, China, then ultimately Hiroshima. *The Warlord of the Air*'s topographical structures are constructed from journeys from margin to centre and back again, inhabiting the discourses of destabilisation which recur so often in British invasion narratives of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. These novels of 'alternate history' both call up the generic marks of science fiction and invasion narratives, but exceed them both discursively and spatially. The 'alternative Apocalypse' which Bastable's act invokes is, of course, one already visited upon 'our' world. The texts replay similar events in different forms — the fraying of Empire, the rise of opposition, the calcifying of this opposition into an alternative tyranny, the failure yet necessity of anarchy — reveal an understanding of history not as cyclical, but as eternal and concurrent.

T-8

C and Captain O had filled up the tanks of the Land Rover in Savannah, and strapped a clutch of jerry-cans to its roof. You can't beat a Land Rover for this kind of thing, thought C. A sense of adventure. Sturdy vehicle, never let you down.

Turning over the tricky starter-motor and hoping for the engine to catch, C caught the Captain's eye. In the last report of B they had had, before their source had himself driven north away from the Cape, B was of him drifting around Cocoa Beach. C had been happy to leave him there, but the Captain had never been reconciled to B's fate and had argued effectively that something should be done. Something should be done, all right, thought C. He imagined the handle of the needle gun fitting snugly into his palm.

The Nature of the Catastrophe[10]

Bastable's physical and spatial journey, like those in colonial texts, is a metaphor for self-discovery. Here, it is neither the adoption of a masculinist and 'racially superior' Imperial self, as in colonial adventure narratives, nor the 'horror' found in *Heart of Darkness*. Rather, it is a progressive alienation from the colonial ideologies which Bastable had previously accepted as 'natural' facts. *The Land Leviathan* ends with a chapter called 'A Matter of Loyalties', in which Bastable reveals himself to be a 'traitor' to the 'white race', an attitude in others he finds merely embarrassing. Loyalty, then, as a condition of ideological closure, is one which Bastable rejects. Throughout the trilogy he adopts, or is co-opted into, a variety of different causes, and by the end of *The Land Leviathan*, he understands that 'My loyalty is to myself and to all mankind' (bk. 2, ch. 5, p. 352). Rather than a passive spectator in the narrative, though, this compromising of loyalty makes Bastable the agent in his moral and political transformation. From being a soldier in the colonial project, Bastable discovers in himself (note the colonial rhetoric here) that it is only *conscience* that should guide his actions. His transformation, and his suffering, make him an emblem of the political struggles of the twentieth century. In *The Land Leviathan*, Bastable comes to an understanding of the nature of the catastrophe:

I think it was then that the notion first occurred to me that perhaps I had been selected by Providence to be involved in a countless series of what might be called alternative versions of the Apocalypse — that I was doomed to witness the end of the world over and over again and doomed, too, to search for a world where Man had learned to control the impulses which led to such suicidal conflicts, perhaps never to find it. I still do not quite understand my motives in recording my experiences, but it could be that I hope that, if they are ever read, they will serve as a lesson to a world which has so far managed to avert its own destruction. (bk. 2, ch. 1, p. 307)

In this passage, while seeming to invoke a didactic reading of the trilogy, the text disrupts Bastable's own subjectivity and self-identity: 'I still do not quite understand my own motives'. Self-alienated, suffering, submitting to forces he cannot understand, Bastable achieves a paradoxical ethical integrity.

T-7

As they pulled on to the highway, Captain O looked quite happy. Adjusting his sunglasses against the glare of the late-morning light, he said, 'I always did like a bit of a touring holiday, you know. Rode round Europe once on an old 3-speed Royal Albert.'

C was relieved that the Captain was with him on this trip. In this timeline, some kind of sidereal disaster had overtaken the Southern states of the USA, emanating from Cape Canaveral. The Apollo programme had continued up until the early 1980s, albeit with a much more military emphasis. A catastrophic failure on one of final missions had triggered a 'space sickness' among the general population, which involved the increasing prevalence of fugue states or psychological distraction, and minatory dreams of space disaster, alien invasion, or planetary catastrophe.

'Do you think we'll find him?' said the Captain, as he struggled with the Land Rover's gearbox.

'We'll find him,' said C, over the sound of clashing gear wheels. He always knew where to find an assassin.

Multiverse[11]

The entirety of Moorcock's *oeuvre* constitutes what is called the 'Multiverse', an interwoven series of parallel universes, all co-existing in time and space. Peter Nicholls notes that 'the whole body of [Moorcock's] work has been made to work retrospectively as a kind of giant, episodic supernovel'.[12] The *Nomads* trilogy was itself re-written, particularly *The Steel Tsar*, in part to align it more closely with the themes of the Eternal Champion sequence overall. Re-writing, of course, allows previous books to be woven into the fabric of the Multiverse, but again, this has an impulse other than commercial imperatives (the mid-1990s Orion reissue of Moorcock's fiction) or neatness. If history can be re-written, perhaps it can be changed. Textually, Moorcock's novel sequences repeat the conception of history found in the *Nomads* trilogy. They represent alternative Apocalypses, re-visions or versions of the same event, re-told. All the central characters in Moorcock's fiction become versions or avatars of the same figure, all his books re-writings or revisions of other books. As Colin Greenland suggests in *The Entropy Exhibition*, '[t]he Eternal Champion is a central figure and continuing theme of Moorcock's work. All his books interlock. People and scene recur, hypnotically'.[13] If history is itself a continual series of revisions or re-visions, Moorcock is also a serial re-writer of his own fictions, again compromising a sense of authenticity with regard to text or authorial self-identity. As there is no 'History', there is no 'character' or 'subject', and no 'author'. There is no 'original', only re-writing. There are only multiple versions, in the Multiverse.

T-6

'I don't think you'll find what you're looking for down there, old man,' said an English voice.

B stirred. He looked up and saw, against the darkening skyline, two men at the pool's edge.

'Come up,' said another voice. This one was English, too. 'We've driven for days to find you.'

Slowly moving his stiff limbs, as if emerging from a long sleep, B shuffled to the ladder and carefully pulled himself up, as hands reached down for him.

'There you are,' said the first voice. It belonged to a short, balding man with a moustache, who bore the unmistakeable air of a British Army officer of middle rank. B looked at his companion, a tall, pale man with long dark hair falling to the shoulders of his black coat, obscuring one lens of his sunglasses.

'Who are you?' asked B.

'Straight to the point. Good man,' said the officer. 'My name is Captain O.'

'You look familiar. Who sent you? London?'

'Yes, in a way,' said the other man, who had not introduced himself. 'I sometimes do favours for a man called Markham.'

'Sir Robert?' said B. 'He sent you? I'm no longer in the service. I retired.'

'No-one retires, old man,' said the Captain, gently. 'You know that.'

'Look around you,' gestured B. 'It's over. Finished.'

'Not quite. Please let me introduce myself. My name is C. We've come to offer you a deal.'

Resurrection of Desire

Georges Bataille theorised subjectivity under conditions of twentieth-century capital to be that of 'discontinuity', by which he meant isolation from other subjects and from the environment. The drive towards sexual pleasure, *Eros* in Bataille's terms, is a desire to go beyond the boundaries of the self, to attain continuity. *Eroticism* is the nostalgia of a discontinuous being for a lost state of continuity, a nostalgia which is manifested in a desire to transcend the boundaries of the Self and contact with the Other. For Bataille, sexual desire and death are inextricably linked, for to experience continuity is to go beyond the bounds of discontinuous existence, which is to say, life. The attainment of transcendence becomes the attainment of continuity: and 'existence itself is at stake in the transition from discontinuity to continuity' (*Eroticism* 17). The sun is the symbol for this transcendence. [14]

In his 1927 text 'The Solar Anus', Bataille presents a relation between material things as one of parody: 'It is clear that the world is purely parodic, in other words, that each thing seen is the parody of another, or is the same thing in a deceptive form'.[15] Parody works by way of circulation, a circulation of language which 'ties one thing to another'. The emblematic objects in this invisible totality are the sun, symbol of transcendence, and the anus, symbol of 'base materiality', the irreducible foundation of things. The text works as a kind of intoxicated enactment of this delirious circulation of language and of things, one which eroticises the world, and which leads to a moment of orgasmic release. The focus of that release, for the heterosexual male narrator or persona, characterised as the sun, is the anus, the symbol of transgressive feminine *night*, also associated with the earth:

The Sun exclusively loves the Night and directs its luminous violence, its ignoble shaft, toward the earth, but it finds itself incapable of reaching the gaze or the night, even though the nocturnal terrestrial expanses head continuously toward the indecency of the solar ray.[16]

In a heterosexual act of sodomy, then, there is a kind of transcendent yet parodic connection between the opposite, between sun and night, between phallus and anus. This is figured as a moment of eclipse:

The *solar annulus* is the intact anus of her body at eighteen years to which

nothing sufficiently blinding can be compared except the sun, even though the *anus* is the *night*.[17]

In the pun, *anus/annulus*, the text enacts the orgasmic connection and coming together of the palindrome, the sun/anus.

T-5

They sat around a wobbly metal table in front of the bar, and B poured generous shots of Johnny Walker into three glasses.

'What is this deal?'

Captain O glanced at C, and lifted a leather dispatch case onto the table. Steadying the table leg with his foot, the Captain opened the flap of the case and removed a slender oblong carton. He slid it across the table towards B.

'Open it, old man. It won't bite.'

B unfastened the top of the carton and slid out a cardboard tray. Attached to it by wire was a long-stemmed rose. Its petals were of a red so dark that they appeared black in the twilight.

'A black rose? Ow.' B watched a bead of blood appear on his forefinger. 'It does bite.'

The Captain raised his eyebrows. 'This was found a few days ago, attached to a buoy in the South Atlantic. A place where no buoy should reasonably be.'

C sniggered, then touched a hand to his sunglasses. 'I think that's something you might have experience of yourself,' he said to B.

B shrugged. 'What is it? A calling card? A message?'

'We think both,' said the Captain, 'but we're unsure whether the message was meant for us. We suspect not, as it was found by a launch on a sweep, looking for wreckage of a hijacked airliner. You may have heard – no, perhaps not. But there was something quite curious about its location.'

'In the middle of the ocean?'

'Yes,' said C. 'And exactly at the co-ordinates where there had been an eclipse of the sun, two days before.'

Camp (1)

Susan Sontag published 'Notes on Camp' in the *Partisan Review* in 1964; it was then collected in *Against Interpretation* (1966). There is a clear connection between Pop Art and Sontag's definition of Camp, in its redemption of 'failed seriousness', its fascination with the ephemeral and trashy; a clear connection too to Wilde and the Preface to *Dorian Gray*: 'All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril'. There is also a clear connection to the *fin-de-siècle* and to masculine 'dandyism', the emphasis upon style and 'theatricalization' (the performance or the performative), an emphasis upon the individual in the face of the 'mass' (mass culture, mass media). Perhaps the key thing in terms of periodization is Sontag's emphasis upon affluence: 'camp' is not quite decadence, but it is a style that is dependent on a kind of insulation from economic privation. The 1960s, as a period of economic growth, is an apt seed-bed for 'camp'.

There is also a connection between 'camp' and 'queer' sensibilities, although Sontag has suffered much criticism in what has been a perceived decoupling in her essay of a 'camp' sensibility and male homosexuality: 'camp' as resisting discourse, or counter-culture, is downplayed thereby. The implication of 'camp' in the figure of the dandy does suggest however a fundamental connection to re-imagined gender performance, and in particular re-imagined masculinity. Moorcock's Jerry Cornelius, who inhabits an ambiguous or polymorphous sexuality (let alone an amorphous subjectivity – at one point in the 'Adventures of Jerry Cornelius' comic strips, published in the *International Times*, Jerry 'goes soft' and transforms into Elric of Melniboné), is another dandy, and as such connects with camp. Far be it for me to argue that the Cornelius texts suffer from 'failed seriousness'; indeed, the narratives could be characterised as satire, or even as a comic-apocalyptic 'inferno' (using Kingsley Amis's term from *New Maps of Hell*). The archness is implicated in serious intent: a critique of colonialism, of 'Great Power' intervention into the affairs of indigenous peoples (the USA in Vietnam), and an affectionate but rather ironic take upon the phenomenon of 'Swinging London' and latterly the failure of counter-cultural dreams.

Jerry Cornelius's later career, in Moorcock's novels, systematically eradicates the 'Swinging London' fantastical elements, and in the last novel, *The Condition of Muzak*, Jerry is a rather tawdry youth, dreaming in Ladbroke Grove of being a superstar rock-and-roll guitarist. The Jerry Cornelius of the stories, the psychedelic secret agent, becomes the day-dream of a frustrated teenager. However, in other 1960s texts, the 'queer' dandy secret agent became a liberating fantasy-figure for gay culture, particularly in the works of Don Holliday (Victor C. Banis). In a series of novels, Jackie Holmes, 'That Man from C.A.M.P.', engaged in secret agent operations, foiling criminal plots while bedding a series of men, some of whom were straight before meeting him. Placed somewhere between pastiche, pulp fiction and pornography, the Holmes books are actually far from 'campy' spoofs, and probably less so than the *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* television series from which Banis derived the books' name. Jackie Holmes, though homosexual and an accomplished cross-dresser (so convincing as a woman that cop Ted Summers, the straight colleague who is eventually seduced by Jackie in *That Man from C.A.M.P.* (1966), is turned on by him), is curiously close to a Bond-style masculinity: he is good in a fight, is tough and resourceful, loves cars (and knows how to fix them), is a chemist, an athlete, and a sexual adventurer. Banis's narratives succeed in constructing a fantastical 'queer' masculinity that is extremely close to the hegemonic heterosexual power-fantasy of the Anglo-American secret agent, a subtle inversion and re-production.

