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AUTUMN

LEAVING THE '80S



Due to the joys and wonders of the British Government and their ridiculous laws (in this case Media censorship) it is possible to bring you another copy of 'Leaving The 80's' - for those about to do so I remember when I was young being told that this country was free, well if that's the case will you please tell me why we had to stand on our heads and sing 'Dixie' before we could get any photo-copier-toner out of 3Ms. And thus so long as ole Gerald keeps on churning out the copies we will keep on writing the gibberish to be consumed by you mad dogs. As spring turns to summer, this final year in the most insubstantial decade of the century draws to a close ... Time is a trick of the Mind! Will the world explode before Christmas? Will our parents get hip? Will Mrs Thatcher go to an Acid-House party. Will this Amstrad Computer give me cancer? Who cares??

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THE SAGER-----S

A G A

What is the point of music? If the answer is madness, freedom, anarchy, sexuality, Dionysian ecstasy, intimidation and agony then read on, If, on the other hand you like your aural pleasure to be tame, kill yourself!

Gareth Sager and I go back a long way, right back to the late '70s, through the ambition and indulgence of the punk group (get it right, Marcus, the Pistols were just London boys!); 'The Pop Group' to my education in Free Jazz; 'Rip Rig and Panic' ending in the most perfect disco Lp of the decade; 'Kill Me In The Morning' ('Float Up CP'), ['Head' are merely '70s revivalists of occasional wit and rhythm.] The music that Sager played drove me on as I searched for wierder and more wonderful ideas to apply to boring old 'rock'n'roll'. I'm not really surprised that he hasn't made a stack of money; only a small percentage of real innovators ever do, what is disturbing however, is the way the rock press continue to laud Sager's old bands (P Group and RRP) while steering clear of serious examination of the doors that these outfits opened.

On the other hand a part of this story is personal, in 1985 I sent an essay on The Pop Group to one of the countries leading music papers not in order to earn money but because I wanted young musicians to realise that here was a different approach to follow in the '80s and '90s (that probably sounds idealistic but I wasn't so cynical then!) A couple of months later I followed this up with a live review of Float Up CP, neither were printed and so died the possibility of at least me offering some of these ideas to the general public. Two years later DC, Ray and myself sent a copy of the T-Mob tape to Dick O'Dell (ex-manager of The Pop Group and current manager of Head), he loved the cassette and that lead to meetings and a gig supporting Sager's latest band. During our meeting with O'Dell I asked a number of questions about The Pop Group and recieved some interesting and illuminating answers. [For info on what happened between us and O'Dell check Gallic Times #7.]

The truth of the matter is that more than any other musician that erupted from 1976, Gareth Sager has tried to create sounds of genuine value. He is of course a very clever band leader and musical director but more than that he tries to sell an 'attitude' and that is what my essay will be dealing with..... The saga starts in 1976.....



THE POP GROUP (1976-80).

The first thing you have to understand is that with punk a wave of musical optimism-negativism swept the country. From Sheffield ('The Future') and Liverpool ('The Crucial Three') to Manchester ('The Fall') and Bristol ('The Pop Group') teenagers were picking up instruments and 'making a noise', for a short period all rules were thrown out of the window. Mark Perry's magazine 'Sniffin Glue' ran a front page picture that stated; *"Here's three chords now go out and form a band"*, it had an enormous impact. Although many of the new bands were appalling some learnt how to play very quickly and started to create astonishingly exciting music.

The Pop Group were among the first of the punk bands formed in 1976 (before even The Pistols or Buzzcocks had released a single). They were young, average age 16 or 17, early reports position their sound in the speed-riff mould; *"...Mark finally talked Gareth into buying an old Burns guitar, Bruce already had a drum kit, and the first song they played together was 'My Generation', They got the chords right and couldn't stop, a crazy noise that lasted for three hours, Mark straining his lungs in the absence of a microphone."*

They took six months off between January and June 1977 to rehearse and write a new set of songs, recruited second guitarist John Waddington and burst back during the 'summer of hate', their live return peaked with a gig at the Marquee supporting the up and coming Cortinas (Nick Shepherd, Cortinas' guitarist later joined 'Head') Their first review in the New Musical Express (as it was then called) described their music as incorporating *"the cold cybernetics of Kraftwerk or Can, the hypnotic beats of reggae, the sombre robotics of the thin white Iggy and the metallic pop of Richard Hell"*, at least two of the songs played later appeared on record; 'Genius or Lunatic' and 'Colour Blind'. They also performed two cover-versions; 'Pablo Picasso' and (get this) 'Solid Gold Easy Action' (the old T-Rex number!) The reviewer (David Housham) was sold; *"Everything vocalist Mark Stewart has been predicting for the last year has been realised, and he will be at the top as quickly as Bryan Ferry managed it with Roxy in '72 because he is in real control of his destiny. Next year there will scarcely be anyone courageous enough to play on the same bill as The Pop Group"*.

Through the winter of '77/78 they played a large number of gigs and supported some big names (in the punk world); Elvis Costello, Patti Smith, Pere Ubu and The Stranglers. It was as support for The Stranglers that they met Dick O'Dell, he was managing that unruly mob at the time after serving a stint with Alex Harvey (one of the better pre-punk performers), O'Dell became their manager at the same time as the majority of The Pop Group were finishing their 'A'-Levels; *"The audience didn't like them, But they didn't shout and throw things like they did everywhere else, They just didn't know what to make of them, And I thought anybody who can get that kind of reaction has got to be special"*. (Dick has always been a sucker for a good live band!) By the middle of 1978 their first 'real' sound had been developed, teenage angst lyrics (perpetually questioning, not yet deeply political) mixed with an incredible 'free-form' rock music (2guitar, bass, drum), the music seemed to be going every which way or as Ian Penman wrote at the time; *"The two guitarists also structure their interactive playing like people inside the freedom of Jazz/Experimental music (everyone solos - nobody solos); abrupt, stammering, caustic, clinging like static on wool - a real cliff hanger"*.

Soon after becoming their manager, O'Dell organised Hugh Cornwell (guitarist with The Stranglers) to produce The Pop Group's demos (some of which later appeared on the 'We are Time - Retrospective'; 'Trap', 'Colour Blind', 'Kiss the Book' and 'Sense of Purpose' all boast a stunning use of sound, the noise (chorus) breaks are exhilarating in their efficiency, there are guitar (ah!) solos, even occasional backing harmonies and splashes of orthodox rock feedback. For me this is one of the best phases the Pop Group went through, (a) they are understandable (b) the guitars mingle better than anyone since Beefheart at his peak. But there was much more to come.

During the Winter of '78 they won their first national music paper cover, Gareth; *"We're just average characters who got pissed off very quickly"*, Pissed off with what? *"Everything"*, or *"We try to leave ourselves open like Leonardo da Vinci, You know the way a child of five*

wants to learn all the time", or "If you provide yourself with a limit then you can work inside it. Constantly hit the walls and just see if you can't actually break them down". In the same period The Pop Group headlined a national Amnesty tour for prisoners of conscience. After watching their October Electric Ballroom show Paul Morley commented: "They are worthy of support; this goes without saying. The theory stands firm, experience grows. But even now their lyrics begin to come into dispute,...." But Dick had done the business and by now the record companies believed that The Pop Group were 'next year's big thing', they scored a deal with Radar records (a subsidiary of WEA, Radar's most successful artist was Elvis Costello), Andrew Lauder (head of Radar) commented on them: "The Pop Group are not content with being quite successful. They want enormous success. They're so convinced and certain of what they're doing that I actually find them awe-inspiring".



I. to r., Mark, Simon, Bruce, Jon. (standing), Gareth.

The results of the Radar deal were heard by the public for the first time in May 1979, 'She is Beyond Good and Evil // 3.38' was an all time classic; pop Nietzsche. The opening guitar is like nothing you've ever heard (that's a Rickenbacker for you!) it tears itself into jazz-dub frame with a pulsating 'disco' bass, the drums of course are amazing, get that cow-bell. The lyrics offer an odd cross between ideal femininity bathed in military metaphor; "Western values mean nothing to her", "Our only defence is to get out as an army I'll hold her like a gun", but Stewart's (under control) voice, how can anyone do that stuff, range-size-depth? The b-side is equally impressive, an instrumental built around a killer bass-drum rhythm, this is psychotic disco! The remainder of the music provides a sort of sound-scape but it works because the original rhythm is so darn good. 3.38 by the way is the length of the song! A video was shot to accompany 'She is Beyond Good and Evil', the band are performing amidst enormous burning letters, this and the Don Letts shorts are occasionally screened at the Scala Cinema in Kings Cross. I think it's worth noting at this point just how good the Pop Group were live, like Sager's later bands you were always left feeling that you'd witnessed a real spectacle, Smith, Underwood and Waddington would be pretty orthodox in their performance while 'Big' Mark Stewart would flail around and Sager would do his version of a 'pop star'. It had to be seen to be believed!

Six weeks later the first Lp followed; 'Y' (pronounced 'why') boasted nine tunes (eh?) First up was 'Thief of Fire' which seemed to pick up where 'Evil' had left off, it's not bad but some of the improvisation seems to wander, we're talking 'noise as currency'. The bass is very dubby, Dennis 'Blackbeard' Bovelle producing, was the main spark in reggae outfit; Matumbi and was just about to hit with Janet Kay's 'lover's rock' number 'Silly Games'. (Nb John 'Welsh bastard' Cale had been original choice for producer but the band had found him; "a totally self-indulgent pig"). 'Thief' did however, pose a challenging start, are we

talking Prometheus? Gysin's 'Here To Go' motto makes an appearance as well but it all comes together for those "We will not forget" screams. The next three songs all miss the target ultimately, 'Snowgirl' is a peculiar pop song with a pleasant chorus but very weird verses, 'Blood Money' is a rant about the military-authority, another sound-sculpture but the idea of mixing Stewart's voice as a perpetually threatening echo, leaping from speaker to speaker only causes the listener pain. On 'Savage Sea' Sager plays piano and violin and the more aged among the rock critics enjoyed it, but for me the crazy mixing of the voice ruins this potentially good love (political imagery) song. End of side one is the Pop Group anthem: 'We are Time', immediately we are hit by the arrogance-determination-indulgence lines like "We'll break the speed of chance" and "We'll tame eternity". (Spouse it sums up how you feel when you're 19!) The song starts like a punk up-date of an early '60s guitar lick and descends into a dub reggae jam; at a certain point the listener just stops feeling anything, (For a better version check the August '78 Peel session where they perform the song along with 'Words Disobey Me', 'Kiss the Book' and 'Don't Sell your Dreams'. - One of the problems with this Lp is that they appear to be half way between where they were during the demos and where they would be when they cut 'Prostitutes'). Over on side two it's the same problem all over again, Radar gave them too much studio time (!), 'Words Disobey Me' is funk stripped down to it's minimalist core but there's still too much excess noise, once again we're going nowhere but Indulgia. Angry lyrics like "We don't need words - throw them away" do nothing for me. 'Don't Call me Pain' has a Sagerian horn intro which I'm sure he later used with Rip Rig, "This is the age of Chance", the music is tight, minimalist funk (which they would get mastered by the second Lp) and Noise. 'The Boys From Brazil' grows out of 'Pain' musically and links the search for freedom with Nazism in South America (No, I don't understand it either). But let's face it "If we forget the past we're doomed to repeat it!" The Lp ends on another soundscaper, scream city, it's pure indulgence with the perpetual Buckleyisms, once again it seems like it's gonna break but never does.



'Big' Mark Stewart.

To sum up what we have here is determined indulgence crossed with 'not quite there' free jazz and the odd splashes of spontaneous invention. All in all one hell of a let-down. But here's some other opinions; Paul Rambali; "Imagine a cross between Miles Davis' 'On the Corner' and John Lennon's first solo album (go on try) and you'll have some idea of what The Pop Group have aimed for. Not as harrowingly personal as 'The Plastic Ono Band' and not as fiercely wired as Miles' output, but similarly both primal and electrifying". Or Mark Stewart himself; "We were so fucked up when we made it, you have to be in a weird, tense frame of mind to listen to it. We were making the record and having people bring us our meals, do the washing up, Cigars and brandy afterwards, it was revolting. I'm really worried now about being true to ourselves. When we started we used to begin by jamming. It was free expression,

We tore songs apart like Hendrix ripped up 'Star Spangled Banner'. Now we just want to be understood; if it's free it doesn't have to be esoteric".

During the many interviews that followed the release of the Lp, the band were cited as having similarities with, among others, JB, Eric Dolphy, Charlie Parker, Mingus, Sly & Robbie, Clinton, King Tubby, Sun Ra, Last Poets, Charles Heydon, Don Cherry and Beefheart. (impressive praise!) All the talk was of tribalism, at about this time the band started using a tape of crazed African drummers as intro music before they mounted the stage. The Lp carried a photo of the Mud People of Papua, New Guinea on it's cover (the uniting of audience with performers was the dream!) The band had taken a leap into radicalism and often refused to discuss the music preferring to talk about political matters, they wanted interviews to be cathartic. Perhaps the most political aspect of the Lp was the free poster that featured a collage of nightmare images of oppression from all over the world, Stewart had 'bootlegged' the photos and prepared the layout with Rich Beale (later to be the singer with 'Head'). This did not endear him to Radar, nor did The Pop Group feel kindly of a record company that was a subsidiary of WEA itself a subsidiary of Kinney Corporation Ltd (a multi-national that among other interests was involved in arms manufacturing)! After much deliberation the band split with Radar (for the record Stewart, Sager and Waddington were for going, Underwood and Smith for staying!) Dick O'Dell called it: *"The best scam since The Pistols and EMI".*

Simon Underwood left during the summer months unable to carry on with bass duties after the arguments over Radar, he was replaced by Dan Katsis, who actually proved to be a tighter 'funk' bass-man. During the summer lull Bruce Smith disappeared to perform drum duties with The Slits who were without a sticksman after the departure of Budgie (Smith continued to tour with them on and off until the birth of Rip Rig). At about the same time writer Max Bell described Gareth Sager as: *"...the hardest member to fathom or like. At times he is forthright and deadly earnest, then suddenly he'll lapse into a fit of giggling silliness, looking for attention. His stage performances are equally unpredictable; he plays to extremes, some of them inspired, many of them distracting or under achieved".*

During the autumn their second single was released (by Rough Trade, the biggest independent), 'We are all Prostitutes'/'Amnesty International Report'. The drum-bass-guitar axis is perfection itself, now this is what I call funk. Sager's sax and guitar carve a NoISE niche of their own and Stewart sound like he's going to explode Musical Anarchy Musical Freedom. Hey Greil this was the lipstick trace you were searching for! Adrian Thrills reviewed it thus: *"Musically, it is a demented slice of ramshackle primal funk driven along by a crazed guitarist midway between Steve Cropper and a circular saw colliding with a corrugated iron wall".* The lyrics have taken a gigantic leap, the influence of Situationist texts methinks?

We are all Prostitutes

*Everyone has their price
And you too will learn
to live the lie*

*Aggression
Competition
Ambition Consumer Fascism*

Capitalism is the most barbaric of all religions

*Department stores are our new cathedrals
Our cars are martyrs to the cause*

*We are all Prostitutes
Our Children shall rise up against us
Because we are the ones to blame
We are the ones they'll blame*

*They will give us a new name
We shall be*

Hypocrites Hypocrites Hypocrites

The b-side featured a very wierd drum rhythm with an erotic nOISE soundscaper standing on it. Mark Stewart reads from an Amnesty International Report on the torture by the British army of Irish prisoners. The music grows stranger/freer as the report is read - I enjoy it much more now than I did then. Dennis Bovell was once again the producer, he did a much better job this time.



Sager (in kilt) & Stewart.

During the next few weeks the band played at the Rainbow (supporting Pete Townshend) and they closed the year at London University. Nick Kent was impressed: "They project a very real sense of danger of the sort I've not experienced since the Pistol's 100 Club days" (that's like saying someone was like God [or Elvis]), he continued: "...the band literally exploded, with drummer Bruce Smith providing a stop-start pulsebeat around which the bassist fired off volley upon volley of gutsy runs and the main guitarist played violent rhythmic outbursts that effectively mated Zoot Horn Rollo with James Brown's chicken scratch work. Meanwhile Gareth Sager, multi-instrumentalist and all-purpose extrovert, played second guitar but continually swapped from that to saxophone to clarinet to violin. Frontman Mark Stewart threw himself around with great abandon, screaming into the mike in a way reminiscent of Tim Buckley in his 'Starsailor' period (he lacks Buckley's range, but his ability to hit those phenomenally high notes was startling)". This gig was recorded ostensibly for a cheapo live Lp, it never surfaced! And more seriously Mark Stewart announced from the stage that: "We won't be around for very long". The end was nigh!

In February 1980 the third (and final) single was released: 'Where there's a Will there's got to be a Way' (c/w The Slits - 'In the Beginning there was Rhythm', nb. Bruce Smith played the drums on both tracks!) "We are not defeated, join the undefeated!" This is a real death-yell, a rant-chant-thrash (there are similarities with Edwin Starr's 'War'). The funk is tight but ... something is not quite right. Post-punk music had changed by this point, Joy Division, The Gang of Four and The Specials were the new kings and the Pop Group appeared to have been left behind (or at least to have gone off on a tangent). Ian Penman attacked the band in print for the lack of action in their lyrics: "I think to point at them (problems) in the way that I think has been done, in terms of worldwide wars, famines, so on, they exist, you see them on TV screens read about them in the papers ... I think you're doing little more than embroidering information, which is the information we all receive through the media; they exist, and they exist in certain manifestations, like starving children, tanks, whatever. And I think you could write lyrics which disturb those notions, lyrics that get more to the roots of why these problems start to come into the world". Some of this is true but for my money the second Lp did more than complain, it pointed the finger as well and to anyone harbouring anger in the provinces it provided a perverse form of hope.

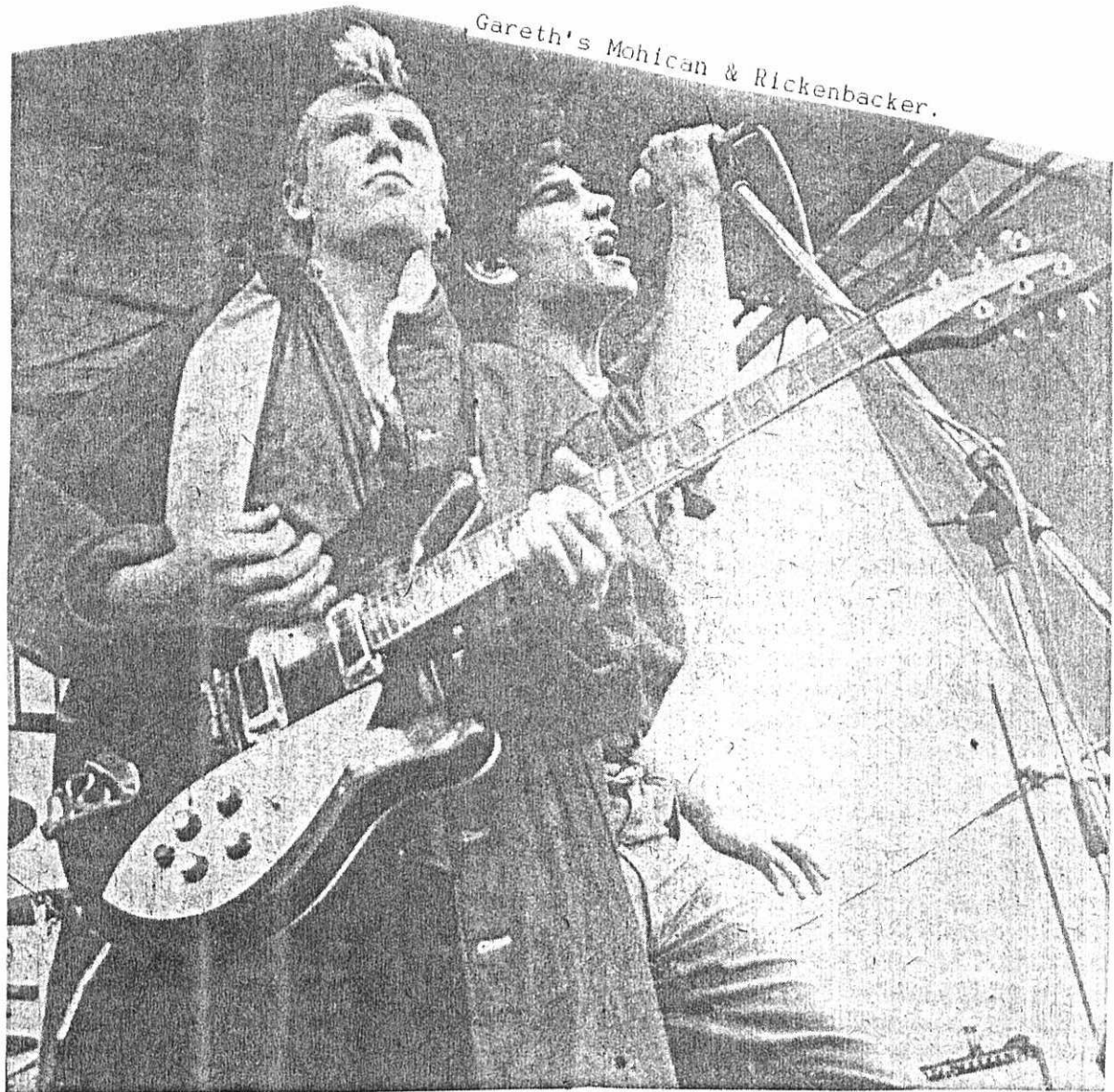
'For How Much Longer Do We Tolerate Mass Murder?' burst forth during March 1980 and answered a whole load of questions (while posing a whole bunch of others). Once again the Lp was bathed in a collage of barbarism sleeve (designed by Stewart and Beale) and the vinyl itself had 'Work-Buy-Consume-Die' printed on the central sticker. The tribal intro tape that they had been using since the autumn opened the Lp and crashed into 'Forces of Oppression', the funk was tight with a five-bar gated drum sound, Sager's use of sound is exceptional and the whole feels good. Contempt is the order of the day! 'Feed The Hungry' is dub-funk (echo on the guitars and noise), the bass sounds like it was recorded underwater. The lyrics are what 'Feed the World' should have been; accusing, pointing, vicious and betrayed. "Western bankers decide who lives and who dies". I particularly enjoy the rhyming of "Greed - Feed (the Hungry)". Next up is 'One out of Many [E Pluribus Unum], Gareth Sager's piano is very Rip Rig, the entire performance is an example of a sound-sculpture at it's best. The writers of this number were the Last Poets, a band whose uncompromising stance and vicious tongues were very much like The Pop Group itself. Only one question - who is the singer? 'Blind Faith' follows the same mix idea as those on 'Y', it's a better song but slightly thrown away (Don't ask me why they kept doing this!) The ending of 'Faith' is almost Chinese, the eclecticism of Rip, Rig and Panic was coming to the fore. 'For How Much Longer' continues in the same vein, but this time the mix idea begins to work (here-there-everywhere). The title is lifted from a German anti-Vietnam poster pasted up in Berlin in the '60s, the song lists all the crimes committed in our name but ultimately changes nothing. The synth in particular is deliciously weird. Side two opens with the gorgeous 'Justice': "I wake up everyday and look at my country, this is what the Blind man sees - doesn't look like 'Justice' to me". The music is very tight funk with exasperating noise, the lyric manages to list everyone killed in police custody during the preceding five years and asks the question: "Who polices the

police?" Other classic lines include "They're bringing in the army to break up the strikes" (this happened in '84) and "Ireland is their practice ground for controlling civil disorder" (True, true). 'There Are No Spectators' twists Situationist theory and ends up blaming us all, the music is dubby-funk with multiple echo on guitar etcetera. In a way it's a thoughtful/pensive piece but finally dies on its own soundscape. "There is guilt and there is Action". Penultimate tune is 'Communication' a semi-instrumental that feels like one of Ornette Coleman's 'free jazz' pieces, Sager blows a sax lick that I'm sure he later used with RRP. For all the indulgence this song looks toward the future (musically). The endslot is filled by the humorous 'Rob a Bank', more thrash-rant-chant (do you believe me now, Marcus, they got to the Situationists and the Ranters in the end as well!) The Horns blow 'Robin Hood, Robin Hood riding through the glen'. The number is all over the place, some nice bits, some silly bits.

Overall a much better Lp than 'Y', I'm still amazed by bits of it today; (a) the ideas (b) the funk (which is a lot more than petty white boy Spandau Ballet bollocks) (c) the anger. Paul Morley in his review at the time, didn't see it the same way: "The Pop Group are ghosts. The Pop Group live in a little hole. The Pop Group should not try so hard. The Pop Group should try talking to us. What is it they want to say? What is it I want to say?" I don't know Paul, I really don't!

During April and May the band toured Europe, some of the live tapes offer a clue as to the direction they were moving in: four new songs, 'Shake the Foundations' was a growth from 'Where There's a Will', lyrically it was simple, urging the audience to attack the 'thing' that oppresses them (and all set to a funky beat), 'Liberty City' was an almost 'Metropolis' like tale of despair in the future, the heavy dub reggae backing making the song even more ominous. 'Hotter than a Thousand Suns' told the Karen Silkwood story in nearly as much detail as the movie that would later appear in the mid-'80s, the reggae thing was becoming the Pop Group's speciality! 'Entertain Your Life Away' was more thrash-rant-chant, Sager screaming out "Join the Army / Fuck the Army" to the usual funk rhythm. In no way did the band sound like it was about to split up, in some ways they were playing better than they ever had before, the new songs offering real hope for the third Lp. (By the way, a few of these tunes turned up on Mark Stewart's first solo album in 1983).

Returning to Britain they played the Alexandria Park 50th anniversary festival for *The Morning Star*, taking the opportunity of the situation to dedicate 'Forces of Oppression' to "all the Stalinists in the audience" and 'How Much Longer Must We Tolerate Mass Murder' to Leonid Brezhnev whose armies had just invaded Afghanistan. During the same week their last Lp was released: 'We Are Time' was a Retrospective that culled it's material from Live tracks, demos and oddities. I've already mentioned 'Trap', 'Colour Blind', 'Kiss The Book' and 'Sense of Purpose' in relation to their demos. ('Trap' is, by the way, quite incredible!) The live tracks (which definitely were not from the 1979 London Uni gig) include a really powerful, ballsy version of 'Thief of Fire', drums perfect (as usual), sax all over the shop and an insane level of intensity. 'Genius or Lunatic' was one of their earliest songs and is quite splendid; a softer Stewart voice (sometimes his harshness can get wearing), immaculate dynamics, both complex and simple. 'Spanish Inquisition' (makes you think of the Monty Python gag) is a bit odd, complex minimalism led by an intelligent bass-line and a horn straight out of hell. The mix isn't great thus it's hard to make out the lyrics but they seem to be of the ranting-cut-up variety. The final live track is the joyous 'We are Time', this is much better than the version on the first Lp, a total amalgam of thrash and noise. Sager doesn't seem to want to leave the stage at the end, the horn noises go on and on! The other material is peculiar; 'Amnesty Report' appears to be a different version (mix) of the b-side of 'Prostitutes', it sounds much better in this format, less soundscapey, you can actually hear the imagination of the music. 'Springer' is a Sager jam, the Beefheartian intro leads into a piano (Mark Springer?!?), of little genuine interest, it merely points toward some of RRP's more indulgent moments. The Lp was packaged very cheaply (to look like a bootleg) and passed by virtually unnoticed in the rock press.



Gareth's Mohican & Rickenbacker.

A few weeks later the Pop Group split up. Sure, they'd made mistakes but there was never anyone else quite like them, live they were outstanding, on record adventurous; the ideas, influences, angst and attitude they displayed were both inspirational and individual! Yes, some of the lyrics were a bit 'preachy' but one shouldn't forget that issues are 'cut and dried' when you're 20! Perhaps the single most exciting fact about these aging lumps of vinyl is that the listener can actually hear the band 'growing up'. When I spoke to Dick O'Dell in 1987 he informed me that (a) it was different then, "*we all believed that anything could be done after punk!*" and (b) that the Pop Group's biggest problem was that they always had five leaders; it's interesting to note what happened to the band members after 1980; Sager and Smith went on to form Rip Rig & Panic (the second section of this essay!) Stewart disappeared for a couple of years finally returning with a scorching new backing band; the rhythm section from The Sugarhill Gang, in recent years he has been working with master-mixer, Adrian Sherwood (of Tackhead fame), John Waddington and Dan Kantsis formed Maximum Joy, who recorded one album for Y Records and disappeared, (Waddington worked at the Scala Cinema in Kings X for a handful of years in the mid-80s), Simon Underwood (who had left in 1979) joined a band named Pigbag and scored a hit in 1983 with 'Papa's Got a Brand New Pigbag', Pigbag split up soon after and that was that, O'Dell managed Maximum Joy and Pigbag in the early '80s but by 1984 his Record company, Y had gone broke! In retrospect it is easy to see that Sager and Smith were the most successful in the post-Pop Group period and so.....

RIP RIG & PANIC (1980-83).

If the Pop Group were, to use Ralph's phrase; the ultimate in teenage 'musical terrorism' then RRP were something else completely. When I first saw them they literally blew my mind! A visual extravaganza of dance, light and sound, they threatened as they converted as they celebrated. Like a phoenix from the ashes, Sager and Smith (always the best musicians with the P Group) recruited old school-friend and godlike pianist Mark Springer, bumped into Sean Oliver (of Essential Logic, who was busking a Last Poets song) and spent their royalties on demoing the outfit and scoring a deal with Virgin.

They played two or three extremely elitist early gigs during the first three months of 1981 at the A Rebours nightclub and the Primatarium (Scala Cinema), the usual set-up was for Springer to perform a weird piano piece, which normally involved strange yells, shouts and 'speaking in tongues' and for Rip Rig to follow him. The name Rip Rig and Panic is looted, by the way, from a Roland Kirk Lp title! The glorious mixer Adrian Sherwood was in charge of the desk at these early showcases and sure enough a buzz was soon circulating in the underground rock world. Asked during this period just what the new band were really like, Bruce Smith described it as: *"music that will penetrate to the core of your being . . . hang on, no, that sounds terrible - but we're definitely very different . . ."*

The new image/attitude was immediately made apparent, beat imagery (Kerouac, Ginsberg, Neil Cassidy) and the Free-jazzers, their talk was peppered with 'hip', 'cats' and 'diggin'. When asked about their background Sager replied: *"The Bristol scene was a big field of people getting into things that had more soul and spirit in them. Different people of different ages always helps; we used to know guys like Pete The Beat. On the other hand we'd all hit the disco scene in a heavy way, that teenage thing. That disco stuff from the early '70s - Bohannon, the Fatbacks, JB - was better than most of the stuff they're coming up with today. It got pretty crazy. People like Weasel were living in trees. I suppose Springer's your man as the one who got us into jazz. He was a freak, he'd be going out and buying Coltrane albums when he was 13 while the rest of us at school were still into 'Cum On Feel The Noize'"*.

The first vinyl from the Rip Riggers was 'Go Go Go (This is It)/The Ultimate in Fun (is going to the Disco with my Baby)'. The single came bathed in a sleeve that featured Leonardo da Vinci on the front and yet another tribal dancer on the back (the tribal thing was not yet exhausted!) The a-side is obviously far too weird for a single, African drums mixed with noise reminds me of what Bow Wow Wow might have offered in a fairer world, in fact Neneh Cherry (the new singer and wife of Bruce Smith) sounds quite like Annabella here. Yells of *"Free Your Soul"* escape the extraordinary mix but nothing prepares the listener for the ending where another tape has been grafted on of someone singing *"Can't afford to be Serious"* to a glimpse of piano rhythm. The b-side offered more hope, slightly reminiscent of the first Pop Group b-side; 'Ultimate in Fun' is a pulsating disco-groove-afro-bass-rhythm thing, dragged by it's hair (horns) out into the open. I do believe I hear a flute in there, but then the feedback stops it dead!

So far there was no musical reason to agree with Sager when he claimed: *" . . . the rock group thing should finish, groups are there just to be saleable, so 'Jackie' can sell your ass - 'Jimmy plays drums, Bobby sings . . .' - People have to loosen up and play with everyone else"*. What he was saying began to make some sense after the release of the Lp in September. 'God' gate-crashed the ending of the post-punk party and offered hope to some of the people who were rapidly growing bored with what 'underground' music was offering. (By this time the Ska revival was dead, the new rock of the Bunnymen, Teardrops and Joy Division had been still-born and the synth revolution was in full swing). The Lp featured 15 songs on two 12" singles (each side marked Red-Yellow-Green-Blue), all the tracks were written and produced by RRP. It opened on 'Constant Drudgery is Harmful to Soul, Spirit and Health' (weird song titles were their forte) a barrage of great funk coming off the bass and drums is varnished by a stunning use of noise on the guitars, synths and horns. The lyrics encourage the listener to lift him/herself up, and the tune ends on a scream of *"Up, Up, Up!"* The negativism of the Pop Group was now officially dead! 'Wilhelm Show me the Diagram' is one of Mark Springer's flowing free-form (Reichian) piano pieces, come home Cecil Taylor, all has been learnt.

Sager, Oliver & Springer in South London. 1981.



'Through Nomad Eyeballs' is an impressive example of just how well this band could play together, the instruments fuse the jam takes place and someone sings scat style in the background, Ari Up (of the Slits) makes an appearance on 'Change Your Life' (Nb Bruce Smith was still drumming for the all-girl combo where he had met Neneh Cherry, who had been a Slits on-stage dancer.) Growing out of a piano riff, the remainder of the instruments follow until it all falls apart (on purpose I'm sure). The 'African pop' vocals are mixed so low as to be a feeling rather than a reality!

The Yellow side opens with 'Knee Deep In Shit', Gareth sings: *"Attack-Defend-Attack-Defend - We all arrive at the same place in the end"*. This is a little diamond, godlike groove, the piano and Sager's instruments jam deliriously. *"If Christ had laughed when he was being crucified - his killers would have been petrified"*. Right on.. 'Totally Naked' is a complex funk piece incorporating modern jazz themes, the piano-playing is beautiful and Flash's (their studio blower) horn is utterly perverse. Another instrumental follows; 'Try Box out of This Box' is both slow and moody, the juxtaposition of sound is successful, Goddamit there's Moslem wailing in their somewhere. 'Need (De School You)' boasts Neneh Cherry, the song is sung in an imaginary language and it's over too soon (less than a minute); this is the pop direction they would follow in '82 and '83. Green side gives us 'Howl! Caged Bird', more mumbo jumbo lyrically (the 'Howl' of course is filched from Ginsberg), tasty synth and as usual wierd rhythms. 'Those Eskimo Women Speak Frankly' is not really like a song at all, more like a sketch of a bohemian party; *"Get your elbow out of the soup - You're sitting on the chicken"* (I often wonder whether they sat down and planned to write such madness!) 'The Blue Blue Third is a very complicated but aurally exciting piano piece, [Rip Rig & Panic Lps always split into four sections; (i) instrumentals (ii) Springer piano thangs (iii) Pop songs!! (iv) extended funky jams]. The blue side offers more Ari Up on 'Shadows Only There

Because of 'The Sun', the sax rhythm is at the crux, bass and drums are separate but 'well together', the tune is good, ends too soon. 'Beware (Our Leaders Love the Smell of Napalm)' is more mellow, memories of 'Amnesty Report' in the bass and drums flooded with tenor sax and effects. Penultimate track 'Miss Pib' is a crazed Beefheartian dialogue between Sager and Springer about musical grades (utterly ridiculous, totally indulgent and very English!) Final song 'It Don't Mean a Thing' is slightly more funky, good groove with a jamming piano, but doesn't stand out as an endpiece.

What can one say about an LP like this? It's DIFFERENT!! Out of 15 songs only three or four possess 'real' lyrics, the remainder are bathed in a mysterious foreign language (I seem to remember that Tim Buckley said something about singing in 'other' languages and being able to turn the voice into an instrument, here RRP have a go at it). Bruce Smith easily handles the move from funk drums to free-form. Any potential indulgence is easier to handle, at least the mix is good! Listen and dream... Richard Cook in the NME reviewed it thus: *"Finally, a group comes out with the sass, nerve, conceit and eagerness to let fly at those unhallowed barriers of jazz, rock, funk - any kinda wave, you want - and make it WORK. Rip Rig & Panic stand in the temple, spit on their palms and turn over the tables - 'God' is an act of faith in tumult, ... There are wild spirits at work here; tough music to be made, and Rip Rig & Panic have the chops and guts to do it ... 'God' bursts with an unfeigned excitement that can't miss. In eschewing the politics of hedonism (Chance) and the inward spiral of claustrophobia (Ulmer), I reckon these cats (not a term I bestow lightly) might just have cracked it".* Or Gareth, himself, on the new attitude: *"...it's definitely time to give the moaners the elbow, I like the cats who are complaining but they're saying 'Yeah' at the same time".*

A few weeks later their second single was released 'Bob Hope Takes Risks//Hey Mr.E a Gran Grin with a Shake of Smile' was sleeved in one of Mark Springer's father's paintings, from the other side glared the eye from 'Un Chien Andalou'. The a-side starts in a weird lingo and bounces into a dubby mix on the bass and drums (and the early horns), there is an unbelievable amount of excess sound - strings-piano-synth-etc. The horns alternately play on and off the rhythmic motif while the band chant meaningless lines, par example: *"She's got that stuff in her eye"*. My biggest complaint is that the mix occasionally drifts into the nightmare Pop Group feel! The b-side was not particularly great 'Hey Mr.E' starts off like late '50s/early '60s free jazz then is incorporated into a larger and weirder rhythm, it cruises into indulgent territory (a jam session) and finally wanders into Nowheresville. (At the same time they were cutting a Peel session and the version there is much better, it starts on a glorious orthodox piano and moves into a hard 'lead' funk piece, Sager is yelling out Hispanic style and the stew truly cooks, multiple rhythms mixed with groovin' piano doth a good pie make! The other three tunes aired on Peel were originals: 'Pullover on Socks', 'Symphony in Dave's Flat' and 'Mr.Barnum'. The elements are disparate, insane synth, showbiz pianer (Ragtime-Gershwin?) and the influence of Lotta Lenye! For my money better than the single.]

They giggered solidly through the Winter of '81/'82 converting many, I personally saw them at least three times and the result was 'Smack My Hand' (those who know will understand!) To give you an idea of what they were like, here is part of a conversation lifted from a bootleg (after RRP played the Venue in October 1981): The bootlegger: *"I think if this band could tour all over the country - and little bands could spring up just like them - It'd be just like the Pistols".* Scott Piering (Rough Trade): *"If I had a really good tape of that performance - I could sell 20,000 of them, It'd be really good for everyone".* In December, Neil Spencer watched their extravaganza and wrote that they'd: *"pushed their show into a more theatrical phase with some giant abstract backdrops and the increased role of Neneh Cherry and Andrea Oliver (bassist Sean's sister) and the shimmy, shuffle and taunt of their Afro-dancing (move over you Human League clumsies) ... The numbers still need more discipline and structure to highlight the instrumental prowess of Sager and Mark Springer but the ever-inventive rhythms of Smith and Hogg can cope with most of the indulgence. It's hard to see how anything short of major miscalculation can stop this group from stamping their identity*

firmly on 1982".

It was six months before any other recorded material appeared, the initiated were only offered one track on the NME 'Jive Wire' compilation cassette, 'Billy Eckstein's Shirt Collar', an instrumental that pissed on anything else on the tape. Opening with someone saying "get some flow going on this thing" the song drove itself into a passionately funky groove, all the usual instruments pump so violently you actually think you're listening to a sexual encounter. For all of you who think improvisation is funny there's a laugh at the end! But when the new single did arrive everything was forgotten, suddenly we could listen to Rip Rig & Panic in a pop context! 'You're My Kind of Climate//She Gets so Hungry at Night She eats her Jewellery' was the sort of single that only arrives once in a blue moon. For anyone who has forgotten, 1982 was the punk version of the summer of pop; ABC, The Associates, Dexys and Scritti Politti providing the soundtrack, this was Sager's offering. Six minutes long, the immediate observations were that it had a slightly more orthodox rhythm, Neneh really sings, (its completely understandable why she hit the big time this year - what a voice!) the bass and drums are mixed lower than in 1981 and that killer of a horn arrangement. Everything had come together, the yells were there, the jam-section was 'kicking', at one point the horns sound like police sirens, the piano trades off the synth off the... Arriving in a Cocteau (Orpheus) sleeve and being genuinely timeless it is impossible to understand why it didn't score in the charts! Oh well, "You're my kind of Climate - Swinging lost Paradise - Your touch, your smell (well you can tell) - I aint talking 'bout Heaven and Hell". The Springer side was equally exciting, a very ornate piano enters a harsh free-form passage (the sharpness and insanity of the music is beyond description). Strange vocal grunts and noises fill the speakers and the song continues into deeper and deeper intensity. Love it to death!

At around this time, Richard Cook wrote that: "'God' was the only English release of 1981 to suggest an altered way of playing, a changed emphasis of group structure and interaction. It presented a collective of brilliant listening musicians reared not on the tired, insecure scholarliness of classical rock bombast but on jazz, eastern and African musics, early '70s soul and figments of the European avant-garde". Sager's response was typically childish and arrogant: "Once you've got hip you've had it! Out on a limb!" As the second Lp was released we were informed that health and humour were their new bag. 'I am Cold' (like it's predecessor) came in double-12" format, each side marked North-East-South-West; the sleeve was graced by Picasso's famous sketch of Arthur Rimbaud. This new collection was very much one step beyond 'God', for one thing

they'd roped in the mighty Don Cherry (Neneh's step-father and ex-player with Ayler, Rollins, Coleman and the mighty Coltrane among other notables), to blow some trumpet. Sarah Sarahandi was performing on her viola and there were other new musicians. The studio was (over)used to it's full effect and of the fourteen self-composed and produced tracks, eleven were instrumentals.