'That seems like an odd coincidence,' said B. 'But I don't see a connection.'

'Well, it wasn't the first of these we'd found.' The Captain took a sheaf of Polaroids from the case and pushed them across the table. 'These others were found at other eclipse sites over the past three years. We've also found them at assassinations and failed assassinations across the world in that period.'

'Really? It sounds like something out of a sci-fi thriller.'

C took off his glasses and laid them on the table.

'It's an anarchist symbol, but we've discounted that connection for now. But one of our other agents told us a story about a black rose that you might not find believable.'

'Look around,' said B. 'Try me.'

'All right. What if you could go back and change it, stop it happening?'

'What? Dallas?'

'No. The death of your wife.'

Camp (2)

In the sixth Jackie Holmes novel, *Holiday Gay* (1967), the performative nature of the queer secret agent is spelt out:

In the bedroom Jackie dressed rapidly. As he did so, the slender blond seemed to undergo a transformation. Naked and away from his work there was little about Jackie Holmes to indicate his homosexuality. He was small and slender, but one quickly recognised the taut muscles rippling beneath the surface of his flesh. […].

As he dressed and prepared for 'work', however, he donned another personality along with his clothes. Jackie Holmes – good looking, masculine, dynamic – mysteriously became a thin, limp-wristed homosexual. His blond hair was pulled down to flop over his forehead. He pinched his cheeks to a bright redness to give the impression of makeup. He adopted mannerisms and gestures typical of a certain type of homosexual known as a 'queen'.

In the end he looked anything but masculine and dynamic. Most importantly, he looked utterly and completely harmless. It was a deliberate facade, one that has proved time and again invaluable to his work. In disguising his true personality, Jackie was disguising his work as well. The small, effeminate, blond boy who stood a few minutes later before the mirror was in fact a secret agent of a most mysterious and unique sort. His true identity remained known to only a few, but his reputation spread throughout the world, giving hope to many unfortunate souls and striking fear in the hearts of countless wrongdoers. To these people he was not known as Jackie Holmes. To them he was simply the Man from C.A.M.P.[18]

'Jackie Holmes' is a kind of male masquerade, and thereby the figure of the effeminate 'queen' is also rendered inauthentic, a performance. There is a kind of split subjectivity at work, a depth model of inner/ outer, or self/mask, which inevitably privileges the inner self over the outer mask, the individual 'true personality' over the performance of 'queer' subjectivity. The scene, where Jackie dresses in front of a mirror, emphasising not only the split or doubled subject but also the concept of the performative subjectivity as a 'suit of clothes', both attempts to fix a unitary inner 'true personality' (non-effeminate, non-'queen') while at the same time destabilising it by introducing elements of performance. This passage seems to express the same distaste for the 'queen',

and elevation of a 'tough' homosexual masculinity, that we find in the work of William Burroughs. A line spoken in the film of *Naked Lunch* is pertinent here: 'homosexuality is the best cover story an agent ever had'.

The Man from C.A.M.P. is the forerunner of the kind of 'tough, 'hard-body' masculinities found in the 1980s in action cinema, but here it is in the service of a gay politics of liberation. Curiously, this leads to marked anxieties in *That Man from C.A.M.P.* about male rape. Even though the novel begins with Jackie, consensually, being penetrated by his sometime lover Rick, anal penetration is a constant threat, and not only to the 'straight' male body of Ted Summers. Jackie is threatened twice with rape and Summers once, in *That Man from C.A.M.P.*, although both men are consensually buggered during the course of the novel (Summers at the end, by Jackie). Jackie's body is penetrable, as well as penetrating others; his 'passive' effeminate masquerade conceals a deep desire for the penetration of his own body, while at the same time concealing his active desire to penetrate others. It is the act of anal sex that regulates the imagination of sex between men in *That Man from C.A.M.P.*: there is no fellatio (though *Holiday Gay* begins with Jackie fellating Lorenzo, another lover). It is Jackie's buttocks that Ted Summers finds arousing, as his armature of heterosexuality begins to dissolve. Summers is a variant of Pussy Galore in the Bond narrative *Goldfinger*, notoriously 'turned' from lesbianism to heterosexuality by Bond's desirability. In a much more radical move, *That Man from C.A.M.P.* suggests that it is *heterosexuality* that is the performance, and that a more polymorphous bisexual mode of desire is the 'true personality' within Summers.

T-3

In the morning, C and the Captain began the long drive back to the occupied zone.

'Do you think he believed us?' asked the Captain, as he drove the Land Rover across the Causeway.

'I don't know,' said C.

'Do *you* believe it?' asked the Captain.

'Jackie is one of our most reliable agents. You'd like him, by the way. I believe *he* believed he visited Atlantis. We have other corroboration. There's the Illuminatus file.'

'And I know you have experience of Thule…'

'Ah, did I tell you that story?' asked C. 'Yes. Thule, Atlantis – it might be a cover, but we have to consider the possibility…'

'But these "wild boys" have nothing to do with the death of B's wife.'

'No.' C grimaced slightly as he thought of his interview with Markham. 'We have been through this, my dear Captain.'

Captain O frowned as he wrestled with the gear-stick and pressed on the accelerator.

'Could he change things?'

'No, of course not. Her death has already happened,' said C. 'But we need to find out about these eclipses and the black roses. If it's what we suspect, the outcome for B himself could be … well, unpredictable.'

'Poor devil,' said the Captain. He put the Land Rover into top gear, and drove away from the ocean.

Story of O

In 'Is the rectum a grave?', Leo Bersani draws upon Georges Bataille and Sigmund Freud in thinking through desire and the subject in the critical period of the AIDS health crisis in the 1980s. Bersani seeks to undo binary oppositions between 'the operation of a coordinated and storing physical organism [and] the perhaps equally strong appeal of powerlessness'.[19] He cites Bataille in proposing a 'transgressing of that polarity which […] may be the profound sense of both certain mystical experiences and of human sexuality'. Drawing on Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, he goes on to describe Freud's 'reluctant speculation […] that sexual pleasure occurs whenever a certain threshold of intensity is reached, when the organization of the self is momentarily disturbed by the sensations or affective processes somehow "beyond" those connected with psychic organisation. The dissolution of the subject is threatened by sexual *jouissance*. Bersani suggests:

Freud keeps returning to a line of speculation in which the opposition between pleasure and pain becomes irrelevant, in which the sexual emerges as the *jouissance* of exploded limits, as the ecstatic suffering into which the human organism momentarily plunges when it is "pressed" beyond a certain threshold of endurance. Sexuality, at least in the mode in which it is constituted, may be a tautology for masochism.[20]

Guy Hocquenghem, in *Homosexual Desire* (1978), also draws upon Freud for his discussion of desire and the subject, but instead on anality and repression as a function of the constitution of subjectivity. He writes:

The anus has no social position except sublimation. The functions of this organ are truly private; they are the site of the formation of the person. The anus expresses privatisation of itself. The analytic case-history (and we cannot help seeing "anal" in "analytic") presupposes that the anal stage be transcended so that the genital stage may be reached. But the anal stage is necessary if detachment from the phallus is to take place. In fact sublimation is exercised on the anus as on no other organ, in the sense that the anus is made to progress from the lowest to the highest point: anality is the very movement of sublimation itself.[21]

Hocquenghem argues that it is the anus that forms the sense of the *private*

individual; the anus is outside social relation, 'and the desiring use of the anus is inversely proportional to social anality.' In a curious echo of the language of Bataille's essay-fiction 'The Solar Anus', Hocquenghem suggests that 'the anus […] is the source of energy giving rise to the social sexual system and the oppression which this system imposes upon desire'.[22] On the same page, Hocquenghem notes that Bataille 'perceived the peculiarly repressed nature of this zone of the bourgeois body', but suggests Bataille constitutes the limit of social sexuality rather than its proper expression; and it is homosexual rather than heterosexual desire that 'challenges anality-sublimation because it restores the desiring use of the anus'.[23]

*

The attainment of lost continuity, the dissolution of the subject through an orgasmic moment of *jouissance*, is achieved in Ballard's *Crash* (1973) by an act of sodomy. This is the description of the key sexual act from the text:

With my right hand I parted his buttocks, feeling for the hot vent of his anus. For several minutes, as the cabin walls glowed and shifted, as if trying to take up the deformed geometry of the crashed cars outside, I laid my penis at the mouth of his rectum. [...] As I moved in and out of his rectum the light-borne vehicles soaring along the motorway drew the semen from my testicles. [...] Sitting together, we were washed by the light flowing in every direction across the landscape (21: 202).

Light and flight are achieved through sodomy; this transgression, this *transcendence of limit*, is the attainment of continuity. In other words, it is death. Light paradoxically becomes the medium of death, rather than life; sodomy, the anus, homosexual desire, become signs of the drive towards death. Through the anus, transcendence of the subject leads directly to the end of existence.[24]

T-2

Kingston seemed the same as ever, with little sign of the lassitude and stasis that accompanied the space sickness. He had flown into Jamaica aboard a flying boat, a PBY Catalina that had just been decommissioned from the Coast Guard, piloted by a self-proclaimed 'freak' who had himself just been decommissioned from flying black ops for Air America in Laos. As B walked the streets of Kingston in search of his old boatman, who would arrange for his journey on to Guyana, he thought about the Black Rose and these strange assassins who seemed to use eclipses for their own ends. He had recently caught up with the past months' news and he wondered if a black rose had been found in Santiago. B wasn't sure that the killing of Allende was quite their style.

He was travelling light. In his case were some used currency, cold passports, a change of clothes, a recent spy novel about an attempt on the life of de Gaulle, and his .25 Beretta. If one of those items didn't talk in Kingston, another certainly would.

Caribbean Connection

The dub, according to both David Toop and Dick Hebdige, begins in Jamaica. Its birthplace was in the studio of King Tubby (Osbourne Ruddock) who, 'one day', according to Hebdige, 'was working in his studio mixing a few ska 'specials' (i.e., exclusive recordings) for Sir Coxsone's Downbeat system.

He began fading out the instrumental track, to make sure that the vocals sounded right. And he was excited by the effect produced when he brought the music back in. So instead of mixing the specials in the usual way, he cut back and forth between the vocal and instrument tracks and played with the bass and treble knobs until he changed the original tapes into something else entirely.[25]

King Tubby invented the 'dub plate', a 'version' of the track which could then be used on Jamaican sound-systems for toasting or talking over. 'Dub' is derived from 'double', for the dubplate is indeed the uncanny double of the original, a 'replicant' text in Toop's terms. Toop describes dub thus:

When you double, or dub, you replicate, reinvent, make one of many versions. There is no such thing as an original mix, since music is stored on multi-track tape, floppy or hard disk, it is just a collection of bits. The composition has been decomposed, already, by the technology. Dubbing, at its very best, takes each bit and imbues it with new life, turning a rational order of musical sequences into an ocean of sensation.[26]

The metaphysical or transcendent turn Toop's language takes here attests to the deconstructive power of dub, in which the 'original' mix (itself a version or rendering of multi-track performances) is itself one of many, de-authorised, arrayed in a multiplicity. That dub originated 'in a poor section of a city on a Caribbean island' is, to Toop, also 'no coincidence' (116). The politics of doubling is explored by Paul D. Miller in *Rhythm Science*. Where W.E.B. Du Bois, in *The Souls of Black Folk* 'contributed the concept of 'double consciousness' to the American dialogue', a sense of looking at oneself though the eyes of others (a foundational self-alienation), Miller argues that 'the twenty-first century self is so fully immersed in and defined by the data that surrounds it, we are entering an era of multiplex consciousness.'[27]

In terms of the subject, then, the politics and practice of dub are not simply about appropriation, 'versioning' found music; if Toop and Miller are correct, its appearance in Jamaica in the late 1960s should be seen as a direct consequence of the post-colonial subjectivity of Afro-Caribbeans in a culture and nation-state that only achieved full independence from Britain in 1962 (and whose cultural interconnectedness with British life since the *Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury in 1948 has become a major part of the narrative of reggae, dub and other forms of popular music). A post-colonial 'multiplex consciousness' also corresponds to the kind of subject proposed by Mark Amerika in *remixthebook* as emergent in an age of globally networked digital communications: 'flux personae' or 'a double agent of distributed aesthetics'.[28] As Toop suggests, 'dub also anticipated remix culture' (118), suggesting that the dub-producer is an analogue of contemporary digital culture's remixologists, instruments of recoding global data flows. For David Toop, the affective dynamic of dub is almost science-fictional: 'dub creates new maps of time' (115). 'Urban, rural, tropic, aquatic, lo-tech, mystical. This was the source mix from which William Gibson drew (sentimentally, some critics think) when adding the humanising elements of Rastafari and dub to his *Neuromancer* narrative of tech-Gnosis' (116). Dub is cosmological, oceanic, 'spreading out a song or a groove over a vast landscape of peaks and deep trenches' (115); in this slowing down of time, just as in J.G. Ballard's 'fugue time' stories, new models of consciousness emerge.

T-1

B arrived in Georgetown a week before Christmas. Through contacts made by his old boatman, he was able to charter a sea-going launch, the *Zwarte Roos*, and had acquired some advanced directional equipment from a Surinamese military contractor. As a Navy man by training, B was sure he could find his way to the point of totality in the launch. Hurricane season was long past, and though he didn't know these waters, he had confidence in his training.

He planned to keep to coastal waters if possible until he reached Brazil, when he would enter the path of the eclipse. He did not want to meet with local Coast Guard or, more worryingly, Navy forces that might interfere with his rendezvous.

If there were to be a rendezvous at all, of course. B was aware that this could well be a one-way trip, for a variety of reasons, not all of which he could fathom. But he was happy to take his chances, with the ocean and with the eclipse. He had come full circle. Another game of chance, another spin of the wheel. Little remained to him now but the game, anyway, and he was determined to play it out to the very end.

Atlantis

The last Jackie Homes novel written by Victor Banis, *Blow the Man Down* (1969), moves finally from the narrative staples of the secret agent genre – conspiracies, criminal or espionage organisations, international travel – directly to a kind of science fiction, or perhaps science fantasy. In *Blow The Man Down*, Jackie joins forces with yet another buff heterosexual agent, this time Mike Summers, who like others in the series, learns to accept homosexual desire through attraction to Jackie, and here, an act of liberating sodomy. Investigating the loss of shipping in the Atlantic, Jackie and Summers are sucked down to the ocean floor by a gigantic 'vacuum' device creating a hole in the ocean, and taken to the domed underwater city of Atlantis, the domain of the virulently anti-hetero supervillain Mother Schmucker. Planning the takeover of the surface world using advanced technologies, the plan is thwarted when Jackie and Summers manage to destroy the domes and inundate the city. In the course of their stay in Atlantis, Jackie meets an old love, the Black Rose, who seems to have been recruited by the Mother Schmucker, but who is revealed to have been acting all along. With the Black Rose's help, Jackie and Summers escape – but only by sacrificing himself. Rescued on the surface, Jackie is given a black rose found nearby: an ambiguous token of either farewell or survival.

Atlantis seems a curious destination for Holmes, whose adventures had hitherto remained rooted in some relation to the late 1960s 'real' (or at least that presented in spy fiction). The generic shift provides the space for Jackie's 'true' love to be revealed (though there are several of those in the course of the series), and leads to what seems to be Jackie's death: he seems to accept drowning before being rescued from the ocean. The revision of the 'hardbody' agent into the subject of romantic loss is echoed in the fantastical setting, which enables (in Summers as in Jackie) a kind of transformation with regard to desire. While Summers (physically) opens up to homosexuality, Jackie's super-agency reaches its limit at the point where his own romantic attachment, and his sense of emotional loss, is emphasised.

Atlantis also figures in Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson's *Illuminatus!* Trilogy (1975). In this freewheeling novel, which collages paranoid conspiracy theories, American history, science fiction and spy fiction in the style of an accelerated, pulp-inflected Thomas Pynchon, Shea and Wilson present a multiplicity of characters who are involved in a struggle between the Discord-

ians and the Illuminati over the fate of the world, and in particular the attempt by a rock band known as the 'American medical Association' to 'immanentize the eschaton', to bring eternal life to a select few through mass human sacrifice. Towards the end of the first book, *The Eye of the Pyramid*, George (who may really be Saul Goodman, a detective) accompanies Hagbard Celine, a captain of the Discordians, aboard a submarine travelling to Atlantis, where Hagbard reveals the purpose of the Discordians (and thereby the novel itself):

Well, part of illumination—and we've got to be illuminized ourselves to fight them—is in learning to doubt everything. That's why Hagbard has that painting in his stateroom saying "Think for yourself, schmuck," and why Hassan i Sabbah said "Nothing is true." You've got to learn to doubt us, too, and everything we tell you. There are no honest men on this voyage.[29]

For George/ Saul, the moment of illumination is produced by multiple orgasms, in part achieved through heterosexual anal intercourse. At the termination of his ultimate orgasm, Saul wakes to discover that he has been subject to a process of ego loss:

"There are two forms of ego loss," Mavis went on, "and the Illuminati are masters of both. One is schizophrenia, the other is illumination. They set you on the first track, and we switched you to the other. You had a time bomb in your head, but we defused it." Malik's apartment. The Playboy Club. The submarine. And all the other past lives and lost years. "By God," Saul Goodman cried, "I've got it. I am Saul Goodman, but I am all the other people, too."[30]

The 'voyage to Atlantis' becomes internalized, an episode in the dissolution of the unitary self and the realization that the subject is multiple and fluid. The subject is revealed not to be a suturing of fragments, or strata of internal layers, but a kind of collage, a constellation of other selves that cannot cohere into a unitary subject. Understanding and accepting this multiple, performed array of selves/ others, operating them and transcending illusions of wholeness and integration, is true illumination.

T-Zero

24 December 1973. 15.44hr UTC. 722 seconds. 1.1°N 45.8°W

Endnotes

1 Dale Carter, *The Final Frontier*

2 It also features two gay assassins, Mr Wink and Mr Kidd.

3 From Brian Baker, 'The Geometry of the Space Age'

4 H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (London: Heinemann, 1911), p.5.

5 Wells, *The Time Machine*, p.4.

6 Bruce Clarke, 'A Scientific Romance: Thermodynamics and the Fourth Dimension in Charles Howard Hinton's 'The Persian King", *Weber Studies: an interdisciplinary humanities journal*, 14:1, Winter (1997), *supplement to ebr, Science Technology and the Arts* (accessed 7 June 2004). <http://www.altx.com/ebr/w(ebr)/essays/Clarke.html>, par.12.

7 Clarke, 'A Scientific Romance', par.11.

8 Clarke, 'A Scientific Romance', par.2.

9 remixed from Brian Baker, 'Witness to the Ends of the World'

10 remixed from Brian Baker, 'Witness to the Ends of the World'

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12 Nicholl, Peter, 'Michael Moorcock'. In *Science Fiction Writers: Critical Studies of the Major Authors from the early Nineteenth Century to the Present day*, ed. E. F. Bleiler (New York: Scriber's, 1982), pp. 449-457 (p.450).

13 Greenland, Colin, *The Entropy Exhibition: Michael Moorcock and the British New Wave in Science Fiction* (London: RKP, 1983), p. 125.

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15 Georges Bataille, 'The Solar Anus', *Visions of Excess*, p.5

16 'The Solar Anus', p.9

17 'The Solar Anus', p.9

18 Victor C. Banis, *That Man from C.A.M.P.: Rebel Without a Pause* (Binghamton NY: Southern Tier editions, Harrington Park Press, 2004), p.119.

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20 Bersani, p.216. See also David Savran, *Taking It Like A Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton NJ and Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1998).

21 Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire* (1978), p.82.

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25 Dick Hebdige, *Cut 'n' Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music* (London: Methuen, 1987), p.83.

26 David Toop, *Ocean of Sound: Aether Talk, Ambient Sound and Imaginary Worlds* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1995), pp.115-6.

27 Paul D. Miller (aka DK Spooky, That Subliminal Kid), *Rhythm Science* (Cambdrige MA and London: Mediawork/ MIT Press, 2004), p.61.

28 Mark Amerika, *remixthebook* (Minneapolis and London: Minnesota University Press, 2011), p.58.

29 Shea, Robert. The Illuminatus! Trilogy (p. 278)

30 Shea, Robert. The Illuminatus! Trilogy (p. 291).

Camp Concentric

[The three aspects of pastiche]: First, a pastiche work is based on putting together elements taken from elsewhere [....] Second, this involves the quotation/imitation of prior works, which leads to the notion of pastiche as a kind of imitation [....] Third, pasticcio painting involved the unacknowledged and deceitful use of combination and imitation, and this negative association has also clung to pastiche.[1]

Our culture no longer bothers to use words like *appropriation* or *borrowing* to describe those very activities. […] Today, an endless, recombinant, and fundamentally social process generates countless hours of creative product (another antique term?). […] [T]he recombinant (the bootleg, the remix, the mash-up) has become the characteristic pivot at the turn of our two centuries.[2]

'I believe Time to be like a faceted jewel with an infinity of planes and layers impossible to map or to contain.'[3]

The most successful of [the] telefantasy adventure shows are *The Prisoner* (1967-68) and *The Avengers* (1961-69), the latter often courtesy of Brian Clemens, a master of the absurd and the largely unsung hero of British telefantasy's profligate disregard of genre boundaries. Among other things, such series provide a valuable context for understanding Michael Moorcock's Jerry Cornelius stories.[4]

1: Concentration

This is not a test. Repeat, this is not a test. Ready? We have go in five, four, three, two, one –

What was that?

C sniffed. Mildew, disinfectant. He opened his eyes and saw an off-white plasterboard ceiling, signs of damp showing through thin paint in the corner. He was lying on an ex-Army single metal bed, tightly made up with grey blankets. Several beds were placed in a row, either side if his own.

Where was he? Had Time Central made an awful mistake? The place called up distant, half-suppressed memories, of bleak and cold summer holidays with his mother, brother and sister in forced-pleasure camps, built for the London poor. He hoped he wasn't in Hell or one of its antechambers; not quite yet, anyway.

A sandy-haired man in striped pyjamas, tucked up in the bed next to his, broke C's reverie. He was sitting up, reading a broadsheet paper, and hailed C like an old acquaintance. 'Ah, hello there,' he said. 'Awake now, I see. How are you feeling? The name's Oswald, Oswald B... but most people call me Captain.'

The Captain folded the paper and placed it neatly upon the counterpane. 'Just checking the Test Match scores,' he said. 'Play a little?'

'I've been known to,' said C, sitting up. 'Do you mind if I have a look at your paper?'

The Captain passed it to him with a smile. The paper – *The Camp Correspondence* – was in fact a single sheet, mimeographed locally. The 'news' on the front was a summing-up of activities in some kind of holiday camp, past and to come, with some celebrity tittle-tattle in a sidebar. Turning the sheet over, C took in a sporting digest for the last week or so. 'Not what you're looking for?' asked the Captain. 'The dailies are kept out of the camp. This is supposed to be a holiday, from *everything*. Don't want unpleasant and upsetting reminders of the bad old world spoiling the atmosphere.'

'I see,' said C. 'Quarantine? Prison camp by any other name?'

'You *are* cynical,' said the Captain disapprovingly.

'I'm sorry,' said C. 'I've had a bit of a shock. I don't really know where I am.'

'I understand,' said the Captain. 'I haven't left the hospital either. All I know about it is what I read in there,' gesturing to the mimeographed sheet,

'and what I've managed to get out of the nurses and orderlies.'

'I'll find out soon, I'm sure'.

Raised voices drew C's attention to one end of the ward. In a small seating area, two men, one in pyjamas and dressing gown, and the other in a white coat, were playing chess. The game was finished. The patient, an imposing older man sporting an Imperial beard, was in animated conversation with a small gentleman who wore a straw boater with his doctor's coat. It must have been a commanding victory for Imperial Beard, he thought. The bearded man was now gesticulating emphatically and had raised his voice. Straw Boater was meekly putting some papers into a leather briefcase and trying to ignore his assailant, which seemed to work the other into still greater expressiveness. All at once, Imperial Beard stopped, drew himself up to his full height, turned on his heel and marched down the aisle of the ward and disappeared through double doors at the other end of the room.

What a curious place, he thought. He resumed his train of thought but was interrupted by someone clearing their throat. It was Straw Boater.

'Pardon me,' said the man in a quiet, diffident voice, 'but I see that you're C, our new arrival, and I thought I'd take the opportunity to introduce myself. My name's Bluffield – I'm a doctor here.'

He offered his hand and C shook it, carefully, aware of the delicacy of the other man's bones. Doctor Bluffield smiled gratefully, and let out a sigh.

'Thank you,' he said. 'You can't always predict how people will react. I had a bout of fisticuffs with one once, you know.'

'Did you win?'

'Do you mean the fisticuffs or the chess game?' The Doctor had something of a twinkle in his eye. 'Both, as a matter of fact. University of Warsaw flyweight champion two years running, I'll have you know. Did you mark my opponent today? I observed you watching us, or him, I should say. Mr Hodgkiss, a very irascible man, and that, if I may say so, is his downfall at the chess board. And,' with another twinkle, 'at the card table. The apoplexy will have him in the end, I'll wager.'

'Do you often take money from your patients, Doctor Bluffield?' asked C.

'In a professional capacity, do you mean?' Bluffield smiled. 'Of course not. But we must keep ourselves busy. Idle minds and all that.' Nodding acknowledgment to the Captain, Bluffield said to C, 'Do you feel up to a little stroll?'

C stood up creakily, unfolding himself like a map. He noticed he was

wearing the same kind of pyjamas as the Captain and Imperial Beard, and the doctor helped him on with a dressing-gown.