The opening track was named 'Hunger (the Ocean roars it bites)'; coming in off a squeaky rendition of 'Softness is a thing called Comfort', the opening music is wierd and hard to place, the piano carries a tasty viola. The feeling engendered is one of doom and morosity. As the number speeds up, the listener is reminded of 'Constant Drudgery' on the first Lp, all this is made more poignant by the delicious Cannish drumming. The openers are interrupted by someone talking on the phone about a piano. 'Epi Epi App Woosh!' introduces Don Cherry, he plays a splendid trumpet part amidst a soft and busy



maelstrom of 'real' jazz-funk. The singing is in an imaginary language and the use of the electronic synth is an intelligent bonus. Track three is oddly titled 'Another Tampon Up the Arse of Humanity', a free (expressive) piano is bathed in semi-Pop Group harshness/madness, the sax is 'solid gone', it almost stops and then comes back completely differently. The aforesaid studio effects are in full use, high pitched voices and a multitude of 'wooshes'. 'Misa Luba Lone Wolf' is a Springer piece with guest Cherry, quite pleasing, it ends on Springer singing: *"Mike Oldfield got nothing on me!"* The East side bursts forth with the Rigger's second real pop (almost a blues) tune; 'Storm the Reality Asylum'. Like most of Sager's lyrics this was a collection of bizzare slogans and catch-phrases: *"Reason's a habit and a sham"* or *"Time is a trick of the mind"*, de Fries' trumpet-playing is a joy, the laid-back rhythm encourages any vagrant noise, darlin' viola at the end too! A great follow-up to 'Climate' (well, I loved it anyway!) The remainder of this side is instrumental; 'Here Gathers Nameless Energy' is improvised off a piano lick, a torrent of studio effects, Don Cherry and the constant weird yelling leaves one feeling insane. 'A Dog's Secret' begins with a rumble (in the jungle) moves into a saxophone/piano piece which slowly evolves into an incredibly odd jazz thing and then ends on an echo! 'Liars shape up or ship out' is dominated by an Eastern European viola, tape extracts drift over the drum rhythm and then it's gone.

Glancing into the South side we discover 'Warm; to the if in Life', a very African 'cool jazz' thing, once more the singing is 'from afar', a heavy dubby bass carries the various solos, sax-trumpet (Cherry)-piano. The song pauses for an ivory interlude and then goes up for the big down; *"Just Groove"*. 'Nurse Increase the Sedatives' features an almost Pop Group bass-line, great 'funk-rock' (!+?) chorus, the 'tongues' have it amidst the indulgence; a gem of a trumpet runs into a feedback ending. [You never know what to expect with RRP.] 'Take a Don Key to Mystery' demonstrates once and for all for those of you who don't believe me that improvisation must have a strong bass-drum core for the 'flow to come'. The rhythm creates the body for interference. On this particular example the piano goes crazy and the horns imitate the 'party' lyrics: *"Who put the Cookies in the Cookie jar - There aint no Cookies in the Cookie jar"* and ends on *"Go on little brother - Go on little sister - Don't tell 'em what you really know!"* 'Tax Sex' is almost a pop song; *"It's take, take, take - you never learn from your mistakes"*. Neneh sings from within to a heavy dub-funk rhythm, about half-way through the number enters a jam phase which seems to involve every instrument (drums, bass, piano, synth, horns and tapes). *"Whip off the fig leaf and show us what you got"*, a challenge indeed! Penultimate piece 'Subversive Wisdom' is a Springer vehicle, the other instruments join in (the drum-cymbals sound particularly good) and turn the beast from an exercise into a celebration. Endpiece on the West side is 'Fire eyes Joyful Silent Tears', Uncle Don blows both mellow and harsh over alternately disco drums and noise, the thing seems to be heading in a whole load of directions at once, very much like Rip Rig themselves.

The Lp was not gracefully received, Barney Hoskyns in the NME: *"Rip, Rig & Panic manage, with a foolish arrogance and bogus 'humour', to presume on its [jazz composition] licence to looseness to the point of producing four sides of very uninspiring, albeit (groan) eclectic, jazz music"*. A few months later Gareth Sager said in an interview: *"We are not jazz musicians! The only thing that we have in common with jazz is that we aspire to a certain spirit that some early jazz embodies"*. And this is the point, Rip Rig were not trying to be Albert Ayler, they were trying to apply some free jazz theory to progressive (I hate that old word!) pop music. My own opinions on the Lp are odd, when I first bought it in 1982 I was slightly disappointed (not enough pop), but after heavy listening for this essay, 'I am Cold' does make some sense, it is obviously a movement forward from 'God' and reviewing Sager's 1980's career, this is the only time that he could possibly have got away with something as radical as this. It is either a very mad person or a very brave one who when faced with potential success, pushes his most extreme product at the audience!

During the remainder of the year, RRP gigged Europe heavily (inspiring among others 'Mad' Klaus, a German drummer we auditioned in 1988, whose fave album was, you got it, 'Cold') and developed their jamming on stage thing, at one point in 1982 they were switching around

Rip Rig & Panic Live. 1982.



Sager steps on it, Andrea Olivier gets down.

instruments whenever they got bored. In October the fourth single was released, 'Storm the Reality Asylum*//Leave your Spittle in the Pot//It's always Tic for Tac you Foolish Brats' was marked 'This is not a record' on the sleeve! The a-side lifted from the Lp was an extended mix (and really no better than the original - see 'I am Cold' review for comments). 'Spittle' was almost African, the instrumental jam involved such diverse elements as Horns and Piano playing on/off the rhythm, a heavily gated drum sound, Noise and a generalised Hispanic feel. The other bonus track was a throwaway, 'Tic for Tac' boasted crazed Beefheartean singing to a ridiculous toy keyboard backing and what sounds like someone pushing a grand piano around a studio! [*Back in the old Punk days one element of the unwritten constitution was that singles would once again be separate from Lps (as in the early '60s), this is the first time that a Sager single was both released as a single and on an Lp! For the worst possible scenario see Michael Jackson who has just lifted his sixth single off 'Bad'!]

During early 1983 they recorded what for me is the first 'perfect' Gareth Sager Lp but first some quotes from an interview at the same time. On glamour: *"Real glamour is erotic, something that is positive and something that most people are petrified of. So much of today's music is really lacking in sex. Just listen to Don Cherry's trumpet playing - now there's real sex"*. On juxtaposition of influences: *"I go very much with the idea of cut-ups and superimposition, like listening to all the Beethoven symphonies at once, rather than individually ... it's humorous and it's getting new out of the old"*. And finally on the success or failure of Rip Rig & Panic: *"I think we are successful, I think Rip Rig & Panic are the most successful thing since Elvis shook his leg..."* Two singles ('Do The Tightrope' & 'Beat the Beast') preceeded the Lp but since both were later on the Lp and the b-sides were merely Springer piano pieces I shall neglect to discuss them.

'Attitude' was released in April '83 and was immediately pleasing. Twelve songs (only three instrumentals) on an orthodox 33.3 single Lp, the sleeve featured a (1976) punkette(?) superimposed on a Leonardo da Vinci medical sketch. The photo on the back was of the band in an abandoned church. The production of Sager and ex-RRP engineer Adam Kidron was slightly messy but not warranting genuine complaint. Overall the band seemed more unified, Sarah Sarahandi (viola) had joined and there was some truly great pop music on the vinyl. Sager's lyrics seemed to have taken a giant leap (he'd put off developing this element of his craft long enough!) Perhaps, most importantly nearly every track was preceeded by some sort of either musical or taped filler. It was obvious that real care had gone into all of this.

The opener was titled 'Keep the Sharks from your Heart', prime funk with arranged-controlled noise (a guitar sounding like a bell in the background) and Sager backing up the vocal with shouts. The lyric about keeping true to yourself was still idealistic: *"Everybody's spirit must be Free"*, but then we're into a piano-based middle-8 and we return to the wierd piano for the ending. A gem of an anti-Torch song follows (it promises release from heart-ache instead of exalting that state), 'Sunken Love' is based on a classic Smith-Oliver rhythm, Neneh Cherry sings with every ounce of her soul (it's here that she becomes a real chanteuse!) Some of the elements of this number would return with Float Up CP on the next Lp. On 'Rip open, but oh so Long thy Wounds take to Heal' (an instrumental) the horns push the piano rhythm, all this is helped by some very imaginative saxophone work. The song does not remotely get boring because it keeps returning to a central form (or notation). Fourth, was the single 'Do the Tightrope', a joyous return to the ideal of pop. The horns introduce it and both saxophone and viola follow the singing pattern identically. A tasty bridge and Neneh at full belt, (who sings with her, is it Hoog Oliver?) An example of the improved lyrics is *"Eternal yearning for eternal learning is what keeps this heart burning"*. The second instrumental/experimental 'Intimacy, just gently Shimmer' features a synth rumble mixed with a percussive rumble while the horns and strings share the surface in a very moody fashion. Final track on this side is also an experiment; 'How that Spark sets me Aglow' is paced by a primal drum rhythm (classic Bruce Smith this) and a one-note bass, tapes of laughter fade in and out and eventually the viola takes over, breaking into a passage that sounds at least a hundred and fifty years old!



Side two of the Lp begins with 'Alchemy in this Cemetery', one of my all-time favourites, "To Win or Lose it's all the same to me!" Two slices of Funk with Noise please, the return of the guitar is a joy in itself, the horns follow the rhythm of the indescribable rock-funk-jazz stick work of Bruce, Meanwhile Sager grunts the majority of the lyrics (Neneh's there as well) ending on a semi-spiritual "All God's children got a little Soul". This is the sort of number I kill for! The second single follows; 'Beat the Beast' is a glorious pisstake of occultists and all their hang-ups; starting on tapes played backwards over the intro chant we suddenly find ourselves in the midst of a genuinely funky pop song (almost verging on be-bop in places), another great line is: "Don't mess with mother Nature - She'll get you back some time later". Ecological or what? Probably what! Next up is what seems like a Springer set-piece, 'The Birth Pangs of Spring' it starts normally enough but turns into a monstrous Canesque (nightmare synth) rhythm, punctuated by more yells in that fictional language of theirs. 'Eros; what brings Colour up the Stem?' is more pop, the strings and horns in combat (by this point Sager had perfectly mastered the use of both in this type of music) and an abundance of synthetic noise, Chorus is good though. Penultimate track, 'Push your tiny Body' is a very short instrumental carrying on the love-hate-war thing between the viola and sax, the rhythm is extremely unorthodox, the bass appears to have been run through a synth and there are some glorious percussive flashes. The end is celebrated by 'Viva X Dreams' (intro snippet is a Radio 4 type-female saying: "It's a funny thing you know, People don't hear the things they're not expecting to hear, Long Johns aren't usually worn for correspondence".) Sager and Cherry sing together, the piano is incredible, stunning timing, the horns are once again almost be-bop. Goddamit the rhythm is gone, man! (An example of beat talk.) Everytime the Lp finishes the only thing I feel is 'Vive la Difference!'

Four months later Rip Rig & Panic split up! There had been little or no response to the Lp or the series of gigs they'd done to promote it. By the middle of '83 music had reached an all-time low, we were being saturated by the new pop - Wham, Howard Jones, Nik Kershaw and the record companies were re-gaining some of the power they'd lost in the late '70s. As Sager himself later said: "As far as Virgin were concerned there were hundreds of bands out there crying, 'Yes, please prostitute me, Me, I'll do it, So why bother wasting time on a bunch of difficult sods like Rip Rig & Panic?" The news of their departure was only tempered by the information that the majority of the band would stay together: "Hogman Oliver, Neneh Cherry, Flash and myself have conspired to form a new band called Les Enfants Terribles, while pianist Mark Springer will be found in the realms of solo performance and drummer Bruce Smith will be journeying to New York, where he'll join Don Cherry". So, next it is to Float Up CP that we must look (the Cocteau name mysteriously disappeared) for what actually turned out to be the conclusion to the Rip Rig & Panic experiment.

FLOAT UP CP (1983-86).

This period was without doubt one of the hardest for Gareth Sager but also one that created perhaps his greatest Lp. Float Up CP (God knows what it stands for, at the time some thought CP = Charlie Parker, but somehow I doubt it!) were a progression from RRP and also a totally different band. Springer was gone and with him, the out-of-control jam sessions that had been so much the mark of Rip Rig. But like a development from 'Attitude' the new band dealt in killer funky pop music. (The band featured Sager [now just playing guitar and keyboards], Sean Oliver [who was simultaneously making a name for himself as a dj at one of London's hipper niteclubs], Neneh Cherry, Sara Sarahandi [the viola player who had joined Rip Rig during their final days] and a new drummer, Derek Goddard; Bruce Smith was back within a few weeks!) A series of unpublicised gigs in early 1984 led to a one-off deal with Rough Trade. In August the single 'Jays' Address' was released, apparently it scored 'single of the week' in The Sun! The song was happiness incarnate, a nice rhythm with lush saxophone and viola playing together, providing the perfect foil for a Neneh Cherry vocal that explored all the potentials of her mighty range. The harmonies are a joy and the "Ah! Ah! Ah!" of the electronically treated voice (during the instrumental breaks) is both pleasurable and necessary.

Two months later Sager was asked what he still had to offer, his reply is of interest: *"What we feel we have, what we've always had, is the most saleable thing possible. It's an exuberance, a zest for life, I feel as if I died about three times during the Pop Group stuff, but I'm still swinging. Just by going through all that frustrated angst stuff, having been one of the best representatives of it, the music and experiences that I can impart to 16 year olds are just in a different league to all the shit that's around".* Float Up CP were a band who received minimal press coverage, I gather they recorded a Kid Jensen radio session in 1984 but I've never heard it, only one NME interview exists (here begins the 'Ignore Sager' period of music criticism that persists to this day).

I saw Float Up CP twice over the next six months, firstly in a tiny church(?) hall in North London (Oct '84), where they played a messy but interesting set, it was obvious immediately that at least some of the new songs were deliciously obscene; 'Sexy Bushes' and 'You Make Me Wet' (during which Neneh Cherry consistently grabbed her crotch, well pre-'Bad' this!) Their lack of funds was the most lasting memory of this encounter, the entire show was organised like a college gig. They even appeared to be moving their own gear. The second time I saw them was during March '85 at the Electric Cinema in Notting Hill Gate. At the time the cinema was running a series of bands accompanied by films of their own choice, Float Up CP had chosen Michael Powell's classic tale of voyeurism/murder; 'Peeping Tom'. I particularly enjoyed the show and wrote a review of it which I sent to one of the music papers, here are some extracts: *"Sager runs amok destroying drum kits, decapitating violinists and piggy-back riding Sean Oliver ... Float Up CP have improved out-a-sight since I saw them last autumn ... Gareth Sager is now playing only guitar ... Sean Oliver has grown a small beard and this has obviously affected his bass playing ... Why were they playing in an auditorium full of seats? (This is music you have to dance to) ... This is organised anarchy. The music tight, the chaos complete ... By the way, Sager jabbered away in French, either had two bruises under his eyes (or some kinda make-up), had 'Baba' tattooed on his chest and nearly killed himself by dropping an amp on top of himself afterwards. Can't wait for the new Lp".*

It seemed like an eternity before the Lp came out (to the best of my knowledge there were very few more gigs), but when I got the vinyl onto my record-player I knew that it was everything that I had imagined. Months earlier Sean Oliver had said: *"For the last couple of years people have been so busy jumping the gravy train, they haven't had time to make records that can still be listened to in three months' time. That's why it's such a mess now"*; this Lp proved that Float Up CP were not going to toe(!) the opportunist line, this band were well and truly 'against the grain'.

Genuine pop music is a very misunderstood and much abused concept, one of the joys of this Lp is that it manages to merge superb musical arrangements with excellent performances and fascinatingly 'real' (ie, they talk to ME) lyrics. It was of course completely ignored!

'Kill Me in the Morning' starts with a 'Chemically Wet' piano, for a second one thinks Springer's back but then checking the Lp sleeve it's obvious that this is Sager's show. The piano fuses into some big horns and then we're in the land of electronic disco. "*Wet Wet - You make me Wet, Wet Wet - You make me blush!*" As usual the music contains some glorious noises, the vocal is backed up with shouts and chants (semi-tribal style) and the horns continuously punctuate the music. Lyrically both ambiguous and obvious, the whole experience is musically spectacular. Make your own mind up: "*De-frock the lot, De-frock the lot - You got it, you got it - To unlock that lock - I've found the key, I've found the key - Say what you do - You Float Up CP*". 'He Loves Me (No, No, No) [She Loves Me (Yeah, Yeah, Yeah)] is rooted in a killer bassline and the usual amazing Bruce Smith drums, it's a lush rhythm, the other instruments serving and supporting the pace of Neneh's vocals. Extraordinarily the backing voices are 'nice'. If pushed I'd list this particular song amongst Sager's top ten achievements, it's a gem, truly sad and moving: "*I love the way you walk - I love the way you talk - Don't matter 'bout my hair or the clothes I wear - I can't make you want me - I can't make you care - Where's there's smoke you'll always find fire - So I'll just know - Say it aint so - I know this so - He loves me No, No, No*". 'The Loneliest Girl' is another mourner, the bass is mixed low and the guitar, saxes and viola continue (as they did on 'Attitude') to feed and play off each other. Neneh sings good and we can commiserate with the feeling of despair: "*I'm blue, I'm blue - Cos I aint got you*" or "*My self-pity makes me so happy*". 'Forever Party' is more of the same, this time softer funk, it starts with a yell of "*Listen*" and believe me you do. There's an almost Warholian feel to the desire for a perpetual party, especially in the listing of names and deeds. Sager's guitar playing is splendid (this surely



Oliver, Sarahandi & Sager. 1984

is an area (in) which he has (been) constantly ignored, "To be and not to Party" (Volume III of the Hipster's Hamlet).

The closing number on side one is Sager's theme-tune (he sings it alone); 'Mad', it's slightly more Fatback in feel, verging on the threatening, Sager's voice is not great but certainly not bad, Ollie Moore (ex of Pigbag, a band that Sager had slagged in print during the Rip Rig era) blows some cracking saxophone, backing every line of the singing. The lyrics are interesting, Gareth persists in his bastardisations of old songs and nursery rhymes, in this particular case it's the (literary?) pirate chant; "Yo Ho Ho and a bottle of Rum - Come here baby and give me some!" Dc pointed out to me that the backing vocal ideas were later expanded with Head. Strangely the song ends on "He wants to go out-of-control". Side two is not as immediately enjoyable, 'Ghost Train Dive' opens with a Chinese thang (I think the Iggy tune 'China Girl' pulls the same stunt!) and then enters a major slice of hard funk. As usual the string arrangement is superb, the drum-sound is extreme and the middle-8 is indescribable. The lyrics deal with defiance in the face of challenge. 'My Memory' is a lighter number, in orthodox terms this would be classified a 'filler', odd fact No62: the horns play the role that the strings performed on 'Ghost'.

'Assassins' was a potential single (as was 'He Loves Me'), every time I listen to this Lp I am amazed at just what damn good funk players Sager & Co. were; Sarahandi's viola is excellent, the backing vocals are pushed well back and those musical breaks. The end, however, is disturbing, a Rip Rig thing that appears to fuse itself to the song and takes over. On 'Secret Desire' Sean Oliver sings, the funk is restrained, the chorus has a nice break but Sean is no singer! Not for the first time the keyboards serve as synthesised glue (this facet would continue into Head) and (almost as a bonus) there comes the first real noises from the saxophone. Oddly enough the mix becomes quite dubby about half way through, the usual maximum echo on the vocals and instruments. Skipping 'Joys' Address' (which I referred to earlier), the final track is 'Sexy Bushes', like a crazy '40s jazz thing it bursts forth but is unfortunately too much 'all over the place'. The clincher of the song is the choral-section where the saxophone and viola track up and down in unison. Overall I must say it's a nice idea but does the basic song merit it? Somehow I don't think so; Sad, because it was so much better live!

I must be honest, 'Kill Me in the Morning' was Nol in my house throughout the winter of 1985, maybe I'm mad but I considered the Lp to be both beautiful and the climax of one of the greatest post-punk careers. Sadly the majority of record-buyers weren't interested; The best to be found in the reviews is; *"...if it's great moments you're after, there are more than enough here. // ...whilst the rhythmic clout and horn arrangements that flash through a piece like 'Forever Party' are quite stunning!"* Float Up CP split up soon after the Lp was released and that was that! Neneh Cherry went solo and returned three years later the conquering hero (top 5 in the UK & the USA) with 'Buffalo Stance'. Bruce Smith won himself the drum-job with Public Image Ltd in 1986 (this was against the best competition in the business!) Rumour has it that Sean Oliver played the bass for Terence Trent D'Arby at one point and apparently has a new band at this very moment. Gareth Sager signed on the dole! Dick O'Dell informs me that growing sick of this enforced poverty Sager put a band together in Bristol that would do for the late '80s what The Faces had done for the early '70s. It was a nice idea anyway



Uncle Gareth

HEAD (1986-89).

Returning to Bristol, Sager contacted a couple of old Bristolian friends; Richard Beale (designer of the Pop Group Lp sleeves) and Nick Shepherd (guitarist with The Cortinas [circa '76-'78] and the 'Cut the Crap' era Clash [circa '83-'85]). The basic premise of the new band was both radical and reactionary, radical because it juxtaposed various musics in a semi-surreal fashion, reactionary because they shrouded their thievings in the 'trash-glam-cock rock' trappings of early '70s (Perfect!) British pop (T-Rex, Bowie, Roxy, The Faces, The Stones etcetera,...) Sager phoned up Dick O'Dell and informed him that 'stardom' was on the agenda and Dick became their manager. A series of semi-secret gigs in 1986 were followed by a one-off deal with Demon records and the recording of their first Lp.

I bumped into them by surprise in early '87, the single 'I am the King//Killing Time' began with a yell of *"Are you ready for star-time?"* The guitar slides into a funk stomp bathed in rockist guitars, the first line of the first verse boasts: *"Just throw me a party - I'll take anything!"* And you know Sager's back! The guitars play neatly off the rhythm and the lyrics force the listener to question is this the king in the Louis XIV sense or are we talking Elvis? (Or are they the same - both Sun Kings!) The horns enter half-way through and the song peaks with a scream of *"I've got a birth-mark right between my thighs."* The b-side was no big deal, an electronic drum sound, a guitar that is reminiscent of the Yardbirds and a lyric that is not unlike Patti Smith's 'Piss Factory' (only more basic). The 12" features a 'cake mix' that makes 'I am the King' sound like a perversion of a dance track.

Before the Lp was released Dick obtained them a stack of press coverage, as was always the case with Sager's other bands the interviews made good reading: *"Before we go on stage, we rub each other with embrocation, It gives us a wicked horn, Can't go on stage for hours 'cos we're trying to keep the horn down,"* or *"We're somewhere between 'Naked Lunch' and 'Crossroads', Remember the old manager, the really smooth one that drives the car? David somebody, We loved the way he was so obviously a perv,"* or when asked if they were more influenced by Prince or The Pop Group?: *"Prince was in the Pop Group but no one noticed 'cos he was too small, He used to get caught up in our flares, These days, we only wear flares at home when we're relaxing."* The gigs were good too, Dc and Ray watched them play in 6-Strings at Glastonbury (amidst the hippies [punks are hippies!]) I saw them at the Mean Fiddler, where they were outstanding; leaping on the monitors, knocking microphone stands into the audience and generally thrashing around like lunatics. (It's impossible to explain but if you can remember The Clash at their peak,... ie. before the summer of '78)

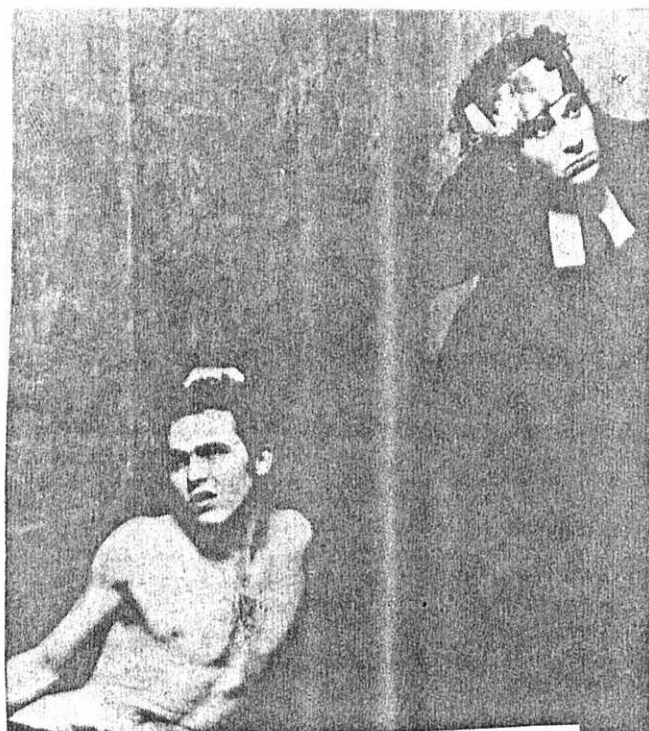
'A Snog on the Rocks' was released in June '87, the sleeve featured Nick Shepherd in leather chaps and a zillion 'boys own' references pinned on the wall behind him. The other side displayed a still from Abel Gance's 1927 masterpiece 'Napoleon'. Homo-erotica was the order of the day! The drummer and bassist were unknown to me, (in fact the drummer had already been replaced), Sager took the name; Hank Sinclair, Shepherd; Candy Horsebreath and Beale; Clevedon Pier! (It was already obvious that these three were the core of Head!)

To the record itself, first track 'Out on the Natch' bursts forth with electronic drums and (watered-down) Pop Group guitars, ('Natch' by the way, is short for 'Natural' as in Cider!) The opening lyrics were typically insane, boasting the name of their home-town and perverting an old rhyme at the same time: *"In Bristol's fair city - where the girls are so pretty - I first set my eyes on sweet Molly Malone - she wheeled her wheelbarrow - through streets broad and narrow - She could make it hard for me!"* References to Olivia Channon (who had just died) and grotesque guitar solos continue but it's all worth it because we still get classic lines like, *"I don't read, I don't write - I come up from Bristol town and I can drive a tractor! - I don't read, I don't write - I comes up from Bristol town and I can scratch your eyes out!"* Hallelujah! 'Sex Cattle Man' carries on the feeling of ambiguity, the lyrics veritably reek of sexuality, Richard Beale actually sings well (I was never that enamoured with the choice of his vocal chords!) Peggy Lee gains a mention and the guitar and keyboards play neatly off each other, the backing vocal harmonies although primitive in comparison to what would come later are pleasing as well. Track 3 is Sager's first solo (Head) writing credit; 'The Captain, the Sailor and the Dirty Heartbreaker' (great title) is

an astonishing ballad, the accordionist from the Pogues guests and the overall feel is one of 'strangeness'. The lyric deals with a sailor (rem. Bristol) jumping ship to find a girl! Since Sager is writing we are graced with the usual thefts, in this case: *"And the boy stood on the burning deck"* and the ancient shanty: *"What shall we do with a drunken sailor?"* Sager's second follows, 'I Can't Stop' is pop-rap-rock, (the press release claimed they were a cross between the Faces and the Beastie Boys), I seem to remember that Simon Walker thought Beale sounded like Billy Idol! There are some tasty lead guitar bursts and some excellent backing vocal ideas. The humour is there as usual: *"I don't care if you stare - at my rhinestone underwear!"* or the glorious backing chant of *"Fingers out on the Waterfront!"* (provides a plethora of new images for the Brando picture doesn't it?) Personally I think the subject matter is not as would at first seem obvious; a relationship; it is I believe the first of Sager's growing screams about lack of fame/success and his own analysis of why he continues. (But more of that later!) The last number on side one is the indulgent 'Crackers (fer yer Knackers)' this one manages to cross introducing the band in an infantile boasting way with a tasty dub reggae back-beat. Two elements are of deep amusement, the voracious doo-wop harmonies that grace the second half of the song and the splendidly offensive line: *"My friend slept with a member of the working-class - pushed a jam rally-polly up her ass!"*

Side two opens with the aforesaid 'I am the King', which is followed by the lush 'Don't Wash Your Hair About It', a song that bears many similarities with Mott the Hoople's 1972 classic 'All the Young Dudes', the music is much calmer and we are flooded with Sager's new obsession; the keyboard with which he would bath the next Lp, the bass-line is also pleasing. The lyric manages to be both silly and serious at the same time; an example of silly: *"Is that new shampoo you're using? Or are you just pleased to see me!"* To continue from what I was saying about the personal in Sager's songs: *"I've been paid and bought and I don't care"*, all this in a song about leaving a girl, yeah and while we're on the subject what has 'insider dealing' got to do with it? I must be honest, I don't like 'Crazy Racecourse Crowd' at all, the horn intro is nice but on light funk the drummer is just too boring, this guy is no Bruce Smith! Lyrically it seems to mean very little. 'Let's Snog' is a totally different matter, one could see it as the fourth of the big 'grinders' (after 'Natch', 'Stop' and 'King'). It's got a useful rhythm, (the guitars are lazy(ish) but enough), the middle-8 is pleasurable and I'm a real sucker for stuff like the literally barked backing vocal (utterly insane)! The lyrics are disturbingly sado-masochistic: *"I'm your lover not your friend - Are you going to beat me up or just put me round the bend?"* or alternatively the glorious idea: *"I just wanna ... breath you in"*. The final track also drew a stack of attention to them, the cheeky buggers had covered Billy Paul's 1973 Philly (Gamble & Huff) classic, 'Me and Mrs. Jones'; Head offer a brave stab, turning the intro into a restrained piss-take, the crashes are exemplified and the funniest bit is when Beale sings: *"While the juke-box plays our favourite song"* and the band enter into a rock break! This version, however does grow boring with time, I'm sure DC and Ray appreciated the self-conscious laugh during the fade-out!

Overall, it wasn't a bad effort, the production was solely Sager's and proved that this was one field that he had now mastered. The horns came courtesy of the Float Up CP gang and when one considers that this was Gareth's eighth Lp in eight years, there was no real complaint, I did have one question



Mark Taylor (on the floor)
Richard III (standing). 1987

buzzing through my mind though, when you've 'sold out' by limiting yourself to one field, sound, image; where can you go but down to the mellow fields of torpor (normality)?

During August Head played at the Mean Fiddler again, and we (that's Ray, DC, Simon and Me) were their support act, personally I didn't think they were as good as in June, but then... They were however playing new songs ('32A', 'Sin Bin' & 'Get Fishy') and according to Dick were on the verge of signing a major deal (it later transpired it was with Virgin). The photos that accompany the next two pages were taken by Ray; DC claimed Nick Shepherd was just an old rocker (one hell of a put-down) and Gareth Sager managed to be like himself backstage as well! He had a 'Head' sportsbag, left his guitar in the bin after the soundcheck and just nodded when I congratulated him post-gig. By the way, he soundchecked his voice by singing 'The Lady is a Tramp'!



As our desires for a managerial relationship with O'Dell grew so I developed a weirder and more perverse relationship with the music of Gareth Sager. [None of this surprised me, it's typical of the Gallic life-style for the thing you want most in the whole world to be tied to the downfall of one of your few remaining childhood heroes, perhaps it's natural for me to have harboured a death wish (actually a wish for commercial failure!) on Head ever since that day, well at least until last week]. A few weeks later their second and final independent single was released, 'I Can't Stop//Me and Mrs Jones' were both lifted from the Lp and remixed, I didn't buy the record but Simon informed me that 'Stop' featured a glorious heavy metal mix, I suppose I ought to check it out!

The first sign that something had gone wrong for Head was a track that came out on a Sounds freebie single during October '87, 'The Car's Outside' started with a very mellow intro and broke into what could only be called a late '70s 'power-pop' number, the guitars were mixed down, there was a very moody ending and a weak reprise. Just about the only thing that stated this was Sager was the lyric (discussed in context with the next Lp) and a shouted 1-2-3-4 intro into a keyboard break. By this point I was convinced Virgin would murder anything that was exciting about them!

It was more than six months before Head reappeared again, (actually I later found out that they had been the support on the Comic Strip's Bad News Tour! Not that surprising when you remember that Rip Rig and Panic had once appeared on 'the Young Ones'!) The first glimpse of

the 'new' Head was 'Sin Bin//32A//The Heads Go Up', a glossy 12" single featuring the American boxer, Floyd Patterson on the cover. Both mixes are extended from the ones on the lp (where I'll discuss the songs in more detail), suffice it to say that 'Sin' boasts far more 'soccer tapes' and '32A' contains a glorious radio-pop-'70s montage; bursts from 'Blue Jean Baby', 'Stoned Love', 'Oh, Baby You Know What I Like'(who done that one?), some Righteous Brothers, splashes of Reggae, Jeff Beck's party anthem; 'Hi Ho Silver Lining', 'School's Out', a Mungo Jerry howl, Sister Sledge's 'We Are Family' and the whole package ends on the Pop Group's 'We Are All Prostitutes' (a joke or a comment on Sager's current situation!) Final track; 'The Heads Go Up' was an utterly ridiculous (and indulgent) story written by someone called Johnny 'Boy' Lesley, it was quite funny when I first heard it but it rapidly got boring! To be honest the package hadn't impressed me! The single reviewer in the NME appeared to like it though: *"I've watched the Bristolian upstart's progress from Punk to neo-Beatnik with grudging admiration, From the pretentious darkness of the Pop Group, through the bookish Kerouac/Cassidy 'jazz' posturings of Rip Rig & Panic, Sager has, with Head! finally emerged as a simple beer-swilling bird-pulling LAD rifling through his '70s funk collection"*.

The lp was released a few weeks later, 'Tales of Ordinary Madness' (title courtesy of Charles Bukowski) came in a (very expensive) Neville Brody-designed sleeve; Beale spreadeagled on a boxing ring canvas (dressed as usual in his Flamenco costume!) 'Sin Bin' opens the collection and the listener is hit by a recording of a foreign football commentator yelling "Goal", it's an intelligent slice of Faces-style Rock'n'Funk that uses football as a metaphor for life/relationships (adultery?); *"All of my foul play has got me a booking - I can't hide nothing, everyone's looking,"* The traditional use of the backing "Na-Na-Na-Na" is at home with countless yells and grunts, the horns are controlled (the Float Up CP crew as on 'Snog') and there's a nice glimpse of piano towards the end, *"Coach! Put me on ice - It feels real nice,"* Next up was there sexist meisterwerk; 'Get Fishy' (a fish is a woman in gay slang!), the song starts with sniffing and then a gut-wrenching scream; *"Get Fishy, get fishy - Cos all the boys are dishy"* the stomp is bearable but as I remember, it was better live in '87 (good keyboard line though). The lyrics verge on the obscene in places; *"Ooh Ah, Ooh Ah - She loves my caviar,"* Number three is perhaps my favourite; 'Machete Vendatta' (Sager's first), a piano intro cruises us into (and out of) a chunk of 'up and down' funk that is simultaneously a great (and sad) love song. Beale's singing is impressive, he actually manages to hit those elusive high notes; *"We want the whole truth and nothing but the truth will do - I tell you honestly my lies would make it easy on you"*. The rhythm is both complex and powerful and the control of the multitude of instruments is an impressive feat in itself. The peak of the lyric is when the woman (in the song) yells; *"I can't wash you off - You're like an old tattoo - I have to spend my life with you"*. Know the feeling! The other two tracks on side one are no big deal, 'Cheeky Little Monkey' contains some brilliant old fashioned rhythmic piano, mentions Warren Beatty and at one point a tape bellows out; *"Have a banana!"* Sadly the use of noise is just too tame, '1000 Hangovers Later' was the song most appreciated by the rock press, the lyric is a Beale effort and personally I don't feel it, too much of a pretence. Shepherd's guitar solos are totally repugnant and the only thing that makes the song bearable is the miraculous use of strings (especially the cello.) Oh yeah and they bung in a reference to Thomas Chatterton, famous Bristolian forger.

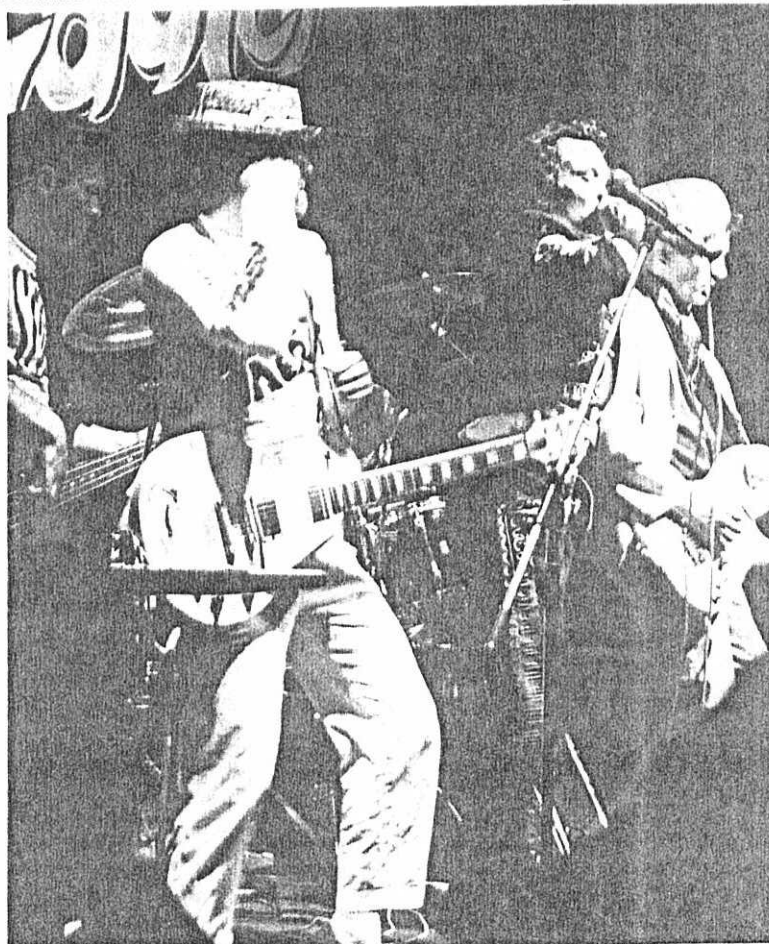
On side two 'Time and Time' (Sager's second) drives along pleasantly, surrounded by an abundance of joyous excess sound which the keyboards help to moderate/inflate. The song is a continuation from 'I Can't Stop' in subject matter; *"Me, I got no self-control - I can't even score into an open goal - But so what - I still have a shot" or "Time and time, I tell myself 'leave that stuff upon the shelf' - But do I? Well, Hell No!"* The supposition that this is all about fame, music and success (or lack of it) is re-inforced by references to Robert Johnson's 'Hell Hound' (if you remember, he supposedly sold his soul to the devil in order to gain fame as a blues singer), and lines like *"Score a winning deal" and "It's worth it's weight in gold - That's what I've been told - And baby, my soul's been sold!"* When all of this is greeted by old-fashioned horns then the intuitive listener knows that tragedy is around the corner. 'Car's Outside' is also Sager's, it's quite similar to the '87 version but

some of the harshness has been lost, this time you get a rocket launch count-off and various tape interludes. The lyric although ostensibly about 'leaving' manages to incorporate much of the material in 'Time': "Sure, I'm dodgy but I got dreams - Call me out and pull off my jeans - And I'm dirty, I get all flirty - Come on and get lucky with me - Take a chance on Me," Oddly enough the tapes urge the progenitor to "Go Honey, keep going baby!" Next offering is 'Jesus ain't got a Daddy', basically a filler; Heavy Metal funk with Beale running through his poxy acting stuff, "I want to swoon in your bosom" was funny the first time I heard it, that's all! But with Sager there's always something, in this case it was the scorching horns and the Alvin Stardust 'tribute' (eh?), Remember, "There is no Head!" Penultimate track is the aforesaid '32A', there really is no reason to discuss this beyond the fact that it's got stomping rock (very Clash) guitars and is a 'juke-box' song. What they're really trying to grab here is the 'feeling' of pop. "It's three minutes long - It's my favourite song - Makes me feel strong", you could claim that it's Joan Jett's 'I Love Rock'n'Roll' for grown-ups. There are some great ideas here though; "Oh, No, not the b-sides - the a-sides are better!" 'Tiger Tiger' opens with a steal from Blake's poem accompanied by a moody, semi-acoustic guitar and descends into pomp-rock of the sort I find utterly intolerable and impossible to comment on. The song ends with another quieter passage and Beale singing "I'm Cold - I'm Cold", a reference to the RRP Lp? Somehow, I doubt it!

Overall, I was very disappointed, the only constructive criticism the music papers managed to come up with was; "Making a prude of Prince takes a particularly dirty and vivid mind!" Bollocks, I could make a prude out of Prince in 30 seconds flat. All of this was only compounded when I went to see them play Dingwalls. The Camden Venue has notoriously bad sound and this particular night was no exception. They'd obviously spent a fortune on gear, all new guitars and a very expensive computerised keyboard set-up. The music they played was moderate, although Head themselves seemed to be 'on top of the world' and the evening was only made interesting when the sound packed in and Sager pointed at the long-haired sound man and yelled "What do you expect when they've got fuckin' hippies doing the sound?" Loved it. The generalised thrashing around continued and it was nice to see that the new gear was not

reversed, Sager managed to land a microphone stand on top of his keyboard. By this point I was convinced that it was all Beale's (the very moderate lyrics he'd written) and Shepherd's fault (all those goddamn guitar solos). And so I resigned myself to watching their downfall!

The fourth single arrived a few weeks later; 'Car's Outside// Jesus Ain't got a Daddy// This Face is a Lonely Place' carried on this feeling of imminent doom. 'Car' was better extended, sharper and as with 'Sin Bin' 'seperated', it also contained some great percussive effects and more tapes. 'Jesus' appeared here as an instrumental ("Singer AWOL"), it's all pretty futile, the playing is good that's all. As far as 'This Face' is concerned I like to think of it as one of those b-sides referred to in '32A'. I was going to



From Left-Right: Taylor, Sager, Beale & Shepherd.

comment that Sager appears to be playing harmonica for the first time here on record but I recently discovered a Rip Rig live bootleg where he also blows harp. The single came in a sleeve featuring Neal Cassidy as photographed by Allen Ginsberg (obviously the Beatnik thing wasn't just a Rip Rig pose!)

Neither of the singles were hits and all the money that Virgin had pumped into Head (videos, full-page adverts, interviews, nationwide tours) seemed to have gone to waste, (it's not the '60s or '70s now, the record companies only give you one chance!) The bass player (Mark Taylor) left and was replaced by Paul 'CJ' Francis. Once again I had to wait eight months before encountering Head again; during March this year they played the (new) Marquee three times, I managed to attend twice. The gigs were deeply depressing, the new material didn't seem strong and the oldies seemed tame, even their stage act appeared to have calmed down. Only two factors were of interest; (a) Beale introduced a song as being *"About a very bad man ..."* and the band broke into Carly Simon's 1972 hit 'You're so Vain', having secretly loved the song since my childhood, I was both shattered and delighted; amidst an audience of morons I found myself singing along and feeling happy to be alive. (b) Sager seemed to have taken the rock'n'roll thing to heart, even going so far as to say to the audience; *"Do you want us to play our regular set or do you want a 40 minute version of 'Louie Louie'?"* (Iggy - 'Metallic KO'). Personally I'd rather they'd gone the whole hog and done 'Louie Louie'!

When I started doing the research for this essay I seriously intended to praise Sager to high heaven for his work with the Pop Group, RRP and Float Up CP and kick the shit out of him for the way Head have fallen, but ... the third Lp came out and I was forced to re-evaluate my position ... (if only because Sager so perfectly justified so many of my theories!)