They walked out of the ward and into a large entrance hall with open double doors. Through them, C could see the grounds, where a path led across the grass to an Italianate water tower. Bluffield led C up a sweeping staircase. At the top of the stairs, the secretary was an attractive young woman hiding behind heavy-framed spectacles. 'Miss Vale,' said the Doctor, and Miss Vale smiled at C. The look she gave Bluffield, however, was much more loaded, even accusatory. Bluffield bustled C through into the consulting room, smiling wanly to Miss Vale as he shut the door.

'Take a seat,' said the Doctor as he extracted C's dossier from a filing cabinet. He walked around the large oak desk and plumped himself into the leather chair, while C perched on something angular and synthetic. Bluffield opened the dossier and scanned several pages, eyebrows raising at intervals. Finally, he looked up.

'What's the diagnosis, Doctor?' asked C. 'Associative disorder? Schizoid tendencies? Undiagnosed social pathology?'

Bluffield smiled indulgently. 'You take an interest, I see. You're in pretty good physical shape, it seems. But there have been symptoms reported by your controllers, strange behaviour, that we might want to talk about. They could indicate deep-seated problems that require our attention.'

'Deep-seated? Talk about? Are you a follower of Freud, Doctor Bluffield?'

Bluffield frowned for the first time. 'Jung. But the therapeutic possibilities of doctor-patient discussion are well documented in the literature.'

'Yes, I always thought Jung *was* more of a literary critic.'

'Even Dr Freud's most famous complex was named after a literary example,' said Bluffield.

'I'll concede that one,' said C. 'But mandalas in the sky? You aren't going to try to convince me, here of all places, that flying saucers *don't* exist?'

Bluffield chuckled. 'But enough sparring. There's clearly something wrong, or you wouldn't be here. I'd like to help. Talking about it might be the first step.'

'Thank you for your kindness,' said C. 'I'll think about it.' Carefully, he crossed his legs. 'Miss Vale. How do you help her? More deep-seated problems that require your attention?'

'A healthy sexual drive is a life-enhancing thing, as I'm sure you appreci-

ate,' said Bluffield breezily. 'Now, if that's all, I have things to attend to. Can you make your own way back to the ward? Be seeing you.'

2: Camp

Thomas M. Disch was the only major writer associated with *New Worlds* not to have produced a Cornelius narrative 'proper', except J.G. Ballard. Ballard, of course, had his own 'Ballardian' set of recurrent characters/ archetypes, stages and motifs, so was in no need of Cornelius. However, Disch did write *The Prisoner*, a tv-series tie-in 'continuation novel' that he produced mainly for financial reasons, published in 1969. If Disch did not find the Cornelius template congenial, then perhaps it is not too fanciful to suggest that *The Prisoner* becomes a kind of 'template' narrative that Disch can utilise for his own ends. Eliot Atkins makes the connection:

At the beginning of the novelisation, Disch's secret agent has dealings with a shop called 'C. Cornelius' (10). Jerry Cornelius is of course Michael Moorcock's psychedelic secret agent, who became a key character in *New Worlds* during the late 1960s. Whether or not Disch includes this allusion as a means of suggesting that the surreal TV series drew on Cornelius as its inspiration, or whether he includes it as a means of highlighting that Number 6 is his own version of the Cornelius character, is open to discussion.[5]

In 1969, Disch also published *Camp Concentration*, a novel about a man unwillingly removed to a secret government facility and his responses to the conditions of incarceration and domination as well as to its experiments on fellow prisoners. (It had been serialised in *New Worlds* in 1967.) *The Prisoner* series, devised in part by its star Patrick McGoohan, has for its 'set' the abduction of a former secret agent and his arrival in (and subsequent negotiations with) 'the Village', a kind of holiday/prison camp for superannuated secret service personnel who are too valuable, or too dangerous, to be allowed to remain at public liberty. Number 6 and Sachetti, the protagonist of *Camp Concentration*, are similar figures: witty individualists transported, against their will, to a dystopian prison, who resist attempts made to make them conform to the imperatives of the institutional system.

The idea of the 'camp' (as prison) is not only found within Disch's fiction in New Wave sf, although as Eliot Atkins has noted, 'Disch's sf of the period abounds with claustrophobic prisons', from the underground facility in *Camp Concentration* to *The Prisoner*'s Village.[6] Clearly, for this generation of writers, the shadow of Nazism and the concentration camp looms particularly large. For J.G. Ballard, it is the Lunghua internment camp outside of Shanghai,

where he and his parents spent much of World War II, that is a major regulatory influence upon the imagination of space. Ballard's high-rises, science parks and gated communities are, as I argue elsewhere, informed by Lunghua, spaces where social convention masks ossification into ritual observance of redundant codes of behaviour, masking an underlying descent into violence and psychopathology. Because of their recurrent emphasis on the liberatory possibilities of psychopathology, it is difficult to view Ballard's spaces and zones as truly dystopian (as much as he might have wanted to cast them as 'storm warnings'). Disch's carceral spaces are more overtly dystopian than those of Ballard.

The political import of *The Prisoner* is largely libertarian, in a classically dystopian vein: McGoohan's shout in the opening sequence, 'I am not a number, I am a free man', has entered popular discourse. In the second episode of the series, Number 6 (McGoohan) talks with his antagonist, Number 2 (Leo McKern), who is in control of the Village's day-to-day operation. The dialogue reveals a much more overtly political intent than is found elsewhere in the series:

Number Two: I am definitely an optimist. That's why it doesn't matter *who* Number One is. It doesn't matter which "side" runs the Village.

Number Six: It's run by one side or the other.

Number Two: Oh certainly, but both sides are becoming identical. What in fact has been created is an international community — perfect blueprint for world order. When the sides facing each other suddenly realize that they're looking into a mirror, they will see that *this* is the pattern for the future.

Number Six: The whole Earth as the Village?

Number Two: That is my hope. What's yours?

Number Six: I'd like to be the first man on the moon.

The Village is then a 'blueprint' as well as a microcosm, a metaphor for control, as outlined by Eliot Atkins:

That the village is emblematic of the socio-political realm is made overt in Disch's novel when Number 2 makes the following declaration to Number 6 soon after the latter's arrival at the village:

Once you become accustomed to our life here, you'll find it isn't *that* much different from the world outside. What you might call a microcosm, in fact. We have our local, democratically-elected government (41).

By delineating his version of the village as a bland colourless community, rather than as the psychedelic space it is in the TV series, Disch imbues it with

a more traditionally dystopian cast, evocative of a provincial version of Winston Smith's grim English locale, or the hostile towns encountered by Kafka's K in his various fictional outings.[7]

The system of control operating in the Village, in terms of the mass media, electoral politics, psychological manipulation and torture, and ultimately violent oppression (in the form of Rover, the balloon-like sentinel) is clearly analogous to that found in other dystopias that represent, in estranged form, the post-war 'Western democracies', where totalitarianism has been replaced by much more subtle forms of domination.

At one point in Disch's *The Prisoner*, in a curious meta-textual *mise-en-abyme*, Number 6 discovers 17 canisters of film in an underground archive, and watches '6-SCHIZ'. As anyone familiar with the series will recognise, Number 6 is here watching an episode from the tv series itself. 'The Schizoid Man' was broadcast as the fifth episode of *The Prisoner*, in which Number 6 awakes to find himself 'Number 12' and a doppelganger has taken his place as 'Number 6'. Throughout the episode, the two men struggle to prove which one is the 'real' Number 6. It does not seem to occur to the Prisoner that his assertion of identity (as Number 6) runs directly counter to the central slogan of the opening sequence: 'I am not a number, I am a free man!' This episode's Number 2 triumphs, then, and not only in foiling (the real) Number 6's escape attempt at the end of the episode: he has forced the Prisoner to embrace the very thing he has spent the previous 4 episodes denying.

The idea of the 'schizoid' is possibly derived from the anti-psychiatrist R.D. Laing. In Laing's 1965 text *The Divided Self*, Laing begins chapter 1:

The term schizoid refers to an individual the totality of whose experience is split in two main ways: in the first place, there is a rent in his relation to the world and, in the second, there is a disruption of his relation to himself. Such a person is not able to experience himself "together with" others or "at home in" the world, but, on the contrary, he experiences himself in despairing aloneness and isolation; moreover, he does not experience himself as a complete person but rather as "split" in various ways, perhaps as a mind more or less tenuously linked to a body, as two or more selves, and so on.[8]

This dissociation is 'schizoid' rather than schizophrenic; further down the page, Laing avers that he uses 'the terms *schizoid* and *schizophrenic* for the sane and psychotic positions respectively'.[9] If 'schizoid' equates with 'sanity', then the sane person is already split, dissociated, 'mad'. Moorcock also deploys the

term 'schizoid' in a Cornelius text:

'"It is the disordered mind which detects order everywhere", Prinz Lobkowitz held her tightly in his grey arms, looking down at her head through fine, fading irises as he stroked her hair. "The schizoid brain seeks desperately for systems, the paranoid produces patterns from the most unlikely sources. The mad eye selects only what it wishes to see – proof of political plots, evidence of interstellar visitation, moral corruption in any given society. The evidence is not presented to us in linear form, you see, and cannot be read as we read lines of print. The secret is to make no specific selection."'[10]

The 'schizoid' subject – split, paranoid, disordered, isolated – is emblematic of the conditions of late twentieth-century life and its deformative effects on individual men and women. If the Village, the camp, and the prison are metaphors for the conditions of everyday life, then the schizoid is the complementary symbol of their effects on the human psyche.[11]

3: Circumnavigations

Miss B had assigned C a chalet close to the administrative centre of the camp. Dressed in the camp 'uniform' of turtle-neck, grey slacks and boating blazer, Jerry opened the door of the chalet to be greeted with an overwhelming sense of familiarity. Off-white walls, signs of damp showing through thin paint; a single metal bed, made up with grey blankets; a small high window with thin floral-print curtains, half drawn. The place called up distant, half-suppressed memories, of bleak and cold summer holidays with his mother, brother and sister in forced-pleasure camps like this one, built for the London poor. Inside a small wardrobe, he found his green velvet trousers and the white Regency chemise, freshly laundered. On a hanger was his carcoat, but no sign of the needle gun. He had expected as much.

There was a knock on the door behind him. Miss B, dressed in a severe Courrèges suit, looked him up and down appraisingly, a thin smile on her face. She beckoned, and he left the chalet, shutting the door behind him.

'Everything to your satisfaction?' she asked.

'As it should be,' he said.

They walked through the camp, lines of chalets with similarly-dressed gentlefolk strolling down grassed lanes. Miss B took his arm and steered him up the steps to a plaza, and the approached what seemed to be an administration building. Through double doors, they entered a reception area, with whitewashed walls, heavily-framed portraiture and Afghan carpets giving it the look of a district office of a rich, sleepy and peaceful outpost of Empire. They entered an office to the left. Miss B walked behind her desk, which had on it a large electric golfball typewriter and an announcer's microphone.

She smiled frostily. 'You never learn, do you?'

'It's one of my better qualities,' said C.

Miss B grimaced. 'We thought it time you had a holiday.'

'A little rest and relaxation? Lovely. Me and all the other campers.'

'Don't start the old "I am an individual" routine, please,' she said brusquely. 'I haven't got time for it. We need your old self back, but any of that self-pitying, navel-gazing ego-trip will just get in the way. We're hoping some of the routines and activities at the camp will be the glue to stick you back together. God knows you're needed elsewhere, but if you're scattered like stardust all over the continuum, there's not much hope for the multiverse, now, is there?

'Is all this for my benefit, then?' he asked.

'Come off it,' she said. 'The camp's real. It's a place where we can keep superannuated intelligence folk in a kind of happy quarantine. Most of them quite like the idea. It's better than Worthing.'

'Where are we, exactly?'

'That would be telling,' said Miss B, smiling. 'Now, for the duration, you'll be in the files as number "8" while we put you back together. We know who you were yesterday, but who knows who you might be tomorrow? Besides, using numbers is democratic. And,' she said, brightly, 'orderly.'

Miss B went to a filing cabinet and, opening the top drawer, pulled out a file of papers. 'Here we are,' she said, passing him a mimeographed sheet of foolscap, 'the week's activities *at-a-glance*. Throw yourself into things. It might help you pull yourself together.'

C stopped off at the café on the way back to his chalet, where he picked up some sandwiches and a flask of tea. He didn't want to chance the canteen after his assignations – chosen and unchosen – today. When he arrived back at the chalet, he ate a couple of rounds of sandwiches then lay down on the bed to have a short nap before the evening began. He felt exhausted by the endless conversations he'd been having. Riding across the Ukrainian steppe with Nestor Makhno seemed a breeze by comparison. He dreamt in a language he didn't know.

*

Miss B waited impatiently for the orderlies to bring in the gurney. Bluffield supervised the transferral of the patient onto the treatment couch and sent the two men back out into the rain. He shut and locked the doors of the triage room, where Miss B bent over C, fixing electrodes to his forehead and hooking him up to an ECG.

'How does this work?' asked Bluffield, intrigued but somewhat apprehensive.

Miss B indicated the televisions screens with a wave of her hand. As she continued to prepare the patient, she said, 'thoughts... like sound waves... converted into electrical impulses, and finally... into pictures.'

'So we'll see what he is dreaming?'

'Yes, we will,' said Miss B who, looking up and smiling, then returning her attention to C, inserted an IV feed into his arm. 'A few minutes to allow the serum to take effect, then his mind will be all ours.'

As they waited, Miss B turned on the monitors, tapping the sides of the screens to correct the vertical hold. Slowly images began to coalesce, and she turned up the audio gain. From white noise, ghostly voices emerged.

*

Cape Canaveral, Florida, 1969

C lowered his complementary field-glasses, complete with Presidential seal, and turned to his neighbour.

'It's a magnificent sight, don't you think, Sir Richard?'

Markham stared straight at the Saturn V, which sat steaming on the launch gantry some miles away, and he exhaled sourly.

'I can't see what on Earth kind of good can come of it,' he said.

'The grand gesture, Sir Richard, the heroic step into history. Doesn't it excite you?'

'Not when I think of the cost.'

C laughed shortly. 'You should be glad the cousins are putting their energies to the space race. Once they give up on the moon, you won't like where their attention will fix itself.'

Markham lowered his binoculars and fixed Jerry with a bloodshot, pouched stare. 'It's all circuses,' he said. 'They'll be holding the Olympics in Hollywood next. All in the name of distraction. Vietnam, Czechoslovakia – there's a lot to look away from.'

C sighed. 'I do hope they don't cancel the countdown again.'

'It would give Mr President another photo-op,' said Markham, looking to his left. 'One suspects he looks into the mirror of the Apollo programme and sees only himself.'

'Who cares about the nobility of means, if the ends are noble?' asked Jerry. 'And speaking of which, do you have a definitive answer?'

Markham looked stonily across at Jerry. 'I have. I don't like it.'

'No,' said C. 'But then again, you don't much like our agent friend either, do you? He's a bit of a loose cannon in these sensitive times. And after that botch with Tanaka and the satellites, I'd imagine the PM was *very* sensitive.'

'You are the very devil, C,' said Markham, half-admiringly. 'It irks me to agree with you, but you're right.'

'I have the perfect woman for the role. Discreet, professional, wealthy, sexually attractive. Reliable. Everything B could want in a wife.'

*

'This isn't going to damage him, I hope?' asked Bluffield. 'I do have faith in more conventional modes of diagnosis, and if given time...'

'Oh, where's your scientific enthusiasm, Doctor?' said Miss B, delicately opening the feed to allow more serum to flow into C's veins. She watched the monitor as the dead channel began to tune into another programme.

*

Tokyo, 1964

C strolled into the air-conditioned lobby of the Shinjuku hotel, grateful that he had made very early reservations to stay during the Games. Before the decision to award the 1964 Olympiad to Japan had been announced, in fact, but that was one of the minor personal benefits of time travel.

His meeting with Tanaka had not been a success. The head of the Japanese Secret Service had apparently read too many American hard-boiled detective fictions and was intent on playing the laconic, hard-bitten cop in the face of all Jerry's conciliatory gestures. C found the Japanese fixation with American popular culture somehow touching and even reassuring, but in this case would have wished Tanaka wasn't such a fan of Mickey Spillane.

Though perhaps I have it all wrong, thought C, in the elevator up to their suite. Perhaps Tanaka was playing that role because he thought that it as the surest way of finding common ground with a gaikokojin, a Westerner like myself. How such things are lost in translation, he mused.

As he clicked open the door to the suite, he knew something was out of place. He reached inside his black suit jacket and slid the needler from his shoulder-holster, which nestled clammily against the damp cotton of his shirt.

He edged into the room, scanning for things amiss. Two highball glasses stood on the coffee table, one containing an olive, the other marked with lipstick. Nothing else of note in the sitting room; the door to the bedroom stood half-ajar.

He padded slowly across the pile carpet to the door, and eased it open with the fingertips of his left hand while covering the room with the needler. There, in bed, a man and a woman, asleep, the covers disordered, the scene post-coital. He could see the raven spread of Catherine's hair across the pillow on the side nearest to him, her naked body half-turned to the side, sheet over her legs. With each slow step he became ever more certain of the identity of

the man beside her, and he forced himself, with a shuddering effort of will, to slowly replace the needler in the holster, without first shooting the man in the spine. But it was not his brother Frank, after all. There, in a hotel bed in Tokyo, next to his sister Catherine, an expression of idiot satiety on his face, was the agent B.

*

'So that's it,' said Miss B.

'I do not understand,' Bluffield said, a puzzled expression on his face. 'Something to do with his sister and this other fellow?'

'That's right,' said Miss B. 'A B and a C. Elementary.'

She unhooked the IV and placed her right palm against C's pallid face. The ECG monitor beat regularly.

'Never mind, dear,' she said. 'See he's delivered carefully back to his room, will you?'

4: Concatenations (1)

Saturday Night

Tonight, in the main hall, at 8 o'clock, we have the exciting sounds of Shaky Mo and the Assassins, who will play for dancing until 10. Please take your seats at the tables by 7 o'clock for chicken-in-a-basket.

C awoke to the sounds of a multitude of men and women preparing for an evening out: fixing hair, brushing shoes, talking with their neighbours, listening to tinny pop music on the wireless. The sky was a pale blue, and watery summer sunlight bled through the thin curtains into the chalet, making it look dingier than ever. He must have slept all day. We gotta get out of this place, thought C.

By the time he changed back into his hipster gear, groups of men and women were walking arm-in-arm towards the domed building, behind which was the hall. It was as though they were being called by some kind of Siren to their doom. C thought he might need the balls of wax before the night was out, especially if Shaky Mo and the Assassins lived up to his expectations.

The first Siren he met, outside the hall, was Miss Vale. 'Dig the threads,' she said, looking him up and down. She was dressed in the female standard issue of white ski pants and t-shirt, with a harlequin cape tossed over one shoulder, but she had lost the glasses. C asked her where they were.

'I can let my guard down a little on a Saturday night,' she said. 'The good doctor can't stand modern music. He goes to bed with the *Lancet*.' Lucky for you, thought C. 'I'll see you later, if your dance card's not full,' she said, giving him a peck on the cheek. 'Want to catch up with my girlfriends and have a few drinks first. Be good.' She slipped into the crowd milling around the bar and was gone. The meal had ended and the campers were fuelling up for the night's bacchanalia.

After managing to locate a triple Macallan, C wandered over to where the band was setting up. He could see a drum riser, a Hammond organ and a couple of amps, and a young man fiddling with the snare. It was Moses Collier.

'Hello, Mo,' C said.

Mo stood up and turned round, his face breaking into a smile. 'All right, guv? Wondered when I'd be seeing you, Mr. C.'

'What are you up to, Mo?' said C.

'Never could resist a uniform, could I, Mr. C?' Mo laughed. 'Things were

shocking all over, not a sniff. You'd buggered off. I was on me tod. Miss B gave me a bell and offered me this gig. Couldn't say no. It's all right, I got a few things going on the side, a few frustrated housewives feeling footloose…'

'Ballroom dancing lessons?'

'That's it! It'll tide me over until something better comes along. Or until you decide to give me a nudge, Mr. C.' Mo smiled warmly. 'Here, our fucking guitarist fell off his fucking motorbike today doing stunts for the punters. Like to sit in? It's all the old stuff, 'Summertime Blues' and 'Silver Machine'. Be like old times. I'll sort you out a tray of drinks. His guitar's a big old Gretsch White Falcon, a nice one. *Very* rock 'n' roll!'

Why not? A few tasty licks on that Gretsch might get the old juices flowing. C smiled and nodded.

'Oh, have you seen yer old Mum?' said Mo.

'Oh, Christ, she's not here, is she?' And as he spoke, he seemed to hear a bellow of coarse, gin-soaked laughter rise above the noise of the crowd, and his heart quailed within his ribcage. He looked round nervously. That was all he needed.

Sunday Morning

He woke up with Miss Vale's arm across his naked chest, a horse-hair blanket pulled up roughly over them. He was so dehydrated from the rider that his tongue felt like the leather sole of a cracked, worn-out shoe. Strands of damp hair trailed across his brow. He couldn't make out whether they were his or Miss Vale's. Mo hadn't furnished him with enough speed to hold back the drink. Memories rose to the surface of his mind, and he didn't want to close his eyes in case that focused the scenes further. In fact, he didn't want to close his eyes for quite some time. He'd have to tap up Mo for another wrap or five of amphetamine.

On the lawn

When C finally saw her, she was sitting on the grass in front of the piazza, legs stretched out, propped back on stiff arms, face tilted back to the pallid sun. She was sitting with Miss B, who still was dressed in her severe suit, and sat with her legs tucked under her in what looked a most uncomfortable way. She seemed to be looking into the middle distance while discoursing on something, but with her Wayfarer shades on, it was difficult to tell.

C walked up to them, smiling shyly. He hadn't seen his sister for some time.

'Hello there,' said Miss B. 'We were just talking about you. And then like the devil…'

'Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.'

'Very droll,' said Miss B.

C's sister shook her head at this and smiled, but would not look at him.

'Anyway, you seem to be settling in to camp life, if last night is anything to go by,' said Miss B with a smirk. 'That was some performance. I'm not usually in favour of such a release of, um, what you might call *Dionysian* energies, but, well… It took housecleaning quite a few hours to mop up this morning, after all that. And where *did* you end up? I lost sight of you after the fifth encore.'

'Being Dionysian,' he said. Miss B smiled nastily.

'So you think you might settle down here for a while?' she asked.

'It's just a holiday, as you said.'

Miss B stood up and gazed out over the camp. 'This is the pattern of the future, you know,' she said. 'Imagine the whole earth as a holiday village. How happy everyone would be. It's a perfect blueprint for world order.'

'So that's what you have in mind,' he said. 'Utopia.'

Miss B took off her Wayfarers, folded them into her hand and looked him in the eye. 'You can't say it doesn't have its attractions. It's peaceful, clean, there's plenty to do, and there's even space for Dionysus. Occasionally.'

She turned and began to walk back towards the domed building. 'Keep an open mind. And have fun.'

C watched as she clicked her way up the ramp and across the piazza. Then the light disappeared: two cool hands had been placed over his eyes from behind.

'Your chalet or mine?' she asked.

5: Concatenations (2)

The Red King's Dream

'Queen to Bishop's 6,' called C through the loudhailer, 'check.' He was perched high in an umpire's chair at the side of the piazza's chess board. He had beaten The Captain a few times over the past weeks, but the Doctor had given him a chastening or two in return.

As he watched the Knight move into position, C thought about the routines that had come to organise his life at the camp. He felt a kind of contentment that had been missing for a long time. He knew that the early signs of a drift down to inertness were presenting themselves, but he felt he could hold that back for another week or two. Then he would have to do something radical about it. But for now, he was happy.

'Knight takes Queen,' called the Doctor. He hadn't seen it.

'Bishop to King's 7,' answered C. 'Checkmate.'

In the opposite chair, Bluffield lowered his loudhailer disbelievingly, scanning the board. With head hung low, he gingerly climbed down the chair and made his way across the piazza to congratulate his opponent. By the time C had edged down the rickety steps of his own chair, the Doctor was there to meet him, hand outstretched once again.

'I give you joy of your victory,' said the Doctor. 'Must be losing my diagnostic powers.' The Captain strolled across to join them, grasping his daily news-sheet, and nodded to Bluffield.

'Captain.' The Doctor clutched his briefcase under his arm and ran his other hand around the brim of his straw boater. 'Well, must be off. I have an appointment in 15 minutes. Can't be late. I needed to keep that short.' He winked at C and strode off towards the surgery.

'Was he suggesting…?' asked the Captain, feigning shock.

'Yes, he's always doing that,' laughed C. 'A sportsman to the end.'

Good morning, campers. At 11 o'clock, there will be a ping-pong competition in the small hall. Or for those with an artistic turn of mind, try your hand at pot-throwing. Redcoat Frank and his wheel will be available on the tennis court from 11.30.

The Captain and C strolled to the café for their habitual mid-morning coffee. 'How are you feeling?' asked the Captain. 'Making any progress?'

'I do feel happier in myself,' said C as they arrived at the café. 'Less split

between times and places. Perhaps I just needed some peace, some time off. If there is such a thing.'

'Perhaps,' said the Captain quietly, as they took a table on the terrace. He looked pensively out to sea, his thin face wan in the morning light, and placed the folded news-sheet on the table beside his cup.

C sipped his coffee. 'We're rehearsing a production this week. *Commedia dell'Arte*. Will you come and see it, tomorrow night?'

The Captain looked at him curiously. 'If I can. You've settled down here, haven't you? Chess matches, the theatre group.'

'I *am* supposed to be on holiday,' said C, defensively.

'Exactly so,' said the Captain. 'How long do you think you'll stay?'

'I haven't decided,' said C. 'I need to finish this production, then we can break down the set and think about what to do next.'

'Have a look at this,' said the Captain, pushing the folded news-sheet across the table. 'It might help you decide. Wait until you're somewhere quiet, though. You never know who might be watching.'

Control Room, Control Room, we have a potential breakdown in sector 4. Housecleaning units to sector 4, please.