Towards the end of June, 'All the Boyz//Heaven is only Six Miles away//You're so Vain' arrived with virtually zero publicity. 'Boyz' was interesting immediately because there was no guitar solos. An electronically treated voice heralds a relatively minor piece of music but it's the lyric that really fascinates me: *"Don't you worry, Don't you worry, Don't you worry 'bout a thing - Just forget it, Don't regret it, Some battles you just can't win."* This seemed like a direct admission of failure from Sager's pen, sure enough he'd disguised it behind military, finic, boy/girl imagery, but I knew that it was a continuation from 'Time and Time'. The song ends on a relatively boring *"La, La, La, La, La."* 'Heaven' is similarly doomy: *"I'm on a 52-week losing streak"*, it's rooted in a semi-familiar piano rhythm which forms the foundation of an extremely sustained song. There's a sound like the tuning in of a radio in the background and the lyric deals with someone driving home from prison toward the only thing left of any importance in his/her life, (are we talking about hope?) Interesting. The Head version of 'You're so Vain', on the other hand was a bit of a let-down, for one thing the singer fails to hit the high notes properly. On the other hand, the rhythm guitar is nice and the lead is dead weird. I especially love the cow-bell that beats the song up to it's first chorus. Typically a big Sager keyboard drives us out, oddly enough one of the tape-in-cuts is *"This town ain't big enough for the both of us!"* '70s revivalists or piss takers?.

And so, ten days ago the Lp arrived and to date has been totally ignored by the press (save ten lines in The Guardian). 'Intoxicator' is, in my humble opinion a much better set than 'Tales of Ordinary Madness', the first obvious fact is how little money was at their disposal, cheap sleeve, no horns or strings etc etc... Song number 1 is 'Walk Like an Angel' which although still rock-funk (now verging well towards the rocky) is pure mid-period ('73) Bolan, it's not too bad, the backing vocal grunts of *"Yeah"* are just 'dandy'. The next six songs are all written solely by Sager and are all the better for it! 'Stalemate' is quite simple, smooth but subtle funky rock'n'roll, the lyric is similar (but more vague) to 'Machete Vendetta', it's a mature and interesting (perverse) love song. Once again the backing vocals are excellent, it seems like they're trying to rip off '60s and '70s soul band styles, it works. Third up is 'Ice Cream Skin' and it's a cracker, a heavy slice of rock (the same idea as 'Addicted to Love', only better). Beale sings about the doubt between an older man and his younger 'gurl' and amazingly Sager rips off his own Float Up CP song, 'Mad': *"Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum - Why do you have to act so dumb - Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum - I need a little woman to*

come and give me some", suffice to say it's a gem that really grows on you. Great sustained rhythm playing too (only one solo burst, and it's a good one!) I'll ignore the previously discussed 'All the Boyz'. During the final track on side one; 'The Party's Over' (remember Float Up CP's 'Forever Party'), all my failure theories are truly detailed and to be honest it's quite upsetting. Starting on a rip-off of Dr Hook's 'When You're In Love With A Beautiful Woman' (for woman read music [fame]), the song moves into a truly lush slice of (soft) funky rock. But it's the lyrics that really hurt: "Now that the party's over - it was just lust - There's more than ten years between us" and "With no source of income you gave me a home - I've overstayed my welcome". The backing vocals are perfection itself! At one point during the run-in, Beale yells out the Howlin' Wolf, Jim Morrison inspired "I'm like a Backdoor man", the ending twists between howls of "Get me outta here" and "Just keep her talking". Sure enough there's the pretence that it's about a man and woman splitting up after a party, but come on ... "I've had enough I don't want no more - I don't regret that we ever met - But you took what's best - And now I need what's left - I need a rest". Listen and weep.

The second real diamond opens side two 'Under the Influence of Books' (great title), is a grinding rocker with an almost Hammond organ style keyboard. In the first verse Lord Byron and Edgar Allen Poe get a mention but lyrically the real joy is found in the second verse: "I work in a down-town bar - Reading how to steal fast cars - So I can hit the road - Never come back - Like Jack K-k-k-k-k-Kerouac". Later in the song Beale does one of the best Marc Bolan impersonations I've ever heard and if the music is a bit safe in places well it's all worth it for "I Want to get away with murder and still be alive on the last page", some one ought to tell Sager he already has! 'Two or Three things' (nearly the title of a Godard movie) is a Beale lyric, even his stuff is okay this time; the music is interesting: somewhere between a stomp and a groove. There's a lovely bit of multi-percussive mixing and a perverse double guitar solo (one normal/one weird). On 'Soakin' My Pillow' they play a variation on 'Me and Mrs Jones' for real and it's good. The keyboard-strings are orchestral, the backing vocals are sweetness itself and if you can find me a band who can play in as many styles as this I'll eat my hat! Sager's last; 'Ships in the Night' starts with an excess of odd sounds, "There's nothing to fear - Except fear itself," The string sound is extremely threatening and it perfectly echoes the feel of a song that seems to be saying 'goodbye', from a man to a woman, and from Sager to us; "And cross yourself before you tell them my name". 'B'Goode or Be Gone' is an old-fashioned style party toon, it's not particularly good but I'll live with it for the horns and the fact that Head prove (once and for all) that they can play a pop song and play it well!

Perhaps, I'm being unduly kind to 'Mad' Gareth about this Lp but I do believe that the collection is far better (musically and especially lyrically) than most of the rubbish we get chucked at us these days. The Lp was produced by Michael Jonzun (who made his name with Tommy Boy records - a rap label) and recorded in the US of A. The last time I saw Head play live was five days after the Lp came out, they were gracing a dive in Shepherd's Bush. Amazingly the gig was great, the sound was appalling but the gig was great! The new bass player had left and was replaced by someone who hadn't perfectly learned the songs, Richard Beale introduced him as being better looking than 'Little' Joe Dallesandro (the Warhol film-star). Sager, Shepherd and Beale had all grown their hair long and they looked as if the last three years had turned them into aged rockers; none of this, however, stopped them from playing a classic set, the best songs off the new Lp were performed alongside 'Sin Bin', 'Car' and 'Time'. 'Car's Outside' was particularly brilliant, played at twice the usual speed, for a second the blood rushed up my back and it was 1978 again. As an encore they played a blues thang and Sager played some killer slide-noise. The audience was tiny (approx 40) but it didn't matter, Head were the Faces, I was God (that's how music is meant to make you feel!) and although it now looks certain that they will split up in the next few weeks and although they have failed to achieve stardom, it didn't seem to matter, I was watching them play and they were happening! Heaven was only six feet away!

JUSTIFICATION // CONCLUSION.

First of all, I apologise for writing such an enormous essay, one of the problems with an analysis of this kind is that there are so many things to say. As is probably obvious I have been a Sager obsessive since the late '70s, and lets get one thing straight we're not talking about some run-of-the-mill pop hustler or some ageing tosser-bastard-muso, Gareth Sager is the single most important British musician to have appeared since Punk; period! I have tried to combine my own ideas about 'perfect' popular music with a complete dissection of the 130-odd songs that Sager has recorded (and released) in the last ten years, on top of this I've attempted to tell a story of success and failure (mine as well as his) but more than anything I hope I've shown that in this medium, there really is the potential to do *anything*.

I'd like to thank Tom Vague (who sent me (free of charge) a package of Pop Group press-clippings), Eddie Wolfram (who tracked down some very rare Sager bootlegs for me), Ralph Tittley and DC Lord (who I went through the whole '87 O'Dell thing with) and finally Chris Underwood (with whom I spent countless late nights discussing many of the ideas expressed in this essay - Chris, of course sadly committed suicide in 1986).

It's important that I should lay the blame for what has happened to Pop music at someone's door: And so I say 'FUCK YOU' to the 1980's wankers who call themselves musicians, but don't seem to be able to record anything of merit. To the faggots in the music press who have been churning out utter gibberish for years, they really are pathetic, most of them want to be musicians and can't cut it and seem to think this gives them the ability to write about it. Sad! To the gig promoters who rip everyone off (performer and punter alike). To the major record companies who deserve all the shit they sign up and wonder why record sales have been steadily falling for twenty years. To the independents who are all boring, indulgent, back-slapping hippies. To the '60s people who ruined it then and still exert a sick, opportunist, racist influence on the entire industry. To the dj's who wouldn't know good music if it leapt out the sky and bit their bollocks off and finally to the record buyers who appear to have lost any imagination they ever had, I HOPE YOU ALL BURN IN HELL!

To close I'd like to remind you of a story about Vic Godard (another post-punk genius ['Ambition' & 'Spring is Grey'] who was also sadly ignored). A few years ago one of the music papers contacted his mother and asked her what happened to him? *"Vic is a postman now, He was treated very badly by the record business!"* Sort of sums it all up, doesn't it? The last word goes to Gareth: *"Even in the most oppressed circumstances, there's no reason that people should have to suffer the sort of rubbish that they're given by Radio One, There is so much more fun to be had than is ever imagined."*

Some additional notes:

1. With regard to my references to Greil Marcus, at the beginning of the essay, see the book review of 'Lipstick Traces' in the Reviews Section, // 2. A Pop Group tape recently came into my possession that proves that they didn't split up until after November 1980. (on the boot, the Pop Group are playing a CND rally in Trafalger Square and they perform: three (as far as I know) unreleased rants, two songs that would later appear on the RRP Lp 'God', Mark Stewart's 'Jerusalem' (Smith's drums are amazing) and 'There are No Spectators', Flash (RRP) plays saxophone and Adrian Sherwood is mixing). It's a fantastic gig! // Obviously there was no Lotte Lenye influence on the 1981 RRP Peel session, that was just a joke! By the way, RRP claimed their names (for that session) were: Lanpkin Schnod, Pinkle Ban, Miss Pit and the Stinking Hog. // 4. The sleeve-photo for 'You're My Kind of Climate' was lifted from Cocteau's 'Blood of a Poet' 1930, not 'Orpheus'. // 5. RRP used to jam regularly on stage, Can-style (making up songs on the spot). I also once saw them play with an aging black jazz drummer. // 6. Float Up CP were gigging from late '83 on, and the mentioned Kid Jenson session (Nov '83) featured 4 songs: 'The Loneliest Girl', 'My Memory', 'Chemically Wet' (better raver) and an unreleased number: 'Throw Me To The Lions' (it's in the same mould as their other stuff). // 7. The b-side to F Up CP's 'Joys Address' is called 'Desert Heart', no room to discuss it, it's a gem (another 'perverse love song, as good as anything on the Lp): *"All or Nothing is the way to be"*. // 8. The producer of the 'Jesus' (Head) re-mix, Chris Lord Alge, recently made an appearance as producer on Prince's 'Batdance'. // 9. Although Sager started to pluck singles from Lps (under record company pressure), he never betrayed two other Punk morals, to release an Lp a year and not to play old songs!

A GARETH SAGER DISCOGRAPHY:
THE POP GROUP.

Y. 1979. (Radar/WEA).

Thief of Fire / Snowgirl / Blood Money / Savage Sea / We Are Time / Words Disobey Me / Don't Call me Pain / The Boys from Brazil / Don't Sell Your Dreams, with free poster, Produced by Dennis 'Blackbeard' Bovelle & The Pop Group.

For How Much Longer Do We Tolerate Mass Murder? 1980. (Y/Rough Trade).

Forces of Oppression / Feed The Hungry / One Out Of Many (Last Poets cover) / Blind faith / How Much Longer / Justice / There are No Spectators / Communicate / Rob a Bank, with free posters, Produced by Dave Anderson & The Pop Group.

We Are Time: Retrospective. 1980. (Y/Rough Trade).

Trap (demo) / Thief of Fire (live) / Genius or Lunatic (live) / Colour Blind (demo) / Spanish Inquisition (live) / Kiss the Book (demo) / Amnesty Report (alternate) / Springer (out-take) / Sense of Purpose (demo) / We Are Time (live), no information.

She is Beyond Good and Evil // 3.38, 12". 1979, (Radar/WEA), Produced by Bovelle & The Pop Group.

We are All Prostitutes // Amnesty International Report on British Army Torture of Irish Prisoners, 7". 1979, (Rough Trade), Produced by Bovell.

Where There's a Will there's a Way // the slits: in the beginning there was rhythm, 7". 1980, (Y/Rough Trade), Produced by Anderson & The Pop Group.

(all songs by The Pop Group except where stated).

members of The Pop Group: Mark Stewart, Gareth Sager, Bruce Smith, John Waddington, Simon Underwood and Dan Katsis, occasional players included: Tristan Honsinger, Sean Oliver (?) and Mark Springer (?)

RIP RIG AND PANIC.

God. 1981. (Virgin).

Constant Drudgery is Harmful to Soul, Spirit & Health (written with D Wright) / Wilhelm Show me the Diagram (Function of the Orgasm) / Through Nomad Eyeballs / Change Your Life / Knee Deep in Shit / Totally Naked (Without Lock or Key) / Try Box out of this Box (written with D Wright) / Naed (De School You) / How!! Caged Bird / Those Eskimo Women Speak Frankly / The Blue Blue Third / Shadows Only There Because of the Sun / Beware (Our Leaders Love the Smell of Napalm) / Miss Pib / It don't mean a Thing if it aint got that Brrod, Produced by Rip Rig & Panic.

I Am Cold. 1982. (Virgin).

Hunger (The Ocean Roars It Bites) / Epi Epi Arp Woosh! / Another Tampon Up the Arse of Humanity / Misa Luba Lone Wolf / Storm the Reality Asylum / Here Gathers Nameless Energy (Volcanoes Covered by Snow) / A Dog's Secret / Liars Shape Up or Ship Out / Warm, To the If in Life / Nurse increase the Sedatives (The Torment's No Better) / Take A Don Key to Mystery / Tax Sex / Subversive Wisdom / Fire Eyes Joyful Silent Tears, Produced by Rip Rig & Panic.

Attitude. 1983. (Virgin).

Keep the Sharks from your Heart / Sunken Love / Rip Open, But oh so Long thy Wounds take to Heal / Do the Tightrope / Intimacy, Just Gently Shimmer / How that Spark Sets Me Aglow / Alchemy in This Cemetery / Beat the Beast / The Birth Pangs of Spring / Eros; What brings Colour up the Stem? / Push Your tiny Body as High As Your Desire Can Take You / Viva X Dreams, Produced by Sager & Adam Kidron.

Go, Go, Go! This is It // The Ultimate in Fun (is Going to the Disco with my Baby), 12", 1981, (Virgin), Produced by Rip Rig & Panic.

Bob Hope Takes Risks // Hey Mr. E a Gran Grin with a Shake of Smile, 12", 1981, (Virgin), Produced by Rip Rig & Panic.

You're My Kind of Climate // She Gets so Hungry at Night She Eats her Jewellery, 12", 1982, (Virgin), Produced by Rip Rig & Panic.

Storm the Reality Asylum (extended mix) // Leave Your Spittle in the Pot // It's always Tic for Tac you Foolish Brats, 12", 1982, (Virgin), Produced by Rip Rig & Panic.

Do the Tightrope // ***unknown b-side***, 12", 1983, (Virgin), Produced by Sager & Adam Kidron.

Beat the Beast (Sob Sob I'm Gonna Jail this Hell Hole Itch) // 1619 A Dutch Vessel Docks in the USA with 20 Humans For Sale, 12", 1983, (Virgin), Produced by Sager & Adam Kidron.

Billy Eckstein's Shirt Collar, on the NME 'Jive-Wine' Compilation cassette, 1982, Produced by Rip Rig & Panic.

(all songs by Rip Rig & Panic except where stated).

members of Rip Rig & Panic; Gareth Sager, Bruce Smith, Sean Oliver, Mark Springer, Neneh Cherry, Sarah Sarahandi, occasional players included; Ari Up, Don Cherry, Flash/Flush, Jez Parfitt, David de Fries, Andrea Oliver, Giles Leaman, Steve Noble, Debbie, Alph Wait, Woo Honeymoon.

FLOAT UP CP.

Kill Me in the Morning, 1985. (Rough Trade).

Chemically Wet / He Loves Me (No No No) / The Loneliest Girl / Forever Party / Mad / Ghost Train Dive / My Memory / Assassins / Secret Desire / Joys' Address / Sexy Bushes, Produced by Sager & Oliver except 'He Loves Me' co-produced with Denis Bovell.

Joys' Address // Desert Heart, 12", 1984, (Rough Trade), Produced by Sager & Oliver.

(all songs by Sager).

members of Float Up CP; Gareth Sager, Neneh Cherry, Sean Oliver, Sarah Sarahandi, Bruce Smith, Ollie Moore, occasional players included; Derek Goddard, David de Fries.

HEAD.

A Snog on the Rocks, 1987. (Demon).

Out on the Match (Sager/Beale) / Sex Cattle Man (Sager/Beale) / The Captain, the Sailor & the Dirty Heartbreaker (Sager) / I Can't Stop (Sager) / Crackers (Fer yer Knackers) (Head) / I am the King (Sager/Beale) / Don't Wash your Hair about It (Sager/Beale) / Crazy Racecourse Crowd (Sager/Beale) / Let's Snog (Sager/Sheppard/Beale) / Me & Mrs Jones (Gamble & Huff-Billy Paul cover), Produced by Sager.

Tales of Ordinary Madness, 1988. (Virgin).

Sin Bin (Sager/Beale) / Get Fishy (Head) / Machete Vendetta (Sager) / Cheeky Monkey (Sager/Beale) / 1000 Hangovers Later (Sager/Beale) / Time and Time (Sager) / Car's Outside (Sager) / Jesus ain't got a Daddy (Head) / 32a (Sager/Beale) / Tiger Tiger (Sager/Beale), Produced by Howard Grey (additional production by Sager).

Intoxicator, 1989. (Virgin).

Walk Like an Angel (Sager/Beale) / Stalemate (Sager) / Ice Cream Skin (Sager) / All the Boyz (at War) (Sager) / The Party's Over (Sager) / Under the Influence of Books (Sager) / Two or Three Things (Sager/Beale) / Soakin' My Pillow (Sager/Beale) / Ships in the Night (Sager) / B'Goode or Be Gone (Sager/Beale), Produced by Michael Jonzun & Head except 'B'Goode' produced by Sager.

I am the King (cake mix) // Killing Time (mexico mix) [Sager/Beale] // I am the King (high profile radio mix), 12", 1987, (Demon), Produced by Sager.

I Can't Stop (extended mix?) // Me and Mrs Jones (extended mix?), 12", 1987, (Demon), Produced by Sager.

Sin Bin (the stadium mix) // 32A (extended remix) // The Heads Go Up (a story), 12", 1988, (Virgin), Produced by Howard Grey (additional production by Sager).

Car's Outside (joy-ride mix) // Jesus ain't got a Daddy (groove version - singer AWOL) // This face (is a Lonely Place) [Sager/Beale], 12", 1988, (Virgin), Produced by Howard Grey ('Car' remixed by Bill Price, 'Jesus' remixed by Chris Lord Alge, additional production by Sager).

All the Boyz (At War) (Sager) // Heaven is only Six Miles Away (Sager) // You're so Vain (Carly Simon), 12", 1989, (Virgin), 'Boyz' produced by Michael Jonzun, 'Heaven' & 'Vain' produced by Sager.

The Car's Outside, on the 3rd Sounds freebie single, 1987, Produced by Sager(?).

members of Head: Gareth Sager (Hank Sinclair-Hamilton MacAdewical), Richard Beale (Clevedon Pier-Bertie Beale), Nick Sheppard (Candy Horsebreath-Chopper Harris), Mark Taylor (SMT-Blaze Castle), Will Ng, (Master William), ?Hill (Plastic Bag), Paul 'CJ' Francis, occasional players included: DD De Fries, BB Moore, James Fearnley, Paul Stewart, Roland(?), Sarah Sarahandi, Johnny 'Stivell' Seal.

Radio Sessions: Pop Group; John Peel 10,8,78, RR&P; John Peel 20,10,81, Float Up CP; Kid Jenson 27,11,83.

Bootlegs: Pop Group; Bristol Granary 2,10,78 / London University 11,79 / Intercollegiate Theatre, London 1980 / Milan, Italy 28,4,80 / Helsinki & Koln 2 & 10,5,80 / London CND Rally (Ally Pally) 26,6,80(?) // RR&P; London Primatarium 10,4,81 / Manchester Rafter's 2,10,81 / Manchester Fagins 31,1,82 / Womad Festival (Shepton Mallett) Aug '82 / Rotterdam Sept '82 / London Hammy Palais 16,5,83 / London Commonwealth Institute 4,6,83 / London Ally Pally 25,6,83 // Float Up CP; London Shepherds Bush Hotel 27,1,84.

On Film: Pop Group; Promo for 'She is Beyond Good & Evil', Don Letts Live shorts 1979, RR&P; performance of 'You're My Kind of Climate' on 'The Young Ones' TV prog in 1982, Head; Promo for 'Sin Bin' 1988.

Related Musics:

The Cortinas - Fascist Dictator 7", 1977 // The Slits - Cut-Lp & Typical Girls 12", 1979 // Essential Logic - Wake Up 12", 1979 // Pigbag - Papa's Got a Brand New Pigbag 7" & Sunny Day 12", 1981 & 1982 // Mark Stewart - Learning to Cope with Cowardice & As the Veneer of Democracy Starts to Fade Lps & Jerusalem 12", 1980's // Raw Sex Pure Energy - Stop the War 12", 1982 // Neneh Cherry - Buffalo Stance & Man Child 12", 1989.

Leaving the '80s II can offer it's readers a delectable compilation cassette of Sager's work in The Pop Group, Rip Rig & Panic and Float Up CP. The 90 minute cassette features 22 tracks and is available for £2 (contact us through who ever sold you the magazine!)

The songs included are; side 1; Trap / Genius or Lunatic / She is Beyond Good and Evil / 3,38 / Thief of Fire / We are all Prostitutes / Where there's a Will / Forces of Oppression / Feed the Hungry / Justice / We are Time, side 2; Constant Drudgery is Harmful to Soul, Spirit and Health / Knee Deep in Shit / You're my Kind of Climate / Storm the Reality Asylum / Warm to the If in Life / Alchemy in this Cemetery / Beat the Beast / Sunken Love / Chemically Wet / He Loves Me (No, No, No) / Mad.

BALLAD OF A STARSAIN

*"I'm as puzzled as the newborn child -
I'm as riddled as the tide - Should I
stand amid the breakers - Or should I
lie with death my bride? - Come hear me
sing, Swim to me, swim to me, let me
enfold you, Here I am, hear I am,
waiting to hold you." ('Song to the
Siren').*

They used to call Tim Buckley a love child in 1966 but Tim was smarter than that.

"I want to be perfect for you," he tells the boys and girls that cluster at his feet in the Trip Club and if they listen that's fine.

Every journalist wants to know if the songs are therefore poetry, if Buckley is a man with that old metric muse, if he has something he wants the people to know.

*No "Let's erase poetry to begin with,
because there's never been poetry in
music, If you call a song poetry you
have to be able to read it, Songs are
songs, Calling things poetry . . . why
that's a whole other thing, that's
literature, I write songs that are
almost like letters sometimes, A lot of
things don't rhyme, and they're all out
of metre, It doesn't make sense either
as a song or as poetry."*

By the time he's 19 Tim Buckley has made two albums for Electra Records and already the differences between what his songs say and the emotions they evoke are acute. He contradicts himself, deliberately, or just as a privilege of youth. Some people think he must be a protest singer in the vein of Tom Paxton, Tim Hardin or Bob Dylan. After all he has curly dark hair and hollow chiselled features and being sent to fight in Vietnam is a distinct possibility. He could be a rock and roller with one foot in the grave like all the other poor saps. *"Talking about war is futile, What can you say about war? You want it to end, but you know it won't, Fear is a limited subject but love isn't, I ain't talking about sunsets'n'trees, I'm involved in America . . . but the people in America, not the politics, All I can see is the injustice."*

Timothy Charles Buckley III was born

on St Valentine's Day, 1947 in Washington DC. He spent nine years in Amsterdam, upstate New York before his family moved for the Promised Land, the flatlands of California. In the formative years of adolescence Buckley lived in Anaheim, a place famous for its proximity to Disneyland and its preponderance of oranges - Orange County USA.

Buckley is a promising scholar but not a dedicated one. His big thing is music, country and western, and he hangs out in the yard of Bueno Vista High School with two guys called Jim Fielder and Larry Beckett.

"At school I got drunk a lot and fell asleep in class," He gets the pocket money working in a Mexican restaurant.

Buckley is acquainted with the troubadour's life when he was 12 and plays behind a lady, Princess Ramona and the Cherokee Riders. They all wear sequinned shirts and mocassins but this boy isn't going to be happy being a backwoods Indian for long so the Princess advises that he study the folk song and listens to the sounds emanating from the East Coast, a gathering storm.

At home Buckley grows up with his mother's taste for the stylists, singers like Ella Fitzgerald, Nat 'King' Cole and Lena Horne and white folks in the country idiom, Hank Williams, Flatt and Scruggs, Johnny Cash. As the kid learns he develops a taste for those musicians who bring a certain defined passion to their playing.

Although he never had a music lesson or a voice lesson in his life, Buckley learns to exercise his voice by screaming at buses and imitating trumpet players. He also develops a unique rhythmic guitar style which becomes a natural adjunct to his singing but technically is all wrong; as a kid in school Buckley had broken his left-hand fingers in a football game. He never could make a barre chord and used to ridicule his withered, lumpy hand.

He listens to guitarists and saxophone players alike, checking out the range and considering their melodic invention. Buckley is already rather more interested in the tones of Stan Kenton and John Coltrane than he is in the



social observations of Dylan or Leonard Cohen.

"I want to function in society instead of withdrawing from it, I want to be able to live with policemen, Torment doesn't make music - that's an American pop fallacy that's come out of the Negro soul thing - no matter how much a white person gets beat up he never has the soul that a negro has, You have a lot of white singers going around wanting to be spades, because they think they want to have a soul. But BB King sounds like a college professor, his diction is better than anybody I've ever heard."

When writer Tom Nolan, in Cheetah magazine, christened Buckley, Jackson

Browne and Steve Noonan the 'Orange County Three', the title was only used in jest. In reality the similarities between the Buckley and his singer/songwriter folksy peers were entirely superficial, though they inhabited the same place and the same haunts.

The mid-'60s had a positive virtue in that before people started thinking about modern popular music - rock - as a marketable commodity there really were no rules and no boundaries, Buckley could frequent the bohemian watering holes in Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York alongside the other hopefuls fresh from art school and film school.

There were exotic creatures like Nico and the Velvet Underground in the Dom to swap thoughts with and long drinking bouts in Nobody's where Tim, Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix (the four horsemen of one particular Apocalypse) could be seen downing shots of tequila and raising hell.

Buckley had a small band with regular dates in Hollywood's It's Boss club where he sang his and Larry Beckett's songs. Beckett, according to Buckley, was "a poet - he's starving in Venice (California) now". Old friend Jim Fielder played the bass sometimes but often the band was Lee Underwood on lead guitar, Carter CC Collins on percussion and Buckley on 12-string and vocal instrument. Throughout 1966 they played in the right places, the Night Owl or the Troubadour, until one night Jim Black, drummer with the Mothers of Invention, came down and was impressed enough to suggest that Mother's manager Herb Cohen take a look.

Cohen couldn't figure out what to do with the kid with the counter-tenor and the plaintive love-lorn songbook but he had a demo and took it to Jac Holzman, president of Electra.

"I must have listened to it every day for a week," Holzman recalled. "Whenever anything was bringing me down I'd run for the Buckley! It was a restorative. We spent a long late afternoon together and I explained to Tim that Electra was growing in a new creative direction and that he was exactly the kind of artist with whom we wanted to grow, young and in the process of developing, extraordinarily and uniquely talented, and so 'untyped' that there existed no formula or pattern to which anyone would be committed."

The qualities which Holzman saw in Buckley were good enough for Cohen, who couldn't think much beyond career, getting gigs and taking a cut - a manager to the bare bones but one with influence. Apart from Zappa, Cohen had Linda Ronstadt and Wild Man Fischer on the books and was able to showcase his latest find on the same bill as BB King on the opening night of the Fillmore East.

Buckley's debut album 'Tim Buckley' was recorded in three days flat and released in October 1966, graced with an effusively precious liner note that suited the boy's melancholic

countenance. To quote: *"Tim Buckley - an incredibly thin wire, just nineteen-years-old is already a kind of quintessence of nouvelle, the sensitivity apparent in the very fineness of his features. The man is a study in fragile contrasts; yet everything is in key, precise."*

"His songs are exquisitely controlled; quiet, complex mosaics of powerful electric sound, they hold the magic of Japanese water colours. The voice - crisp, full of strength and character - can soar, yet remain tender and delicate."

That was what Buckley called his 'Bambi' image and in truth he was only finding his feet. The band Underwood, Fielder, Billy Mundi on drums and emergent enigma Van Dyke Parks on keyboards, matched Buckley's romantic aspirations with a decidedly baroque flair - flat-out weepy strings and lavish arrangements in the early psychedelic mode, too lush not to have become dated but adventurous enough to merit the listener's indulgence. Songs like 'Strange Street Affair Under Blue', 'Aren't You The Girl' and 'Understand Your Man' give an indication of the area the singer is going to move into, although the strictly West Coast tripsichord blues doesn't enhance the direction, only the naivety. Producers Paul Rothchild and Holzman used some of the techniques they'd tested on Arthur Lee and Love's first album and would perfect on the Door's debut but they didn't suit Tim so well.

1967's 'Goodbye and Hello' marked Buckley's potential star-status in the Electra family. It took a month to record and employed a larger cast of musicians, plus name producer Jerry Yester.

It's a full-blown artistic failure, bedevilled by ambition and Beckett and Buckley's preoccupation with courtly love and secondhand moralising about the Vietnam war. As a product of its time the resulting artefact is fascinating, painfully sincere, bloated with overwrought metaphors and quaint images.

The title-track itself (with an uncredited arrangement pinched from Joshua Rifkin) embraces childlike wonder and unashamed hedonism and rejects the toils of labour and its rewards entirely.

Still, you can gain pleasure from the

pitting of Buckley's fractured high notes against the creamy, dramatic scores, 'Pleasant Street', (an anti drug number he retained until the end), 'Morning Glory' and the Fred Neil influenced 'Once I Was' benefit from a simplicity in arrangement missing on the attempted epic cuts, where Yester overshadows Buckley.

'Goodbye and Hello' dug behind the debut album for lyrical inspiration; here are the protest numbers that the first album eschewed. Its maker referred to the spectres of Keats and Shelley and saw it as the end of his writing apprenticeship. As Buckley told Andy Childs of *Zig Zag*, "Whatever I wrote after that wasn't adolescent."

'Goodbye and Hello', despite its failings, found Buckley modulating his tenor to an alto and above, below, anywhere, with a casual flair that surpassed the self-conscious stance of the lyrics. 'Morning Glory' became a minor hit, the album's sales outstripped its predecessor and Buckley enjoyed a live popularity at such venues as the Balloon Farm (with the Mothers of Invention) and prestige dates in the Cafe au Go Go that went far beyond any notion of the cult figure. He arrived with the worst album he would ever record but that didn't matter - he was a golden boy.

The influential rock critic Lillian Roxon put it most astutely in her oft-quoted observation: *"Nothing in rock, folk-rock, or anything else prepares you for a Tim Buckley album, and it's funny to hear his work described as blues, modified rock'n'roll and raga rock when, in fact, there is no name yet for the places he and his voice can go."*

Buckley's star was in the ascendant throughout 1968. He could afford to take a year out of the studio, to write and to assimilate the classic period of East Coast jazz improvisation.

His energies were divided between the pleasures of the mind and the flesh (especially the flesh). There were stormy liaisons with Linda Eastman (who could usually be seen crouched in the aisles of the Fillmore East - camera pointed up) and a longer romance with Hope Ruff, a singer-writer whose main claim to fame (and a legit one at that) was to have transposed the music for Sam the Sham and the Pharoahs.

He also had the respect of his peers.

Everyone from Paul Butterfield to Frank Zappa to Lou Reed gave credit to the 20-year-old boy with the gymnastic throat while the girls could not resist that frothy face and the promise of some new experience. Tim Buckley was big on oral communication.

The roadside trail took in England for the first time, a concert with label-mates The Incredible String band at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, where the singer was backed up by Danny Thompson and Terry Cox, Pentangle's rhythm section.

'Happy Sad', released early '69, bore out the virtues of transition. It's his first essential record and right up in the vanguard of controlled experimental recordings that emerged in the post-psychedelic haze. 'Happy Sad' was produced by Jerry Yester and Zal Yanovsky (Lovin' Spoonful fame) but the former's keyboard saturations are absent and the band is pared down to a jazz flavoured basic with bassist John Miller often leading the melody, leaving Buckley and Underwood to battle out gentle cool blue note chords. The contributions of vibes and bass marimba player David Friedman (who later worked with Weather Report) finally kissed off Tim's folksy roots, letting the music flow in one direction, into the ether.

Prior to making the album he and the band spent weeks listening to Miles Davis' 'Kind Of Blue', Bill Evans' 'Nirvana', 'Intermodulation' and 'Town Hall', any recordings by Monk, Mulligan, Mingus that came to hand.

Buckley is now in control of his destiny, Larry Beckett doesn't contribute, and the lyrics are almost incidental to the atmosphere that Buckley's vocal creates. Underwood too has found his niche, concentrating on harmonies and rhythm and leaving the weird stuff to the architect.

Buckley arrives at the place his voice can go, stays awhile and then takes off for somewhere else. The initial blues of 'Strange Feelin' and 'Buzzin Fly' are transformed by the new freedom into something honestly experimental that doesn't quite rattle the gates of the avant-garde until the fine textures of 'Gypsy Woman' where Buckley gives his Don Juan persona its full head. Now he is prepared to take his time with a song and the feeling of unlimited space becomes a reality.

The courtly face reappears on a semi-

madrigal, 'Dream Letter', but it's a territory that has absolutely nothing to do with past trials and absolutely no common ground with rock and roll - though Richard Dyer Bennet and Lotte Lenze would have approved.

1969 was a period of intense activity for the singer, one which was to produce 'Blue Afternoon', a set of songs that Buckley had been working on and off since 1966, followed by a sign-off album for Electra - 'Lorca' - which coincided with Holzman's selling of the company to WEA, and finally the miasmatic pinnacle of Buckley's experimental phase, 'Starsailor'.

Cohen had the kid solidly on the road in between times and the boozing was becoming an obsession.

Buckley's flirtation with hard drugs was not over. He took heroin if it was available - got right on the edge. Tim had a road manager name of Barry 'The Bear' Schultz who was employed to try and keep him in order - a thankless task at times, though Buckley soon numbered Schultz amongst his tiny circle of friends.

One time when they were working the Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Centre they needed some lighting designed, and called upon one Joe Stevens to do the honours. Prior to the Lincoln show, Joe recalls, Buckley had been ill in bed for some time with a bad cold but had refused all medicaments save the inevitable quart of Jack Daniels Black. The day before the headliner Tim is to be found crashed out in Bear's studio (Hole Hog Productions) on 6th Ave, sprawled senseless across a kilo sack of finest Columbian pot (a drug he abhorred). On the big day when the soundtrack call came, Buckley had vanished altogether but was eventually found with a laundry bag headed for the wash-a-teria. This was supposed to be a major star, about to play an important gig, and he was doing his laundry!

Another good friend from this period, John King, had a secluded farm in upstate New York where Timmy and co. were often to be found screwing the chicks from nearby Bard College, picking guitar and getting outside plenty of Tennessee's finest sour mash whisky.

Musically Buckley's prolific output was tinged with a reflective, wistful accentuation. 'Blue Afternoon' attempts to do for the voice what Miles Davis was

doing with his trumpet in his late-'50s melodic hat. The singer is able to stretch half-tones and harmonic crescendo over entire verses. Again the lyrics are all his; and again the details, erotic bluesy exhortations to the fair sex, are secondary to the style. On 'The Train' or 'Blue Melody' the entire band is moving across unknown edges, sparking off each other in the heat of creation. The sound is entirely live and acoustically powerful, heady natural noises.

'Blue Afternoon' was Buckley's first release on Straight. He knew Electra was folding, losing its identity along with the spectrum of classic '60s music that was being absorbed into big business. Buckley bitterly regretted the phasing out of the label. As he remarked *"You weren't afraid to buy an album from Jac Holzman."*

Buckley's first 1970 album was dedicated to the murdered Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca - and it shared his fascination with baroque mannerism. Tim's pipes twist and meander across plateaux of basso warbling and shattering, pitch perfect dynamics.

'Lorca' finally sealed Buckley's talents; he was beyond limits, the only competition in a field of one.

'Anonymous Proposition' and 'Nobody Walkin' bear a closer resemblance to the tonal directions of Coltrane's quartet or the silent screaming of Albert Ayler than to the more usual comparison points of the Mothers and Beefheart.

On 'Starsailor' Buckley and Beckett are writing together again for the first time since 'Goodbye and Hello'. In the interim Beckett had failed to find a publisher for his eighty-page epic tribute to the seventeenth century essayist Paul Bunyan; the experience seems to have matured him considerably.

Whatever the reason for the reunion, 'Starsailor' was/is as far off the rock wall as it's possible to get. For the first time Buckley incorporates reeds into the ensemble, in the guise of Mothers brothers Buzz and Bunk Gardner who contribute trumpet, flugelhorn, alto flute and tenor sax though Buckley frequently outstrips and eclipses their magnificent blowing with a series of the most outrageous yelps, squeals and bodyshaking scat singing ever committed to vinyl. And unlike Annette Peacock's 'I'm the One' - in some ways a

comparable record - Buckley doesn't resort to electronic treatment to obtain his effects.

The 'Starsailor' band toured America in 1970, Buckley often spent entire shows barking at the audience while the Gardners improvised fractured scales for him to soar above . . .

Lee Underwood had broadened his contributions to include electric piano and pipe organ, the traditional guitar chording of Buckley's earlier numbers had become rapidly outmoded.

Underwood was partially responsible for the change. After playing with Buckley on seven albums the guitarist quit professional music to take up jazz writing on *Down Beat* magazine. His article *Chronicle of a Starsailor* remains the definitive insight into the singer's art and influences. Before 'Lorca' Underwood had introduced Buckley to the talents of Cathy Berberian singing Berio to electronic backings.

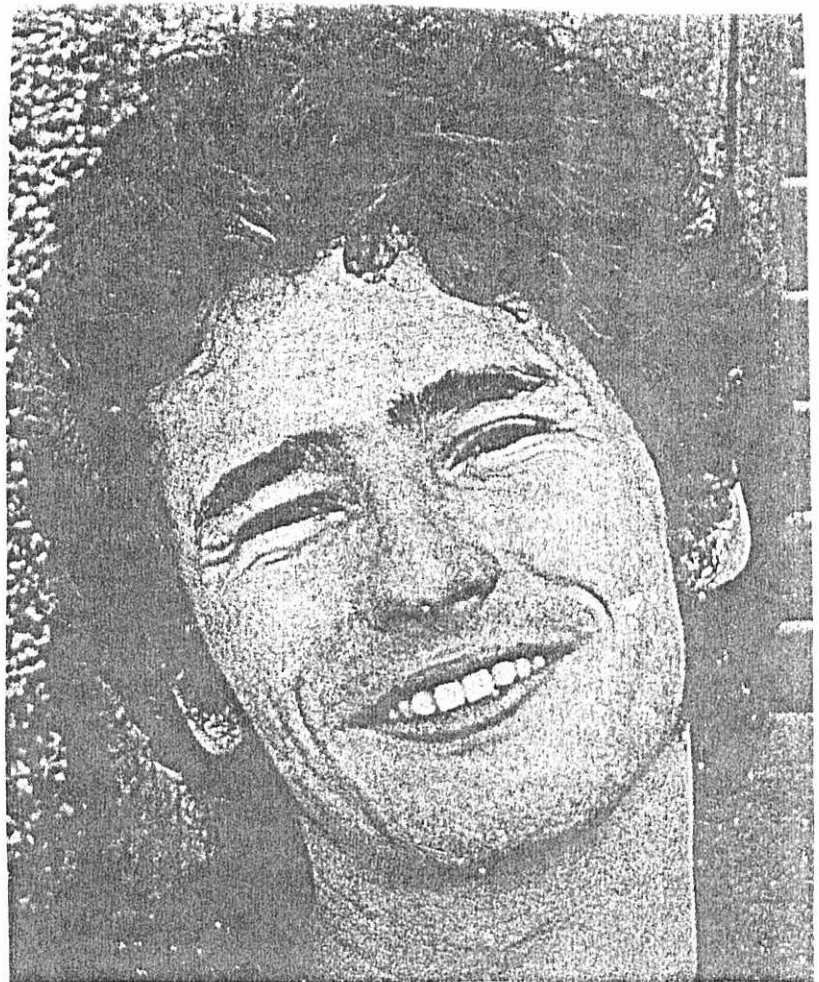
Buckley won no new friends with 'Lorca' but always rated it above 'Blue Afternoon'; contractual obligations interrupted his creative flow and he was itching to escape from the boundaries of the medium.

"In rock when someone hits a wrong note, they don't know what to do with it. Rock music is so over-rehearsed . . . I've seen Roland Kirk make a mistake and integrate it, elevate the music."

Whole choirs of distortion battle out the melodies with the back-line, but there is nothing po-faced about it. On 'Jungle Fire' the singer ascends through a ludicrous Tarzan yodel into a crushingly frenetic assault on the senses that gives a new meaning to the cliché *"it has to be heard to be believed"*.

The title track indicated that Buckley wasn't glossing his new-found interest in the electronic work of Stockhausen and the free jazz model onomatopoeia of Eric Dolphy and Albert Ayler. The number travels through outposts of solar activity and comes to rest as 'The Healing Festival', where Buckley breaks with his folk-hippy roots for good.

'Moulin Rouge' and 'Down By the Borderline' are asides to the ball-busting phonetic strangulation, the former a street cafe croon to some Parisian belle dame, the latter the album's one indication of a straighter search for soul which would be continued



on 'Greetings From LA'.

'Starsailor' is the kind of accomplishment that takes years rather than months to appreciate, and for Buckley the effort of backing it up on a stage-became too much.

During recording Buckley was at an emotional and physical peak. He had remarried, to his fantasy woman, Judy, and moved into a house on Laguna Beach. Tim and Judy (who he nicknamed 'Madame Wu') spent hours by the sea listening to Penderecki, Satie, Oliver Messiaen and always the great jazz horn players - a consuming passion. When 'Starsailor' was finished and had been generally slaughtered by the press, rejected by the fans, Buckley could still hold his head up proud and insist that *"I came as close to Coltrane as anyone has ever done. I even started singing in foreign languages - Swahili for instance - just because it sounded better."*

Discouraged at the album's poor sales, frustrated and alienated by the '70s crop of volume-orientated blues crucifiers, he lay low in Venice with his family, drove a cab in Los Angeles and even took up employment as Sly Stone's chauffeur for a while.