'I'd better be off,' said the Captain, downing the last of his coffee. 'Good luck.'

C waited a few moments to let the Captain get a head start, then picked up the news-sheet and walked down into the formal garden. He turned into the yew maze and taking some corners at random, found a small arbour situated in a dead-end. On the back of the news-sheet was an intricate design for some kind of flying machine.

<u>The chrono-plane</u>

C found the Captain some hours later at the hospital workshop. He knocked on the wooden Judas door and stepped though into the cluttered space. In one corner he noticed a collection of intricately worked clockwork devices, some of which were clearly based on chronometers of some kind. The Captain was working silently on a large tubular contraption, something like a primitive motor-cycle, a box-like frame with saddle and odd levers and gears.

'What *is* this?' asked C, holding up the folded news-sheet.

'I don't think you'd believe me if I told you.'

'Did you build these other machines over here?'

The Captain nodded.

'You'd think me very slow, as slow as Bluffield, if I didn't notice that it all has to do with time.'

The Captain looked up at C, a haunted, yearning expression on his face.

'Tell me about it,' said C.

'I'm... lost,' said the Captain. 'A long way from home. In space, I mean, certainly, but...'

C waited.

'But also... in time.'

'A sense of dislocation? I feel that way all the... time.'

'Don't be so bloody glib!' the Captain shouted. 'You really are as obtuse as Bluffield!' He stared angrily. 'No, I mean *actually* lost in time. I was a soldier once, in India, the North-West frontier, fighting for the Empire... but something – happened. I entered another time, another world. Not this one, I mean. I took part in a war, a terrible war, and killed thousands of people. The end of the world, and I brought it about. Again and again and again...' He sagged against the machine. 'I've told Bluffield nothing of all this.'

'Quite right. He would think you'd gone insane.'

'Some days I think the same thing. How is it possible? And the others, like Mrs Persson...'

'Una?' said C, smiling in surprise. 'My dear Captain, you're not insane. But I suspect that Miss B knows a little more about you than Bluffield does. That's why you're here.' C began to sing, '"I am a traveller in both time and space"...'

'I've been thinking about naming her – the machine, I mean,' said the Captain.

'One of the benefits of a classical education is facile allusion,' said C.

The Captain smiled ruefully. 'I thought of the Argos, or perhaps Penelope, Odysseus's wife? But then, no. I remembered this from my schoolbooks.' The Captain pulled out a notebook from his pocket and began to read.

'When suddenly a madness overcame
The unwary lover – pardonable indeed
Did Hell know any pardoning: he halted
And on the very brink of light, alas,
Forgetful, yielding of his will, looked back
At his own Eurydice.'

The Captain paused. ‘Eurydice. You know the myth, I dare say? Lost loves, looking backwards. We all have our own trips through the underworld…’

C walked around the bench and kissed the Captain lightly.

‘Not to worry,’ he said. ‘So you’re trying to build a time machine, is that it? To go back?’ The Captain nodded. ‘I might be able to help you with that. But this looks more like a flying machine. I see no wings, though.’

‘I’ve made them, but not fitted them. I didn’t want Bluffield to think I want to go over the wire.’

‘The good doctor will be getting in some bowling practice for the match later on. Let’s wheel the machine outside and get the wings fitted, shall we? Then we can see you take to the ether, at long last.’

6: Cricket

Cricket [...] had been formed by rural and artisan Englishmen who had aimed at nothing but the creation of an activity which would disinterestedly express their native artistic instincts. If it could be so rapidly elevated to the status of a moral discipline it was because it has been born and grew in an atmosphere and in circumstances untainted by any serious corruption. The Victorians made it compulsory for their children, and all the evidence points to the fact that they valued competence in it and respect for what it came to signify more than they did intellectual accomplishment of any kind. The only word I know for this is culture. The proof of its validity is its success, first of all at home and then almost as rapidly abroad, in the most diverse places and among peoples living lives which were poles removed from that from whence it originally came. This signifies, as so often in any deeply national movement, that it contained elements of universality that went beyond the bounds of the originating nation. It is the only contribution of the English educational system of the nineteenth century to the general educational ideas of Western civilization.[12]

In the Jerry Cornelius stories, by Michael Moorcock and others, cricket appears most overtly in 'The Tank Trapeze', a story published in *New Worlds* in 1969. In 'The Tank Trapeze', Jerry is sent to Burma in the *SS Kao An*, 'his only luggage an expensive cricket bag' (24). Jerry is engaged by Captain Maxwell – based on the later newspaper tycoon Robert Maxwell – to assassinate a child, a boy who seems like a young incarnation of a Dalai Lama figure, somehow older than his years: 'Again he looked into the child's eyes and was interested by the ambiguities he saw in them. For a moment he was afraid' (29). The reason for this assassination is never given, though after it is done, Maxwell turns upon Jerry (it is hinted that some kind of payment was not forthcoming) and, in turn, assassinates the assassin: 'Maxwell raised the Webley and Scott .45 and fired the first bullet. Jerry was thrust against the washbasin and he blinked rapidly as his vision dimmed' (40). Maxwell abuses Jerry at the point of his death, verbally – '"Bloody gangster! Murderer! Fucking killer!"' (40) – but also, it seems to be hinted, sexually: 'he had the impression that Maxwell's trousers had fallen down [....] He shuddered and was only vaguely aware of the weight of Maxwell's lumpen body on his' (40). This echoes the death of the child, who, when prostrated upon the floor, praying before a temple, he seems to

offer himself to Jerry: '"Do you feel like a woman?"' before Jerry 'burned a thin hole through the child's anus' with his 'heater' (37). This repeated signification of sexual transgression, related to sodomy, is curiously oblique in comparison to the polymorphous sexual roles played out elsewhere in the Cornelius texts.

Perhaps this has something to do with 'the East'; Moorcock is careful not to offer stereotypical Orientalising episodes and characters, and so pederasty, sodomy and other forms of sexual 'perversion' or 'degeneration' are bracketed off. Jerry's amorality seems at a high pitch here, however, in offering to 'try' to kill a child (he succeeds), an index of a kind of ethical emptiness. Jerry's own death could be read, perhaps, as a somewhat stylised motif of moral retribution, though Maxwell is clearly ill-suited to a role as arbiter of 'justice'. The political import of the story, indicated by the intercutting of sections from a *Guardian* report on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, critiques neo-colonial 'intervention' as other Cornelius texts clearly critique US involvement in Vietnam, returning the war at the colonial 'margins' to the centre of Empire: London.

Jerry plays cricket, for the first time '"since I had my teeth knocked out when I was five"' (30): 'Caught at the wicket for sixteen off U Shi Jheon, Jerry now sat in his deckchair watching the game. Things looked sticky for the visitors' (31). Cricket, as C.L.R. James noted in *Beyond a Boundary*, is a crucial apparatus for disseminating the ideologies of Empire: the value of the 'civilizing mission', the regard for rules and authority, codes of restraint and 'fair play'. The interpellation of the colonial subject through cricket – constructed to be *like* yet different from the coloniser – is crucial to James's analysis of British colonialism and in 'The Tank Trapeze' Moorcock reveals its deep implication with power, domination and ultimately violence.

Cricket has become an index of a certain kind of English imaginary: nostalgic, sentimental and class-bound, it is summed up in former Prime Minister John Major's much-satirised statement that 'Fifty years on from now, Britain will still be the country of long shadows on cricket grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pools fillers'. In this imaginary, cricket is white, middle-class, non-urban, Home Counties-based and as comforting as warm beer. The reality of cricket – played in cities by British Asian and Black British and Welsh and even Scots men and women – is masked by this, but Moorcock uses its ideological implication with the imaginary of Empire in 'The Tank Trapeze' just as he used the ideological implication of the scientific

romance with Empire in the *Nomads* trilogy: to identify the insistent and ongoing presence of Empire dreams in the imaginary of contemporary Britain.

Cricket is also played by Number 6 in *The Prisoner* episode 'The Girl Who Was Death', a spoof of McGoohan's past as 'Danger Man'. In a narrative revealed at the end of the episode to be a bedtime story for 'children... everywhere', Number 6 is abroad in the world, tracking down a super-villain by the name of Professor Schnipps, who is bent on destroying London. Bent on destroying Number 6 is the 'Girl who was Death', Schnipps's assistant, who sets a number of deadly traps for the agent, all of which he avoids (at last by faking his own death). One of these traps takes place on a village green, where Number 6 investigates the death of a batsman by taking his place in the batting order. Where the assassinated cricketer played a shot to an exploding cricket ball, thereby triggering his own death, Number 6 – dressed in whites and W.G. Grace-style bacon-and-egg cap, with moustachioes and mutton-chop whiskers – catches the ball and hurls it to the boundary, where it explodes harmlessly.[13] The playfulness of this episode, as *Danger Man* spoof or even *Avengers* pastiche, locates an imaginary England of the village green, but makes this the site of (ludicrous) danger. It is as unreal as the Britain of the Macnee/ Rigg *Avengers*, a caricature place infected by fantasy, by science fiction devices, and by television itself.

7: Close of Play

The fourth innings

C perched on a wicker armchair on the veranda of the cricket pavilion and strapped on his pads. In his whites, he resembled the Pierrot he was to play on stage the next evening. The batting had declined badly against Bluffield's spin and he was in next. The Captain, pencilled in at number three, had failed to turn up, severely weakening the top order. Hazy sunshine played across the square, making it difficult for the batsmen to pick up Bluffield's length, and at the other end C suspected the sight-screen was not all it should be. C's brother, a ringer in a red coat, had taken three wickets with high full tosses that the batsmen clearly hadn't picked up. C wasn't looking forward much to facing his brother down 22 yards of cracked earth, even if he seemed disinclined to pitch the ball on the surface at all.

There was a cry from Bluffield, and Miss B, standing in a stylish white coat at the non-striker's end, raised her finger. The batsman began to trudge from the crease as C jumped up and drew his bat from his cricket bag. A good old Gunn and Moore, long since taped up around the blade, had served him well against Holding in Jamaica but an English club pitch was a different matter from the fast, true surface of Sabina. He'd have to wait and see.

His brother began barracking him half-way to the wicket. C adjusted his cap and called to Miss B for a leg-stump guard. As he scraped his mark on the pitch, C heard a low buzzing sound and looked around the outfield. Frank scowled at him from midwicket, keeping well out of the way of C's well-known strength through cover point. Bluffield went back to the end of his short run-up, while Miss B extended her arm to prevent him running in. C tapped his bat on the crease and surveyed the field.

Bluffield's first ball was an orthodox leg-spinner, and C played inside the line, allowing the ball to pass through to the keeper. 'Well left, Mr C,' said Mo, almost in his ear. 'See if you can pick the next one.' Bluffield came in again and delivered another leg-spinner, which C again let go. C couldn't quite pick the hand action, and he waited for Bluffield to come in again. This one was quicker and rushed on to C, who jabbed down on the top-spinner just in time.

'Bowling,' called Mo.

C anticipated the googly, and as the ball turned into him, C clipped it past Frank at midwicket and set off for a leisurely single. There was one ball left in

the over, and he knew Frank would be tearing in at him from the other end if his partner couldn't score off the next ball. He couldn't.

'Bowling,' called Mo.

C's brother grabbed the ball and marched to the end of his run-up. He turned and grinned horribly at his brother. C knew what to expect, fast in-swingers, full of length. Same as ever, just as if they were children, still playing each other on a hard-packed beach somewhere on the South Coast. If his brother couldn't hit the wicket, he would try to hit C. With a hard cricket ball instead of a tennis ball, he would attempt to crush C's toes.

The first ball was a quick-ish yorker that C dug out quite comfortably. The second was a full toss into his pads that he turned down to long leg for an easy two. The third was over-pitched outside off stump, and C went down on one knee and smashed it through the covers, holding the pose to irritate his brother. His brother's face flushed as he strode back to his mark. The fourth ball was a bouncer, quite rapid and half-way down the pitch. C got outside the line and hooked to the midwicket boundary for another four. He heard applause from the pavilion for that one, but then that strange buzzing sound came again. It became louder, as C shaded his eyes with his hand and looked around the field. In the sky over long-off was a dark shape in the sky that quickly assumed the form of an ungainly aircraft, slowly approaching the cricket field.

As his brother began his run-up for the fifth ball of the over, the aircraft seemed to be following him in. C's attention wavered between bowler and the aeroplane as his brother reached the bowling crease and delivered another bouncer, faster and shorter than the last. C ducked underneath it as the plane soared slowly down the wicket, banking over the boundary rope to come around for another pass. As C unfolded himself from his crouch, he realised that his brother was standing next to him, having finished his follow-through, watching the flight-path of the primitive craft.

'He's coming round again.' The brothers watched as the plane made the turn at the far end and began another run down the field, bisecting its clock-face like hands stopped at six o'clock. As the aircraft clattered past Miss B, standing at the far end of the pitch, the pilot heaved something over the side. In a disassemblage of rods and plates and bolts and springs, some kind of mechanical device bounced down the pitch towards C and his brother. As coolly as they could, they jumped clear of the tumbling metal mess, which smashed the stumps at the striker's end.

'You're out,' sniggered C's brother. 'Hit wicket.'