He found it futile trying to get any

work on the old circuits. His deal with Straight was over and only small, out of the way clubs accepted independent bookings. The singer was desperate to tour with his band; John Balkin, the bassist who had become a mentor, Maury Baker, the tympanist, trombonist Glen Ferris, and 10-string electric stick (!) specialist Emmett Chapman. It was impossible to pay their wages; Buckley was a financial has-been and would never recover his initial market.

In an interview he gave to the *Changes* periodical in 1969 he reacted to the status of the musician who is governed by the age-old relationship of the artist and the patron. The papers said he'd sold out . . . *"You are the same people who, when Monet or Modigliani were starving for 40 years and finally sold a painting, you said they'd sold out . . . I live in a hundred dollar a month house in Venice, California, and I don't need anything. You could take away all the money from me and I could make it anyway. I did it before, and I can do it again. All I'm doing is paying for airplanes."*

He also enrolled in the Music Department of UCLA, where he studied the ethnic origins of Japanese and Balinese music, lectured occasionally, and started writing two film scripts - one a comedy, the other called *Fully Air-Conditioned Inside*, a work influenced by futurist Buckminster Fuller. This script was eventually turned into an unpublished book; *"a kind of 'Fear and Loathing' in Dallas"* was how he described it.

Buckley explained himself to *Rock* magazine in 1972:

"See I was spawned into singing through Nat 'King' Cole and John Coltrane. It was a logical progression when you're learning . . . everything matters. I'm still learning now. My peers don't matter to me as far as my learning process goes . . . I have no affinity with it at all . . . I'm not trying to be abstract, but it's like I'm on standby most of the time."

When Buckley wasn't waiting to be called he acted some, appearing in professional productions of Edward Albee's *Zoo Story* and Jean-Paul-Sartre's *No Exit* in the same small theatre group in LA that Doors guitarist Robbie Krieger worked for.

Buckley prepared for his comeback via

his most accessible record to date, the solid sexy funk of *'Greetings From LA'*. The inside of this album depicts Buckley in sardonic pose clutching a smog-mask in reference to the cover's post-card of LA, where the city is seen covered in its customary blanket of automobile exhaust.

The singer's new main-men were strictly black dudes like Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield and James Brown, and the resulting artefact is an exact counterpoint *'Sex Machine'* and *'Let's Get It On'*, a no-holds-barred fuck album dedicated to the girls who talk in tongues and rattled the bed-springs of his mis-spent youth.

'Greetings From LA' is one of those rare rock albums that treats the sexual act with respect and affection. There's no macho posturing or idle boasting and no lying; instead every aspect of Buckley's desire is stripped open and exposed - from admissions of emotional inadequacy that turn into triumph on *'Sweet Surrender'*, to details of seamier rendezvous with hookers in *'Hong Kong Bar'*. It's Buckley's first and last concept album, but as the concept is sexuality it isn't too difficult to appreciate.

'Nighthawkin' even tells the tale of one of Buckley's cab fares, some old lush who leads him into the red light district . . .

Outside a brief reappearance from Carter Collins the personnel was all change. No Lee Underwood, no acoustic bass - it's all electric funk, expertly produced by War-man Jerry Goldstein and highly flavoured by the swirling smooth rhythms of Ed Greene, Chuck Rainey, guitarist Joe Falsia and ex-Byrd Kevin Kelley on keyboards.

Buckley is still playing 12-string guitar but his singing has changed, albeit slightly. In the same way that his voice 'broke' for *'Happy Sad'*, it now sounds rougher and older; the range is intact but the edges aren't quite so pure and sweet.

Buckley didn't play in England again until June 1974 when he appeared first on a bill before Alex Harvey, Van Morrison, The Doobie Brothers and the Allman Brothers. His band for the date included a reunion with bassist Jim Fielder, the old school buddy who'd gone on to relative fame and fortune with Buffalo Springfield, Blood, Sweat and

Tears and the ubiquitous Mothers, Lunchtime at Knebworth - a storming set to a few early arrivals and die-hards.

The guitarist was a guy with a gammy leg called Art Johnson, Buckley's constant drinking companion on that last visit, Drummer Buddy Helm and keyboard player Mark Tiernan were featured on 'Sefronia' ('74), an album that in retrospect reeks of awful compromise on Buckley's part.

Lumbered with a staff producer called Denny Randell, a whole raft of melodramatic strings and a selection of material that often sounds like somebody else's choice (probably Herb Cohen's), the record is too close to diluted product, too redolent of other lesser talents cashing in on Buckley's reputation.

It is possible that by now Buckley was devoting more energy to scriptwriting and acting than to his music. Both 'Stone In Love' and 'Honey Man' could be 'Greetings' outtakes, while the attempted tour-de-force title track 'Sefronia - After Asklepiades, After Kafka'/'Sefronia - The King's Chain' (written with Beckett) is divided perversely and seems unfinished.

Buckley fails to rescue Tom Waits' (another Cohen charge) feeble 'Martha' and never has a chance on Denny Randell's godawful 'I Know I'd Recognise Your Face' where he duets with some broad called Marcia Waldorf who seems to think she's advertising washing up liquid.

'Peanut Man' (by two rightly unknown wiseacres name of Freeman and Nehis) is pure throwaway by Buckley's standards, which leaves an admittedly gorgeous reading of 'Sally Go Round The Roses' and a version of Fred Neil's classic 'Dolphins'. (Neil, a near legendary figure on the Greenwich Village folk scene back in the early '60s is an interesting precursor to Buckley. Both his languid phrasing and his style of guitar playing are an obvious influence on the younger man, while Neil's subtle vocal modulations and facility with simple contortions of language and metaphor must have appealed to the tearaway kid looking out over midnight Manhattan for a bag of his own).

Tim's other originals, 'Quicksand' and 'Because of You', do pull out some stops, nothing memorable but his vocals make the nut and Joe Falsia stamps some

authoritative class into his solos, which keeps them danceable at least.

The critics were kind to 'Sefronia', leastways if they were old Buckley fans they were. Not so when 'Look at the Fool' (DiscReet) was released late in 1974; for that one even his most ardent admirers could be heard wringing and washing their hands. Less committed folk chose this moment to whet the nib on and laugh when the ink turned red. Who was this Tim Buckley anyway? Just some washed-up loser juicer on permanent heat.

Maybe they felt threatened, because the fact is that 'Look at the Fool' is a good, not great, record that came slightly too early to make its deserved impact. Buckley's slinky scorched torch voice is burnt round the edges, he sings in a gut-wrenching falsetto and seamless soprano more than ever now, wackier than Al Green and more loaded than Curtis but still, could he ever sing.

In the afterglow of 'Young Americans' or Boz Scaggs' 'Silk Degrees' it's possible to groove on 'Look at the Fool' for what it is, a backstreet soul-food mess of Buckley blues. The man is trapped in the business and feeling the pain of making a come-back (*"It has to be a calculated comeback,"* he admitted, *"It's not as passionate as it used to be"*). but the voice emerges in tact in spite of the busy arrangements and the insistence on short songs. Here was one artist who was seldom at his best within any three minute format.

The album's original title was to have been 'An American Souvenir', an ironic choice partially influenced by a record he had in the back of his mind, Van Dyke Parks 'Rediscover America'. The final title says something about Buckley's state of mind then, a man who is finding it hard to come to terms with his drinking problem and the facts of the '70s rock and roll life. At Electra Tim Buckley was a star - on DiscReet he had become just another male singer; file under popular.

Listen to 'Ain't it Peculiar' or 'Down in the Street' and you hear a man who is bemused rather than bitter, listen to 'Freeway Blues' and you hear the frantic desperation of a man who wants to have a party but no one turns up. It's hard to accept rejection but Buckley still has standards: *"I never swallow that cheap booze / I keep my distance from straight*

dudes."

He has a Mexacali fetish that won't let go too, lots of songs about getting lost and found in some red light district. The companions of his youth are living the good life - or they're dead.

Jim Morrison had been one of Tim's more reliable partners in crime. He told *Rock* magazine: "Jim was a friend . . . he was greatly misunderstood, especially his humour. His humour was phenomenal in everything he did."

'Look at the Fool' was produced by Joe Falsia, Buckley's guitarist and latterday manager/minder. After it Buckley's contract was severed and his relationship with Cohen was as bad as the sales and reviews. The playing throughout is excellent however especially the drumming of Earl Palmer, a man who had laid down the beat for Taj Mahal and BB King, the piano work of Mike Melvoin and Falsia's lead. On 'Who Could Deny You' and the title track the man soars and scythes over dancing blues and light jazz with his old facility. Being 26 was nothing to get too cut about.

It was nice to imagine that 'Look at the Fool' would end Buckley's affair with funk. The signs were that it would. He spoke of a definite plan to record a retrospective double live album utilising the services of 'all the original musicians from each section of his career. In addition he had new material worked up for a new studio album when a label could be found, and there was a project on hold with Larry Beckett to adapt Joseph Conrad's early novel *An Outcast Of The Islands* . . .

Buckley had had no luck with his other writing, but that didn't deter him from planning a screenplay based on Thomas Wolfe's *You Can't Go Home Again*.

Tim Buckley never had any illusions about his own great talent, though he didn't expect success as a right. He was proud of his abilities as a singer and prepared to use the gift as a means to other ends. Of his voice he remarked:

"An instrumentalist can be understood doing just about anything, but people are really geared to something coming out of the mouth being words. I use my voice as an instrument when I'm performing live. I figure if I can do it, why not stick with it? The most shocking thing I've ever seen people

come up against, besides a performer taking off his clothes, is dealing with someone who doesn't sing words."

"This kind of thing also figures into 'An American Souvenir', because I get off on great sounding words. If I had my way, words wouldn't mean a thing, but the rules are different for a single singer than a band - they get away with it because their life expectancy is only two years."

"If I haven't done it and I'm capable or old enough and ready, I'll do it while keeping an eye on communication and not necessarily trends and fads. If I thought a whole album of Hank Williams songs was right, I'd do it even if burlesque was the style."

"Miles Davis went for 15 years without really selling a lot of albums, but his company kept putting them out because there is only one Miles Davis. Now, I'm not equating myself with him, but there isn't anybody who can sing or write like me, and if I wasn't allowed to record then recording wouldn't be valid."

Tim Buckley died in his Santa Monica apartment on Sunday June 29, 1975. He was 27.

The day before he had returned to the West Coast after completing a highly successful tour of Texas and California. His last gig had been before a capacity crowd of 1,800 in Dallas.

When he got home Buckley was in his usual partying mood and had gone to visit some friends at UCLA. During the evening he was offered and accepted some white powder which he presumed to be cocaine. As the night wore on the singer complained of feeling very sick; he had bad stomach pains and was shaking violently. His wife Judy took him home and put him to bed before calling an ambulance.

Buckley was dead before it arrived.

At first it was said that Buckley had died from natural causes but the report of coroner Dr Joseph H Choi found that he had died from *"acute heroin/morphine and ethanol intoxication due to inhalation and ingestion of overdose"*.

Underwood delivered a simple funeral oration in Wiltshire Funeral Home, Santa Monica, where Buckley's body lay in an open coffin, dressed in a black silk shirt made by his wife. A yellow orchid rested on his hands. The mourners were mostly ex-lovers, weeping silently for



their Valentino, his immediate family and the few close friends who he gathered towards him in the latter stages of his life.

Underwood was certain that Buckley had died, *not* because the drugs he took were alien to him, but because he had been 'clean' for so long that he had no resistance. Tim had been on similar binges so frequently that there was no point glossing his familiarity with such risks.

In the event a 30-year-old graduate student, Richard Keeling was charged with first degree murder and administering an illegal substance.

Falsia insisted that Buckley wasn't a heavy drug user at all and the evidence suggests that this is true. He *was* becoming a chronic drinker but his death was not an inevitable rock'n'roll tragedy like Gram Parsons' or Janis Joplin's. He had no morbid death wish and no romantic image of himself to support. Any idea that he was a doomed genius operating beyond the pales of normal expectation is refuted by the facts.

Buckley's road manager The Bear had strong feelings about Tim's demise, an emotion which Joe Stevens bears out.

"We felt angry that the kid had been cheated. In a way you sensed his frailty; he wasn't a big strong guy. He had the aura of permanent youth on him but no death wish, no. He was too precious."

The Bear felt that there was something ordained for Buckley beyond his control, that he couldn't last. It wasn't a feeling he cared to articulate but it was something he sensed very strongly, like a deep dread. Barry 'The Bear' Schultz died himself in 1979, a victim of cancer in upstate New York.

Since Buckley died without a record company his passing was mourned by those who knew but pretty well ignored otherwise. It was no big deal.

Herb Cohen consistently refused to acknowledge the existence of any unreleased material but it's a solid fact that no artist goes for nine years (and makes as many records) without someone somewhere recording him off the mixer, or in a club, or anywhere.

The Bear had tapes of Tim singing his heart out and playing that twelve-string down in Hole Hog. He mailed the reels someplace and they never showed up.

There was black irony in Buckley's death, a quirk of fate that had become

typical of his wretched limbo. Though all his writing projects had remained on the shelf, unpublished, he had been offered the starring role in a film version of Woodie Guthrie's life, playing the itinerant singer for Hal Ashby's *Bound For Glory*. Had Buckley made the transition, he would have been financially secure for the first time since his late-teens, the days when he could appear in *The Monkees* as a 'guest-star', and the girls swooned.

Bound For Glory was his only escape route. Roger McGuinn and Jacques Levy had once had Buckley in mind for the lead role in their adaption of the musical *Peer Gynt*, which they'd re-named *Gene Tryp*; McGuinn iced the idea after making 'Untitled' with the '70s Byrds, 'Chestnut Mare' and 'Lovers of the Bayou' were two songs that survived the session, but there was no return call for Tim (who'd once intimated that he played on the Byrds' first album, a claim McGuinn refutes).

For a variety of reasons Buckley spent the last three years drifting in and out of a psychological mine-field that was barbed with depression, self-loathing and chronic artistic insecurity. To earn any kind of living he was committed to playing the business game, to making records that the Straight/DisCreet organisations would OK from a commercial angle.

Buckley despised the limitations of the format he'd been coerced into. The sexual drive of his material fired the sessions with a certain vicarious energy but deep inside, Buckley's range of five and a half octaves struggled for air.

In 1974 Buckley wrote an extraordinary 'story-letter' to Underwood where he bared his soul with a frightening honesty. *"You are what you are, you know what you are, and there are no words for loneliness, black, bitter, aching loneliness, that gnaws the roots of silence in the night . . ."*

"There has been life enough, and power, grandeur, joy enough, and there has been beauty enough, and God knows there has been squalor and filth and misery and madness and despair enough; murder and cruelty and hate enough, and loneliness enough to fill your bowels with the substance of grey horror, and to crust your lips with it's hard and acrid taste of isolation."

To Buckley the past was now *"a dark time . . . feeding like a vulture on our entrails, and we know that we are lost, and cannot stir."*

It's difficult to fully understand the creative spark that triggers a charge like Tim Buckley had in his throat, to hear the music that played in his head, to separate the myth from the romance, and the role from the reality. His short time really *was* gorged on an excess of . . . everything except lasting success. But that's life.

And death was everything he'd feared, until he uttered his last words to Judy, just *"Bye Bye Baby"* and goodbye.

Tim Buckley died owning nothing except a guitar and an amplifier; all his assets had gone to creditors, to the good life and the high times.

Now, when you can only listen, you know that if he'd lived long enough he could have been champ. But what the hell . . . that voice was his and there's no one to judge him anymore, no one who can decry those massive achievements.

The song of the Siren is breaking on the surf, lapping around the rocks, and there are always those places. The places that his voice can go.

This essay was written by Max Bell and originally published in the New Musical Express in 1979.

Gallic Productions Recommends:

Happy Sad, Lp, 1969

Blue Afternoon, Lp, 1969

Lorca, Lp, 1970

Starsailor, Lp, 1970

Greetings From LA, Lp, 1972,



DEVOTOED

In the mid-seventies Howard Devoto got together with Pete Shelley and a handful of other young punksters to form Buzzcocks. They met at college in Manchester, drawn together by a common interest in Capt Beefheart, Can and The Velvet Underground.

In England at that time anything was possible. The old, tired 'rock' music had been swept aside by the new intense, vital punk revolution which, at its height, was the most important musical movement for a decade. 'Punk' ethics meant that anyone, musician or not, could pick up a guitar, learn a bar chord and become a superstar. A&R men were desperate to sign anyone who could snarl a few lyrics or smash a cheap guitar whilst spitting (metaphorically and literally) on the Queen, the government and society in general. Popular music and culture had its cobwebs brushed away by this new force that sadly lasted only about six months (the record industry and the young hippy/punks of today still think its happening - poor deluded souls.)

A plethora of new punk bands appeared overnight (many disappearing just as suddenly) with McLaren's Sex Pistols taking centre stage (the result of a clever marketing strategy) and groups like The Damned, The Clash, Subway Sect, The Banshees and of course, Buzzcocks becoming household names.

Devoto wrote the lyrics, Shelley and the rest of the band wrote the tunes which to begin with were simple, three chord bashes (like everone else). The lyrics, however were a bit more subtle than the average howls. Most bands write songs about sex and love but Devoto wrote from a different angle - his songs reeked of a strange perversion, of guilt and sin:

*Sneaking in the backdoor
With dirty magazines
Your mother wants to know
What are those stains on your jeans*

*So you're asking in an alley
And your voice ain't steady
The sex mechanic's rough
But you're more than ready
You're an Orgasm Addict*

Buzzcocks played a few gigs then to bypass the major record companies they recorded and released an independent EP - 'Spiral Scratch' containing four songs; *Breakdown*, *Time's Up*, *Boredom* and *Friends of Mine*. This ensured their recognition and before long the band signed to United Artists.

Although Devoto sings on *Spiral Scratch* he had left the band by the time the EP was released. Pete Shelley took Buzzcocks on a different course, writing pop lovesongs (of dubious sexuality) such as *Ever Fallen In Love* and *What Do I get* - the tunes that are most remembered when people talk of Buzzcocks. Although they were cast as punks their songs were not what would be termed 'Punk' today. Shelley (both of them!) was a romantic, using the current medium to carry his message:

*You spurn my natural emotions
You make me feek like dirt
And I'm hurt
And if I start a commotion
I run the risk of losing you
And that's worse*



Devoto, meanwhile formed a new band - Magazine, and for the first time was involved in writing the music for his new songs. Whilst Shelley wrote about emotion from a lovesick adolescent's point of view Devoto approached it as if he were some time-weary cynic:

*As the day stops dead
At the place where we're lost
I will drug you and fuck you
On the permafrost*

Magazine's first single *Shot by Both Sides* (co-written with Shelley) was hailed as a classic by critics and did well in the charts. Devoto turned down an opportunity to do Top of the Pops but did it a week later where he gave a perfect *negative* performance, appearing hesitant and sneering grotesquely at the camera. Soon after this, sales of the single dropped off rapidly and it never became the hit it could have been.

Magazine went on to make three bearable Lps; *Real Life*, *Secondhand Daylight* and *Magic, Murder and the Weather* and one brilliant collection; *The Correct Use of Soap* all of which showed Devoto's excellent lyric style while the music developed from post punk solidity to a kind of mild, precise rock music which did begin to sound a little weak. Once the band split Devoto went solo with his single *Rainy Season* and Lp *Jerky Versions Of the Dream* which, while being interesting (the single was quite good actually) were not up to his previous standards. This mirrored Pete Shelleys solo efforts. Shelley's singles *Homosapien* and *Telephone Operator* were good dance-like numbers but his lps were a little tame (although not complete write-offs).

I missed my chance of seeing Magazine when they played Malvern Winter Gardens in 1978 - how could I have known the influence they would later have on me? I did, however see Howard Devoto. We were driving down the Euston road when we spotted him in a white Ford Escort estate. We yelled to attract his attention and saluted as he drove by - a fitting tribute we thought; he probably thought *we* were insane.



A synthetic noise, elements of rock'n'roll, a voice that sounds like Beefheart had sex with that bloke from 'Eraserhead', bird sounds, how can a love song be a Non-Alignment Pact, these people must be sick, music as a physical being; the bass & drums as legs, guitars as arms, synth as brain! shouts and Yells. / The sound of a hammer hitting metal, Alfred Jarry's revenge on popular music, "Merde - Merde", an underwater cavern of science fiction characters, basic boogie back-beat thus a Modern Dance, hop on board what? People laughing and being happy, guitar-runs inspired by that genius of the 'human guitar'; Peter Laughner (RIP), synthesiser as fluff. / The secret history of the untutored horn part nine, rhythm is important even if the drums sound like cardboard boxes, fat people laughing at thin people, all sound is music (Bruitism), my baby said if the devil comes shoot him with a gun, the blues are a chair, clever hippies pretending to be punks, in the desert sands a hot-dog frying in the sun, bass runs away. / Pop music, is that a plane landing in my living room, electricity is visible (it also comes from plums and other planets), a lead guitar solo or was it DCfied, the Street waves at me, this is what happens to human beings if you coop them up in modern industrial cities. / The folk tradition, could you take the piss out of the Eagles? scat singing, applause, 'Nuggets' original punks gone mad on information, tape-recording is killing the Record Industry - good! The British Invasion has a lot to answer for, the pianist is infected with Chinese Radiation. // Later than you think, record his songs but refute his life-style, squiggle-doodle with a machine, shift your ass at the annual wolverine hoe-down, I need a drink, Life Stinks, rock ending No 67 (c/o Gauls, Agro early '80s) done badly. / In the Real World rhythm is a two-finger job, how can you walk when your leg is rotten to the marrow? squirt, exude, spray, dribble, most people hate noise it upsets them, is the drummer of the Blakey persuasion? as one walks, the dirt and illness of the streets is most upsetting, imagine falling over in a clock-shop and laughing at the damage / a policeman is most understanding (but inside he hates you), to destroy the olden days is the most pleasurable of occupations, dogs of roar, repulsive guitars go Over My Head, even if they are interesting, gentle Africans are still threatening. / Open your Christmas presents and break them, your father hisses at you, don't bottle me! to the sound of a mentally ill Coltrane, he unzipped his fly and exploded, Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee on a Sentimental journey, wait, feedback is akin to transcendentalism, zapped by history, home is such a mess if you just killed someone there! / Pleasant reggaeish twangs echo through my mind, it's just a joke mum, how can guitar solos be both horrible and beautiful at the same time, if you Humor me I will spell words correctly, and so it ends, since this lp is not avant-garde I thought I'd be avant-garde in remembering it.



KEVIN

THE KILLJOYS; SINGLE.

Nov 1977 - Johnny Won't Get To Heaven/Naive.....Raw RAW 3

DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS; SINGLES.

Nov 1979 - Dance Stance/I'm Just Looking.....Parlaphone R 6028
 Mar 1980 - Geno/Breakin' Down The Walls Of Heartache.....Parlaphone R 6033
 Jun 1980 - There There My Dear/The Horse.....Parlaphone R 6038
 Nov 1980 - Keep It, Part Two/One Way Love.....Parlaphone R 6042
 Mar 1981 - Plan B/Soul Finger.....Parlaphone R 6046
 Jun 1981 - Show Me/Soon.....Mercury DEXYS 6
 Nov 1981 - Liars A To E/...And Yes, We Must Remain the Wildhearted Outsiders.....Mercury DEXYS 7
 Mar 1982 - The Celtic Soul Brothers/Love,Part Two.....Mercury DEXYS 8
 May 1982 - Come On Eileen/Dubious.....12" Mercury DEXYS 9
 Sep 1982 - Jackie Wilson Said/Let's Make This Precious/TSOP.....12" Mercury DEXYS 10
 Nov 1982 - Let's Get This Straight From The Start/Old (live)/Respect (live).....12" Mercury DEXYS 11
 Feb 1983 - The Celtic Soul Brothers/Reminisce, Part One/.....12" Mercury DEXYS 12
 Nov 1985 - This Is What She's Like/This Is What She's Like (instrumental).....12" Mercury DEXYS 13
 Oct 1986 - Because Of You/Kathleen Mavoureen/Sometimes There.....12" Mercury BRUSH 1

ALBUMS.

Jul 1980 - Searching For The Young Soul Rebels
 Burn It Down/Tell Me When My Light Turns Green/The Teams That Meet In Caffe
 /I'm Just Looking/Geno/Seven Days Is Too Long/I Couldn't Help If I Tried/
 Thankfully Not Living In Yorkshire/Keep It/Love,Part One/There There My Dear,Parlaphone PCS 7213
 Jul 1982 - Too Rye Ay
 Celtic Soul Brothers/Let's Make This Precious/All In All/Jackie Wilson Said
 /Old/Plan B/I'll Show You/Liars A To E/Until I Believe In My Soul/Come On
 Eileen.....Mercury MERS 5
 Sep 1985 - Don't Stand Me Down
 The Occasional Flicker/This Is What She's Like/Knowledge Of Beauty/One Of
 Those Things/Reminisce, Part Two/Listen To This/The Waltz.....Mercury MERH 56

KEVIN ROWLAND; SINGLES.

Apr 1988 - Walk Away/The Way You Look Tonight/Even When I Hold You.....12" Mercury DEXYS 14
 Jul 1988 - Tonight/Kevin Rowland's Band.....12" Mercury ROW 1
 Oct 1988 - Young Man/One Way Ticket To Palookaville.....12" Mercury ROW 2

ALBUM.

Jun 1988 - The Wanderer
 Young Man/Walk Away/You'll Be The One For Me/Heartaches By The Number/I Am
 A Wanderer/Tonight/When You Walk Alone/Age Can't Wither You/I Want/
 Remember Me.....Mercury H121

JEAN RENOIR

BOUDU SAUVE DES EAUX
(BOUDU SAVED FROM
DROWNING)

Screenplay by Renoir and Robert Valentin. Photography by Marcel Lucien. Assistant Directors: Jacques Becker & Georges Darnoux. Filmed summer 1932. Released November 1932. running time: 83 mins. Cast: Michel Simon (Boudu); Charles Granval (Edouard Lestingois); Marcella Hainia (Emma Lestingois); Severine Lerczinska (Anne-Marie).

Boudu sauve des eaux makes abundantly clear why Jean Renoir's work was so admired by Andre Bazin, and why the filmmakers of the New Wave regarded him as their supreme antecedent and father-figure. Bazin's theory of realism - especially in so far as it is concerned with the preservation of the physical realities of time and space - is repeatedly exemplified by the use in *Boudu* of long takes, camera movement, and depth-of-field, relating action to action, character to character,

foreground to background, and continuously suggesting the existence of a world beyond the frame. The subversive implications of the material, the use of real locations instead of studio sets, the sense of a moral freedom combining inevitably with technical freedom, the evident love of actors and performance, and the resulting effect of spontaneity - all could add up to a model for the ambitions of the New Wave.

Leo Braudy has interpreted Renoir's work in terms of a dialectic of nature and "theatre" (the latter to be understood both literally and metaphorically), the two concepts achieving a complex interplay. *Boudu* works very well in this light. Indeed, the film opens with a *theatrical* representation of *nature* rites (Lestingois as satyr, Anne-Marie as nymph). If Renoir shows great affection for the world of nature surrounding, and epitomised by, Boudu - the freedom of the tramp without restrictions, the play of sunlight on water, the lush fertility of the imagery of the film's final scene - he is equally charmed by the bourgeois household of the Lestingois - by





the artificial birds that Anne-Marie must dust, by Lestingois's reverence for Balzac (on whose works Boudu casually spits, not with the slightest animus but simply because it is natural to spit when you feel the need). One might add that he finds the Lestingois household charming because of the lingering traces of a subjugated, sublimated nature that continue to animate it. At the same time, he sees that it is the subjugation that makes culture possible. Windows - the barrier between nature and culture but also the means of access - are a recurrent motif throughout Renoir's work. In the films of Ophüls (with whom Renoir has so many points of contact while remaining so different) windows are always being closed; in those of Renoir they are always being opened. He is centrally concerned with the possibility of free access and interchange between the two worlds, the uncertainty being crucial.

The desire to negotiate between nature and culture encounters problems which the film can't resolve, and partially evades. On the one hand, the comic mode enables Renoir to avoid confronting the psychic misery produced

by bourgeois repressiveness; Madame Lestingois, in particular, *can only* be a comic character for the film to continue to function. If her position were allowed to be explored seriously, the laughter would die immediately. The scene in which she is "liberated" by being raped by Boudu is saved from distastefulness solely by being played as a farce. On the other hand, Renoir's equivocation in evaluating the bourgeois world results in some confusion over Boudu himself; does he or does he not represent a serious threat to it? The point gains force when one compares Michel Simon's characterisation here with his pere Jules in Vigo's *L'Atalante*. Jules is at once more formidable and more consistent, and Vigo's radicalism more sharply defined. Boudu, in contrast, seems little more than a pre-socialised (and pre-sexual) child, essentially harmless. The sudden ascription to him of great sexual potency jars, considering that we are told earlier that he has never killed anyone except his dog.

The film is typical of Renoir's work in its warmth, humanity, generosity; it also suggests the close relation between



that generosity and impotence. If every way of life can be defended, then nothing need be changed. - (*Robin Hood*).

LE CRIME DE MONSIEUR LANGE
(THE CRIME OF MONSIEUR
LANGE)

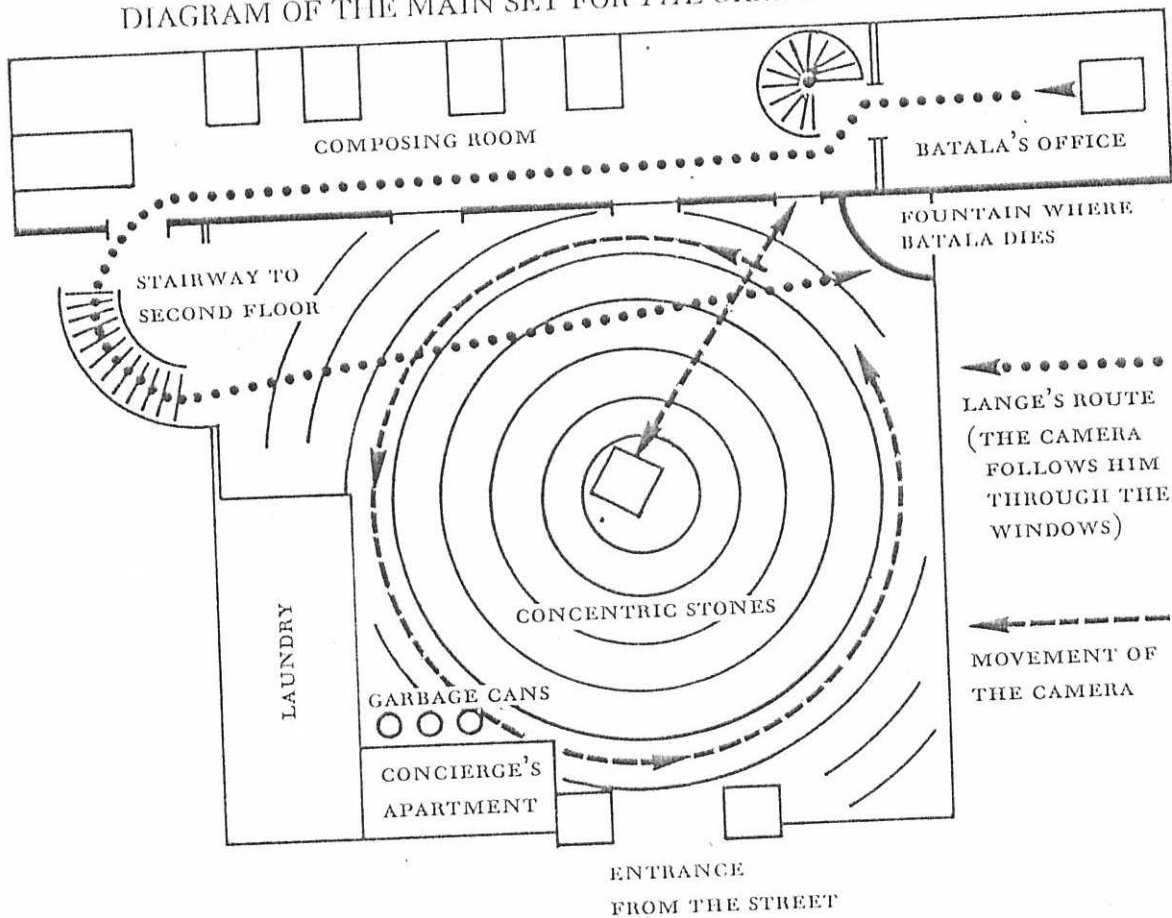
Screenplay by Renoir and Jacques Prévert. Photography by Jean Bachelet. Filmed Oct - Nov 1935. Released January 1936. running time: about 2 hours. Cast: Jules Berry (*Paul Batala*); Rene Lefevre (*Amedee Lange*); Florella (*Valentine Cardes*); Nadia Sibirskaia (*Estelle*).

For nearly three decades Jean Renoir's *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* was a film which failed to garner the

recognition it so richly deserved. At the time of its release, it was received indifferently and suffered the vicissitudes of political censorship. It was not until 1964 that the film enjoyed a US release, and belatedly earned its reputation as a pivotal work in Renoir's career.

Le Crime de Monsieur Lange is the film which solidified Renoir's political reputation as the film director of the left. In sympathy with France's Popular Front, this film was Renoir's statement that the ordinary working man, through united action, can overcome the tyranny of fascism. Renoir's films were always imbued with a humanism and love for all mankind. With this film he use a small group of Parisian workers, their families and neighbours, as a microcosm

DIAGRAM OF THE MAIN SET FOR *THE CRIME OF M. LANGE*



for the French common man.

Lange, played by Rene Lefevre, is the author of a western pulp fiction series entitled *Arizona Jim*. When Batala (played magnificently by the great Jules Berry), the head of the nearly-bankrupt publishing company, absconds with the company funds, Lange organises a "cooperative" with the help of the other employees. Their venture is so successful it prompts the scoundrel publisher to return in the guise of a priest and reap the monetary rewards of the cooperative. In a brave and mandatory move, the naive and humble Lange kills the publisher to prevent the destruction of their venture. Lange and his girlfriend flee the country, are caught by border guards, but allowed to go free when the girl explains the details of Lange's crime.

The script of *Monsieur Lange* was written by Jacques Prevert from an idea by Renoir and Castanier. As with all Renoir films, the script was simply a starting point around which Renoir composed his films. To emphasise the sense of community, Renoir centers all

the action on the courtyard which surrounds the publishing firm as well as the homes of the workers. Thus the courtyard becomes an integral part of Renoir's mise-en-scene, as much a character in the film as any of the actors, representing a united world which in turn evokes Renoir's philosophical aspirations for all mankind. Renoir is thus able to demonstrate the importance of the interaction of his characters for the benefit of all, the beginning of the film is devoted mostly to scenes of characters one-on-one, emphasising the lack of any central goal. When Lange begins his efforts to form a cooperative, Renoir shifts his scenes to those of group relationships. Throughout, he uses his extraordinarily fluid and cyclical camera movements to create a unity of both time and purpose.

While *Monsieur Lange* is both an intriguing story of crime and an exercise in black humour, the film encompasses much more. It is an attack on class superiority and prejudice, an attack on the church, and although Lange

does commit murder, it is a crime of poetic justice exonerated by the victim's avarice and the altruism of Lange's goal. Despite its indifferent reception at its release, *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* is today regarded as one of Renoir's best films and one which significantly captures the social consciousness of the day.
- (Ronald Bowers).

adapted but also actually improved by Renoir's additions and refinements to the original tale. This is high praise, indeed, when one realises that the film's completion was highly problematic. Many of Renoir's films have had checkered careers, but none was quite so confusing as *Une Partie de Campagne*. Renoir originally intended to shoot a 35-or 40-minute story which he would make, he wrote later, just as if



UNE PARTIE DE CAMPAGNE (A
DAY IN THE COUNTRY)

Screenplay by Renoir.
Photography by Claude Renoir.
Assistant Directors: Jacques
Becker & Henri Cartier-Bresson
(and Luchino Visconti). Filmed
July-Aug 1936. Released
(unfinished) May 1946. running
time: 45 mins. The Cast: Sylvia
Bataille (Henriette); Georges
Darnoux (Henri); Jeanne Marken
(Mme. Dufour); Jacques Borel
(Rodolphe); Paul Temps
(Anatole); Jean Renoir (Father
Poulain).

Andre Bazin, in his unfinished study of the director Jean Renoir, described *Une Partie de Campagne* as a "perfectly finished work," one that is not only faithful in letter and spirit to the Maupassant story from which it is

it were a full-length film, Renoir chose a gentle, 19th-century tale and planned to spend a relaxed summer shooting along the banks of the Loir near Marlotte, an area he knew extremely well. The entire experience should have provided him, as Alexander Sesonske has described it, with a "brief and pleasant respite in mid-career." Despite the rainiest summer in memory, an extremely volatile political climate, tensions on the set, and the fact that the film sat for nearly 10 years waiting for its final editing, *Une Partie de Campagne* is a remarkably fine film, some say a masterpiece; Sesonske thinks that no Renoir film seems "more unstudied, more a pure flow of life caught unaware."

There are sound reasons for the film's critical success; it is a film of uncommon gentleness and beauty, and it forms less of a "respite" in Renoir's

career than a concentration of his most important themes and images; the river, the countryside, the loving scrutiny of bourgeois life. *Une Partie de Campagne* forms a poetic centre for Renoir's French films. Rather than a sense of diversion, the film reflects a completeness. Renoir's rendering of his subject is incisive, his style mature, his vision complete; it is a seamless work of art. Many critics have called attention to the film's impressionistic quality, suggesting that it is a homage to the director's father, the painter Pierre Auguste Renoir. Indeed, impressionistic moments do grace the film - but for one to try to understand it as an attempt by the son to do what the father had already done with paint and canvas is to sadly underestimate the qualities of the movie. The "painterly" look of the films of Renoir *films* have done much to strengthen his popular image as a director of surfaces, much to the detriment of his standing as a filmmaker of depth and perception.

The shortness of the film also has strengthened the perception of Renoir as an impressionistic filmmaker, and many critics today still respond to the film as incomplete, an interesting but unfinished experiment. The fact that Renoir left two scenes from the Maupassant story unshot has been used as evidence for regarding the film as a fragment, and considering Renoir's relative fidelity to the events of Maupassant's story, it is an understandable, if mistaken, conclusion. Published versions of the screenplay for those "missing" scenes have further confused the issue. However, closer examination of the relationship between the story and the film will dispel such misconceptions. Renoir wrote in his autobiography, *My Life and My Films*, that when he was asked to increase the original footage to feature length, he refused because he felt that it would have been contrary to the intent of Maupassant's story and to his screenplay to lengthen it. Moreover, what many critics have failed to notice is that Renoir adapted the events of Maupassant's story faithfully, but he greatly altered the story's tone, which allowed him to drop the final scenes from the completed film without leaving

the project incomplete.

Maupassant's tantalizingly brief tale is largely satiric in tone. He makes fun of the pretensions and foibles of his bourgeoisie often rather harshly; the natural setting is kept in the background; and the atmosphere of the country is diminished. Renoir not only places greater emphasis on the rural atmosphere and setting but also makes a film that by bringing such natural elements into the foreground turns Maupassant's rather strident attack on the Dufort family into a compassionate and understanding film about unrecoverable moments and the inevitable sadness of the loss of innocence and love. As Andre Bazin has noted, such changes do improve the original. The story is given a resonance, the characters motivation, and the ending a poignance lacking in the fictional source. As Pierre Laprohon has described it: "there is an overflowing tenderness, and extraordinary responsiveness to the existence of things, and a transformation of the commonplace into the sublime." In *Une Partie de Campagne*, Renoir has created a poetic compression of those things that he holds dear, which is one of the reasons the film evokes such fond memories and responses from its viewers. Although unhappy and somewhat ironic, the ending is nevertheless not unhopeful. Life and the river will both flow on and be renewed.

- (Charles L P Silet).

LA GRANDE ILLUSION (GRAND ILLUSION)

Screenplay by Renoir & Charles Spaak. Photography by Christian Matras & Claude Renoir. Assistant Director: Jacques Becker. Filmed Jan-April 1937. Released June 1937. running time: 117 mins. The Cast: Erich von Stroheim (von Rauffenstein); Jean Gabin (Marechal); Pierre Fresnay (de Boeildieu); Marcel Dalio (Rosenthal).

The critical estimate of *La Grande Illusion* has fluctuated with the vicissitudes of critical theory. In the days when film's importance was attributed to the importance of its subject, it was widely regarded as Renoir's masterpiece, a noble humanist

anti-war statement. With the development of the auteur theory in the late 1950s, its reputation dwindled. It came to be perceived as a less personal, less intimate and less complex work than *La Règle du jeu*, which superceded it as marking the summit of Renoir's achievement. Though opposed, these views are based on the same misconception. *La Grande Illusion* is much too complex to be reduced to a thesis film, and although an anti-war statement can certainly be read from it (Renoir's detestation of war is not in doubt), that is incidental rather than essential to the film's meaning. In fact, it has a great deal in common with *La Règle du jeu*; Renoir's own account of the thematic premise of the later film applies equally to earlier ("*My preoccupation is with the meeting; how to belong, how to meet*"); both have similar four-part structures, moving to a big climatic scene at the end of part three, with a quieter, more intimate fourth part in which action moves out of doors or into the countryside.

"*How to belong, how to meet*" - another way of putting it is to say that Renoir's perennial concern is with the boundaries that keep people apart and the possibility of transcending them. The four-part structure enables him to

develop this theme through a network of shifting, interlocking relationships presented consistently in terms of difference and the overcoming of difference.

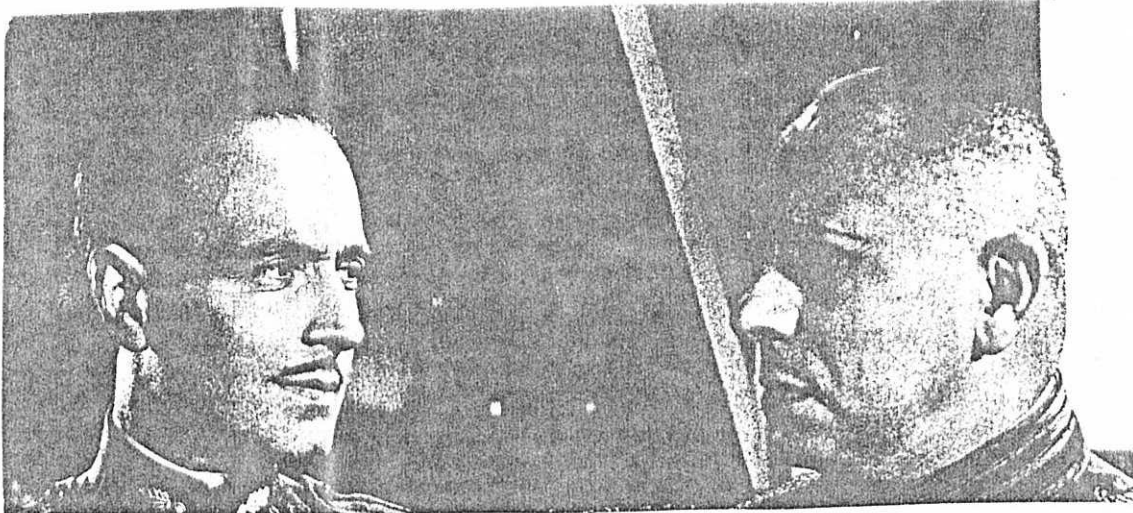
The first part consists of a prologue that introduces three of the four main characters and two of the main boundaries, class and nationality. Boeildieu and Marechal are connected because both are French and involved in a war against Germany; Boeildieu and von Rauffenstein are connected because both are aristocrats and share a particular code that excludes the proletariat Marechal. The film's basic assumption - that "difference" is socially constructed but so thoroughly internalised and so strongly institutionalised as to be very difficult to overcome - is dramatised in the parallels between the two headquarters (French/German) which are identical in structure but different in every detail, the details insisting upon "Frenchness" and "German-ness" respectively.

The second part occurs in the Prison Camp. Another main character, Rosenthal, is introduced, along with a host of minor ones who illustrate diverse aspects of the theme in the particularities of social position,



profession, outlook etc. With Rosenthal a third main boundary is established, that of race and religion. The pattern of alignments/separation becomes more complex; Marechal/Boeildieu are linked by race and religion (Aryan, Christian) but separated by class position; Boeildieu/Rosenthal are linked by privilege but separated by class tradition (aristocrat/*nouveau riche*); Rosenthal/Marechal are linked as non-aristocratic but separated by race/religion and social status. This section of the film makes frequent and expressive use of a favourite Renoir motif, the window, which stresses separation (outside/inside), but is also a boundary that can be crossed or communicated across. The second part culminates in the first big climax, the celebrated scene of the prisoners' camp show and defiant singing of the "Marseillaise". Most important here,

leading concern here again connects the film to *Regle du jeu*, the notion that the aristocratic order the two men represent will not survive the war. The aristocracy of *Regle du jeu* is significantly different; they no longer are informed and guided by a clearly defined code of nobility. *Regle du jeu's* Marquis is connected, not to Boeildieu, but to Rosenthal (not only are the two characters played by the same actor, but we are told that "Rosenthal" was the name of the Marquis's grandfather). Renoir views this inevitable destruction of a way of life with marked ambivalence. The aristocratic code is seen at once as based upon an untenable privilege and as embodying a fineness without which civilisation will be poorer. This part of the film moves to the second major climax, in which Renoir magnificently ties all the major thematic and dramatic threads together:



however, is the film's raising of the last main issue of boundary, that of gender/sexuality, especially in the extraordinary moment when the young prisoner is seen in women's clothes (for the show) and all activity and conversation abruptly cease. Its intensity exceeds anything explainable in terms of nostalgia for absent women; the androgynous figure becomes the centre of the men's fascination and attraction.

The third section reintroduces von Rauffenstein (now with broken vertebrae, in a sense as much a prisoner as the men he is in charge of) and the development and culmination of the Boeildieu/von Rauffenstein alignment/separation. A

the escape of Marechal and Rosenthal, secured by Boeildieu who sacrifices his life by compelling von Rauffenstein to shoot him. The scene echoes the climax of the second section by centring on a "theatrical" performance (Boeildieu playing his penny whistle on the battlements, the searchlights trained on him as a "star"). Together with the ensuing scene of Boeildieu's death and his class friend/national enemy's grief, the scene enacts the theme of the end of the aristocratic order (the proletarian Marechal and the *nouveau riche* Rosenthal are the embryonic future). It achieves the film's supreme irony in its play on the intimate understanding and affection between two men, one of whom must kill

the other.

The last section involves the escape/the farm/the border. The relation of *La Grande Illusion* to classical narrative (with its traditional pattern of order-disturbance of order-restoration of order) is complex and idiosyncratic. The narrative actually takes place in the hiatus between two orders; the order the war has destroyed and the new order that will be built when it is over. Between the two, Renoir manages at once to suggest the social order that was left behind and the possibility of a different order no longer based on artificial divisions. In the camps, the boundaries of class, race, nationality are repeatedly crossed and eroded as new alignments (based on human need and sympathy) are formed. The last section restores what was crucially absent earlier: the presence of a woman. A series of three immediately consecutive scenes can be read as "answering" and containing the eruption of a possible bisexuality in part two; Marechal and Rosenthal sleep in each other's arms (the motive is warmth, not sexuality, but nonetheless they are in close bodily proximity); awakening, they quarrel violently, Marechal calls Rosenthal a "dirty Jew", they separate, then tentatively come together again; hiding in a barn, they hear someone coming and spring to either side of the door; the door opens and, exactly between them, the woman appears. The ensuing scenes restore the heterosexuality that, at the outset, was present only as a song ("*Frou-Frou*") and a memory (Marechal's Josephine, the woman recalled by both Boeildieu and von Rauffenstein). This leads to the ultimate expression of togetherness/division: the Christmas celebration in which Rosenthal assists, only to be excluded as the lovers leave to go to bed. If the film celebrates the possibility of demolishing boundaries, it also acknowledges, within the existing social system, their inevitability. - (Robin Wood)

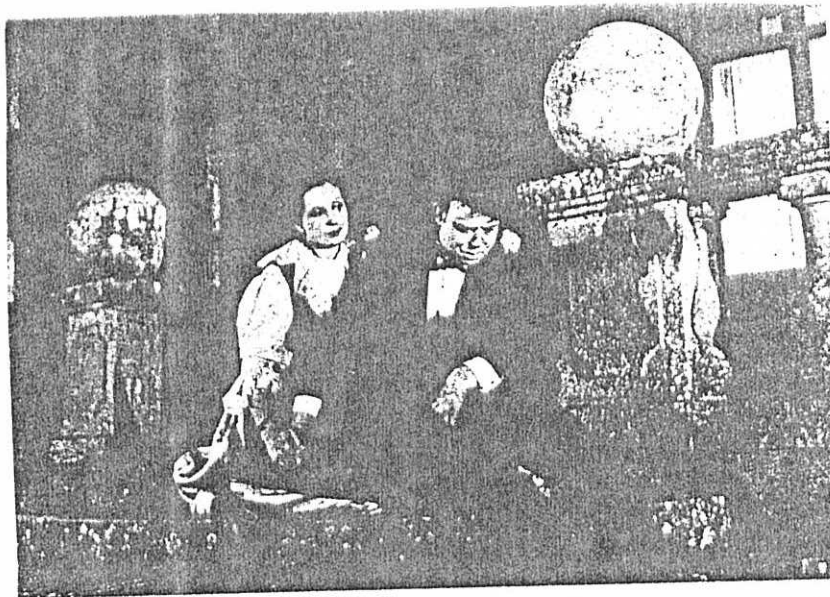
REGLE DU JEU (RULES OF THE GAME)

Screenplay by Renoir & Camille Francois & Carl Koch.
Photography by Jean Bachelet.

Assistant Directors: Andre Zwobada and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Filmed Feb-April 1939. Released July 1939. running time: 110 mins. The Cast: Marcel Dalio (Robert de la Chesnaye); Nora Gregor (Christine de la Chesnaye); Roland Toutain (Andre Jurieu); Jean Renoir (Octave).

Detested when it first appeared (for satirizing the French ruling class on the brink of the Second World War), almost destroyed by brutal cutting, restored in 1959 to virtually its original form, *La Regle du jeu* is now universally acknowledged as a masterpiece and perhaps Renoir's supreme achievement. In the four international critics polls organised every ten years (since 1952) by *Sight and Sound*, only two films have been constant; one is *Battleship Potemkin*, and the other is *La Regle du jeu*. And in the 1982 poll *La Regle de jeu* had climbed to second place. Its extreme complexity (it seems, after more than 20 viewings, one of the cinema's truly inexhaustible films) makes it peculiarly difficult to write about briefly; the following attempt will indicate major lines of interest:

Sources. The richness of the film is partly attributable to the multiplicity of its sources and influences (all, be it said, totally assimilated; there is no question here of an undigested eclecticism). It seems very consciously (though never pretentiously) the product of the vast and complex cultural tradition, with close affinities with the other arts, especially painting, theatre and music. If it evokes impressionist painting less directly than certain other Renoir films (for example *Partie de Campagne* or *French Can-Can*), it is strikingly faithful to the *spirit* of impressionism, the desire to portray life-as-flux rather than as a collection of discrete objects or figures. The influence of theatre is much more obvious, since it directly affects the acting style, which relates to a tradition of French boulevard comedy. Renoir specifically refers to Musset's *Les Caprices de Marianne* as a source (indeed, it was to be the title of the film at an early stage of its evolution) and to Beaumarchais (the film is prefaced by a quotation from *The*



Marriage of Figaro). This last points us directly to music, and especially to Mozart, whose music opens and closes the film, the "overture" (in fact the first of the "3 German Dances" K.605) accompanying the Beaumarchais quotation. This is perhaps the most Mozartian of all films; it constantly evokes Bruno Walter's remark (in a celebrated rehearsal record of a Mozart symphony), "The expression changes in every bar."

Method. Every frame of *La Règle du jeu* seems dominated by Renoir's personality; yet the most appealing facets of that personality are generosity, openness, responsiveness. As a result, *La Règle* is at once the *auteur* film *par excellence* and a work of co-operation and active participation. In Renoir's words, "of all the films I have made, this one is probably the most improvised. We worked out the script and decided on the places we were going to

shoot as we went along...." It is clear that much of the film's complexity derives from its improvisatory, co-operative nature. Renoir cast himself as Octave (a role originally intended for his older brother Pierre), and developed Octave's relationship with Christine, because of his own pleasure in the company of Nora Gregor; the role of Genevieve was greatly extended (originally, she was to have left the chateau after the hunt) because of Renoir's appreciation of the talent of Mila Parely; the entire sub-plot involving the servants was similarly elaborated during shooting, partly because of Renoir's delight in Carrette's characterization.

Stylistics. The film marks the furthest elaboration of certain stylistic traits developed by Renoir since his silent films; the use of off-screen space (see Noel Burch's seminal account of *Nana* in

Theory of Film Practice); the mobile camera, always at the service of the action and the actors yet unusually free in its movements, continuously tracking, panning, re-framing; the fondness for the group shot, in which several characters (sometimes several diverse but simultaneous actions) are linked; depth of field, enabling the staging of simultaneous foreground and background actions, which often operate like counterpoint in music; the re-thinking of "composition" in terms of time and movement (of the camera, of the actors) rather than static images; the constant transgressing of the boundaries of the frame, which actors enter and exit from during shots. There are various consequences of this practice: 1) Renoir's "realism" (a word we should use very carefully in reference to so stylized a film) - the sense of life continuing beyond the borders of the frame, as if the camera were selecting, more or less arbitrarily, a mere portion of a continuous "real" world. 2) A drastic modification of the habits of identification generally encouraged by main-stream cinema. Close-ups and point-of-view shots are rare (though Renoir does not hesitate to use them when he feels them to be dramatically appropriate - interestingly, such usages are almost always linked to Christine). The continual reframings and entrances/exits ensure that the spectator's gaze is constantly being transferred from character to character, action to action. If Christine is gradually defined as the film's central figure, this is never at the expense of other characters, and she never becomes our sole object of identification. 3) The style of the film also assumes a metaphysical dimension, the apprehension of life-as-flux. The quotation from Lavoisier that Renoir applied to his father is apt for him too; "In nature nothing is created, nothing is lost, everything is transformed...."

Thematics, La Regle du jeu defies reduction to any single statement of "meaning". As with any great work of art, its thematic dimension is inextricably involved with its stylistics. Renoir's own statements about the film indicate the complexity of attitude it embodies: on the one

hand, "the story attacks the very structure of our society"; on the other, "I wish I could live in such a society - that would be wonderful." People repeatedly quote Octave's line, "Everyone has his reasons," as if it summed up the film (and Renoir), reducing its attitude to a simple, all-embracing generosity; they ignore the words that introduce it: "...there's one thing that is terrible, and that is that everyone has his reasons," as to the "rules" of the title, the attitude is again highly complex. On the one hand, the film clearly recognises the need for order, for some form of "regulation"; on the other, the culminating catastrophe is precipitated by the application of opposed set of rules by two characters (who happen to be husband and wife): Schumacher, who believes in punishing promiscuity with death, and Lisette, who believes in sexual game-playing but has rigid notions of propriety in questions of age and income. Not surprisingly, the film plays on unresolved (perhaps, within our culture, unresolvable) tensions and paradoxes; the Marquis "doesn't want fences" (restrictions), but also "doesn't want rabbits" (total freedom). Few films have treated the issue of sexual morality (fidelity, monogamy, freedom) with such openness; a film about people who go too far, or a film about people who don't go far enough? - (*Robin Wood*).



These five essays were extracted from 'The International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers: Volume I - Films'.

Jean Renoir was born in Paris, 15 September 1894.

Silent French Films:

- 1924 - *Catherine or Une Vie sans Joie*, (Production, screenplay, acting).
- *La Fille de l'Eau*, (Production, direction).
- 1926 - *Nana*, (Production, direction, editing, screenplay).
- *Charleston or Sur un Air de Charleston*, short, (Direction).
- 1927 - *Marquitta*, (Direction, screenplay).
- *La P'tite Lili*, (Acting).
- 1928 - *La Petite Marchande d'Allumettes*, (Co-Production, Direction, screenplay).
- *Tire au Flanc*, (Direction, screenplay).
- *Le Tournoi or Le Tournoi dans la Cite*, (Direction, screenplay).
- 1929 - *Le Bled*, (Direction, screenplay).
- *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, (Production, screenplay, acting).
- 1930 - *La Chasse a la Fortune or La Chasse au Bonheur*, (Acting).

Sound French Films:

- 1931 - *On Purge Bebe*, (Direction, screenplay).
- *La Chiennne*, (Production, direction, co-screenplay).
- 1932 - *La Nuit du Carrefour*, (Direction, co-screenplay).
- *Chotard et Cie*, (Direction, screenplay).
- *Boudu Sauve des Eaux*, (Direction, screenplay).
- 1934 - *Madame Bovary*, (Direction, screenplay).
- 1935 - *Toni*, (Direction, co-screenplay).
- 1936 - *Le Crime de M. Lange*, (Direction, co-screenplay).
- *La Vie est a Nous*, (Co-Direction & screenplay, acting).
- *Une Partie de Campagne*, (Direction, screenplay, acting).
- *Les Bas-Fonds*, (Direction, co-screenplay).
- 1937 - *La Grande Illusion*, (Direction, co-screenplay).
- 1938 - *La Marseillaise*, (Direction, co-screenplay).
- *La Bete Humaine*, (Direction, screenplay, acting).
- 1939 - *La Regle de Jeu*, (Direction, co-screenplay, acting).

Sound Films In Exile:

- 1940 - *La Tosca*, (Italy), (Direction - 5 shots, co-screenplay).
- 1941 - *Swamp Water*, (USA), (Direction).
- 1943 - *This Land Is Mine*, (USA), (Direction, co-production & screenplay).
- 1944 - *Salute to France*, (USA), short propaganda, (Direction, co-screenplay).
- 1945 - *The Southerner*, (USA), (Direction, screenplay).
- 1946 - *The Diary of a Chambermaid*, (USA), (Direction, co-screenplay).
- *The Woman on the Beach*, (USA), (Direction, co-screenplay).
- 1950 - *The River*, (India), (Direction, co-production & screenplay).

Sound French Films II:

- 1952 - *Le Carrosse d'Or*, (Direction, co-screenplay).
- 1955 - *French CanCan*, (Direction, screenplay).
- 1956 - *Elena et les Hommes*, (Direction, screenplay).
- 1959 - *Le Testament du Dr Cordelier*, (Direction, co-production, screenplay).
- *Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe*, (Direction, co-production, screenplay).
- 1962 - *Le Caporal Epingle*, (Direction, co-screenplay).
- 1968 - *La Direction d'Acteur par Jean Renoir*, short, (Direction, acting).
- 1969 - *Le Petit Theatre par Jean Renoir*, (Direction, screenplay).

Died in Beverly Hills, 12 February 1979.

Books on Renoir: 'Jean Renoir: the French Films 1924-39' by Alexander Sesonske, 'Jean Renoir' by Raymond Durnat, 'Jean Renoir' by Andre Bazin, 'My Life and My Films' by Jean Renoir.

THE UNITED STATES(S)

If the co-operative darkness of the movies is the nearest our culture gets to the dissolve of dreams, who are these figures patrolling them, recurring, fleshing the stories out for us?

Robert De Niro, may we ever gaze upon that spectral countenance and yet never know anything of your dreams.

What is called acting, then? A location, a wishing well, from which we can draw what we need to express - or suppress - our desires, Desire - always after what it does not have (we shall come to the American Dream), and above all a sign or two of what it does not want to have, or have to face.

This actor faces us, and defaces our guilty secrets - "there is always someone to go through the screen, the controlling screen of phantasy, and fulfil the horrified fascination of the culture."

What, of the actor, haunts us?

What is called acting - a "science of ghosts" perhaps as Jacques Derrida calls cinema. In the case of Robert De Niro we know less of the body behind the white sheet than most - and if, as I think, the Scorsese series is De Niro's real triumph, we can only wonder how forceful this particular phantom would be without his compatible demon.



Mean Streets, Taxi Driver, New York New York, Raging Bull, The King Of Comedy; they make operas together, for each other. Whatever iconic posterity and popular infamy is to be De Niro's, it will surely stem from *Taxi Driver*, closely followed by the other Scorsese collaborations. No doubt, He has yet to match these portraits elsewhere - and indeed, in such epic sweeps as *Godfather II, The Last Tycoon, 1900* and *The Deer Hunter*, he is little more than an empty centre of gravity, a mere glint of the presence, the method.

De Niro and Scorsese were made for one another - it's almost too symmetrical; the tall and

short of it; De Niro, who can apparently do anything with his body at will - Scorsese a prisoner of asthma and other ailments; De Niro's speech (from what we can gather) is slow, elliptical, fumbling - Scorsese is an aggressively symbolic, free-wheeling fast-talker; De Niro's parents split when he was two - whereas the Scorsese family seems to be the most (only?) solid thing in his life; Scorsese looks at the world and the world looks at De Niro .

This is what interests me; the icon and the iconoclast, their United State(s), their brittle Italy, overlap, overkill, overall. All the malefactors, all their men.

If we build up an idea of the roles - the conscious thread and the unconscious chains - what's been said about them, what was required for them, what the characteristics portray, we may see more clearly what it is that Robert De Niro has been doing for us.

Or for some of us. Who, we?

This easily overlooked enquiry may reap more answers than we might expect. From the tarnished saints of *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver* to the semi-bloated dopehead of *Once Upon A Time In America* is certainly a metaphorical - and revealing - gulf; but many things about Robert De Niro and his audience have remained the same.

De Niro is emphatically, a male preserve.

No Gere, Hoffman or Redford he; the girls have not taken him up as a fully fledged popular sex symbol. In the watching couple, De Niro's determinedly male horrors produce at most a tense laughter of recognition. In both, But the species of the male - individually and invariably - has a different relationship with the boys from the black stuff of *Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*.

Friends, female travellers male feminists - I know that you have grown tired of hearing us repeat our favourite lines from these films. But inevitably - to whose extent? we'll see - my view of Robert De Niro must be this male. This may involve some steep admissions.

On both sides of the screen.

We might easily imagine Robert De Niro started life as *Taxi Driver* as a yellow checker soul - Oedipus in NYC - tormented by his in-growing no-tale. But the De Niro story, like most, didn't arrive conveniently pre-arranged; it obeys the same ragged, uneven and vicissitudinous path as most lives.

Born in the Lower East Side of New York on 17 August, 1943 he only knew his parents collectively for the next two years, before they split. Both mom and dad were artists - Mrs De Niro an Impressionist who went under the pseudosignature of Virginia Admiral (coincidentally, she later took up with renowned film critic Manny Farber) and Robert De Niro Snr a figurative painter, part time sculptor and poet. Mother got custody of young Robert, and he seems to have been emotionally close to her, though physically the resemblance is to his father (the famous grin is an heirloom).

He was an irregular scholar, but started Saturday morning matinee acting class from an early age, then from age 16 to 20 studying under Method luminaries Stella Adler, Luther James and - of course - Lee Strasberg. He acted around the theatre fringe in off-Broadway and Boston before landing his first celluloid appearance at age 20 in *The Wedding Party*, a studious student exercise directed by one very precocious Brian De Palma, he took his first cheque for a six month stay in Paris before poverty returned him to a mixture of table-waiting and the audition line.

Two more gigs with De Palma - *Greetings* (1968) and *Hi Mom!* (1970) brought him to the attention of Shelley Winters, who drafted him into the lead of a play she had written and was about to stage called *One Night Stands of Noisy Passenger*. He co-starred alongside her in his first commercial movie appearance, Roger Corman's Bonnie and Clyde cash-in *Bloody Mama*, and he met Martin Scorsese in the same year, 1970.

Mean Streets plays out the mean ratio between enunciation and explosion on the streets of New York's Little Italy. Initially, it's a direct transposition of Martin Scorsese (or even Martin ScorseSe), and what the director is doing is ridding himself of a childhood.

With child hoods; Charlie (Harvey Keitel) would be a Saint Francis of the numbers racket if he could only stop Johnny Boy (De Niro) from always coming (and going) too soon. Johnny

shoots his mouth off at everyone, shoots his gun at anything, he hits out too soon, pitches in his grin too soon, bets and spends too much too soon. And so, sooner or later . . .

But he can't be stopped. De Niro makes Johnny Boy a shuttering poetry of motion, rudely anarchic, random (his energy goes in all the wrong places). Charlie is Catholic reason - trying to resolve, busy placating his influential Uncle and even more influential Father (Up There) - trying to save Johnny from himself. But it can't hold. Johnny Boy is the dynamic Scorsese sides with, it's what he's always going to feel, and field for us. It's the beginning of the Scorsese--De Niro schizo tour (Scorsese's voice is intercut with Keital's - not only in two minds, but two mouths).

De Niro makes a dance of everything Johnny Boy has to do - he starts up the best of Scorsese's Rock-of-Movies, driven by a pulse like an ambulance without breaks. Music seeps into and out of *Mean Streets*; Charlie's doo-wop drunk, Johnny's goon dance to The Miracles' 'Mickey's Monkey', the 16rpm entry into the bar - mohair coat, brand new shirt, no trousers.

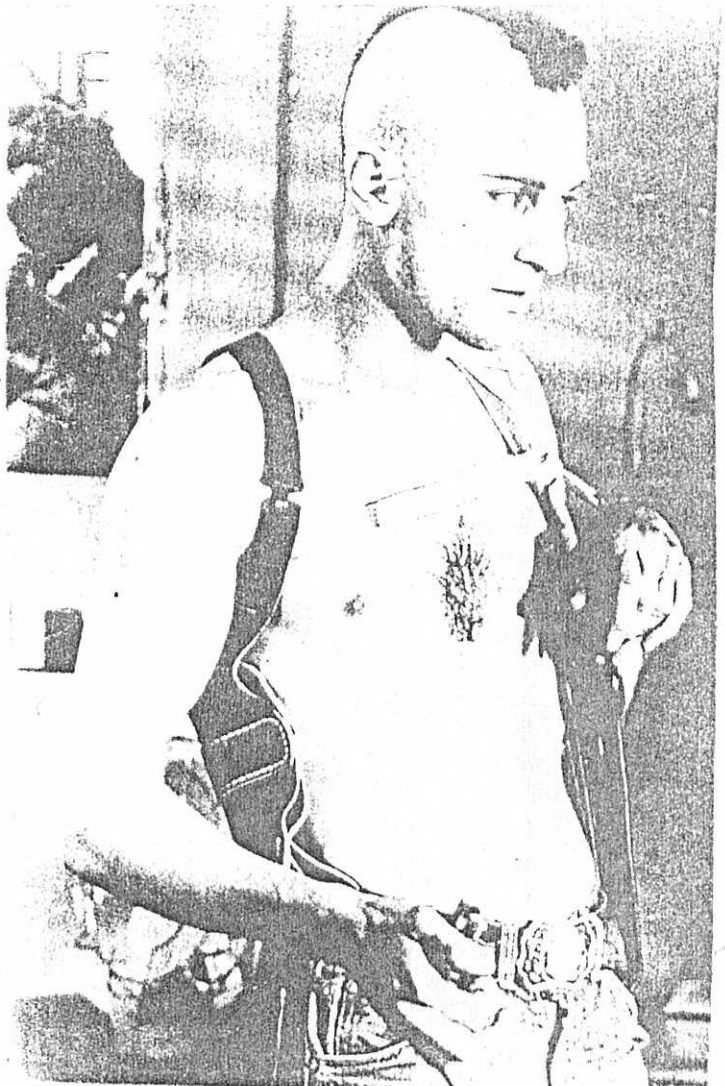
Heretofore, youth rebellion in the movies has been strictly side of the mouth, kickstarts into sluggishness, everything down to lazy eyebrows and elbow joints (Brando, Dean, Nicholson). *Mean Streets* is cut to the rhythm of Johnny Boy's pointless bravado, his overdrive. De Niro doesn't use his body to suggest - we get Johnny Boy's run-for-cover, the veering recklessness, the naive violations, and we get them straight. In the more panicked moments, he realises the expression of a kid who's learnt to act (to mug) in order to survive - and only got halfway there. He isn't a rebel (just a "crazy mixed-up kid"), and - like the up-coming Travis Bickle - you get the feeling that Johnny might (as) well be virginal. He's just pure devilment.

Besides the tricky banter with Charlie, he even looks like a clown - De Niro is a mass of points, thin and vulgar, a hat looking to get lost and a chin asking to get bust.

Both Johnny and Charlie get their come-uppance, although neither one is actually killed, as is often thought. Like a rehearsal for *Taxi Driver*, the joyride can't even arrive at the transcendence of death. Scorsese: "That's the worst part. That's the whole thing."

Kael's point about not explaining madness is a pertinent one. It's important to remember that for the Scorsese gallery, De Niro doesn't act psychotic. Madness is not within the province (the prophylactic gaze) of knowledge - like death, it is not something that can be researched, or recalled from memory, and then wiped.

De Niro doesn't go for the Anthony Perkins/Bruce Dern bug-eyed monster. He dawdles, doodles with the mood, implies a future frenzy arrives incognito, the fuck-up proceeds with his own inane logic (from coffee and pie to a seat in the porno stalls). All the schmucks and pretty boys, "behind their tender eyes lurks a fierce and frozen being whose fear lies in wait for you." *Taxi Driver* was De Niro's first role, and there's scarcely a frame he



doesn't occupy. The pace is all his to set, and whole stretches of the film rely on his silence; his eyes must carry the weight of Travis Bickle's psychosis, its birth and acceleration.

When Travis applies for his hacking job, he seems to have awoken from some cultural half-death, a baby yet to learn the city's syntax, its official slang. Failing this (as he does) the wanting love of his sister (Jodie Foster) and Madonna-like mother/wife (Cybil Shepherd) must be avenged on the city's fathers (that they're politician and pimp respectively is scarcely relevant).

De Niro has to be a holding aesthetic focus for the warped force of the Schrader--Scorsese partnership (a sort of Morals Brokerage), had to make breath of their timeless concerns, their diagrammatic repugnance. Together they drew out rhapsody from Travis Bickle's solitariness. *Taxi Driver* could only be cinematic.

"... A very rich piece of juvenilia, but it is juvenilia. It is an adolescent, immature mind, struggling to identify itself. It has no maturity except at the talent level." - *Taxi Driver* scriptwriter Paul Schrader.

Unhip Travis may be, but it didn't take long for him to join the ranks of the Teenage icon.

Everyone knows *Taxi Driver*; most people probably know it inside out by now. If there is an across-the-board sub-cultural movie (that has permeated rock, rather than paid insufferable 'homage' to it) then *Taxi Driver* must be it. *The Teenage* movie - one of the most clogged-up sexual fables of our time, featuring perhaps the most seriously fucked-up protagonist of our day . . .

But part of *Taxi Driver's* secret is that it is unrelentingly sexy, albeit at an unconscious level. For one thing, it is in constant motion. And De Niro crossed with Bickle makes for a brittle, alabaster, almost neutered and saintly sexiness. It's a spell Travis is unaware of - and boys can dig De Niro as Bickle (without guilt) because he prows; it's an easier narcissism than, say, a Harvey Keitel or Sylvester Stallone. He is just about gawky enough.

Travis Bickle is a sieve through which oozes the detritus of the permissive society (he hates, most of all, the sidewalks of display; through his eyes and his cab pass, quite literally, the scum off the streets. The backseat is awash with menstrual blood and quick ejaculations . . .) and the back of his head?



Travis in his cab is like a diagram of the Freudian instincts: the (super) structure of cab/job gives him an excuse to keep going, working the city, keeping assignations and appointments. Inside the eyes of this ego are not looking where they're going (which is nowhere anyway, as he does not choose the direction) they're in the rear view mirror. Hell - and, in this case, his unconscious - is other people. Throughout *Taxi Driver*, Scorsese plays a very clever peeping game with a variety of mirrors and optical devices. Travis is a born projector.

It's a fable of perfectly wrought confusion - without any where from or where to (cabbie's joke). Travis Bickle is one of Schrader--Scorsese's failing fathers, and the displaced blood of birth goes instead into a ceaseless production of death. Peter Boyle ('Wizard' in TD): "Travis creates dead bodies, in a sense, because the feeling is not released and the blocked energy creates a deadness." (Travis, to himself, in the mirror: "You're dead.") At the time of *Taxi Driver*'s "release", the violence - and let's not forget that there's really not that much, quantitatively, alongside a *Dirty Harry*, *Death Wish* or your average Peckinpah - was a real shock, just as the sex in *Last Tango* had been.

Pauline Kael again: "... There is practically no sex in it, but no sex can be as disturbing as sex. And that's what it's about: the absence of sex - bottled-up, impacted energy and emotion, with a blood splattering release. The fact that we experience Travis' need for an explosion viscerally, and that the explosion itself has the quality of consummation, makes Taxi Driver one of the few truly modern horror films."

All this appeals to the adolescent (in us) because Travis doles blame outwards, projects the fear of what he loves and in the process turns it sour. But we fall for him, because he's not the puffy outsider or social leper of our own cities - his enervation is gaunt and rhythmic, he is fuelled by his hang-ups rather than handicapped. He thinks schedules will solve everything - he exists in a purified state of dissipation.

What made this De Niro so much an icon for the times, though? I think it's partly to do with Schrader's (correct) prediction that the grey early '70s were ripe for their own brand of film noir.

With *Taxi Driver*, American cinema rediscovered its (favourite) city. The black and white New York skyline had been central to many '50s pictures of social failure (for some reason I always think of Wilder's *The Apartment* as epitome of this particular area), but had been ditched in the hay-wired drop-out of the '60s, when everyone went wild for sand dunes and cross-country fun. Scorsese coloured in the monochrome, murkily, added a yellow viper, and sensualised the humid hometown, the "anti-Ark", the rotten Apple.

In terms of timescale, Travis was obviously not even an ex-hippie, but just another one of the ignored moods of the '60s, one of the rural boys who spent them in the slime of Indochina rather than the mud of Woodstock. The USA already possessed a convenient national symbol in Nixon, but political dilapidation and social heterogeneity were global, a film maker like Godard could dissect the fragmentation of collectivity and utopianism, but Scorsese wanted to tinker with popular undercurrents.

Much of the appeal of *Taxi Driver* works on a sub-or even pre-conscious level (colour, tempo, music) and it is here also that we can differentiate - within De Niro's performance - between what is mere graft, and a craft worthy of Art.

Even - or most of all - an intelligent man like Schrader knows that the narrative-held American movie demands little of the script - not much more than structure, in fact. It isn't even a pseudo-literature - at most, a kind of clipboard symbolism. So where the written text offers the possibility of building up a believable character - not just through a list of habits, but within the writer's own style, the accumulation of resonances - the movie script starts from a practical zero. It's up to the actor to provide the intermittent rhythms of an ingrained life. There has to be enough consistency to establish years within minutes, but omission enough to keep us on edge.

Much of De Niro's screen time is simply spent doing nothing - in Travis' cab and apartment, with no other actors to feed off. As well as playing dumb, he must also suggest why Travis might be appealing to both Betsy and Iris - the bottom line of acting, to make believable

make believe (dealing with Schrader and Scorsese gives the word belief an added pressure). He sensualises the sickness. He embodies - sometimes in one look - the schizophrenia that will finally crack like a fault line.

Schrader: "De Niro's contribution was much of the schizophrenic quality of the character, which is not in the script. That quality in Travis of shooting the guy and then saying 'Oh, I don't know what to do about this gun' - all those schizo elements came straight from his own personality."

Subliminally, the film lulls us into this split from the off - the ominous Bernard Herrman orchestra and drumbeat says War, Tom Scott's plaintive saxophone says Relax, Identify.



Taxi Driver is both an immigrant view of a foreign or alien world, and - just pre-Punk - a celebration of city squalor (no matter how inadvertantly). De Niro is a pale, red-eyed creature, his hair DIY-hacked from scene to scene, his shades matt black rather than mirror, dressed for self-defence rather than defiance - everything says withdrawl. he moves with his head tucked in, gargling uppers on brandy, eats shit, watches TV shit, looks like shit . . . and then can't comprehend why it is he feels like shit.

Death of Teenage? Birth of Teenage!

Other American anti-hero movie stars of the time didn't come close - like Warren Beatty, even Jack Nicholson; just too easy to be an anti-hero in Laurel Canyon, I mean - *Shampoo?* Gimme a break! Mild satire and Mazursky may have been alright for mature American film critics, but *Taxi Driver* could also entrap the casual teenage thug with its entropic groove (the sign above De Niro on the marvellous blue TD posters; "*ADULT MOVIES*"). And, if you lived in the sticks, chances are that Bruce Lee and Sylvia Kristel were previously the closest you'd been to Method acting . . .

"You talkin' to me?" - that strangest, most popular scene from *Taxi Driver*, of De Niro. I can think of myriad subliminal reasons for its continued effect (the baby-like repetition of the phrase; an adolescent identification with "Well I'm the only one here" and the fact that it all takes place before the mirror) . . . but why, most perplexing of all, do we laugh?



Look at it - the expression on De Niro's face has more in common with the Three Stooges than Clint Eastwood; it's a threat that maybe will fail but works like a dream in the privacy of his own room (maybe we've all rehearsed something similar?) We laugh - he laughs - at the silliness and doom of it. Like Schrader's (Mishima's) Samurai, it's death as a way of life. Hence also the grin at the end of the massacre, as he rests a blood soaked index against his Humpty Dumpty temples and the eggshell grin almost halves his face. This grin is practically unreadable - pleasure? failure? simulation of death? simulation as death? indicating where the violence was - and should have gone back to - all the time? simulation as death as the American way of death . . . ?

Travis as the adolescent country that will not look into itself?

What we've got going here is a cycle (or given the partnership, a bicycle - made by two) which starts with the childhood of *Mean Streets*, stretches painfully through the sexual, adolescent confusion of *Taxi Driver*, which reaches maturity (marriage, careers, success, divorce) in *New York, New York*, and then drops into senility, decline, death or purgatory in *Raging Bull*.

Both *New York, New York* and *Raging Bull* achieved notoriety for De Niro's pre-match training - learning near-perfect sax movements for the former and near-professional boxing for the latter. Such considerations perhaps make for easy conversation stoppers to the exclusion of why or how the techniques are being deployed. The lengths De Niro goes to seem to parallel the lengths his characters go in order to avoid a confrontation with themselves.

The technique, the career - will and ill will - is obviously a mask for deeper malcontents - the male thing. "Your characters are often very macho," an interviewer once said to Scorsese. "They appear to be," he corrected. The Scorsese--De Niro male breaks or injures or spites the male community that he is part of. He is, in spite of himself.

The law is always (made) male - perhaps more to preclude the male's own feminine than to directly 'oppress' the women. And above all it is the law of the Father - but Scorsese--De Niro male cannot control it because he cannot be it, he can't 'make' it. So he fucks up. Scorsese couldn't make something as pretty and finite as *New York, New York* - so he ravaged us with *Raging Bull*.

Jake La Motta in *Raging Bull* is a frightening figure of a man, not merely physically, but emotionally - so in-turned, so paranoid. For fear, he must break the male image. When he no longer has any strength (faith) left in his prick, he literally goes to seed. He becomes a

real prick. He beats himself against a wall. His brother Joey analyses his problem early on, and advises "less eat and more fuck", the one increasing in direct (dis) proportion to the other. When he can no longer take it out or get it up, he acts like a fuck-up.

Unlike the sort of characters played by an Eastwood or Bronson (towers of surety and strength - they know what they're doing, and that what they're doing is right) or even Beatty and Nicholson (the feminised Casanova figure) these men are real fuck-ups. Not even nasty calculating bastards. Sick fucks, Dumb fucks, Johnny Boy can't stop himself, Travis won't go near his bed (his dreams), La Motta's impotence turns to stones. They all must break the Law (break, or kill, or main).

These critiques are often criticized for being too sympathetic, for being, in turn, "too male"; and the hasty empirical thought presents itself - women don't like them, or appreciate them but can't get close to them. The feeling is that De Niro's outbursts are ultimately narcissistic (the burden of La Motta's flesh being perhaps the supreme act of self glorification - through pain), that they only serve to further (de)generate the mythos of the male, crude male, chained male, a chain mail perhaps (as we merely mouth all those favourite lines). The male curse: fuck you, you fuck, you motherfuck, your mother fucks . . . all a matter of diction, contra wise. To the manner - rather than the mother - born? No surprise that so much of this cursing is spun around the question(ing) of birth, throwing into doubt the mother's purity, the number of possible fathers.

I think the generic Sick Fuck about covers these characters. No one else is to blame for their fuck ups. They fuck (up) themselves. Till they make themselves bleed, or blood is shed. They fuck themselves silly. Johnny Boy, Travis, La Motta, none can be said to be the most sensible of men.

So what the fuck is the matter with you?

"You talkin' to me?" You like these movies too? You're a sick individual, what can I tell you?



Is this series of shocks actually a comfort to us? Surely not. What is this male pathology (these case studies) if not a homeopathy? The dictionary: "A system . . . that treats a disease esp. by administration of minute doses of a remedy that would in healthy persons produce symptoms of the disease treated." We might stress the phrase "that would in healthy persons . . ."

In *Raging Bull*, it is not time or (r)age that separate the two halves of La Motta - not even the young contender is a particularly nice person. What we are given to see is not past and a future - two different modifications - but the same La Motta; the bloated showbiz corpse was always struggling to get out.

De Niro put on 60 pounds, just as he had shed 35 for *Taxi Driver* - and the film starts with it, subtracting the possibility of a conventional narrative shock. The worst moment comes when La Motta is thrown in a county jail, the dead end, no one else to take his troubles out on. Schrader originally had it written as some sort of "*masturbation monologue*", but Scorsese lights it like a religious epiphany, and, like Travis' mocking finger, all the violence returns to the host.

"My joy as an actor," De Niro has said, "is to live different lives without risking the real-life consequences." So, given the sort of role he chooses to accept, what's his idea of joy?

What he does for us is make sneakingly likeable characters we wouldn't have within a 12-mile radius of our homes. For this reason alone, he can never disappear into the Method. In *The King Of Comedy* Rupert Pupkin exists in a medium precariously balanced between humour and the grotesque. At times, he's almost endearing - in the same way that the young Jerry Lewis was (bearing in mind that those characters were always just one step away from something cruelly spastic), but he's obviously a completely unbearable 'personality'.

King may be a self-confessed 'stop-gap' for Scorsese - full of in-jokes and references, and about as light-hearted as he's likely to get - but the same deathly-serious undercurrents are still there. De Niro's performance is as eerily subsumed as Bickle or La Motta; "behind" Pupkin - nothing, no self-mockery a la Burt Reynolds or Clint Eastwood, no careerist vanity, no gimmicks (both of which combined to produce Dustin Hoffman's silly *Tootsie*).

Growing used to De Niro we may fail to notice the full extent of his character's sickness. *The King Of Comedy* is *Taxi Driver* re-run; "I'm in communications right now, but by nature I'm a comedian." says Pupkin, but he isn't. He simulates what comedians do, just as Travis simulates what assassins do. The only genuine burst of laughter in *The King Of Comedy* comes from Scorsese, funnily enough. It may be one of De Niro's most finely, self-deprecating performances - on a par with *True Confessions* (the only non-Scorsese role where he really excels; again, it's a quiet one; again, it has its basis in the New York theatre community). De Niro is more unrecognisable as Pupkin than ever before - he seems to have lost a neck and gained square shoulders and a square head in anticipation of TV fame. Other Scorsese--De Niro characters lose their soul, but keep bodily (bloody) contact with the Earth; Pupkin is a man without any life of his own, no discernible past or future, and a present lived continually through others, through chat show hosts and . . . actors.

Will the most exhaustive analysis of De Niro's career, after all, be left with no more than a collection of masks? Contrawise, what if, all along, he has been showing us everything? That in this multiplicity of 'guises', Robert De Niro has really been unravelled? The only addiction being those techniques (dialect, weight, disciplines) used to concentrate, to condense his life into the space of a dream, the time of the cinema . . .

Unlike most of his viewers, this life is a matter of public record, and the record suggests that acting has been less a question of exhibitionism or popularity than catharsis and survival.

One decisive area I haven't been able to cover in this look at De Niro (and Scorsese) is that of their self-conscious status as immigrant. Creation for both seems to be an agonised act - the search to find the ground, the truth, the decisive moment, to become . . . (Shelley Winters: "He doesn't act: he becomes!").

And the silence? All part of the Method, to keep it as real as can be - to keep

our belief in the screen De Niro, untainted by any *Rolling Stone*-type interview full of individual trivia, doubt, revision, set details (irony of the penultimate images in *The King of Comedy*, the news-stand Pupkin that De Niro will never be). It's like a faith, a vow of silence, the closure of disclosure taken literally, he has held true to his own body's murmurs, his own dream of nightmares, hasn't fallen for the American Dream of many actors. Like Pacino, he has not become a huge star in the conventional sense, and doesn't have a string of hack movies to his name (and credit). Only one recent development threatens to in any way dent or taint the image - the Belushi episode.



"If you made a 20-hour movie, you might see their better sides." De Niro once said of his characters - or might we call them patients? I'd like to see him do something out of the ordinary like that - something outside of the mainstream, just to insure that the next phase of his career (his 'maturity') doesn't subsist as mere reiteration of a certain recipe or box of tricks, the Method or any method (as is the case with so many American actors).