As the plane banked again, its engine began to splutter. Bluffield walked over from his fielding position at mid-off and inspected the wreckage.

'It's one of the Captain's clocks,' he said. 'Poor man. I wonder. What can he mean by it?'

'Why don't you ask him?' said Frank. 'He'll be landing in the long grass in a minute.'

Its engine lifeless, the plane was coming in for an emergency landing at the bottom end of the field. If the plane didn't have enough landing room it would bury itself in the yew maze of the formal garden.

C walked down the pitch, bat tucked under his arm, avoiding the large gouges that scarred the surface. Miss B turned as he stuck out his hand.

'Match abandoned?'

Endgame

C sat in the dressing room, applying white makeup to his cheeks. He watched in the mirror as his sister lounged behind him on a brown leather sofa that had seen better days; say, 1912. She was dressed as Columbina, in a patched white dress (now well hitched up, showing the cream-coloured tops of her thighs), white stockings on her long legs (crossed), and heavy eye make-up (eyes closed). She had been looking at the ceiling and tapped the tambourine she held against one leg. Her own clothes – the standard female outfit of white ski-pants and top, and harlequin cape – lay crumpled on the floor.

His Pierrot costume still hung on the back of the door. C looked at his own face carefully. Had he let himself go here at the camp? Should he be taking his responsibilities more seriously?

But then, what was more serious than the *Commedia*?

'How do you think the house will be?'

'It will be *fine*, no need to worry,' she soothed. 'Remember last night. The rehearsal, I mean,' she smirked.

'It's all I think about,' he sighed.

She got up from the sofa and knelt down behind him, hands on his shoulders. Her beautiful face doubled his in the mirror.

He smiled, then winced. 'I hope this makeup doesn't flake when it dries,' he said.

'Ten minutes to curtain,' she said. 'Will you be okay?' He nodded. She

stood up, bent around him and lightly brushed his lips with hers. 'Break a leg, darling.'

She left him alone to finish his preparations.

Beginners, please.

'It's time to get into character,' he said to himself, appraising the rather nice job he'd made of the makeup, if he said so himself. He cleaned his hands and then reached for the white linen Pierrot suit.

Beginners, please.

His mouth felt dry. He mustn't work his lips, the colour might come off. Hold it together now. I am Pierrot. He closed his eyes.

Beginners, please.

He found himself on stage. Catherine was beside him. Through the glare of the footlights he saw, in the front row, Miss B, his brother, the Doctor, Miss Vale, his Mum, all looking expectantly at him. He opened his mouth –

And could not speak. Dumb-show.

As a tear began to trail down his cheek, blearing his unblinking eye and smearing his carefully applied mask, the house began to laugh.

*

Back in the dressing room, C found a set of keys on his dressing table. He took off the Pierrot suit and set to scrubbing off the white makeup, violently, painfully. Red-faced and sore, he put on his green velvet flares and the Regency chemise, both of which his sister had had laundered for him, and the chisel-toed Chelsea boots and car-coat. He took the harlequin cape from the floor, held it to his face and breathed in appreciatively, then tipped an ironic salute to the Pierrot suit lying on the stool as he shut the door behind him.

Emergency! Emergency! We have a reality breach! Evacuate Control Room! Evacuate the studio! Emergency! This is not a test! Repeat, this is not a test!

Outside the hall the candy striped Mini Moke was where Miss B had left it. The engine clattered into life when he turned the key. He put it into gear with a terrible grinding noise, and then stamped on the accelerator. As the Mini Moke picked up speed down the service road, C took his hands off the wheel. Come what may.

Coda

At Time Central, C introduced the Captain to Al, who was poring over the latest bulge in the western arm of the mandala.

'It's a bad one', said Al. 'Not quite an emergency yet, but very definitely going into crisis.' Miss B gestured to C and the Captain from behind the glass of the computer booth.

'Looks like we're going to have to use the shifter,' said C. 'That will be an interesting experience for you. A different kind of time travel.'

The Captain smiled ruefully.

Miss B, C and The Captain stood in front of the shifter. Miss B signalled with a nod of the head to Al, and they stepped forward, hand in hand, into the light.

Endnotes

1 Richard Dyer, *Pastiche* (London: Routledge, 2007), p.9.

2 William Gibson, 'God's Little Toys: Confessions of a cut-and-paste artist', *Wired* 13.07, July 2005, <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.07/gibson.html>. Accessed 22 April, 2010.

3 Michael Moorcock, *Mother London* (1988) (London: Scribner's, 2000), p.486.

4 Mark Bould, 'What Kind of Monster Are You? Situating the Boom', *Science Fiction Studies* 30:3 (Nov 2003), 394-416 (p.402).

5 Eliot Atkins, 'Dangerous Fictions: Generic Play in the Novels of Thomas M. Disch', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Liverpool 2001, p.94.

6 Eliot Atkins, 'Dangerous Fictions', p.70.

7 Eliot Atkins, 'Dangerous Fictions', p.93.

8 R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p.17.

9 Laing, *The Divided Self*, p.17.

10 Michael Moorcock, *The Entropy Tango* (London: NEL, 1981), p.121.

11 There is an interesting visual echo of 'The Schizoid Man' in a much later Cornelius text. In *Michael Moorcock's Multiverse*, a collection of graphic narratives Moorcock created with a variety of artists, Cornelius is discovered by his cousin Seaton Begg, the Metatemporal Detective, sequestered in Castle Auchy. 'Speaking of ourselves, I'm having a bit of an identity crisis', says Jerry, dressed in a vertically-bifurcated half-white, half-black Pierrot costume (Michael Moorcock and Mark Reeve, 'The Metatemporal Detective', *Michael Moorcock's Multiverse*, New York: DC Comics, 1999, p.183). Begg's response is: 'It's time I made this poor chap - - Pull himself together!' (183). In 'The Schizoid Man', the 'imposter' playing the role of Number 6 wears his customary black boating blazer with white piping; the 'real' number 6 (as Number 12) wears a white blazer with black piping. In Moorcock's *A Cure for Cancer* (1971), Cornelius had turned entirely black, a walking silhouette. The black/white visual splitting playfully emphasises the 'schizoid' psyche.

12 C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963) (London: Yellow Jersey Press, 2005), pp.218-9.

13 A very similar image can be found in one of Mal Dean's illustrations to the Cornelius short story 'The Sunset Perspective', first published in 1970. In this black-and-white ink drawing, a moustachioed cricketer in bacon-and-egg cap walks to or from the wicket, bat under am, holding the peak of his cap

either as a salute or to keep it being blown away from the down-wash of the rotor blades of a twin-rotor helicopter, the silhouette of which dominates the centre of the image. See Michael Moorcock, 'The Sunset Perspective: A Moral Tale', *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (London: Orion, 1993), pp.179-191 (p.179).

The Nelson Mandala

The attempt to deliver an academic paper at the science-fiction conference on June 12 199-, first assumed to be the act of a delusional psychopath, later led to enquiries of a very different character. Participants will recall that the little evidence collected seemed to point to the strange and confusing figure of an unidentified lecturer at the Institute. Other traces of his activities were found in a number of unexpected places: in a footnote to a paper on some unusual aspects of behaviour of depilated capuchin monkeys, published in an obscure journal some years earlier; in the fine print of the credits of a graphic novel, long since pulped; and in the background of a record sleeve of the pop group Tortoise Head, to instance only a few. Whether in fact this man was an academic suffering from delusions of grandeur, the figment of an ill-organized hoax, or, as some suggested, an avatar of the mythic figure of Shaky Mo Collier, is anyone's guess. What little evidence we have has been assembled below.

Apocalypse Kit. Dr Baker studied the documents laid out on the demonstration table. These were: (1) a map of the London Underground; (2) fragments of a paper entitled 'The Nelson Mandala'; (3) photograph of V-2 rocket bomb; (4) Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for Wilde's *Salome*; (5) J.G Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition* and Iain Sinclair's *Crash*; (6) Max Ernst's 'Garden Airplane Traps'.

He turned to the audience. 'You say these constitute an apocalypse kit?'

Ballard, J(ames) G(raham). Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition*, which collected his production of 'concentrated novels' of the late 1960s, and was published in 1969, is described by the novelist Iain Sinclair as 'as much like storyboards for unmakeable films as auditions for future books'. Sinclair also suggests that *The Atrocity Exhibition* rehearses many of the concerns of Ballard's later novels. He argues that

Nobody could be expected to act on these instructions, they were magical and potentially threatening to the fabric of the received world.[1]

Sinclair suggests, then, that Ballard's fiction of the time, offering as it does narratives of 'transgressive' sexuality, catastrophe, and the collision of the human body with technologies of transport, communication and suburban environment, is a type of 'spoiled prophecy', an invocation and in some sense celebration of the new individual, sexual and social possibilities of the contemporary world. Sinclair also writes:

Ballard's poetic is anti-populist, anti-city. It's a demented meltdown of Thatcher and Aleister Crowley: do what you will is all of the law, repression is death. No interference from the state, no nannying. Canary wharf triumphalism and the inalienable right to kill yourself on an orbital motorway as you fight your way to work. What is astonishing is the courage, the recklessness of Ballard's argument; the unashamed trust in his own psychopathology.[2]

Sinclair's *London Orbital* is an anti-Ballardian text, although it appropriates the Ballardian imaginary, and vampirises Ballard's future. Sinclair (re)visits and appropriates Ballard's territory, the 'non-places' of 'storage units, hangars, satellite hotels, car hire companies, apologetic farmland as a mop-up apron for Concorde disasters', in order to exorcise its anticipatory power.[3]

Concentration City. Ballard's fiction interrogates the landscapes of London's marginal spaces: the Westway and M4 in *Concrete Island*, Heathrow airport and environs in *Crash*, the banlieues of *High-Rise*, the suburb of Shepperton in *The Unlimited Dream Company*. Each becomes the site of transfiguration.

Departure Lounge. The non-places of 'supermodernity', where time,

history and memory are erased, are, the French anthropologist Marc Augé suggests, particularly located in 'airports and railway stations, hotel chains, leisure parks, large retail outlets'.[4] They are also signally the topography of J.G. Ballard's fiction. Ballard is a spectral presence in Iain Sinclair's *London Orbital*, a text that narrates a series of walks around London's orbital motorway, the M25. Ballard's fiction is understood by Sinclair as prophetic: 'how does [Ballard] feel,' asks Sinclair, 'about predicting, and thereby confirming, the psychogeography of Heathrow's retail/ recreation fallout?'.[5] Ballard's symbolic landscape – overlit highways, airport service roads, corporate campuses – is deployed in *London Orbital* as London's Other, London's future.

Entropy. In a closed system, according to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, there is a universal tendency to the degradation of mechanical energy. Entropy will, conversely, tend towards the maximum. This means that the universe will eventually 'run down', all energy being the same at every point, a state of maximum disorder and undifferentiated 'heat death'.

Flâneur. 'It is to him, aimlessly strolling through the crowds in the big cities in studied contrast to their hurried, purposeful activity, that things reveal themselves in their secret meaning'.[6]

Gospel of Philip. 'He who has knowledge of the truth is a free man.'[7]

Holland Park. 'The myth of the golden past gave way to the myth of the golden future but, for a short time in the [18]90s and then the 1960s, we enjoyed the myth of the golden present'.[8]

International Times. Mal Dean, Moorcock, M. John Harrison and R. Glyn Jones collaborated on a Jerry Cornelius comic strip which was published in the underground paper *International Times*. The Cornelius strips drew upon (and satirised) the Swinging and, latterly, psychedelic London which formed *International Times*'s cultural production and reception. Moorcock, in interview with Colin Greenland, suggested that 'when Mal Dean was delivering the last of those strips [*The Adventures of Jerry Cornelius, The English Assassin*], he heard someone, Mick Farren or someone, complaining that we were sending up everything their paper stood for'.[9] Jerry appears as a *fin-de-siècle* dandy in

black suit and white frilled shirt throughout the strip until his regression back to 'reality', where he, Frank and Catherine are children enduring one of his mother's Christmas dinners.

Jerry Cornelius. Jerry Cornelius, the English Assassin, Messiah of the Age of Science, traveller in time and space, was, according to his creator, Michael Moorcock, 'a conscious effort to look at the late 20th century in terms of its specific mythologies and apocrypha'.[10] Bastard child of James Bond, William Burroughs, P. J. Proby and Swinging London, Jerry – like Catherine and Frank Cornelius, Mrs Cornelius, Shaky Mo Collier, Bishop Beesley, Captain Maxwell, Una Persson and the rest -- is at first a cartoonish figure, a protagonist without dimensionality who is delivered into various scenarios, adventures and capers. These portray Cold War conflicts in terms of sexual desire, revolutions in terms of end-of-the-world parties, and social change as the manipulations of continually resurrected egomaniacs.