The European theatrical theorist Grotowski has written: "The actor looks for something concrete in himself and the easiest thing is hysteria. He hides within hysterical reactions: formless improvisations with wild gestures and screams. This, too, is narcissism."

We can only wonder just how sick De Niro is that he will go to such lengths as he has to purge himself of his ghosts. And we can only hope that there is enough true will to sustain him, to keep him from an early grave in Hollywood, that most unforgiving of ghost towns.

This essay was written by Ian Penman and originally published in the NME in 1984.
(Ian Penman is now the film critic for The Face).

The Five Scorsese--De Niro Movies are:
Mean Streets, 1973 / Taxi Driver, 1976 / New York, New York, 1977
Raging Bull, 1981 / The King Of Comedy, 1983.

Martin Scorsese was born in Queens, New York City, 17.11.42.

Other films include: Who's That Knocking at My Door? '69, Boxcar Bertha, '72, Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore, '74, Italianamerican, (Doc) '74, The Last Waltz, (Doc) '78, American Boy, (Doc) '78, Afterhours, '85, The Color of Money, '85, The Last Temptation of Christ, '88.

Robert De Niro was born in New York City, 17.8.43.

Other films include: The Wedding Party (De Palma), '69, Greetings (De Palma), '69, Hi! Mom (De Palma), '70, Bloody Mama (Corman), '70, The Swap (Shade), '70, Jennifer on My Mind (Black), '71, Born To Win (Passer), '71, The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight (Goldstone), '71, Bang The Drum Slowly (Hancock), '73, The Godfather Part II (Coppola), '74, Novecento 1900 (Bertolucci), '76, The Last Tycoon (Kazan), '76, The Deer Hunter (Cimino), '77, True Confessions (Grosbard), '81, Once Upon a Time In America (Leone), '84, Falling In Love (Grosbard), '84, Brazil (Gilliam), '85, The Mission (Joffe), '85, Angel Heart (Parker), '87, The Untouchables (De Palma), '87, Midnight Run (Brest), '88.

THE WICKER

MAN



Beware all you Christians, sitting smugly in your arrogant certainty, the old ways are not forgotten, merely hidden, waiting patiently to spring forth and engulf you when you are at your weakest. Imagine, if you will, the following: a devout Christian policeman is sent to a remote Scottish isle to investigate the disappearance of a young girl. Once on Summerisle he discovers that all is not as one would expect. A perverse sexuality pervades throughout the entire population, presided over by the Lord of Summerisle himself. Our hero, a lay preacher, finds he must fight against his own desires to remain without sin. He finds himself fending off his yearnings for the innkeepers's sexy daughter who has a habit of performing nude dances and seducing youngsters. The islanders insist that the missing girl was never there but his investigations convince him otherwise and the more he finds out the more he comes to believe that the locals intend to sacrifice the girl to ensure a good crop in accordance with an ancient satanic rite.

Part of his deductions are correct except for one fact. It is not the young virgin who is for the chop - she is merely the bait. What would Satan like more than an immaculate young thing, a fervent Christian soul. It is our hero himself who is to be sacrificed. Not in any normal, buckets of blood on the altar fashion but by incineration. He is placed inside a giant Wicker Man which is set alight, the ensuing conflagration ensuring healthy, ripe corn for the coming season.

This is the basic plot of 'The Wicker Man'. Edward Woodward plays the ill-fated policeman, with Christopher Lee as Lord Summerisle - Britt Ekland plays the inn-keepers daughter. On one level the film is like a long episode of *The Avengers* - a typically British adventure story but it has an underlying theme of darkness and menace. The joviality of the inhabitants of Summerisle contrasts with their diabolic intents. The fact that the Satanists prevail is somehow pleasant despite their cruelty in the way they despatch Woodward. And we must remember that Christianity has teeth just as sharp as the devil!

HITCHCOCK

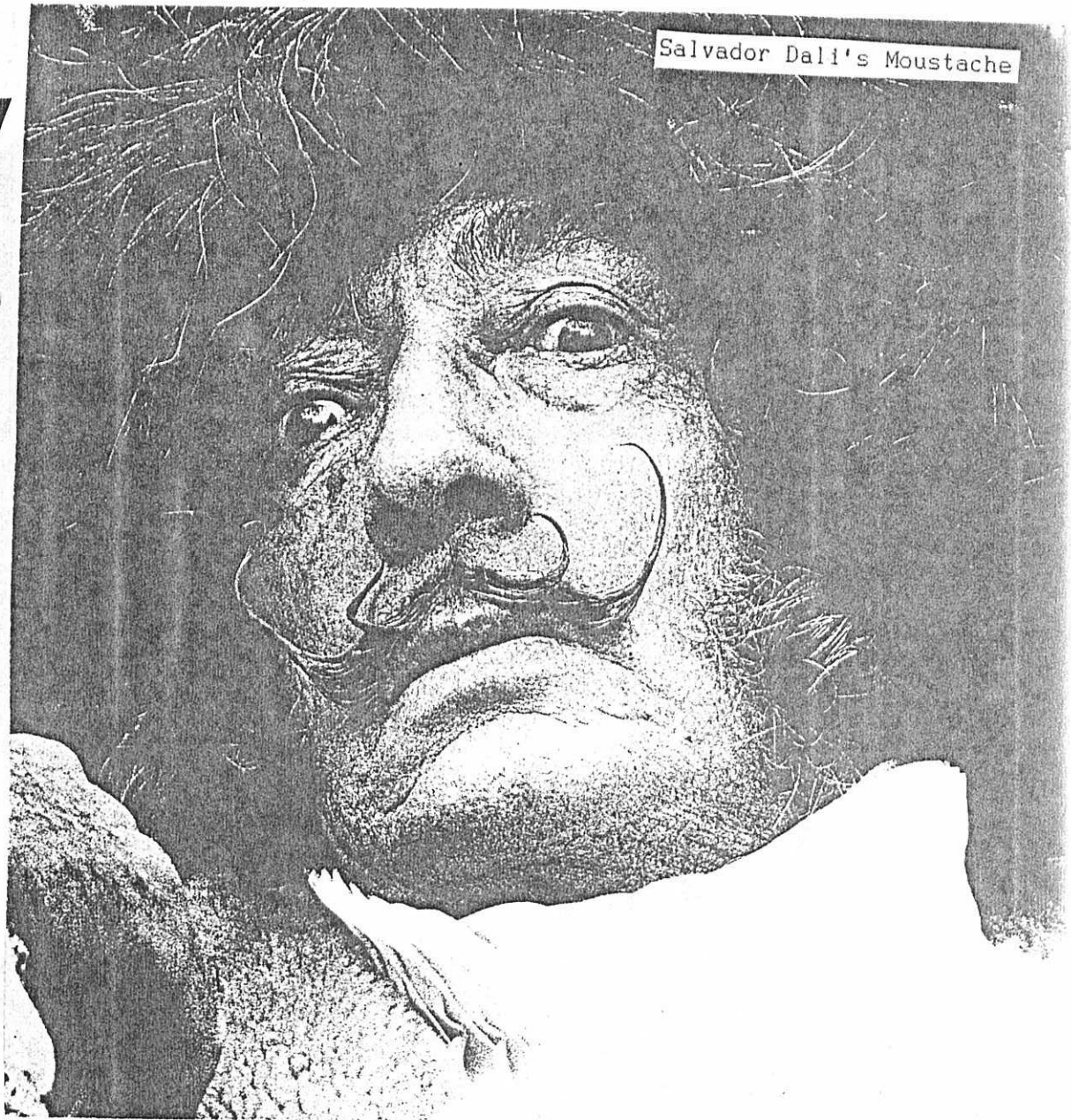


as Silent Director: 1922 - *Number 13, unfinished* (+P), / 1926 - *The Pleasure Garden*, / *The Mountain Eagle* / *The Lodger*, (+co-sc), / 1927 - *Downhill*, / *Easy Virtue*, / *The Ring*, (+sc), / 1928 - *The Farmer's Wife*, (+sc), / *Champagne*, (+sc), / *The Manxman*, / 1929 - *Blackmail*, (silent & sound)&(+sc), / *Juno and the Paycock* (+co-sc)

as Sound Director: 1930 - *Murder*, (+co-sc), / 1931 - *The Skin Game*, (+co-sc), / 1932 - *Rich and Strange*, (+co-sc), / *Number 17*, (+co-sc), / 1933 - *Waltzes from Vienna*, / 1934 - *The Man Who Knew too Much*, [P Lorre] / 1935 - *The 39 Steps*, [R Donat], / 1936 - *The Secret Agent*, [J Gielgud, P Lorre] / *Sabotage*, / 1937 - *Young and Innocent*, / 1938 - *The Lady Vanishes*, [M Redgrave, M Lockwood], / 1939 - *Jamaica Inn*, [C Laughton] / in USA: 1940 - *Rebecca*, [L Olivier, J Fontaine], / *Foreign Correspondent*, / 1941 - *Mr and Mrs Smith*, [C Lombard], / *Suspicion*, [C Grant, J Fontaine] / 1942 - *Saboteur*, / 1943 - *Shadow of a Doubt*, [J Cotten], / 1944 - *Lifeboat*, / 1945 - *Spellbound*, [I Bergman, G Peck -- sc Hecht], / 1946 - *Notorious*, [I Bergman, C Grant -- sc Hecht] (+P, story), / 1947 - *The Paradine Case*, [G Peck, C Laughton], / 1948 - *Rope*, [J Stewart] (+Co-P) in Colour, / 1949 - *Under Capricorn*, [I Bergman, J Cotten] (+Co-P) in Col, / 1950 - *Stage Fright*, [M Dietrich] (+P), / 1951 - *Strangers on a Train*, [co-sc Chandler] (+P), / 1953 - *I Confess*, [Monty Clift] (+P), / 1954 - *Dial M for Murder*, [R Milland, G Kelly] (+P, sc) in Col, / *Rear Window*, [J Stewart, G Kelly] (+P) in Col, / 1955 - *To Catch a Thief*, [C Grant, G Kelly] (+P) in Col, / *The Trouble with Harry*, (+P) in Colour, / 1956 - *The Man Who Knew too Much II* [J Stewart, D Day] (+P) in Col, / 1957 - *The Wrong Man*, [H Fonda] (+P), / 1958 - *Vertigo*, [J Stewart, K Novak] (+P) in Col, / 1959 - *North by Northwest*, [C Grant, E Marie Saint, J Mason] (+P) in Col, / 1960 - *Psycho*, [A Perkins] (+P), / 1963 - *The Birds*, [R Taylor, T Hedren] (+P), / 1964 - *Marnie*, [T Hedren, S Connery] (+P) in Col, / 1966 - *Torn Curtain*, [P Newman, J Andrews] (+P), / 1969 - *Topaz*, (+P) in Col, / 1972 - *Frenzy*, (+P) in Col, / 1976 - *Family Plot*, (+P) in Col.

Other Filmic work: Various inter-title designs 1920-22, General assistant 1923-25, Completed Direction 1930 - *Elstree Calling*, Propaganda; 1944 - *Bon Voyage*, (short) / *Aventure Malgache*, (short), TV Productions; 1955 - *Revenge* / *Breakdown* / *The Case of Mr Pelham*, / 1956 - *Back For Christmas* / *Wet Saturday* / *Mr Blanchard's Secret*, / 1957 - *One More Mile to Go* / *The Perfect Crime* / *Four O'Clock*, / 1958 - *Lamb To the Slaughter* / *Deep in the Pool* / *Poison*, 1959 - *Banquo's Chair* / *Arthur* / *The Crystal Trench*, 1960 - *Mrs Bixby and the Colonel's Coat* / *Incident at a Corner*, / 1961 - *The Horseplayer* / *Bang! You're Dead*, / 1962 - *I Saw the Whole Thing*,

Salvador Dali's Moustache



WARHOL & DALI SELF-PUBLICITY AS ART

It was in 1909 that '*The Founding Manifesto of Futurism*' appeared on the front page of *Le Figaro* heralding a dramatic change in our culture and society. In one brilliant stroke, Marinetti succeeded in bringing his message to the attention of thousands of people, securing interest whether adverse or good. From what was essentially a front page advertisement the Futurist group sprung ready formed, Boccioni, Carra, Russolo, Balla, Severini, they all replied to Marinetti within the week. What makes this unprecedented act so revolutionary, with so many implications is its realisation of the power of the media and the mass audience. Marinetti was definitely a figure of the twentieth century, he despised and attacked the 'cultured intellectual' and bohemian withdrawal. He saw that technology, advancing at an incredible rate even at the turn of the century, would profoundly influence man's 'psyche'. A working man could via film be in the jungle, become an actual hero, although he realised this was not reality it could not help but affect his perception of life. Both Dalí and Andy Warhol recognised this fact and during their lives created and altered their personalities via the power of the media to become what they and the masses essentially wanted. It has been debated often what these two artists would be remembered for, their art or themselves.

Although born twenty four years apart, Dalí in 1904, Warhol in 1928, there are certain similarities in their early childhood. Both were as children protected and cared for, far beyond what could be construed as normal. Dalí, as an only son, following the early death of his elder brother at the age of two and a half, was naturally treated with extreme care by his recently bereaved parents. His birth was exactly nine months after his older brothers death, he was given the same name; Salvador, and thus constantly reminded of his



Andy Warhol's Sun-Glasses

brother's prior existence, he complained in adulthood that this had a great effect on his psychology. Andy Warhol was the youngest son to his mother Julia Warhola and being a sickly child was constantly under surveillance, and a continual worry. As children, both of them discovered their parents weaknesses and manipulated them to the full, Dali realised that his parents greatest fear was the loss of their only son just as they had lost their first born. He tells in his semi-biography *'The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali'* of his intense enjoyment in causing his father and mother great distress in order to obtain the smothering attention that he craved. At the age of eight he would still routinely wet the bed. His desperate parents bought him a handsome red tricycle, which was stored on top of a cupboard, and which would be his as soon as the bed-wetting stopped;

"I was eight years old, and every morning I would ask myself, 'The tricycle or peeing in the bed?' And after thinking it over dispassionately, sure of humiliating my father, I would pee on the sheets."

All the attention he received ensured that Dali would be kept in a state of infantile dependence, denied the forays and self-reliance normal for a boy of his age. This dependence never left him, he was extremely naive, even in adulthood. When in Paris in the 1920's he arrived at Julien Levy's apartment where he was expected for drinks, Dali pushed the buzzer in order for Levy to let him in, which Levy promptly did, but then did not appear. When Levy went to investigate he saw Dali running off. When he caught up with him he asked what was the matter. *"The Door, the door!"* Dali stammered. *"It whispered at me!"* It was to be Gala, the former Russian wife of Paul Eluard, who would become Dali's new protection from the hazards

of everyday life.

It is interesting to note that Andy Warhol also depended on a single woman to give him the security he needed, his mother. He developed the same type of manipulative skills as Dali; being a weak child he demanded constant attention from her at all times. He refused to go to school once he had become of age preferring his mother's company. At eight years old Andy developed St Vitus's dance, an illness that was serious enough to confine him to bed for several months. It was during this period that his mother cared for his slightest whim, acting as his first full-time assistant and therefore allowing him his first experience of manipulative power.

Both Dali and Warhol were very backward for their age at school, this doesn't imply slowness but a refusal to conform. In fact their imaginations were quite bizarre for children of that age. Dali spent long hours creating the perfect companion, Galushka; *"All I have to do is stare at the wet spot on the ceiling of Mr Truiter's classroom. I can transform real shapes at will, making them first into clouds, then faces, then objects First I make up Galushka's sled with its furs, then a battle of wolves galloping along, their ferocious jaws foaming with rage. Soon the ceiling is not big enough."*

It is of no coincidence that it is a female companion that Dali creates, via his fantasies he is exploring his own sexuality and psychological make-up. Warhol, at the same age is also discovering the same thing. His closest friend is a young girl called Margie Girman. In his recent analysis in Warhol's biography, Victor Bokris brings attention to a photograph taken on Dawson Street of the two friends. He states that in the picture Margie's expression and stance were identical to Warhol's:

"It looks as if their personalities have merged. Andy's relationship with Margie Girman set up a pattern for his relationships with women throughout the rest of his life. Part of him wanted to be her."

This also explains Warhol's fascination with transvestites in the late '60s, Jackie Curtis, Candy Darling, Holly Woodlawn acted out what he himself could relate to, the need to identify with the opposite sex.

In order to create self-publicity, to obtain fame, it is essential to be in the public arena constantly. Dali and Warhol realised this and used it to great effect. As Marinetti foresaw, the days of the cultured elite, even the avant-garde were numbered and it is no surprise that as Dali broke from the Surrealist movement so tightly controlled by Andre Breton, so Warhol also rejected the intellectual conforms of the Abstract Expressionists. Although their art is completely opposite, Dali, very academic with stress on craftsmanship while Warhol was painting 'popular' images from American culture, 1962 Campbell's soup cans, with emphasis on detachment from the finished piece. Both artists were trying to bring their art back to the masses. No longer were they hiding behind a tiny minority that discussed, felt but never brought their art to the public instead contenting themselves with themselves. Of course, one is walking a tight-rope between Fine Art and Commercialism but we have to pose the question to ourselves: *What is Fine Art?* Painting during the Twentieth century has followed a path that is very hard to define. The job of representation would seem to have ceased with the advent of photography and film and ever since then the painters and artists have been closing themselves in as protection. Art is rapidly becoming elitist, out of touch with the majority. Surrealism tried to bring to our attention the value of the subconscious so often held back by our overbearing logic but one painting such as the *'Persistence of Memory'* by Dali re-produced all over the world in all sorts of areas has done more to publicise this aim than any of Andre Breton's rarely read 'automatic' poems. In our consumer society people want everything laid out for them without having to exert any effort, commercialism exists for exactly this purpose. Dali and Warhol were masters of this Twentieth century phenomenon and understood exactly how to manipulate it.

In his book *'Popism: The Warhol '60s'*, Warhol states:

"Everybody was part of the same culture now, Pop references let people know that THEY were what was happening, that they didn't have to read a book to be part of culture - all they had to do was BUY it (or a record or a TV set or a movie ticket)."

With this statement we can see that he was completely in touch with the cultural development in the '60s. Warhol also recalls that in the early '50s one aspect of Salvador Dali profoundly influenced him, his total willingness to enter into commercial art-work and his use of the media situation. In 1939 Dali had not as yet taken New York by storm but an opportunity came about by total chance. It was Julien Levy's idea that Dali design some shop windows and he was approached by Bonwit Teller of Fifth Avenue and offered \$1,000 for the job. Dali organised it to go on view the same day his one-man exhibition opened in New York. The central feature of the window was called 'Day' and was a bathtub lined with black fur and filled with water, beside it stood a mannequin decorated only with red hair and green feathers. In the other window called 'night' another mannequin was asleep on a black satin bed, the canopy of which was composed of a Buffalo's head with a bloody pigeon in its mouth. She lay on a pillow of apparently live coals. Due to several complaints that the windows were obscene the management removed the bed and changed the mannequins. Once Dali discovered this he turned with uncontrollable anger and tried to upturn the bath-tub, but he slipped allowing the tub to smash through the shop window narrowly missing passers-by and just failing to cause serious injury, the final result was that Dali ended up in jail, the charge was later suspended and his exhibition went on as planned. The newspapers rushed to cover the story with the final effect of causing queues of people to fight their way into Julien Levy's.

It was the fact that a Fine Artist had not turned his nose up at commercialism which was so important to Warhol in the early '50s since he himself was a commercial artist, drawing shoes and various cats. It is interesting to note that Warhol too in the mid-'60s also advertised in a shop window for Pilgrim clothes, it was called the 'Paraphernalia Show' but instead of a set Andy used actual people, himself included. The Velvet Underground staged the music, various superstars were present, the girls showing the new fashions while dancing. Warhol sold his entourage as commercial art.

Dali's love of wealth and comfort, fame and notoriety induced Andre Breton in 1942 to create the cutting anagram, coined from Dali's name: *AVIDA DOLLARS*. The original indictment

read:

"The rustle of paper money, illuminated by the light of the moon and the setting sun, has led the squeaking patent-leather shoes along the corridors of Palladio into that soft-lit territory of Neo-Romanticism and the Waldorf Astoria. There in the expressive atmosphere of 'Town and Country' that meglomania, so long passed off as the paranoiac intellect, can puff up and hunt its sensational publicity in the blackness of headlines and the stupidity of the cocktail lounges."

Dali had a symbiotic relationship with the world of press, television and radio and his financial backing depended on it. Reporters knew that Dali would be shocking and could always be counted on to give interviews, they would oblige nudging him along his chosen



Gala & Dali (all at sea!)

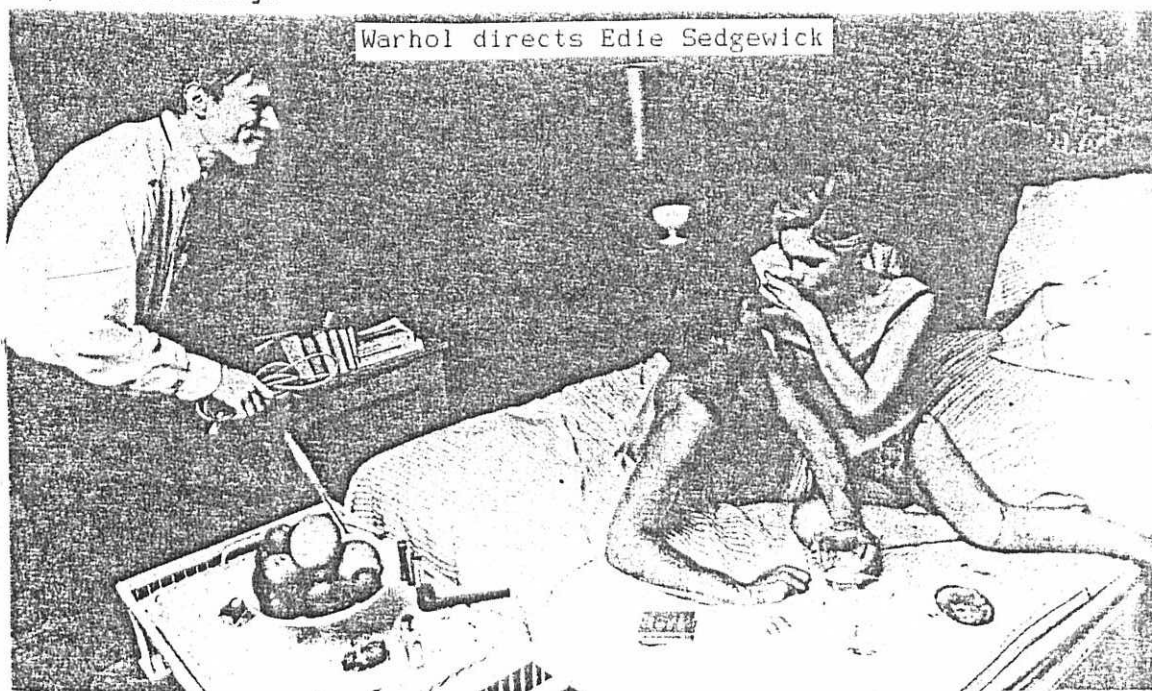
path, a circular progression in which everybody won. Warhol too was tremendously fond of money, coming from a deprived immigrant background in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in fact he was despised in the early '60s even by other Pop artists; Jasper Johns and Robert Rosenberg, because he actually collected art and was a very successful commercial artist, both facets which were seen as unworthy of a Fine Artist. In fact in the '70s after his near death in 1968 Warhol turned to making money, almost like a business-man. As with Dali, portraiture was a lucrative market for Warhol enabling them both to earn huge sums of money by painting rich society women, it was an opportunity that they both milked dry. Wealth was a part of the image, the mask that allowed Warhol and Dali to stay in the public eye and imagination, in today's capitalist society money is a sign of success and also a purveyor of power. It could be argued that during the last decades of their lives this money mellowed their original standpoints and there is some truth in this supposition but the money also helped to cement their images in the minds of the public and forever symbolised recognition.

Essentially, Warhol and Dali were voyeurs of their contemporary society, separate yet present, acting as mirrors enabling us to view our society while still being an intricate part of that culture. Dali, often stated that astonishing the world every half-an-hour was no joke, and since he had managed to keep the world amused for a quarter of a century he ought to be given a medal. In 'astonishing' the world Dali was watching the reaction of the world to his mad antics, Warhol was doing the same thing, watching and capturing the essence of his contemporary society, recording it and the reaction to it.

"The people I loved were the ones like Freddy, the left-overs of show business, turned down at auditions all over town. They couldn't do something more than once, but their one time was better than anyone else's. They had star quality but no star ego - they didn't know how to push themselves. They were too gifted to lead 'regular' lives, but they were too unsure of themselves to ever become professionals."

People such as Freddy Herko, a Judson dancer who conceived of everything in terms of dance were Andy Warhol's inspiration, those on the fringe of society who lived life to the full as they saw it, these were the characters who made up the Factory scene in the '60s. Eric Emerson, Ondine, Gerald Malanga, Brigid Polk, Ultra Violet, Viva, Billy Name created the source material that created Andy Warhol. He would sit back and watch, hardly ever joining in, instead he was noticeable by his detachment.

"When it's one-to-one with 'Andy, it's very easy, but when you're in a group, Andy creates competition between people so he can watch problems being played out. He loves to see people fighting and getting jealous of each other, and he encourages people to gossip about each other." (Gerald Malanga)



The films made around this period are based on the same theory. Warhol would point a camera at people and leave it running while they simply talked with no script at all. *'Chelsea Girls'* was an extended movie of just such talk on any subject, cut in length by using a split-screen effect. *'Sleep'* was simply twelve hours of just that, a person asleep. *'Blow Job'* was a close-up of the face of a young adolescent being blowed, that's all!

Although drugs were everywhere at the Silver Factory, Warhol hardly ever touched them preferring to watch instead. Andy defends his standpoint in *'Popism'*:

"Now and then someone would accuse me of being evil, of letting people destroy themselves while I watched, just so I could film them and tape record them. But I don't think of myself as evil - just realistic. I learned when I was little that whenever I got aggressive and tried to tell someone what to do, nothing happened - I just couldn't carry it off. I learned that you actually have more power when you shut up, because at least that way people will start to maybe doubt themselves. When people are ready to, they change. They never do it before then, and sometimes they die before they get round to it. You can't make them change if they don't want to, just like when they do want to, you can't stop them."

To Andy every occasion was of interest. When Freddy Herko danced his last dance by pirouetting through his sixth floor apartment window, all Andy could say was *"Gee! I wish he'd told us before, we could have filmed it"*.

Death was unreal to Warhol, life was like a film-script. In the '60s the Factory was open to easy access with only a simple elevator between it and the outside world. When Valerie Solanos shot him in 1968:

"It still seemed unreal, like watching a movie. Only the pain seemed real - everything around it was still a movie."

There had been other previous incidents but they had seemed just as unreal. In the early '60s a woman had strolled into the Factory and shot through a stack of Marilyn silk-screens being prepared for a one-man show, Warhol simply changed their name to *'Shot through Marylins'* and still hung them in the show as a set. Again a little later a kid walked in, forced Andy and his friends to sit and proceeded to play Russian Roulette. Annoyed that everyone thought it was a joke the kid raised the gun in aggravation and shot a hole through the roof, he than ran out. After 1968, the problem faced by Warhol was how to react to unstable people, the fear of getting shot again made him feel he could never enjoy talking to somebody whose eyes look weird but that caused confusion because that included nearly everyone he really enjoyed. The consequence was that in the '70s Factory life mellowed out, no more drugs etc and Warhol's entourage changed dramatically.

One result of fame is that you attract interest and therefore can become a focal point for someone bent on a symbolic murder. Valerie Solanos shot Warhol for the publicity that would follow/giving her access to the media for her own radical feminist ideas shown in her pamphlet; S.C.U.M (Society for Cutting Up Men). This is just one dangerous aspect of fame, that must be taken into account. An interesting similarity between Warhol and Dali is the fear of having their masks penetrated. Warhol could not stand being physically touched or forced to do anything and if any one did attempt this he became totally crazed. It was in 1955 that Warhol acquired his first wig, the first of many. In 1962 Leo Castelli went to Andy's apartment to view some of his work, Warhol looked more like a pop star than a painter, rock and roll music blaring from a record-player in the corner of the room, he was always in touch with his culture. Like Dali, Warhol was always interested in fashion all through his life and especially of high society people with money. In his films he had a perception always in tune with the times, he had, already made two films; *'Lonesome Cowboys'* and *'The Hustler'* before *'Midnight Cowboy'* was made in 1968. Warhol remembered, reflecting in hospital, after being shot:

"Why didn't they give us the money to do, say, 'Midnight Cowboy'? We would have done it so real for them. I diidn't understand then that when they said they wanted real life, they meant real movie life!"

To Warhol what the underground originally had to offer was:

"....a new, freer content and a look at real people, and even through our films weren't

technically polished, right up through '67 the underground was one of the only places people could hear about forbidden subjects and see realistic scenes of modern life."

Warhol was recording how it was; in the '70s anyone who entered the Factory was immediately asked to pull down their pants so Andy could photograph their genitalia. Participation in sex was rare, he would often film it and get his kicks that way. Dali was also similar in this regard, many young women would chase him in New York only to be invited back to his apartment, made to undress while Dali was in the kitchen frying eggs, when the moment came when sex appeared to be on the agenda, Dali would place the eggs on their shoulders, draw them and leave!



Dali thinks about eggs.

Neither Dali nor Warhol would seem to have indulged in sex, instead they watched since this gave them the advantage because they were both shy of their physicality, both were very insecure in themselves.

Although Dali enjoyed interviews he always had to be in control of the conversation, able to cloud the issue if it began to get too personal. In an interview with 'Le Point' he stated:

"I advance, masked,"

When the reporter

pushed the issue and tried to get an admittance that a time would come when the mask would have to disappear, Dali answered:

"I don't personally think so. Because at the moment of my death I think that I have already decided to make use of ways to be even better masked than ever, I have already thought about hibernation. That is the most impenetrable of all masks, because no one knows whether you are dead or not."

Warhol, on the other hand, has always escaped from himself by living through other people. He usually stayed quiet while allowing others to act out what he found interesting. At one point there was a scandal involving whether Warhol actually painted his pictures or if others did, and this accusation is almost certainly based in truth. Interviews were often given by those who were not Warhol at all, especially on the phone; this gave him security and also a certain power.

The Dali statement, on the other hand, destroys all speculation that the Spaniard, during his final years was locked up against his desire, this is simply a fantasy conjured up by his family to gain access to the vast fortune he had built up since he shunned them at the age of twenty.

It was an incredible power that both Dali and Warhol had, their success, fame and wealth attracted people to them in search of the same glamorous life. Some would stay for years, working hard but never being paid a cent, their payment was the belief in doing and being culture. None of Warhol's superstars made money from their acquaintance with him, Edie Sedgwick was Warhol's 'girl of the year' in 1967 but never saw a penny for it, as far as Andy was concerned he had created a superstar, he didn't have to pay for one as well. He would pay for meals and somewhere to sleep or money for travel, but only when it had something to do with his activities, he never paid out for artistic work. Dali once even got

a baker to make a piece of bread 50 foot long and never even thought of paying the bill, his argument was that the baker should be proud of working for him.

As said before, Dali and Warhol were interested in all areas; books, film, fashion, in fact entire popular culture. Dali, in 1972 attended a David Bowie concert and criticised his dress-sense. Warhol, as in film and art was also in tune with music, his divergence in artistic medium was incredible. In the late '60s Warhol financially backed the Velvet Underground supported by his entourage; the EPI (Exploding Plastic Inevitable) Warhol staged the band in various clubs in New York and the West Coast.



Warhol and the Velvets

"Always leave them wanting less."

Was one of his favourite expressions and it is easy to see the similarities between the Velvet's 'raw noise' and Marcel Duchamp and Dada (the anti-art movement of 1916). When on stage the Velvets played while Gerald Malenga danced his whip dance and Warhol movies were projected on top of them. If the crowd started to enjoy the music, Andy demanded a change of set, it was the audience who were on show, being viewed, the Velvets would even turn their backs on the voyeurs strengthening the isolation.

On one occasion Bill Graham was trying to persuade Warhol to go to San Francisco, he said intensely:

"I can't pay you much money, but I believe in the same beautiful things that you do."

Once he had left Paul Morrissey said:

"Was he serious? Does he think we actually believe in this? What beautiful things?"

Warhol's comment is interesting:

"That's what so many people never understood about us. They expected us to take the things we believed in seriously, which we never did - we weren't intellectuals."

To conclude, Warhol and Dali believed in the 20th century consumerist society, used it and loved it. They acted as a focus of attention through which we could view our culture by exposing it. They broke down barriers and showed up our conventions, provoking in us a re-evaluation of what our culture really is.

"Who wants the truth? That's what Show Business is for - to prove that it's not what you are that counts, it's what you think you are." (Andy Warhol's Popism).

BALLARD=CRITIQUE

The marriage of reason and nightmare

-1970. A major American publishing house pulps an entire edition of a new novel for fear of a public outcry over its contents

-1973. The reader for a large British publisher and wife of a prominent psychiatrist returns a different manuscript with the warning: "*This author is beyond psychiatric help, DO NOT PUBLISH.*"

-Not since Joyce's *Ulysses* or Henry Miller's 'Tropics' had the written word provoked such disgust, moral outrage or outright misunderstanding. Both novels, *The Atrocity Exhibition* and *Crash* were written by JG Ballard, and seemed to be some kind of perverse aberration in the career of their author, like the first glimpse of one's horribly deformed newborn infant. And whilst some hailed this mutant strain as pure genius, there was almost universal loss of support for its progenitor.

-Until the late 1960's, Ballard had enjoyed growing popularity as a writer predominantly of short stories, and a reputation as an ingenious and entertaining figure in the sphere of science fiction. But these new works developed previously latent ideas to a malignancy which burst out of the confines of science fiction. The fiction seemed to become real, too real, and there were dangerous questions; moral, existential, even political. To many, this man might have been advocating the assassination of presidents, unnatural sex acts with mutilated victims of car crashes, and defaming public idols. Even other writers, whose support he had previously enjoyed, failed to understand his motives now.

-For Ballard, of course, this reaction represented total artistic success. But it meant that he never achieved the recognition, particularly in the USA, that he so richly deserves. In fact, it seems incredible that this publication should be the first [*this essay was written in 1983, ie, pre-'Empire of the Sun'*] to celebrate a career which to date spans more than 30 years. It is at least a step to a fuller understanding of a unique commentary on our times.

The dead time

-James Graham Ballard was born in Shanghai in 1930, into a cosmopolitan landscape which was to form the tableau for much of his subsequent writing. Internment by the Japanese in the last three years of World War II turned a world already without a past, a totally modern city, into an almost surreal setting of desolation, decadence and disarray. Empty zones, tower blocks and casinos fenced off with barbed wire, and everywhere the debris of war; "*the end of technology, the end of America,*" or so it seemed.

-In comparison, the return to England in 1946 was uninteresting; the urban landscape, like the people, dull, uniform. After two years studying medicine, he discontinued as the hitherto rich metaphors of physiology and pathology were swamped by a plethora of details. In fact, it was as a service-man in the Royal Air Force in Canada that Ballard began to write seriously, leaving behind him some unfinished experimental pieces influenced by Joyce, among others. The result was his first published short story in the SF magazine *New Worlds* in 1956. Subsequently, a short period working on a scientific journal preceded his transition to full-time writer - about 1960.

-The choice of science fiction as the field in which he was to write was partly expedient - it was the easiest way to have stories published - and partly because Ballard believes it to be the most relevant branch of modern literature. But he has little time for the Asimov/Van Vogt/Heinlein school - the idea that SF is all about applied or social engineering, that SF ideas will soon be, or ought to be, material practice. He prefers those who show why SF is about the present, not the far-distant future; why it is about Earth, not outer space. Thus the SF authors he respects are Bradbury above all, also Sheckley, Pohl and Matheson.

-In other literature, authors with whom he has an affinity are Jarry's pataphysics, Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Poe's grotesqueries, Borges' and Becket's condensed style and of course Graham Greene's ability to externalise the psyche in terms of a particular landscape or situation. An ability Ballard has since crafted from the status of technique into an important theme, a

statement on the psychology of modern man.

-This is perhaps typical of his approach in general - the subject always comes first and the technique second. There was never any conscious attempt to evolve any literary style apart from the 'condensed novel' format of *The Atrocious Exhibition*. Yet the language is always perfectly suited to the subject in Ballard's work - efficiency, the syntax of media and technology.

The post-humanist universe

-From Shakespeare until the 19th century the main concern of literature was the definition of man and his relations with other men in terms of his qualities, his values, his morals. The humanism of alienated and isolated individuals haunted a society of manners, with its exhausted introspection, pessimism and sophistication. But the 20th century has seen a psychologization of man and his environment which is in obvious ways more total, but nevertheless more optimistic, more naive; an iconography of mass culture which paradoxically presents us with 'unlimited possibilities'.

-Ballard, of course, is not alone in confronting this challenge, but he has gone by far the furthest in adapting the new language of science and technology to positive ends. For him the choice was simple: either to use this new lexicon of symbols or remain mute. Psychologization is a reciprocal movement. The preoccupations of the psyche become reflected in the entire architecture of the urban landscape, but more importantly, 'interior space' itself becomes populated by the signposts of the media-technological milieu. The dimensions of time, nostalgia, dream and imagination are expressed in the obsessive language of technology, to the point of a 'death of affect' (or emotional expression). Yet for Ballard this abandonment of sentiment and emotion is no cause for regret; rather it has cleared a space for the free play of our perversions and especially our apparently unlimited capacity for abstraction.

-The exterior world used to represent for us reality, and our mental universe the imaginary. We speak in these terms out of habit. But the equilibrium has changed radically, even to the point of total inversion.

- . . . Our universe is governed by fictions of all kinds; mass consumption, publicity, politics considered and managed like a branch of publicity, instantaneous translation of science and techniques into a popular imagery, confusion and telescoping of identities in the realm of consumer goods, right of preemption exercised by the television screen over every personal reaction to reality. We live at the interior of an enormous novel. It becomes less and less necessary for the writer to give fictional content to his work, the fiction is already there. The work of the novelist is to invent reality. . . . - Introduction to the French ed. of *Crash*, by JG Ballard.

-In fact, the little reality remaining to us is inside our heads. For many, this collapse of the humanist universe represents another Fall of mankind, a disastrous descent into a nightmarish technocracy, a world without feeling, without standards. But it is Ballard's most valuable contribution to modernity that he has given us an alternative, a method for manipulating the new colonizers of our 'interior space' to our own ends.

The dissolution and the communion

-Between 1962 and 1966, four novels appeared: *The Wind from Nowhere*, *The Drowned World*, *The Drought* and *The Crystal World*. These were apparently simple disaster stories in the established English tradition of *Day of the Triffids*, etc. But to an intelligent reading they were 'transformation' rather than 'disaster' stories, involving not a material solution, but one of psychic fulfillment of the hero. In fact, the hero is the only one who pursues a meaningful course of action - instead of escaping or trying to adapt the material environment, he stays and comes to terms with the changes taking place within it and, by implication, within himself, he tries to understand the logic of his complex relation to the material world. In a world of qualified images, isolated objects and emotion detached from any human context, a psychic disaster forces a radical response. The hero perishes in one sense, but develops the capacity to become a 'whole' with a dequantified universe.

-In the religious tradition of the solitary, the hero discovers the *fact* of death, the real nature of the relationship between man and time. An eastern idea of the acceptance of one's own consciousness, and the phenomenology of the universe, not only of existence, but also of mortality. In dissolution or communion man begins to find his sense of the preternatural in very different areas from where he found it in the past.

-Yet this was only a partial solution, a hint - if you like - of a more detailed hypothesis still to be developed.

"for all the veronicas of our own perversions....."

-From *The Atrocity Exhibition* through the trilogy, *Crash* (1973), *Concrete Island* (1974) and *High-Rise* (1975), Ballard explores in perverse detail the twin leitmotifs of the 20th century; sex and paranoia. The earlier solution is insufficient - it lacks specificity of investigation. It is too general. With a ruthless and sadistic/masochistic honesty, he 'reduces the amount of fiction', forcing us to come face to face with our own ambiguous attitudes, the scenario unfolds before us like progressive steps in an autopsy - 'offering to the reader the raw content of his spirit, a panoply of alternatives to the imagination'.

-What we are forced to realise is that science has become equivalent to pornography in its aim of isolating objects analytically from their context in time and space. There is a new obsession with the specific activity of quantified functions. But this very isolation of objects has paradoxically allowed their recombination in the imagination according to an unlimited matrix of permutations. The fiction - or is it the reality? - is open-ended; the modern writer is deprived of all moral or philosophical ability to judge; he can only offer several hypotheses. The myths are concerned with ends rather than beginnings, predictive of the future rather than the past (Cf. *Myths of the Near Future*, 1979). The obsessions are subjective - the only key in a world deprived of objectivity able to unlock the reality/fiction surrounding each of us.

-Yet there is a new 'morality' beyond Morality. (Nietzsche's ultimate search; a morality of a free imagination, a purely imaginative psychopathology, 'a psychopathology of metaphor'.

-Ballard shares much in common with the French social philosophers Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard (the idea of hyperreality) and Deleuze and Guattari (the polymorphous perverse), but he is the first to explore the post-humanist universe with optimism, with idealism, with a brutal honesty and, above all, with humour.

Gallic Productions Recommends;

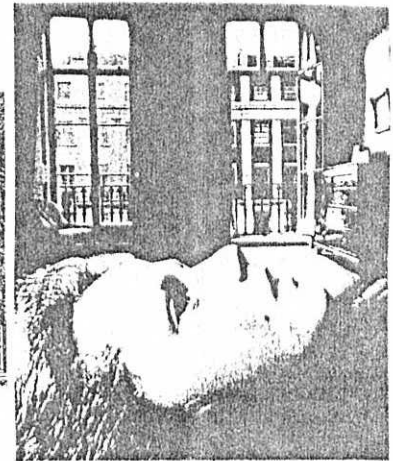
*The Atrocity Exhibition, 1970, Crash, 1973, Concrete Island, 1974, High-Rise, 1975,
The Spielberg motion-picture 'Empire of the Sun' is a splendid adaption of a Ballard novel!
This essay was extracted from 'Re-Search #8/9' (an American magazine),
JG Ballard is alive and well in Shepperton,*



© * () - BILL BRANDT

"If there is any method in the way I take pictures, I believe it lies in this. See the subject first. Do not try to force it to be a picture of this, that or the other thing, *Stand apart from it*. Then something will happen. The subject will reveal itself." Brandt's discovery in the spring of 1944 of a late Victorian stand camera with a minute pin hole gave him a means by which he could both see the subject close up, and at the same time stand apart from it. He began to 'photograph' his cherished picture books. *Cherry Stones* was one of the more notable, but it was Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* which particularly caught his imagination. His Portrait of a Young Girl in 1955 has deliberate semblances of Carroll's Growth Tonic:

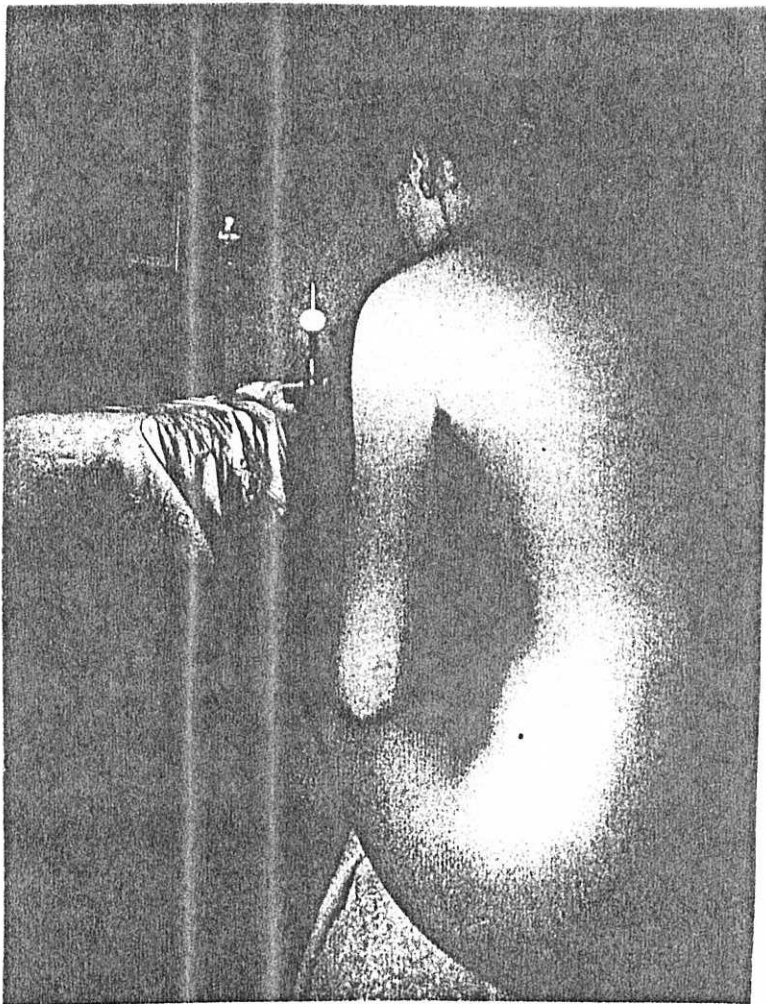
"'Curiouser and curiouser!' cried Alice . . . 'Now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was! Goodbye Feet!' (for when she looked down at her feet, they seemed to be almost out of sight, they were getting so far off)."



Indeed, Brandt's desire to attain the huge depth of field in his work is most evident in what are probably his most individual photographs; those made in Campden Hill in the late forties. The nudes are dark and closeted - isolated in dingy rooms. Their faces are predominately downward facing, mournful and reflective. The eye is often led away from the human figures towards darker, static objects. Brandt prints the photographs in harsh tones; no compromises, nowhere for the eye to hide.

These strong images, and his passion for the new-found range of focus that he could achieve led him away from previously socially orientated works of poverty in Newcastle and Sheffield; of mines and bomb-shelters. Now more of the surrealist Brandt becomes visible. He moved to the sea-side - that favoured, important locale in Surrealist visual imagination. In Bunuel's *Un Chien Andalou*, the prize possessions and fetishes acquired in childhood are discovered on a rocky shore. In Germaine Dulac's film *The SeaShell and the Clergyman* from the same year, the sea cliff becomes the site of the resolution of a battle with patriarchal authority. And Tanguy also had integrated erotic signs and anatomies with a love-nest beach-world in his paintings.

Here, on the East Sussex Coast Brandt produced his most acknowledged works. The nudes are anonymous, their faces obscured, sometimes not even in the photograph at all. Brandt's emphasis is on shape; the female figure as stone. In one instance the model holds a mirror reflecting the beach and her chest becomes invisible. In another, the foreground is dominated by her ear, echoing the shadows of the beach. These are experiments - Brandt makes us think about his ideas rather than conveying an emotion or a set of characters. They are consequently harder to react to, we are asked a question which we have to answer ourselves. His use of the female body is peculiarly magical. The eroticism is frustratingly sexy - and deeply Surreal. Interpretation of this set of prints becomes an exercise in self-analysis. All the fundamental symbols are there (the sea-shore, water, huge cliffs, no clothes and pebbles), but the work has to come from us. There is none of the exploitation of women that Man Ray (and Paul Raymond) portrays. There is barely any acknowledgement that the shapes are

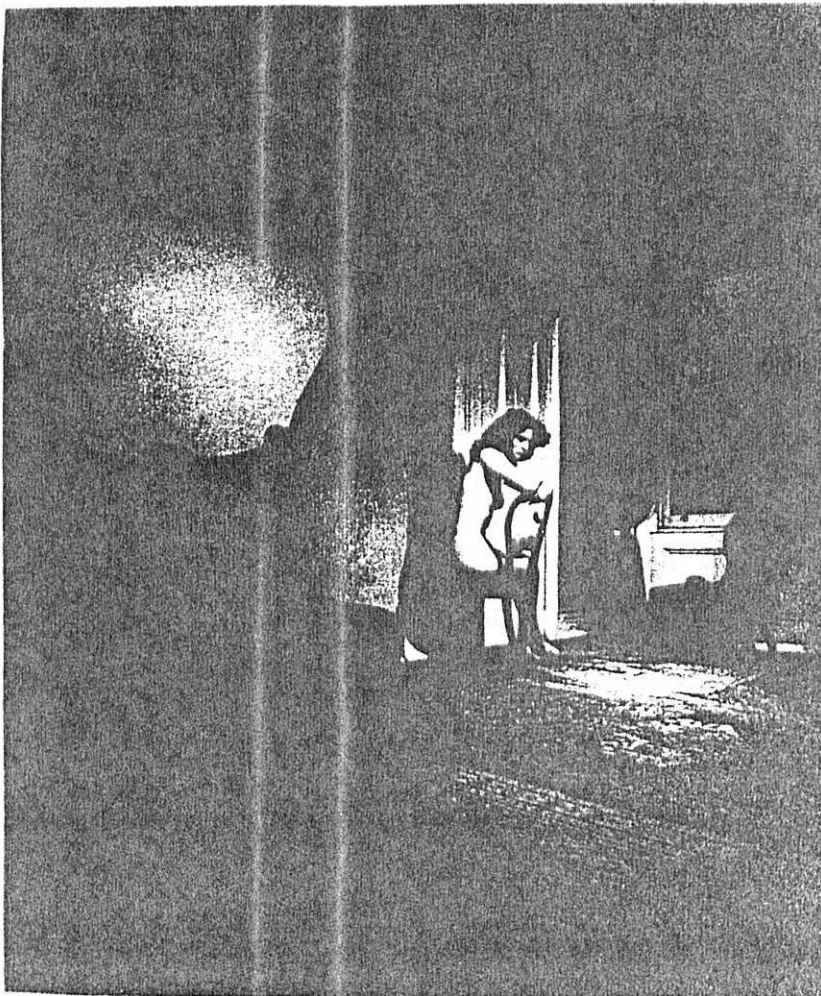


people at all, rather that they are malleable female forms appearing in a photograph on equal terms with the background. His work in the late fifties was inspired. He had behind him sixty years as a photographer and was still learning; "The camera now had to do the seeing" - with Brandt operating, so to speak, blind; it was the apparatus, with little intervention from him, that "produced anatomical pictures and shapes that my eyes had never seen."

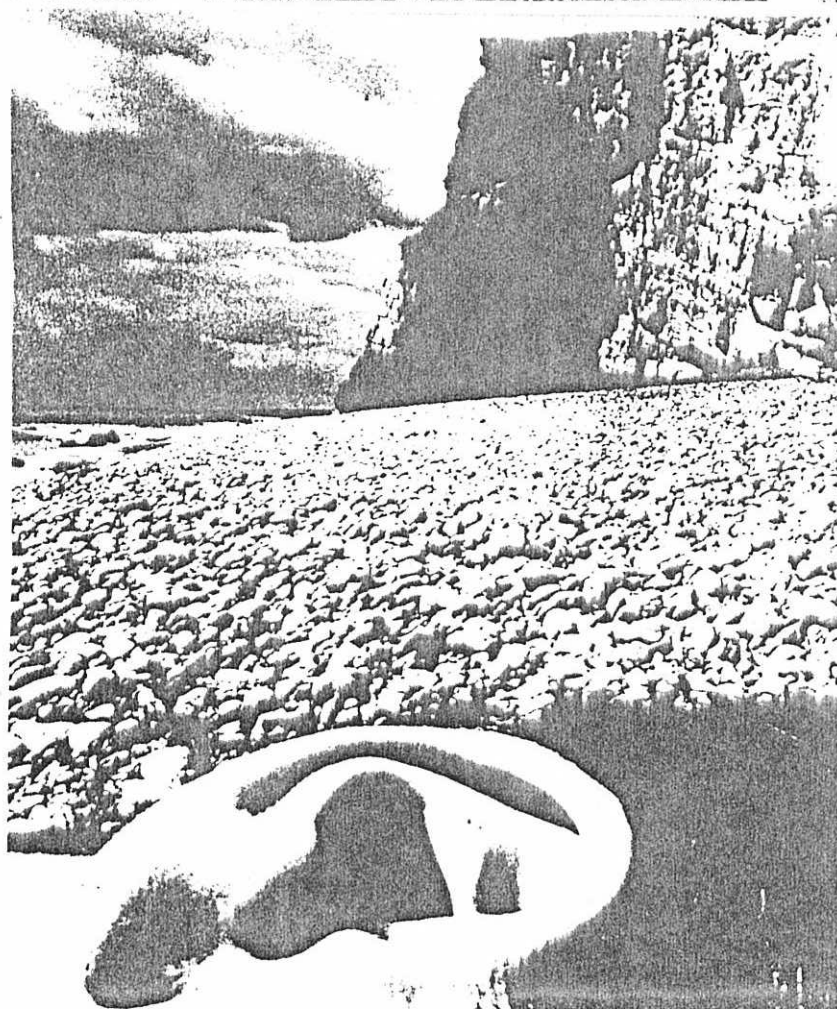
*"Er griff sein vorpals
Schwert zu,
Er suchte langads
manchsam' Ding;
Dann, stehend unterm
Tuntum Baum,
Er an-zu-denken-fing"*

*"He took his vorpals sword
in hand:
Long time the manxome foe
he sought
So rested he by the
Tuntum tree
And stood awhile in
thought"*

*- Lewis Carroll
Jabberwocky.*



What Brandt has managed to achieve throughout his career is what Tom Hopkinson, the then editor of *Picture Post* describes as a "sense of mystery ... there is a sense of imminence, of something eerie just about to happen." Yet in the foreward to Brandt's photo-journal *Literary Britsin*, John Haywood argues that "when we look at a collection of photographs ... two faculties are brought into play. The first is that of recognition, the second that of association



(it is this) faculty of association, mysteriously coupled with memory that enables us to relate the present moment of experience to the past," whether Brandt is referring to the past, present or future is evidently a matter for debate. What is certain is that the future of Bill Brandt's work has been in part assured by the founding of the Bill Brandt Room in the Photographers Gallery in Gt. Newport Street. And if that does not work, the free rein he accorded to his view camera "excluding a conscious mental guidance" as Max Ernst put it, the timelessness of his thoughts and erotic individualism will maintain his place alongside Cartier-Bresson, Man Ray, Bunuel and Andre Breton himself.

(Guy Gadney)

MODS

Mod is the best example of the process ... by which Pop cults rise up out of the undergrowth and spread and escalate into mass-media terms, and are softened up, and then disintegrate ... It had its roots around 1960, when a few teenagers emerged as utter clothes fanatics, obsessive to a degree that had been unknown before, and that has remained unequalled since.

They were purists. Every penny that they had went straightaway on clothes and each detail was conceived in passion. They spent hours each morning in front of the glass, changed their underwear three times a day. In Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I knew a boy called Thomas Baines, who refused to have sex at parties unless there was a shoe-tree available and a press for his trousers.

"I always believed in certain values ... Everything that I wore had to be exclusive and I could only wear a shirt once, I couldn't put on a soiled shirt and say 'that's good enough', because it wasn't good enough, not for me".

... They didn't wear uniforms and they didn't use their clothes for aggression, as weapons in a running battle with grown-ups. First and last, their involvement was with themselves - a true dandies' narcissism.

At first they were concentrated in a few London suburbs - Stamford Hill, most notably - and they were very young, anything from fourteen upwards. Marc Feld, the infant prodigy, later Marc Bolan, started at twelve! ... *"At this time, clothes were all that Mod was about. The music and dancing and scooters and pills came later. I'd say that Mod was mentally a very homosexual thing, though not in any physical sense. I was too hung up on myself to be interested in anyone else ..."* (Marc Bolan).

Such ornateness was only possible because teenagers, during the early '60s, were in a position of unparalleled affluence. Mods could not remember the war, nor, except as a shadow, the austerity, and they were not threatened by any real poverty. When they worked, they were wealthy; even when they didn't, they collected unemployment benefit, and this cushioning produced in them smugness, a sense of power and, yes, decadence.

Mod style varied around the country; but there were certain basic locks: little mohair suits with narrow trousers, which were pressed every day and carried around in a bowling bag, to be put on fresh before entering a party or dance hall; Ivy League jackets, in white-and-blue-striped cotton or seersucker, with long side vents; maroon or mustard-coloured suede shoes, or desert boots; army surplus anoraks, known as Parkas with bits of fox-fur sewn around the collar; knitted ties; short-legged, ankle-swinging trousers; and clip-on braces, worn beneath a jacket ... In their tastes, they were puritan.

They were curiously self-contained. They tended not to be interested in girls, nor in anyone else. In clubs, they danced by themselves, lost in narcissistic dreams and, wherever there was a mirror, they formed queues. Often, they would wear make-up - eye-liner and mascara - but that didn't mean they were queer, or not necessarily; it was just a symbol of strangeness.

At weekends, the Mods came up into the West End and stayed awake for thirty-six hours. They hung around in clubs, in coffee bars and on Soho street corners and when they got tired they took pills to keep going, great handfuls of purple hearts. Apart from that they did nothing. They seemed sexless and emotionless, passive in everything. They were not happy and not unhappy and, to the outsider, they were scary; a race of undead.

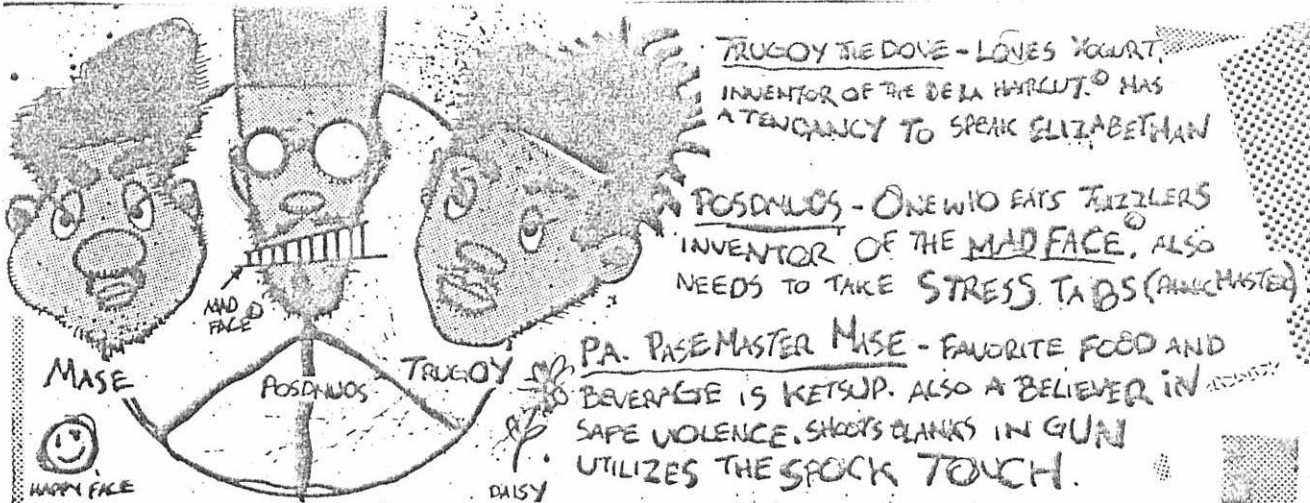
Extracted from Nik Cohn's 'Ball the Wall'.

? REVIEWS

De La Soul - 'Three Feet High and Rising' (Big Life Lp/Cassette).

As anyone with any intelligence has already noted, this is the Lp of the year, so far. Why? Because it revolutionises the Hip-Hop form (in much the same way as Public Enemy's 'Rebel Without a Pause' did in 1987). The first and most important observation about 'Three Feet High and Rising' is that it contains 23 cuts spread out over 60 minutes of music, now that's what I call value for money. The listener is greeted by what can only be described as a mad circus/quiz show format, the music is both soft and hard (a great relief) and the vision (musical and lyrical) is darn odd. Some people have written that this Lp is as acidic as Zappa or Beefheart, sadly this is not true, for one thing the De La Soul crew don't have the required IQ's for that sort of perversity! What they do have though is their parents' record collection and it is duly plundered for some classic rhymes, rhythms and beats. The magic number is 3 and as we all know, triumverates are only bound for one destination: backstabbing and two-on-one land, Beware! The previous singles 'Jenifa Taught Me' and the not so good 'Plug Tunin' are included amidst the crazed Ecology, the (semi-surreal-sexual) French lessons, ole soul and usual homeboy references: "Everyone in the World has Dandruff ...". If 'Me, Myself and I' is a jaunty pleasure ride, 'Eye Know' is a masterpiece of theft and perversion [good Lp title], listen and fall in love, whistle it honey. 'Treadwater' and 'A little bit of Soap' are equally exciting, the latter being based around an early Smokey Robinson intro. And when the Jungle Brothers join in; the Daisy Age has begun. It's superb that someone has pushed the increasingly boring Public Enemy from their pedestal but one question persists: How much further can theft/plagiarism go? To conclude, Tommy Boy's revenge on Def Jam is complete, the revolution has taken place and Gold, Guchi and Grotesque violence are buried; Acidic happiness is born. In the Delacratric state the "doing of anything" is permitted. Thank God!

MUSIC



Prince - 'BatMan' (Paisley Park Lp/Cassette).

For a soundtrack collection (notoriously crap) this is an excellent effort, the most immediate comment is that the groove has returned. Only one track repulsed me 'The Arms of Orion', when will Prince realise (or someone tell him) that Sheena Easton is a talentless little dolt! For someone so universally acclaimed (wrongly) to be God, he takes a long time learning about tiny mistakes! Track-by-track analysis shows how Prince manages to incorporate his (increasingly boring) personal obsessions into what was meant to be a movie soundtrack: 'The Future' simplifies 'Sign of the Times' to Batman's neo-Fascist (lone wolf) vision, 'Electric Chair' is an ode to hard-core sex dragged screaming to it's logical extension, execution, The Joker is credited. 'The Arms of Orion' as already stated is an orthodox love

song ('tween Vicki Vale and Bruce Wayne), 'PartyMan' (Joker or Prince, himself); "All hail - The new king in town, Young and old gather 'round, Black and white, red and green, The funkiest man U've ever seen". On 'Vicki Waiting' Prince examines the (im)mature concerns of a man who is now, over 30 (B Wayne). Side two opens with 'Trust' wherein the Joker celebrates the lies/honesty between man/god, man/woman and human being/sex. On 'Lemon Crush' Prince steals an intro to colour up Vicki Vale's genital desires (sort of). 'Scandalous' written with his father, poses the increasingly absurd question; Do Supermen have supersexual desires and thus supersexuality? Only Batman knows! (The Marvin Gaye, Teddy Pendergrass '70s soul song is [ab]used). The Lp ends on the single cut; 'BatDance' which features all the characters and Prince/Gemini advertising the film and investigating promiscuously the sexuality of childhood heroes; samples-killer guitar-house-'batman'-updated-rock-funky heavy rock-heavy funk-"Hey Duckie, Let me stick my 7-inch in the computer"-freneticism-change-construction-musical architecture! Overall, great single, moderate Lp - When is Prince's best long-playing record; *The Black Album* going to be released?

Coldcut - 'What's That Noise?' (Big Life Lp/Cassette).

Well to say that 'People Hold On' kept me alive during the last months of Winter would not be to lie. Lisa Stansfield sings in an atomic style, stretching from the monstrous countryfied high notes to the erotic heavy low area, the piano keeps pumping into the groove and the lyrics are hope-educing. Sure enough some of the material on 'What's That Noise' aint so great, but since they offer 13 numbers over 60 minutes for our perusal, I don't mind. All the singles are included (which in this case is good, they're all re-mixed and 'Doctorin' the House' in particular sounds better in the acid-style). The guests range from the Fallen Mark E Smith (ace idea that almost works) to the greatest mixer in the world, Adrian Sherwood (what that man can do with drums I could write a book about!). If ideas be the source of life these guys (who met in Reckless Records, on Upper St) are doing alright. Who would have thought that British cut-up merchants could ever reach this height. Honey, they've got rhythms they haven't used yet

Neneh Cherry - 'Raw Like Sushi' (Circa Lp/Cassette).

Going on Cherry's previous work this Lp should have been a gem; Dancing for The Slits, Rip Rig & Panic, Float Up Cp, 'Slow Train to Dawn', the two taster singles ... but no it's poor! The real problem is that she hasn't pushed her voice one little bit. Bland disco beats and Earth Mother banter are well below the ability of this girl. Let's hope she does better next time; of course a top five hit in the States isn't likely to encourage that!

MOVIES

'Patti Hearst' (Paul Schrader).

Was Patti Hearst really brain-washed by the SLA or did she (as I believe) actually join their organisation and only dump them after the arrest? This, however, is not the question that Schrader asks. The movie is adapted from Hearst's auto-biography 'Every Secret Thing' and thus is her version of the tale seen through her priviledged eyes. Of course as always, Paul Schrader's cinema is one of intense beauty and intellectual challenge; the movie starts in captivity (remember the cages in 'Cat People', the daughter in 'Hardcore', Mishima's madness!) and ends in captivity. That the imprisonment is of two types, the first by terrorists, the second by the state is not washed over, neither group trust the little rich-girl granddaughter of *Citizen Kane* role-model William Randolph Hearst and thus Patti is a genuine *outsider* in both situations.

The visual skills of Schrader are displayed in their utmost glory, the entire sequence while under the influence of the SLA is handled almost in a Bressonian manner [use of time/role of dream], (avant-garde theatre techniques are equally milked). Tributes to Godard and Fassbinder spun before my eyes and I felt a certain joy that there are still film-makers in this world that want to do something more than just entertain ... (moods like this come

on me at certain strange times of the year!) Visual perfection used to be an aim of every left-field director, in Schrader's use of light and dark he comes close to something like it.

Although the kidnapping is over too fast, the sexuality of claustrophobia (bondage) is examined in detail. Humour is rife, retribution is (un)just and Paul Schrader, the auteur is a director of bio-pics: *"For all the air circulating in there, I might as well have been in an underground coffin ... I felt like a wild animal, so helpless"* (Patricia Hearst). *"And Patty Hearst, you standing there in front of the Symbionese Liberation Army flag with your legs spread I was wondering were you getting it every night from a black revolutionary man or and his women or were you really dead and now that you are on the run what goes on in your mind, your sister they sit by the window, you know your woman does sit and cry and your daddy, well you know what your daddy said, Patty, he said, he said, he said ... 'It was 60 days ago she was such a lovely child now here she is with a gun in her hand'"* (Patti Smith).



'Mississippi Burning' (Alan Parker).

The film starts with a sequence of events which occurred twenty five years ago in Mississippi. Parker, in his most tightly structured film so far has Hackman and Dafoe as FBI agents, Anderson and Ward, sent to investigate the disappearance of three Civil Rights activists. The depicted dynamics of the intense power struggle between the main protagonists is at the core of the picture, especially as the pressure between the agents mounts and Dafoe's rule book methodology fails to penetrate the defences maintained by the strength of peer group pressure amongst the menacing Klannish locals. This film sees Hackman in the sort of role he plays superbly well, realising the dirty nature of battle, fighting effectively at an appropriately low level with dramatic results.

Setting aside the worry that with effective propaganda, this rationale of State intervention can be extended to all areas from industrial disputes to foreign policy. What also becomes evident is that the film has no positive black characters and describes the roots and role of the racism of the Deep South in 1964, blinkered by emotional rather than critical analysis. Parker himself has admitted to a limited perspective of this standpoint, but tells the story well. Alan Parker has produced good cinema, but ultimately this is a white persons film.

(Micky Head).

ARJ

'The Situationist International 1957-72' at the ICA,

After having been denied access at the Beaubourg in March due to industrial action and consequently forced to suffer Parisian hospitality and snow, the arrival of the Situationist exhibition at the ICA was eagerly awaited. When the day finally arrived, my grandmother and I set off with all the enthusiasm of a couple of explorers out to discover a lost tribe.

The Situationists, active from the late fifties to early seventies, tie together loose strands of Art/Political culture. When one enters the exhibition the first thing you are faced with is a pin-ball machine with a road map of central London (Paris) stencilled on top of the glass case. The machine's light is flashing, inviting you to play, once involved one discovers the game is never ending, it is impossible to win or lose. The ball follows its own path, without any control apart from your flippers, it is simply deriving (a situationist concept). It was believed that in order to live life one had to experience it. Deriving involved going out into the city environment without any preconceived notion of what was going to happen, or where to go, instead you handed yourself over to chance in order to discover, experience 'situations'. On the walls of the exhibition, photographic diaries are placed of just such activities in various cities like Venice and Berlin. The free, spontaneous movement of the steel ball symbolises the uninhibited travel through the city of London, created by the stencilled map.

In following the red arrows that the ICA kindly laid out in order to guide us through the exhibition, I could not help but feel that this was contrary to the Situationist spirit; the exhibits should not have been placed in such a logical order but rather in one total space. I did like the touch of having the cafe in the middle of the pre-destined route, a pity it wasn't in the middle of the exhibition itself.

Certain ideas on painting proved to be particularly stimulating. Theories such as, why paint more Art? Why not simply touch up old work instead, attacking the very foundations of the progressive Modernist European tradition. Why not create a painting for all people, not only the middle classes? Why should Art be turned into a lucrative market for the bourgeois? Instead, paint a painting that could be sold in segments according to how much money you wanted to spend. Therefore, if you are poor you could purchase one square inch, and if you are rich, forty square feet. These radical ideas remind one immediately of Dada, the anti-Art movement of 1916.

Following on from Bauhaus, the Situationists were involved with creating an architectural utopia, be it only on paper or models. They decided to create an environment that combines both the country side/nature and the urbanity of city, rather than keep them separate as they are today. They believed in a 'snake like' city that had meadows, grass reaching into the very confines of the city limits.

The Situationists were intellectual terrorists with great financial and organisational backing. That's what made it so powerful. Their articles presented a coherent and interwoven attack on the whole of contemporary life and culture. The central thesis was that art, in all its traditional forms, was completely played out. Dada marked the end of Western culture, no self-regeneration was possible. At the same time technology allowed unprecedented leisure for Western civilisation, and the Situationists argued that this leisure could only be filled by a new type of creativity - that continued where Art folded. Imagination should be used to transform reality itself, not simply symbols in the form of philosophy, literature, painting etc. Everybody should make this new reality into a normal everyday life that was passionate, dramatic and rational.

"The modern artist does not paint but creates directly ... Life and art make one."

(Tristan Tzara)

Paul Klee - Tate Gallery

The exhibition is not that bad but a bit confused (*like me - Ed*). The Tate have displayed the art in such a way that it is supposed to speak for itself, which it does not do. There are a few great paintings and it is easily understandable why Klee was exhibited in 1936 with the Surrealists. His early works attempt to free colour by giving it a transcendental quality

(especially in some of his abstract studies). One criticism is that the materials used rarely show the qualities as separate entities from the final image. Faith to the material is very important to me.

Sean Scully - Whitechapel

It was OK but I could not help feeling concerned with Scully's attempt to combine Abstract Expressionist ideals with Modrian's perfect geometric form; the two are incompatible. The paintings/reliefs were interesting but I would not go to it twice. When it takes you seven or eight years to understand the strip, I think, great but what's the point?

Russian Art - Barbican

I didn't go again, I never seem to be able to make it there!

(BananaFishFace).

B O O K S

'Prisoner of Love'

by Jean Genet (Picador £12.95).

'To my question, 'what song were you singing?' Khaled replied: 'Everyone invents his own.'
'What is it usually about?' 'Love of course! And occasionally the revolution.'

Throughout the course of the book, Genet's voice is both dark and at times tender, so it would have to be, since the subject of his last book, before his death in 1986, is wholly concerned, with the Palestinians. Do not be fooled, this book will not lead you through the quagmire of political polemics, as Genet states: *'I am after the art of the struggle and not its political outcome'*. In this respect, *'Prisoner of Love'* is a huge whirlwind that traps the reader in its power and magnitude. Like Homer's *Iliad*, this book questions the ethos of struggle and honourable death, so much so that on one level the reader begins to admire the heroics of the Palestinian fighters, while on the other level the reader will find himself questioning the ethics that lie behind the struggle, death and martyrdom.

Genet not only seems to understand the Palestinians but he also juxtaposes his own position and ventures to the extent of associating his philosophical attitudes to that self-same struggle. Thus what we are left with is a book of contrasts. Genet recites tales of his experiences with the fighters, and then immediately reflects those tales philosophically. By the end the conclusion is clear, Genet helped the Palestinians resolve some of their hardships, and in the same sense, the Palestinians helped Genet overcome his deeply personal day to day struggle. The book is thus balanced.

However where the book stops being a biography, it becomes a book of folklores. Stories are told in search of the true Palestinian identity. He throws away the dichotomy of the Kefiah and Klashnikov, and instead settles on the poetry of the struggle. Genet, above all, is the master of observation and as such the book is full of fine and rich detail describing with intimate detail the hopes and fears of the Palestinians within the community. These stories are told with a sentimental tongue which allows the full flavour of the prose to exude. There is also a strong sexual sense within the book, but only in as much that *'Prisoner of Love'* is the story of man aged, reclaiming his youthful soul through reminiscence. Perhaps that is the only fault of the book. Maybe the voice that comes through is too badly disguised. There is a constant feeling that Genet no longer has the youthful energy which his earlier novels marked. But nevertheless this point is relatively minor to the whole emphasis of the book. To its greatest credit the book never allows the reader time to escape from the message it is feeding. Its constant questioning is potent and powerful and at times overwhelming. But the answers are not found within this volume - only the response;

'Having been slaves, we shall become terrible masters when the time comes',

(T.B).

'Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century'

by Greil Marcus (Secker & Warburg £14.95).

Is Greil Marcus the greatest writer on popular music? Is *'Mystery Train'* the best book on popular music? YES! Thus, I excitedly awaited *'Lipstick Traces'*, Marcus's perverse history of punk, the Situationists and beyond (before). The book itself is long and bulky, 490-odd pages and although a fascinating and well-explained story, many questions arise. For one thing I don't understand how a middle-aged American can remotely understand something as British as Punk, Marcus totally neglects to mention ATV (*'Life'*), The Pop Group, Vic Godard etcetera etcetera ... and thereby proves my theory! I think it was Julian Cope who said Punk was something that happened to three people in Liverpool, in my case it was in Malvern. The truth is that Punk contained many reference points to Britain that had nothing to do with any of the subjects in this book, for instance: Post-War mixed economic conditions, the insanity of the declining English cities and provinces and a once and for all revenge on the Americans for coming up with Elvis. On the other hand *'Lipstick Traces'* does provide a valuable service, it simplifies the energetic hatred that so powered the dADAists, the Lettrists and the Situationists and breaks from the accepted texts by colouring the picture with a human feel! For me, the most fascinating aspects of this work was the information on the religious extremists of the Middle Ages, Norman Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millenium* is now vital reading. As to whether this book is the final word on the subject, I think not. Personally I would rather Marcus had written a book in much more detail on the Situationists etc and left Punk to someone like Paul Morley who truly understands it. But then it is a good read and it does fill a literal void on the subject so I suppose it is a good successor to *'Mystery Train'*, let's hope that he doesn't wait fifteen more years before he writes another book.



This TV column is smaller than usual because recent television has not been too hot, the weather however, has. So I went out and asked my friends(?) "What has been any good on the Box?" Wendy: "*The Manageress*", Fuck knows it's just something to watch on a Sunday evening! I don't remember now, I don't know". Aarit: "*Brookside*", hold on I'm just lighting a cigarette, Raymondo, I'm going to burn your hair in a minute, and by the way there's good acting in it and I wish Billy would pull his finger out, And what an ugly tart Doreen is, go back to Bristol". Ray: "*Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy*" was good but it's finished now, it was only good 'cos it had a reference to an Islington estate-agent, Look out for the C4 series on mushrooms, due October, '*Neighbours*' stinks". My own opinion is not worth stating, '*The Bill*' great social-realistic drama, MacEnroe swearing during the tennis, the French Revolution coverage was appalling. Perhaps the best moment in recent months was when Peter Snow showed us what Europe would look like if these results (ie one) were carried across the entire continent, Weird, Keep Viewing Brothers



Laurence Olivier died on the 11th of July. Considered by many to be the greatest stage actor this century, Larry was born in Dorking(!) in 1907. During the 1927/8 season Olivier gained valuable experience with the Birmingham Repertory Company and from 1929 on he became a West End leading player concentrating on 'romantic' roles (he also met and acted with Noel Coward). It wasn't until 1935 that Olivier began to play the sort of roles that would make him world famous: *Romeo & Juliet* (with Gielgud) and between 1937 and 1938 at the Old Vic, the Shakespearean peaks: *Hamlet*, *Henry V*, Iago (in *Othello*), *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus*. Although he had been appearing in movies since 1930, the first important production was *Wuthering Heights* for William Wyler in 1939, Olivier later claimed that Wyler taught him the difference between stage acting and movie acting (and believe me, it's a big difference!) Two more important

Hollywood roles followed; Mr Darcy in *Pride & Prejudice* and Maxim de Winter in Hitchcock's Oscar winning *Rebecca*. The first movie as director/star was *Henry V*, a superb debut that served as a timely allegory for Britain's exact state at that time, just before the end of WW2. One year prior to this Olivier had played Richard III for the first time on stage, fame as an actor was now secure, and was acknowledged by the award of a knighthood in 1947. The *Hamlet* motion picture that he made in 1948 was no big deal and the next five years were amongst the most troublesome in his career, mainly caused by his marriage with Vivien Leigh (1940-60) which eventually turned out to be more of an ordeal than a pleasure. The recovery began with what must surely be his greatest movie; *Richard III* (1953) and continued with some amazing stage performances; *Macbeth* and Peter Brook's ritualistic *Titus Andronicus*. If *The Prince & The Showgirl* (with Marilyn Monroe) in 1957 was a failure then his performance as Archie Rice in *The Entertainer* at the Royal Court was a roaring success. After becoming director of the new Chichester Festival Theatre in 1961, Olivier was appointed the first director of the National Theatre in 1962. Stunning performances followed but Sir Larry was growing old, he retired from the Directorship in 1973 after a severe battle with cancer. During his last years he played some pretty moderate roles on film and often appeared slightly ridiculous when interviewed. But in retrospect he was the last of an old breed, a genuine stage actor; "I am far from sure when I am acting and when I am not. For what is good acting but convincing lying?"

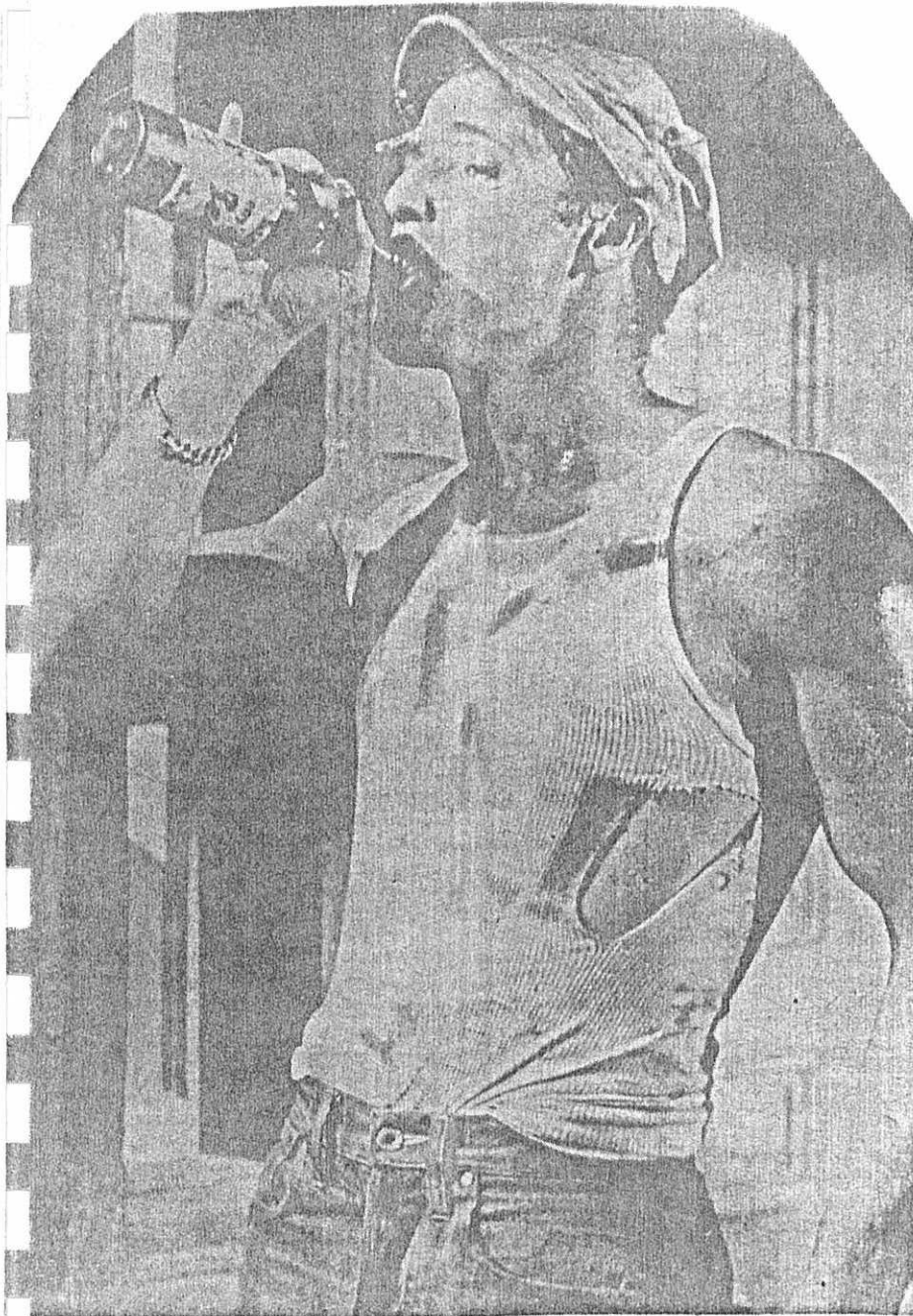
Sergio Leone died in April at the age of 60. Born in 1929 in Rome, his first contact with the movies was a small part in De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* and from this small acorn a great career grew. The Italian discovered/created Clint Eastwood and along with Sam Peckinpah kept the Western alive in the 1960's; *Once Upon a time in the West* was a masterpiece of close-ups and ever-moving panning camera. As a commentator on America, he used the Western genre to it's fullest before turning his hand to a gangster epic; *Once Upon a time in America* (1984) was both one of the best films made during this decade and an example of what good movie making can produce. At the time of his death he was preparing to make another picture with Robert de Niro, Leone's death is our loss!

Ayatollah Khomeini left this world on June 4th, he was 88 years old. Reviled and criticised by much of the Western world, Khomeini was a much more interesting character than the media would like you to believe. Born during 1900 into a clerical family, the Ayatollah at the age of 79 joined the illustrious list of revolutionaries who have seriously affected the world around them; Lenin, Mao, Castro. There was no doubt that the Shah was guilty of all the crimes levelled against him, the real question is whether fundamental Islam is as dangerous to the rest of us as some commentators would have us believe. There is no doubt that the Ayatollah is a worthy subject for further L the 80's research.

Abie Hoffman left us during April. As one of the few genuine American radicals he was leader (with Jerry Rubin) of the Yippies (Youth International Party). He organised the battle at the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention and spent time in prison and 'underground' for his sins. One thing is certain he never went straight like so many of those other '60s 'trouble-makers'. More on Abie in GT#11 (Sept).

Robert Mapplethorpe died from AIDS during March. His photographs of flowerpieces, nudes, portraits and Patti Smith ('Horses' Lp) made him famous; the cold, calculated, blatantly homosexual photos of negroes made him infamous. The fact that this cruel and heartless disease has not lessened but still kills America's (and our) young should not (and cannot) be forgotten.

Peter de Freitas was killed in a motorbike accident during June. As drummer with Echo & the Bunnymen he provided a rhythmic if slightly infantile back-beat. The idea was consumed and disposed of by the sailors of Gallos!



BRANDO OR CLIFT?

Marlon Brando was born in Omaha, Nebraska on 3.4.24, he attended school in Minnesota and studied acting at the 'Method' school of Stella Adler in New York. He made his Broadway debut at the age of 20 in 'I Remember Mama' and established his stardom with 'A Streetcar Named Desire' in 1947. His first film role was in 'The Men' in 1950, playing an embittered paraplegic, crippled in the 2nd World War (Brando spent a month in a hospital ward in order to fully understand the character). One year later his fame was secured by his performance as Stanley Kowalski in 'Streetcar', the torn t-shirt, violence and 'outsiderness' making Marlon one of the earliest teen idols! In '52 'Viva Zapata' demonstrated that he was quite capable of showing immense power, passion and fundamental nobility. His Mark Anthony in 'Julius Caesar' (53) was quite exceptional. 1954 boasted Johnny in 'The Wild One' (*'What are you rebelling against? What have you got?'*) and his first Oscar winning role in 'On the Waterfront' (*'I Could have been a Contender'*). After this unbelievable start he could only go downhill, but there were still high points; Sky Masterson in 'Guys and Dolls', his self-

directed 'One Eyed Jacks' in 1961, Fletcher Christian (check out the accent) in 'Mutiny on the Bounty', Sheriff Calder in Arthur Penn's deeply under-rated 'The Chase' in 1966 and the homosexual Major in Huston's splendid 'Reflections in a Golden Eye' (a role originally planned for Monty Clift who died before it was made). In 1972 he returned with a vengeance in 'The Godfather' (for which he won his second Oscar) and 'Last Tango In Paris', the Bertolucci movie that shocked many with its open and brutalised portrayal of sexuality. In recent years Brando has barely worked at all, (obviously he is not obsessed with bettering his previous performances). The last time he was worthy was in Coppola's 'Apocalypse Now', his Kurtz, both a physical and mental example of extremism.