The London of the Cornelius stories is depicted in terms of a carnivalized apocalypse, and fragmented narratives through which grotesque, typical or symbolic figures perform their functions. Moorcock has written: 'My vision of London, since my first unpublished novel in 1957 and the first Jerry Cornelius novel, "The Final Programme", in 1965, has tended to be somewhat on the apocalyptic and fanciful side, rather than the realistic'.[11] In the Cornelius stories, London is continually bombed into ruins and (like Cornelius) resurrected. In *The Condition of Muzak*, the last in the Cornelius tetralogy, Jerry approaches London in his trusty Phantom:

In the evening light the city was phosphorescent, like a neon wound; it glowed beneath a great scarlet sun turning the clouds orange and purple. And Jerry was filled with a sudden deep love for his noble birthplace, the City of the Apocalypse, this Earthly paradise, the oldest and greatest city of its Age, virgin and whore, mother, sister, mistress, sustainer of life, creator of nightmare, destroyer of dreams, harbourer of twenty million chosen souls. Abruptly he left the Middle Ages and entered the future, the great grey road, a mile wide at this point, gradually narrowing to its apex at Piccadilly Circus. Now, as night drenched the tall buildings and their lights burst into shivering life, he could again relax in his natural environment.[12]

Moorcock, resident in Notting Hill, creates an alternative London which exposes the ideological structures (and myths) of twentieth century Britain: fading Imperial dreams and Wellsian utopianism, the Cold War (and Vietnam superimposed on Europe), music hall and trips to the seaside, and bureaucratic order against the possibilities of new technologies, rock and roll, and sexual experimentation.

Jerry Cornelius is a character impossible to imagine except in terms of late 1960s youth culture. He embodies the sexual, moral and political possibilities of the counter-culture. In 'The Entropy Circuit', the epigraph to section 5 ('God') reads: '"There is no figure in modern developed societies to compare with that of the shaman"'.[13] Jerry Cornelius, however, is such a figure. The apocalypse of love at the end of *A Cure for Cancer* is a 'spell' and a 'ritual' created by Jerry through his black entropy box and Jimi Hendrix's *Third Stone from the Sun*.[14] In 'The Swastika Set-Up', Jerry procures a young woman for the vampiric symbol of order, Miss Brunner:

His mouth was full of blood. He popped the last of the liver down his throat and sucked his lower lip, appraising Helen, who stood shivering in the centre oft he pentagram. Then he took the speakers and placed one on each of the star's five points, turned to the console on the wall and switched on.

Sparks leapt from point to point and settled into a blue-green flow. Helen hugged her naked breasts.

[...]His eyes stopped blinking. His face was bathed in the blue-green glow as he watched Miss Brunner move in on the girl.[15]

Jerry, not averse to a bit of vampirism himself to keep his identity together, elsewhere discovers Miss Brunner burying a goat for magical purposes. Science, in the Cornelius stories, is a form of superstition, the line between it and magic blurred. Jerry Cornelius also embodies the failure of the counter-cultural movement, and ultimately his adventures are compromised, perhaps only existing as the daydreams of a rather hopeless youth.

Karen Novotny's Last Dance. 'Looking back, one can see Swinging London as a mass delusion, a world of endlessly self-aggrandising mythologies. If there was novelty, it was not in the much-acclaimed but barely supportable "classlessness", but in the creation of a massively successful media myth, a mix

of pop sociology and the propagandist's chestnut: the big lie'.[16]

LSD-25. 'The kaleidoscope's view of the eye'.[17].

Mother London. About his 1988 novel, Moorcock has written:

I started *Mother London* with a wish to write about my own experience of the world in my own city, and I wanted it to be a celebration of that city. I wanted to write about the mythology of London, because that had been my first impulse when writing the Cornelius stories too, and I never thought I'd done it successfully there. I invented a mythology more than I examined one'. (*Death Is No Obstacle* 101)

Mother London has a tripartite focus and concentric structure. Three people, the writer David Mummery, theatrical Josef Kiss and former coma sufferer Mary Gasalee are all to some extent telepathic. The narrative moves from 1980s London back in time to the Blitz of 1940, and thence back to 'present' time again. These narrative foci channel the voices and experience of Londoners throughout the post-war (and post-imperial) period, and the narrative is interspersed with fragmentary 'stream of consciousness' paragraphs which signify the Babel that is London's linguistic multiverse.

New Worlds. Michael Moorcock has written about *New Worlds*:

Style and technique was merely a means to an end -- frequently a very moral means to some very moral ends. We were looking at the Vietnam War, Kennedy's assassination, the computer revolution, the armaments industry, the manipulations of the media, the profound hypocrisies of the liberal bourgeoisie, the appalling condition of the majority of human beings on the planet, the useless currency of outmoded or inappropriate political language. But our response was scarcely a puritan one and neither did we recoil from *experiencing* our subject matter. We relished and embraced change, we celebrated the advent of new technologies and theories which opened up the multiverse for further exploration, which helped us understand our own behaviour and which provided us with some profound and spectacular metaphors! If the world was going to hell, we were determined to see how, but we were also determined to enjoy it while it was happening. Our curiosity was considerably greater than our uncertainty.[18]

Operation Rewrite. '"The only things not prerecorded in a prerecorded universe are the prerecordings themselves"'.[19]

Persistence of Memory. 'Dali's work, according to Ballard, constituted "a body of prophecy unequalled in accuracy since Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*"'.[20]

Queer Street. Jerry Cornelius, bored, shifted at the back of the lecture hall. Fragments, psychedelia, necromancy -- wasn't it all a bit old hat?

This trip hadn't paid off.

He tipped the catalogue into his bag and slipped out quietly.

Miss Brunner was waiting outside the lecture hall by the Phantom VII. She looked him over, appraising his black narrow-waisted jacket, black flared trousers and black Chelsea boots with high Cuban heels.

'I've had it,' said Jerry. 'Drive me to the docks, will you?'

'It's a all question of willpower,' smiled Miss Brunner. 'You're running out of time, Mr Cornelius.'

Jerry climbed into the back seat of the Phantom and drew his jacket around himself. He always felt a chill north of Ladbroke Grove.

Retinal Landscapes. In *Crash*, the narrator Ballard meets Vaughan for the last time in 'the mezzanine lounge of the Oceanic Terminal [...] this house of glass, of flight and possibility'.[21] They then both take LSD, and embark on a drive through London which will end in the consummation of their desire. The city is transformed into a tableau of light, and this vision is accompanied by both physical intimacy and images of transcendence:

Taking my eyes off the road, I clasped Vaughan's hand in my own, trying to close my eyes to the fountain of light that poured through the windshield of the car from the vehicles approaching us.

An armada of angelic creatures, each surrounded by an immense corona of light, was landing on the motorway either side of us.[22]

Vaughan becomes a psychedelic messiah, one who sacrifices himself in order to transform London.

Soma Holiday. The word 'psychedelic' was coined by Dr Humphrey Osmond. History notes the use of 'psychedelic' or hallucinogenic drugs in shamanistic rituals, mystery religions, and other religious rites as an access to a state more nearly approaching the 'divine'. Aldous Huxley, literary precursor of the nexus between hallucinogenic drugs and literary production died on the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. He wrote:

'To go beyond the insulated self is such a liberation that, even when self-transcendence is through nausea into frenzy, through cramps into hallucinations and coma, the drug-induced experience has been regarded by primitives and even by the highly civilized as intrinsically divine'.[23]

The Trajectory of Fate. 'My belief', writes Iain Sinclair in his BFI Classic text on Cronenberg's *Crash*, 'is that Ballard, drawing on Burroughs and Ray Bradbury, identified a trajectory of fate, derived from his own sense of "deep time", the crystalline images that decorate the borders of his fiction. He 'treated' episodes from the corporate sensorium, the parallel world of news headlines, advertisements, pornography and art. *The Atrocity Exhibition* was both a summary of everything Ballard had worked on in the 60s (texts, exhibitions, scripts) and a template for what was to come.'[24]

Universe. In Pamela Zoline's 'Heat Death of the Universe' (1966), Sarah Boyle's 'obsessions' with entropy and death are both a product of her entrapment and a way of *ordering* the seeming randomness and emptiness of her life. Sarah lives in California, where the blue of the sky matches the blue of the 'fake sponge' used for washing the dishes, which also matches the 'most unbelievable azure of the tiled and mossless interiors of California swimming pools' that 'hisses, bubbles, burns in Sarah's eyes.'[25] California is, in the fiction of Philip K. Dick as well as Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), the land of 'heat death': a warm equilibrium, 'all topographical imperfections sanded away with the sweet-smelling burr of the cosmetic surgeon's cosmetic polisher'. It is, like Ballard's suburbs, a 'non-space', a place of terminal entropy.

Vestigial Traces. V-1 and V-2. Alan Moore's *V for Vendetta*. Pynchon's *V* (1963), Benny Profane chasing alligators in the sewers. The V-2 suspended over the London cinema at the end of Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. The 1966 V & A Aubrey Beardsley exhibition which injected the aesthetic of *fin-de-siècle*

London into swinging and psychedelic London. V for Victory. Vietnam.

Waste Land. T.S. Eliot's vision of the end of the world, the Fisher King hoarding his fragments against the destruction of meaning. London is a vast necropolis, a city at the end of time, a broken world awaiting apocalypse. The brown fog echoes *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, a world signified by veils, strata of hidden subjects. The crowd flows over London Bridge like the river beneath, an endless flow of the dead. The city and the unreal city, the underground city, merge in the brown fog in a moment of anamnesis and revelation ('apocalypse').

XX, XY. (a) Salvador Dali to J.G. Ballard. Ballard to Pamela Zoline. Ballard to Will Self. (b) William S. Burroughs to Michael Moorcock. Moorcock to Angela Carter. Moorcock to Iain Sinclair. (c) SF to *New Worlds*. *New Worlds* to London and SF.

You and Me and the Continuum. J.G. Ballard's short story, collected in *The Atrocity Exhibition*. A story of condensed fragments, ordered on alphanumeric principles, in 26 parts.

Zenith and Ralph Nader. Top and bottom, beginning and end, *ouroboros* eating its tail.

Endnotes

1 Iain Sinclair, *Crash: David Cronenberg's Post-Mortem into J.G. Ballard's Trajectory of Fate* (London: BFI, 1999), p.8-9

2 Sinclair, *Crash,* p.110

3 Sinclair, *Crash*, p.177

4 Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995), p.79.

5 Iain Sinclair, *London Orbital* (London: Grana, 2002), p.218.

6 Hannah Arendt, 'Introduction' to Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Collins, 1973), p.12

7 James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984); Codex II,3; 77,14.

8 M. Lescoq, *Leavetaking*, quoted in Michael Moorcock, *The Condition of Muzak*, in *The Cornelius Quartet* (London: Phoenix House, 1993), p.801.

9 Greenland, Colin, *Michael Moorcock: Death Is No Obstacle* (Manchester: Savoy, 1992), p.54.

10 Michael Moorcock, 'Introduction' to Moorcock and Langdon Jones, eds., *The New Nature of the Catastrophe* (1993) (London: Orion, 1997), p.vii

11 Michael Moorcock, 'Building the New Jerusalem', *Casablanca* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1989), pp.155-159 (p.155)

12 Michael Moorcock, *The Condition of Muzak*, in *The Cornelius Quartet* (London: Phoenix House, 1993), p.641

13 Michael Moorcock, 'The Entropy Circuit' (1974), *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, pp.310-326 (p.317).

14 Michael Moorcock, *A Cure for Cancer*, in *The Cornelius Quartet* (London: Phoenix House, 1993), p.362.

15 Michael Moorcock, 'The Swastika Set-Up' (1972), *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, pp.264-296 (p.289).

16 Jonathon Green, 'The Swinging Sixties? As If', *The Guardian*, 17 April 1999, p.4

17 J. G. Ballard, 'Project for a Glossary of the Twentieth Century', *A User's Guide to the Millennium* (1996) (London: Flamingo, 1997), pp. 276-280 (p.277)

18 Moorcock, 'Introduction' to *The New Nature of the Catastrophe*, pp.viii-ix

19 William S. Burroughs, *Cities of the Red Night*, (1981) (London: Picador, 1982), p.194.

20 Sinclair, *Crash,* p.61

21 J.G. Ballard, *Crash* (1973) (London: Vintage, 1995), p.193.

22 Ballard, *Crash,* p.199.

23 Quoted by Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The Complete Social History of LSD, The CIA, The Sixties and Beyond* (London: Pan, 2001), p.65.

24 Sinclair, *Crash*, p.106

25 Pamela Zoline, 'The Heat Death of the Universe', *New Worlds* 173, July 1967. Repr. in Michael Moorcock (ed.), *New Worlds: An Anthology* (London: Flamingo, 1983).

Bio

Brian Baker lives in North Wales and teaches at Lancaster University, UK. He works critically on science fiction, masculinities and post-war British and American fiction, having published monographs on Masculinities in Fiction and Film 1945-2000 (2006), Iain Sinclair (2007), Contemporary Masculinities in fiction, film and tv (2015) and also The Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism in Science Fiction (2014). Since 2018, he has returned to art to re-energise his critical and creative practices. His work, drawing on Tom Phillips' A Humument, combines erasures with visual poetry to create image/text hybrids using found text or whole books. Argo-0, a re-working of HG Wells's story 'The Chronic Argonauts', was published by Steel Incisors. An Invention, a full revision of The Time Machine, is forthcoming in late 2023. He has recently finished a reworking of Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, spliced with erasures from Nietzsche's Will to Power. His work often moves through time and space, with journeys through strange dimensions. He works with the Troiiica art group in North Wales.

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Endnotes