Marlon Brando is at his best in the portrayal of outsiders, characters who might appear on the surface to be orthodox but inside are harbouring dreams, hopes and ambitions of a totally different type. The notorious 'mumbling' or hesitant speech patterns are a way of displaying this interior strife to the viewer.

Montgomery Clift was also born in Omaha, Nebraska (the majority of the great actors come from the Mid-West!) on 17.10.20. He made his Broadway debut at the age of 15 and worked constantly in theatre for the next ten years. In 1947 he was one of the co-founders of the Actors Studio in New York. His film career started with a lead role in Fred Zinnemann's 'The Search'. In the same year, 1948, he played Matt Garth opposite John Wayne in one of Howard Hawks' better Westerns: 'Red River'. The struggle between the macho Wayne and the softer, more compassionate Clift opened up the reactionary Western genre and offered a more modern and enlightened approach. In 1950 he turned down the role of Joe Gillis in Wilder's: 'Sunset Boulevard', believing that the role of the (albeit disguised) gigolo would damage his image with the fans. In 1951 he played opposite Liz Taylor in the Theodore Dreiser story: 'An American Tragedy' (re-titled as 'A Place in the Sun'), a much better version than the earlier Von Sternberg effort (which was even earlier an Eisenstein project!!) Clift and Taylor had a perverse Hollywood relationship, he was homosexual but the pair were deeply attracted to each other, they looked perfect together but nothing was ever to come of it, (mind you she stuck with him right through until the end). In 1953 Monty gave one of his strongest performances in 'From Here to Eternity', the complexity with which he embellishes the character of Prewitt, bugler and former boxer is a wonder to behold. Nailing down another complex role in the same year for Hitchcock; the priest in 'I Confess', Clift looked set for the top, but disaster struck and in 1956 he was involved in a serious car-crash which destroyed his matinee-idol good looks and shattered his already problematic psyche. During the last ten years of his life Montgomery Clift went downhill fast, descending through the twilight world of drugs and sex he still managed to turn in some good performances, in 'The Misfits' (Monroe's last picture), 'Freud' (the Sartre-Huston effort) and in an astonishing cameo as a retarded man ('Judgement at Nuremberg'). Clift died in 1966 a broken and embittered man, virtually abandoned by the industry (the old stalwart 'unreliable') and ravaged by alcohol and drug abuse.

Montgomery Clift was one of the greats of post-war acting, a perfect example of someone turning their own personal miseries into visual tragedy-drama for the masses. As method-orientated as Brando, he learnt to box, ride and play the trumpet for his movies. Monty deserves to be well-remembered but rarely is!

As to who is the greater, Brando or Clift? I can only answer by stating Dennis Hopper's famous reading of James Dean's 'method', Dean when asked why he was such a success replied: *"How can I lose when I've got Marlon Brando in one hand saying 'Screw You' and Montgomery Clift in the other saying 'Help Me'!"*



GOGOL



- 1809 20 Mar - Nikolai Vassilevich Gogol born in Sorochintsy (Poltava).
- 1829 - Published poems '*Italy*' and '*Hanz Kuechelgarten*'.
Enters Civil Service.
- 1831 - Leaves Civil Service, meets Pushkin and publishes first volume of '*Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*'.
- 1832 - Publishes second volume of '*Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*'.
- 1835 - Published two volumes of stories entitled '*Migorod*' and '*Arabesques*', a collection of essays and stories (including '*Diary of a Madman*'). Writes two plays '*Marriage*' and '*The Government Inspector*'.
- 1836 - April/May: '*The Government Inspector*' premieres in St Petersburg and Moscow.
- 1836-40 - Travels Europe. Begins writing '*Dead Souls*'.
1841 - Publishes '*The Overcoat*'.
- 1842 - Publishes First part of '*Dead Souls*'.
- 1842-48 - Travels Europe, trying to finish '*Dead Souls*' (1845 - Burns uncompleted Second part).
1848 - Pilgrimage to Palestine.
- 1852 21 February - Gogol dies in Moscow as a result of primitive medical treatment and self-imposed starvation while his mind is unbalanced by religious guilt.

CHARLES MANSON

Manson was born illegitimate in Kentucky in 1934, he was known simply as 'No Name Maddox' (his father has never been identified). In 1936 Manson's mother Kathleen Maddox sued a Colonel Scott for maintenance and won a lump sum of \$25 and \$5 a month. Whether his mother was a prostitute or not has never been proved (the whole Manson story is surrounded in mystery) but what is known is that she was sentenced to five years for armed robbery when Charlie was still a small child. From that time on he was shuttled from one home to another, at the age of nine he was sent to reform school. In 1946 he escaped from another institution and returned to his mother, where he was informed that she didn't want him! At the age of thirteen he committed his first armed robbery (and car theft). While on parole at the age of seventeen he raped a younger boy. By 1952 at the age of eighteen he was listed as *"dangerous, with homosexual and assaultive tendencies"*.

His life was a series of different institutions and varied periods of parole/freedom. In 1954 he met and married a girl called Rosalie who bore him a son (they were divorced in 1958). In 1960 Manson was sent back to jail for pimping, cheque fraud, credit card offences, car theft and transporting young girls over the state line for immoral purposes. While in prison he became friends with Alvin 'Creepy' Karpis (an ex-member of the Ma Baker gang that had committed 14 murders, Karpis taught him how to play the guitar. In 1966 he was transferred to California in order to prepare him for his release. Manson's conduct sheet warned: *"He has a pattern of criminal behaviour and confinement that dates to his teen years. This pattern is one of instability, whether in free society or a structured institutional community. Little can be expected in the way of change in his attitude, behaviour or mode of conduct"*.

He was released in 1967 (during 'the Summer of Love') after spending half of his thirty three years in prison. He wasn't keen to leave the security of imprisonment, he even pleaded with the authorities to let him stay confined. Drifting into San Francisco, Manson was amazed by the Hippies, 'Flower Power' was at it's peak and so Charlie assumed the same identity. Before long he got 'shacked up' with Mary Brunner, they were later joined by Lynette 'Squeaky' Fromme, who had left home after a domestic row. As a group of three, they moved into Haight-Ashbury for the Summer. Susan Atkins (aged 21, ex-armed robber) and Patricia Krenwinkel (21, ex-secretary) were the next to join. Manson literally hypnotised his followers, here was a man with a genuine charisma and a real influence over people's minds,

KILL CITY NO 2



The faces of Charles Manson. According to his disciple Squeaky: 'He was a changeling. He seemed to change every time I saw him.'

Charlie styled his hair and beard in the mould of Jesus and claimed that he was the Second Coming. Man's Son = The Son of Man. LSD was the drug of the moment and the Manson Family consumed the delicious acidic in vast quantities, the other ingredient in Charles's Magick Potion was 'sex', the members were made to rid themselves of their particular hang-ups; sodomy, rape, fellatio, flagellation, all, in front of the entire Family. No-one ever refused and Charlie had as much sex as he wanted!

By the autumn of '67 Manson's aim was to become '*bigger than the Beatles*', contacts with the Beach Boys were made and an Lp followed, but no fame. Meanwhile the Family grew in size, new members included Bobby Beausoleil (musician and Crowley fanatic) and Sandra Good (daughter of a wealthy stockbroker). During 1968, the Family moved to Spahn ranch (30 miles from LA), Fromme 'turning on' the aged owner (originally it was the home of silent movie star William S Hart), who allowed the hippies to stay in the shacks at the back of his house. At the same time Manson was developing his '*Helter Skelter*' (check out the Beatles song of the same name on '*The White Album*') theory. He believed that the American negroes were on the verge of revolution and when that time came, he would lead his followers into a mountain cave where they would wait until such a time as the blacks needed Manson to lead them. He was both a racist and deeply in awe of the black man (some commentators think that Manson thought that his own [unknown] father was a Southern negro!) He believed that the blacks would hunt down and kill the '*pigs*' - the White bourgeois in revenge for the cruelties and injustices perpetrated against them during the previous two hundred years. As if to prepare his Family for this outcome, Manson began dealing with 'Bikers' (Hells Angels) in order to get weapons and training!?!.

By the summer of 1969, Charlie increasingly disappointed at the slowness of '*Helter Skelter*' decided to speed the whole process up a bit by demonstrating to the simple(!) negro how to go about revolution. It is thought that he attempted to kill a drug dealer during July and on 25th of that same month ordered Beausoleil, Susan Atkins and Mary Brunner to the home of his acquaintance, the musician Gary Hinman. The purpose of the trip was to rob Hinman of \$20,000, but the musician didn't keep sums like that at home. Manson arrived, severed the victim's ear with a blow from his 2-ft 'magic sword' (a present from a Motorbike gang), tortured Hinman into signing away the documents of his car and ordered the poor unfortunate to be killed. Beausoleil executed him and wrote '*Political Piggy*' on the wall in the victim's own blood. One week later Beausoleil was picked up driving Hinman's car and Mary Brunner and Sandra Good were arrested for possessing stolen credit cards. Charlie decided: '*Now is the time for ... Helter Skelter*'.

The Polanski house was chosen virtually at random because Manson had once been there (when it was occupied by Doris Day's son; Terry Malcher). Tex Watson, Susan Atkins and Patricia Krenwinkel entered the premises during the evening of 8th August and indulged themselves in a virtual blood-bath. Linda Kasabian stayed outside as look-out (she later became a witness for the prosecution!) Delivery boy, Steven Parent was shot in the head at close range as he sat at the wheel of his car. The people in the house were all slaughtered, Wojciech Frykowski (Polish writer) put up the best struggle, he made it to the garden but was beaten down, stabbed countless times, shot and pistol-whipped. Abigail Folger (coffee heiress) also made a dash for the garden but was stabbed to death by Susan Atkins. Tex Watson knifed the Hollywood hair stylist, Jay Sebring while, Sharon Tate (actress and wife of Roman Polanski) was hung on a beam and literally torn apart by a multitude of knife blows. A towel was dipped in Tate's blood and the word '*Pig*' daubed on the living-room door. The three killers then fled, dumping their blood-stained clothes in an embankment. When they returned to the ranch Manson was delighted everything had gone off so smoothly, it was only the next day that the killers learnt who their victims had been. As Susan Atkins put it: '*It really blew my mind*'. One point of interest, the autopsy revealed that both Frykowski and Folger had large amounts of MDA (a Hallucinatory drug) in their blood at the time of the killings. One can only imagine what it must have been like to be merrily tripping and to have Tex Watson introduce himself as: '*I am the Devil, and I'm here on the Devil's business*'.

The second part of *Helter Skelter* took place a few weeks later, Manson, himself led the

raid. Supermarket boss Leno LaBianca (44) and his wife were tied up by Charlie who assured them: 'You won't be harmed', he proceeded to rob them and then ordered Tex to finish the show. Mrs LaBianca was stabbed 41 times, her husband, 12 with fourteen punctures from a big double-pronged fork. The words 'Death to Pigs', 'Rise' and 'Helter Skelter' (good spelling!!) were daubed on the walls. The man also had the word: 'War' scarred into his abdomen. The other family members on this outing were Atkins, Krenwinkel, Kasabian, Clem Grogan and Leslie Van Houten. As before all the Family were 'out of it' on acid.

Manson was arrested less than a week after the LaBianca slayings, for suspected car-theft but was released due to lack of evidence. His luck, however was running out: Beausoleil's girlfriend was arrested as a suspect in the Hinman killing, she denied her involvement but named Susan Atkins and Mary Brunner as being involved. Meanwhile Susan Atkins (in prison on a minor charge) had started to blab to cell-mates about her involvement in the Sharon Tate murder. LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) announced on 1st December 1969 that Watson, Krenwinkel and Kasabian had been charged with the murders. They later added Manson, Atkins and Van Houten to the list.

The trial began in 1970 and is noted as being both the most expensive (at that point) in California's history and one of the wierdest. The jury returned their verdict on 19th April and Manson, Atkins, Krenwinkel and Van Houten were all found guilty and sentenced to death (this was later commuted to life imprisonment after California state abolished the death penalty in 1972). Various other members of the Family were also sentenced to extremely long prison terms. Both Mary Brunner (Manson's wife) and Linda Kasabian were not charged (they gave evidence for the prosecution!) The exact number of murders committed by the Manson Family has not been established but Vincent Bugliosi (prosecuting attorney) claims in his book: 'Helter Skelter' that the number might be as high as 35!

In a strange way, Manson ended the '60s in as powerful a way as JFK had started them. He had single-handedly destroyed the hippie ideal of luv & peace and had, in the process shaken the West Coast to it's roots. The majority of the Family have now been released (some even got religion) but 20 years later Charles Manson is still locked up.

"In my minds eye my thoughts light fires in your cities"

For Further Information:
 Vincent Bugliosi with Curt Gentry - 'Helter Skelter' /
 'The Manson File' (Amok) /
 Colin Wilson & Donald Seaman - 'Encyclopedia of Modern Murder 1962-83' /
 Ed Sanders - 'The Family' / 'Macbeth' 1971 (Roman Polanski).

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
 OFFICE OF CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER-CORONER
 BODY FULL LENGTH ANTERIOR

NAME SHARON TATE POLANSKI Date Aug 10 1967 File # 69-8796

STAB WOUND #1
 STAB WOUND #2
 STAB WOUND #3
 STAB WOUND #4
 STAB WOUND #5

LIVIDITY
 R
 L
 Small punctured abrasion
 Thomas J. Niquah D.D.
 Deputy Medical Examiner M.D.

COLIN INVESTIGATES HOOLIGANISM!

Quentin Crisp, one dark night while walking back to his home discovered an irony connected with posses of aggressive young males. To him it was a pleasant surprise, realising that latent homosexuality exists in some surprising wolf's clothings.

It is limiting to talk of football hooliganism when incidences of such violence occur more and more outside the rationalised context of a football match with two opposing tribes of supporters. The incidences of violence all over the country on friday and saturday nights is entertainment. However it is more than restless male humans with too much energy like young bullocks vying for superiority. There is a great deal of malicious intent, an unusually large amount of psychopathic tendencies in the actions of hooligans. Where does this pure hatred for life come from? A television programme about men who commit violence revealed so-called hooligans unashamedly describing the pleasure they receive from maiming. One, not unintelligent, in fact quite eloquent and rational human being has a penchant for smashing noses with bricks, he describes the way the noses disintegrate, dispersing in several directions. Of course we all enjoy the sound of breaking glass, we all revel in the sight of a building being destroyed, violence and destruction are natural human forms of entertainment. Yet for it to become elemental, essential, addictive, making life worth living there has to be something, something else, some parallel explanation. I forward the energy theory. In physics energy is never lost, it never disappears, it merely changes the form it materialises in. We all have our energies making us do the things we do everyday. If your life has been given a wrong direction, say by parents or other circumstances, if the way you view the world, your environment is hostile, if people are things that will harm you and just living is pain you will act either in a defensive reclusive manner or an aggressive violent manner. (There are alternative means of coping with living; intermediary devices which dull the pain or convert the outside of yourself into a form which you can digest: these devices for example are the drugs, being an artist, either musical or visual - acting away the pain. Basically everyone in society has some sort of intermediary device for coping with the pain).

So what makes for satisfaction? Satisfaction comes when you can reconcile yourself to your pain and find a means of changing yourself and your life so that you can convert the hurt energy into a positive creative energy. Yet, countless humans go for expediency, if you can get something that works fast and takes you out of it (what it is really doing is dulling your senses, fooling your brain by disconnecting feeling with thinking). Use comfort in food, drink, sexual activity (love can't come unless you first love yourself and love the living experience). We live in an age where materials and the possession of things attempts to dull the senses providing a cushioning.

It has always been found that 'love' is the best way to defeat an aggressor, disarming and making violence irrelevant, and out of context. The Bible and countless other sources are full of examples of this fact. This is the action of a homosexual, he turns around and loves his aggressor, he accepts pain, what is pain? Pain can be fun, can become a way of life. A hooligan out of context. In context pain is fraught with pain, hate with hate concluding in ultimate self-destruction, I mean you feel that why, if I'm not enjoying being alive, am I alive, do I create or destroy if I can't just love life.

POESIES III

Genius guarantees the faculties of the heart,
Man is no less immortal than the soul,
Great thoughts spring from reason!
Fraternity is not a myth,
Newborn children know nothing of life, not even its greatness,
In misfortune, friends increase,
Abandon all despair, ye who enter here,
Goodness, thy name is man,
Herein resides the wisdom of nations,
Each time I read Shakespeare it seems to me that I cut to shreds the brain of a jaguar.

I shall write down my thoughts in order, to a plan without confusion, If they are correct, the first will be the consequence of the others, It is the true order, It characterises my object by calligraphic disorder, I should disgrace my subject too much were I not to treat it with order, I want to show that it is capable of this.

I do not accept evil, Man is perfect, The soul does not topple, Progress exists, Good is irreducible, Antichrists, accusing angels, eternal sufferings, religions, are the products of doubt.

Dante, Milton, hypothetically describing the infernal wastelands, have proved themselves first-class hyenas, The proof is excellent, The result bad, Their works are not bought,

Man is an oak, Nature contains nothing sturdier, The universe need not arm itself to defend him, A drop of water is not enough to preserve him, Even if the universe were to defend him, he would no more be dishonoured than whatever does not protect him, Man knows that his reign has no death, that the universe boasts a beginning, The universe knows nothing; it is at best a thinking reed,

I imagine Elohim to be cold rather than sentimental,

Love of a woman is incompatible with love of humanity; Imperfection must be rejected, nothing is more imperfect than shared egotism, Throughout life, suspicions, recriminations, solemn oaths written in dust, pullulate, It is no longer the lover of Chimene; it is the lover of Graziella, It is no longer Petrarch; it is Alfred de Musset, While dying, a rocky area close by the sea, any old lake, the forest of Fontainebleau, the island of Ischia, a study complete with raven, a chambre ardente with a crucifix, a cemetery where the object of one's love looms in view amid moonbeams that finally annoy, stanzas wherein a group of unnamed maidens come and stroll in turn, showing off the author's ability, uttering regrets, In both cases, seriousness doesn't enter into it all,

The mistake is the mournful tale,

Hymns to Elohim accustom vanity not to be concerned with earthly things, Such is the snag of hymns, They wean mankind from relying upon the writer, It forsakes him, It calls him mystic, eagle, perjurer of his mission, You are not the sought-after dove,

An assistant schoolmaster could manufacture a literary outfit for himself by stating the contrary of what the poets of this century have said, He would replace their affirmations with negations, And vice versa, If it is ridiculous to attack first principles, it is more ridiculous to defend them against these same attacks, I shall not defend them,

Sleep is a reward for some, a punishment for others, For all, it is a sanction,

If Cleopatra's morals had been less short, the face of the world would have changed, Her nose would have grown no longer,

Concealed actions are the most estimable, When I see a few of these in history, they please me greatly, They have not been completely concealed, They have been known, This small way in which they appeared increases their merit, That they could not be concealed is the finest thing of all,

The charm of death exists only for the brave,

Man is so great that his greatness is especially apparent in that he does not want to acknowledge his unhappiness, A tree does not know it is great, To be great is not to want to acknowledge one's unhappiness, His greatness refutes these miseries, Greatness of a king,

When I write down my thoughts, they do not escape me, This action makes me remember my strength which I

forget at all times. I educate myself proportionately to my captured thought. I aim only to distinguish the contradiction between my mind and nothingness.

Man's heart is a book I have learned to value.

Not imperfect, not fallen, man is no longer the great mystery.

I allow no one, not even Elohim, to doubt my sincerity.

We are free to do good.

Judgement is infallible.

We are not free to do evil.

Man is the conqueror of chimeras, the novelty of tomorrow, the regularity which chaos bemoans, the subject of conciliation. He is the judge of all things. He is not a half-wit. He is no worm. He is truth's trustee, the store of certainty, the glory, not the outcast of the universe. If he humbles himself, I extol him. If he extols himself, I extol him the more. I reconcile him. He comes to understand that he is the angel's sister.

Nothing is incomprehensible.

Thought is quite as clear as crystal. A religion whose lies depend upon it may cloud it momentarily, speaking of long-term effects. Speaking of short-term effects, an assassination of eight persons at the gates of the capital will cloud it - that's for certain - until the destruction of evil. Thought is not slow to regain clarity.

Poetry must have as its aim practical truth. It states the connections that exist between the first principles and the secondary truths of life. Each thing stays where it is. The mission of poetry is difficult. It does not dabble in political events, in the way a nation is governed, nor allude to periods of history, coups d'etat, regicides, court intrigues. It does not tell of battles man fights, by the way of exception, with himself and his passions. It discovers the laws that keep political theory going, universal peace, the refutations of Machiavelli, the wrapping paper of which Proudhon's work consist, the psychology of mankind. A poet must be more useful than any other members of his tribe. His work is the code of diplomats, legislators, teachers of youth. We are a long way from the Homers, Virgils, Klopstocks, Camoenses, from imaginations run wild, ode-manufacturers, vendors of epigrams against the divinity. Let us return to Confucious, Buddha, Socrates, Jesus Christ, moralists who roamed the villages while suffering from hunger! From now on one must reckon with reason, which only operates upon the faculties presiding over the category of phenomena of pure goodness.

Nothing is more natural than to read the *Discourse on Method* after reading *Berenice*. Nothing is less natural than to read Biechy's *Treatise on Induction* and Naville's *Problem of Evil*, after reading *Autumn Leaves* and *Contemplations*. The transition is lost. The mind balks at the junk, the mystagogy. The heart is bewildered by these pages scrawled by a marionette. This violence enlightens him. He shuts the book. He sheds a tear in remembrance of the unsociable authors. Contemporary poets have abused their intelligence. The philosophers have not abused theirs. Memory of the former will fade. The latter are classics.

Racine, Corneille, would have been capable of writing the works of Descartes, Malebranche, and Bacon. The souls of the former are at one with those of the latter. Lamartine, Hugo, would have been incapable of composing the *Treatise on the Intelligence*. The soul of its author is not on a par with those of the former. self-satisfaction made them lose their central qualities. Lamartine, Hugo, through Traine's superiors, like him possess only - it is painful to admit this - minor talents.

Tragedies arouse pity and terror through duty. That is something. It is bad. But not as bad as modern lyricism. Legouve's *Medea* is preferable to the collective works of Byron, Capendu, Zaccone, Felix, Gagne, Gaboriau, Lacordaire, Sardou, Goethe, Ravignan, Charles Diguët. Which writer among you, pray, can lift - what is it? What are these snorts from the opposition? - the weight of *Augustus's Monologue*! Hugo's barbarous vaudevilles do not proclaim duty. The melodramas of Racine and Corneille, the novels of La Calprenade, do. Lamartine is not capable of writing Pradon's *Phedre*; Hugo of Rotrou's *Venceslas*; Sainte-Beuve, the tragedies of Laharpe and Marмонтal. Musset is capable of coining proverbs. Tragedy is an involuntary error, allows struggle, is good's first step, will not appear in this work. It retains its prestige. The same does not hold true of the sophism - metaphysical Gongorism after the event - of the self-parodists of my mock-heroic times.

The principle of worship is pride. It is ridiculous to address Elohim as did Job, Jeremiah, David, Soloman, Turquety. Prayer is a false act. the best way to please him is indirect, more in keeping with our strength. It consists in making our race happy. There are no two ways of pleasing Elohim. The concept of

the good is indivisible. Since virtue in little is virtue in much, I allow mention of the example of maternity. To please his mother, a son will not proclaim to her that he is modest, radiant, that he will behave himself so as to merit most of her praises. He does otherwise. Instead of saying it himself, he reminds her by his actions, rids himself of that sadness that puffs up Newfoundland dogs. One must not confuse Elohim's goodness with triviality. Each is to be presumed. Familiarity breeds contempt; veneration breeds the opposite. Work destroys misuse of the feelings.

No reasoner believes contrary to his reason.

Faith is a natural virtue by which we accept the truths Elohim reveals to us through conscience.

I am aware of no blessing other than that of being born. An impartial spirit finds it complete.

Good is victory over evil, the negation of evil. If one sings of good, evil is eliminated by this congruous act. I do not sing of what must not be done. I sing of what needs to be done. The former does not contain the latter. The latter contains the former.

Youth listens to the counsels of maturity. It has a boundless confidence in itself.

I know no obstacle that surpasses the strength of the human mind, except truth.

The maxim has no need of it to prove itself. An argument demands an argument. The maxim is a law containing a set of arguments. An argument is complete in so far as it nears the maxim. Become maxim, its perfection rejects the proofs of the metamorphosis.

Doubt is a homage paid to hope. It is not a voluntary homage. Hope would not consent to be merely a homage.

Evil rebels against good. It cannot do less.

It is a proof of friendship to remain unconscious of the increase in that of our friends.

Love is not happiness.

If we had no faults at all, we would not take such pleasure correcting ourselves, praising in others what we ourselves lack.

Men who have resolved to hate their fellows do not know that one must begin by hating oneself.

Men who do not fight duels believe that duellists to the death are brave.

How the depravities of the novel squat in shop windows! For a man who is lost, as was another for a five-franc piece, it sometimes seems one might kill a book.

Lamartine believed that the fall of an angel would become the Rise of a Man. He was wrong to believe it.

To make evil serve the cause of good I shall say that the former's intention is bad.

A banal truth contains more genius than the works of Dickens, Gustave Aymard, Victor Hugo, Landelle. With these latter a child, surviving the universe, would not be able to reconstruct the human soul. With the former, he could. I presume that he would not sooner or later discover the definition of sophism.

Words which express evil are destined to take on a useful significance. Ideas change for the better. The meaning of words participates there.

Plagiarism is necessary. Progress implies it. It closely grasps an author's sentence, uses his expressions, deletes a false idea, replaces it with the right one.

To be well made, a maxim does not call for correction. It calls for development.

As soon as dawn breaks, young girls go gathering roses. A gust of innocence sweeps through the valleys, the capitals, assists the intelligence of the most enthusiastic poets, showering down protection for cradles, wreaths for youth, belief in immortality for the aged.

I have seen men tire out moralists to lay bare their hearts, to have benediction scattered on them from above. They would utter meditations as expansive as possible, would gladden the author of our felicities. They respected childhood, old age, whatever breathes as well as what does not, would pay homage to womanhood and consecrate to modesty those parts which the body reserves the right to name. The firmament, whose beauty I admit, the earth, image of my heart, were invoked by me in order to find myself a man who did not believe himself virtuous. The sight of this monster, had it been realised, would not have made me die of astonishment; one dies for more than that. All this needs no comment.

Reason, feeling, counsel and deputeise for each other. Whoever knows only one of the two, by renouncing the other deprives himself of the totality of the aids which have been granted us for our guidance. Vauvenargues has said "deprives himself of part of the aid".

Although his phrase and mine rest upon personifications of the soul in feeling, reason, the one I should choose at random would be no better than the other, had I coined them both. The one cannot be rejected by me. The other might have been accepted by Vauvenargues.

Whenever a predecessor uses in the sense of good a word that belongs to evil, it is dangerous for his phrase to exist beside the other. It is better to leave the word the evil meaning. To use in the sense of good a word belonging to the good does not possess it. He is not believed. No one would wish to wear Gerard de Nerval's necktie.

The soul being one, sensibility, intelligence, will, reason, imagination, memory, may be introduced into the dissertation.

I had spent a long time studying the abstract sciences. The few people with whom I am in touch are not the kind to put me off these. When I began studying man I saw that these sciences are his own and that in exploring them I strayed less outside my province than others through their ignorance of them. I forgave them for not working at it at all! I did not expect to find many companions in the study of man. That is what is his alone. I was wrong. There are more studying him than geometry.

We lose our lives joyfully, so long as we do not talk about it.

Passions wane with age. Love, which must not be classed among the passions, wanes likewise. What it loses on the one hand it regains on the other. It is no longer strict with the object of its vows, doing itself justice; expansiveness is accepted. The senses no longer have their spur to excite the organs of the flesh. Love of humanity begins. On those days when man feels he has become an altar bedecked with his virtues and tots up every sorrow that revives, the soul, within the heart's inmost recess where everything seems to originate, feels something that no longer throbs; I referred to memory.

The writer, without separating one from the other, can outline the law governing each of his poems.

Some philosophers are more intelligent than some poets. Spinoza, Malebranche, Aristotle, Plato are not Hegesippe Moreau, Malfilatre, Gilbert, Andre Chenier.

Faust, Manfred, Conrad are character types. They are not yet reasoning types. As it is, they are agitator types.

Descriptions are a meadow, three rhinoceroses, half a catafalque. They can be memory, prophecy. They are not the paragraph I am on the point of concluding.

The governor of the soul is not the governor of a soul. The governor of a soul is the governor of the soul when these two kinds of soul are confused enough to be able to affirm that a governor is only a governess in the imagination of a jesting lunatic.

The phenomenon passes. I seek laws.

There are men who are not types. Types are not men. One must not let oneself be dominated by the accidental.

Judgements on poetry are of more value than poetry. They are the philosophy of poetry. Philosophy thus understood embodies poetry. Poetry could not do without philosophy. Philosophy could do without poetry.

Racine is not capable of condensing his tragedies into precepts. A tragedy is not a precept. To a like mind, a precept is a more intelligent action than a tragedy.

Place a goose quill in the hand of a moralist who is a first-rate writer. He will be superior to the poets.

Love of justice is for most men only the courage to suffer injustice.

Hide yourself, war.

The feelings express happiness, make one smile. Analysis of the feelings expresses happiness, all personality aside; makes one smile. The former uplift the soul, dependant upon space, upon duration, up to the conception of humanity considered as itself, in its celebrated constituents! The latter uplifts the soul, independently of duration and space, up to the conception of humanity considered in its highest expression, the will! The former are concerned with vices and virtues; the latter only with virtues. Feelings do not know their marching order. The analysis of feelings teaches how to reveal it, increases the strength of the feelings. With the former, all is uncertainty. They are the expression of happiness, grief, two extremes. With the latter, all is certainty. It is the expression of that happiness which results at a given moment from knowing how to restrain oneself in the midst of good or evil passions. It uses its calm to render the description of the passions down to a principle which flows through the pages; the non-existence of evil. The feelings weep when they must, as when they need not. Analysis of the feelings does not weep. It possesses a latent sensibility which catches one off guard, prevails over miseries, teaches how to dispense with a guide, provides a combat weapon. The feelings, sign of weakness, are not feeling! The analysis of feeling, sign of strength, generates the most magnificent feelings I know. The writer who is taken in by feelings must not be placed on a par with the writer who is taken in neither by feelings nor

himself. Youth intends sentimental lucubrations. Maturity begins to reason without confusion. He was only feeling, he thinks. He used to let his sensations wander: now he gives them a pilot. If I liken humanity to a woman, I shall not expatiate upon her youth's being on the wane and the approach of her middle-age. Her mind changes for the better. Her ideal of poetry will change. Tragedies, poems, elegies will no longer take precedence. The coolness of the maxim shall prevail! In Quinault's time they could have understood what I have just said. Thanks to some scattered glimmers during the last few years from magazines and folios, I can do so myself. The style I adopt differs as much from that of the moralists, who only record evil without prescribing the remedy, as the latter's does not from melodramas, funeral orations, the ode, the devotional stanza. There is no sense of struggle.

Elohim is made in the image of man.

A number of certainties are contradicted. A number of falsehoods are uncontradicted. Contradiction is the sign of falsity. Non-contradiction is the sign of certitude.

A philosophy for the sciences exists. It does not exist for poetry. I know of no moralist who is a first-rate poet. That's odd, someone will say.

It is a horrible thing to feel what one possesses slip away. One devotes oneself only to the idea of trying to find out whether anything at all is permanent.

Man is a subject devoid of fallacies. Everything shows him the truth. Nothing deludes him. The two principles of truth, reason and sense, apart from the fact that they do not lack sincerity, enlighten one another. The senses make reason clearer through real appearances. The same service they render it, they receive from it. Each takes its revenge. The soul's phenomena appease the senses, make impressions upon them which I do not guarantee to be troublesome. They do not lie. They do not vie with each other in making mistakes.

Poetry should be made by all. Not by one, poor Hugo! Poor Racine! Poor Coppee! Poor Corneille! Poor Boileau! Poor Scarron! Tics, tics, and tics.

The sciences have two extremities which meet. The first is the ignorance in which men find themselves at birth. The second is that attained by great souls. They have surveyed whatever man can know, find that they know all, meet in that same ignorance whence they started. It is a clever ignorance, which knows itself. Those among them who, having emerged from the first ignorance, have been unable to achieve the other and have some snattering of this self-satisfied knowledge, pose as experts. The latter do not disturb people, are no more mistaken in their judgements on everything than others. The masses, the skilled, make up the retinue of a nation. The others, who respect it, are equally respected by it.

To know things, one need not know their details. As detail is finite, our cognitions are sound.

Love does not confuse itself with poetry.

Woman is at my feet!

To describe heaven it is not necessary to transport the materials of earth there. One must leave earth and its materials where they are, so as to beautify life with its ideal. To address Elohim familiarly is an unseemly buffoonery. The best way of showing him gratitude is not by yelling in his ears that he is mighty, that he created the world, that we are worms compared to his greatness. He knows it better than we. Man may excuse themselves from informing him of that. The best way of showing him gratitude is to console humanity, to restore all to it, take it by the hand and treat it like a brother. This is more genuine.

To study order, it is not necessary to study disorder. Scientific experiments, like tragedies, stanzas to my sister, the gibberish of misfortunes, have no business here below.

Not all laws are fit to mention.

To study evil so as to bring out the good is not to study good in itself. Given a suitable phenomenon, I shall seek its cause.

Until now, misfortune has been described so as to inspire pity and terror. I shall describe happiness so as to inspire their opposites.

A logic exists for poetry. It is not the same as that of philosophy. Philosophers are not so numerous as poets. The poets have the right to consider themselves above the philosophers.

I need not bother about what I shall do later. I ought to do what I am doing. I need not discover whatever things I shall come across later. In the new science, everything takes its time, such is its excellence.

There is the stuff of the poet in the moralists and philosophers. The poets include the thinker. Each caste suspects the other, develops its qualities to the detriment of those which bring it nearer the other

caste. The jealousy of the former does not want to admit that the poets are stronger than they. The pride of the latter declares itself unqualified to do justice to more sensitive brains. Whatever a man's intelligence may be, the process of thought must be the shame for all.

The existence of tics having been established, let none be surprised to see the same words recur more than their fair share; in Lamartine, the tears which fall down his horse's nostrils, the colour of his mother's hair; in Hugo, the darkness and the broken man; these are part of the binding.

The science I undertake is a science distinct from poetry, I do not sing of the latter, I strive to discover its source. Through the rudder that steers all poetic thought, billiards professors will discern the evolution of sentimental theses.

The theorem is mocking by nature, it is not indecent. The theorem does not ask to be allowed to serve as application. The application made of it belittles the theorem, turns it indecent. Call the application the struggle against matter, against the ravages of the spirit.

To struggle against evil is to do it too much honour. If I allow men to despise it, let them not fail to say that this is all I can do for them.

Man is certain not to be wrong.

We are not content with the life we have in us. We want to live in the idea others have of an imaginary life. We do our utmost to appear as we are. We exert ourselves to preserve this imaginary being, which is none other than the real one. If we have generosity, fidelity, we are eager not to let it be known, so as to attach these virtues to that being. We do not detach them from ourselves in order to join them to it. We are brave so as to acquire the reputation of not being poltroons. Sign of our being's capacity not to be satisfied with one without the other, to renounce neither one nor the other. The man who did not live for preserving his valour would be infamous.

Despite the sight of our splendours, that grasp us by the throat, we have an instinct which sets us to rights, which we cannot repress, which uplifts us!

Nature has perfections to show that she is the image of Elohim, defects to show that she is his image none the less.

It is fitting to obey the laws. The people understand what makes them just. One does not abandon them. When one makes their justice subject to something else, it is easy to render it doubtful. The people are not liable to revolt.

Those who are in disorder tell those who are orderly that it is they who are deviating from nature. They believe themselves to be following it. A fixed point is needed in order to judge. Where in morality do we not find this point?

Nothing is less strange than the contrarieties one detects in man. He is made to know the truth. He seeks it. When he tries to grasp it he is dazzled, is disconcerted so that he gives no cause for disputing with him for possession of it. Some wish to rob man of the knowledge of truth, others want to assure him of it. Each works from such dissimilar motives that man's perplexity is destroyed. He has no light other than the one he finds in his character.

We are born just. Everyone inclines towards himself. It is towards order. One must incline towards the general. The inclination towards the self is the end of all disorder, in war, in the economy.

Men, having contrived to recover from death, misery, ignorance, in order to make themselves happy took it upon themselves not to think about that at all. This is all they have been able to devise as consolation for so few ills. Ultra-rich consolation. It doesn't go far towards curing evil. It hides it for a short while and by hiding it ensures that we think about curing it. Through a legitimate inversion of man's nature, boredom, his most palpable evil, does not happen to be his greatest good. It may contribute more than anything else to making him seek his cure. That is all. Diversion, which he regards as his greatest good, is his most insignificant evil. It brings him closer than anything to seeking the remedy for his ills. Both are counter-proofs of the misery, of the corruption of man, but for his greatness. Man is bored, seeks out this host of occupations. He has an idea of the happiness he has won; finding this within himself, he looks for it in outward things. He is content. Misfortune is neither in us nor in other creatures. It is in Elohim.

Nature makes us happy in all circumstances, our desires depict for us an unhappy state. They join to the state in which we are the afflictions of the state in which we are not. When we came to these afflictions we would not be unhappy because of that; we would have other desires consonant with a new state.

The strength of reason is better apparent in those who understand it than in those who do not.

We have so little presumption that we should like to be known in the world, even to those who come after when we are no more. We have so little vanity that the esteem of five people, say six, amuses us, does us honour.

Few things console us. Many things afflict us.

Modesty is so natural in man's heart that a workman takes care not to boast, wants to have his admirers. Philosophers want them. Poets above all! Those who write in favour of glory want to have the glory of having written well. Those who read it want to have the glory of having read it. I, who write this, pride myself on having this desire. Those who read it will make a similar boast.

The inventions of man go on increasing. The kindness, the malice of people in general does not remain the same.

The mind of the greatest man is not so dependent that it should be caused disquiet by the slightest noise of the *Tintamarre* going on around him. The silence of a cannon is not required to impede his thoughts. The noise of a weathercock or a pulley is not necessary. The fly is not reasoning well just now. A man buzzes at its ears. This is enough to render it incapable of good advice. If I would have it find truth, I should chase away this animal which holds its reason in check and disquiets that intelligence which governs kingdoms.

The object of those people who play tennis with such mental concentration, such physical activity, is to boast to their friends that they played better than someone else. It is the source of their assiduity. Some toil in their chambers to show the scholars that they have resolved a hitherto insoluble algebraic problem. Others expose themselves to dangers so as to boast of a place they would have found for themselves less wittily, to my mind. The latter kill themselves in order to note these things. Not in order to become the less wise for them. It is above all to show that they understand the substantiality of them. These are the least stupid of the bunch. They are so advisedly. One may consider that the others would not be, if they did not have this understanding.

The example of Alexander's chastity made no more celibates than that of his drunkenness made teetotallers. One is not ashamed not to be as virtuous as he. One can believe oneself not quite within the virtues of the majority of mankind when one sees oneself within the virtues of these great men. One values them by how they adhere to the people. However noble they may be, they are united with the rest of mankind in some aspect. They are not suspended in the air, separated from our society. If they are greater than we, it is because their feet are held as high as ours. They are all on the same level, rest upon the same earth. By this extremity they are as exalted as we, as children, a little more than the beasts.

The best way to persuade consists of not persuading.

Despair is the least of our errors.

When a thought presents itself to us like a truth generally current and we take the trouble to develop it, we find that it is a discovery.

One can be just, if one is not human.

Unconsciousness, dishonour, lewdness, hate, men's scorn, are to be had for money. Liberality multiplies the advantages of riches.

Those who have integrity in their pleasures, have sincerity in their business. It is the sign of a mild disposition when pleasure makes one human.

The moderation of great men limits only their virtues.

It is offensive to human beings to give them praise that extends the bounds of their merit. Many people are modest enough to suffer appreciation willingly.

We must expect everything, fear nothing, from time and men.

If talent, fame, do not make men unhappy, what one calls misfortune does not merit their regrets. A soul condescends to accept fortune, tranquillity, if they must superpose the strength of its feelings, the full scope of its genius.

One respects great plans, when one feels capable of great successes.

Reserve is the apprenticeship of consciousness.

We say sound things when we do not strive to say extraordinary ones.

Nothing true is false; nothing false is true. Everything is the contrary of dream, of untruth.

We must not believe that what nature has created amiable is vicious. There has been no century, no nation, that has established imaginary virtues, vices.

One can judge the beauty of life only by that of death.

A dramatist can give the word passion a useful meaning. He is no longer a dramatist. A moralist gives any word at all a useful meaning. He is still a moralist!

Whoever contemplates the life of a man therein finds the history of the species. Nothing has been able to make it evil.

Must I write in verse to separate myself from other men? Let charity decide!

The pretext of those who make others happy is that they wish them well.

Generosity enjoys the happiness of others, as though it were responsible for it.

Order prevails in the human race. Reason, virtue, are not the most powerful there.

Princes create few ingrates. They give all they can.

One can wholeheartedly love those in whom one recognises great shortcomings. It would be impertinence to believe that imperfection alone has the right to please us. Our weakness bind us to each other as much as that which is not virtue could.

If our friends do us services, we think that as friends they owe us them. We do not think at all that they owe us their enmity.

He who is born to command would command even on the throne.

When duties have exhausted us, we think we have exhausted duties. We say that everything can fill the heart of man.

Everything lives by action. Hence communication between beings, harmony of the universe. This natural law, so fertile, we find to be a vice in man. He is obliged to obey it. We conclude that, not being able to exist in repose, he is in his place.

One knows what the sun, the heavens are. We have the secrets of their movements. In Elohim's hand, blind instrument, insentient spring, the world attracts our tributes. The revolutions of empires, the faces of the times, the nations, the conquerors of science, this is the result of a crawling atom which lasts but a day, destroys the spectacle of the universe throughout all ages.

There are more truths than delusions, more good qualities than bad, more pleasure than pains. We like to control character. We raise ourselves above our kind. We enrich ourselves by the consideration which we shower upon it. We do not believe we can separate our own interest from that of humanity, nor slander the race without compromising ourselves. This ridiculous vanity has filled books with hymns on nature's behalf. Man is in disgrace with those who think. They vie with each other in burdening him with fewer vices. When was he not on the point of uplifting himself. Of having his virtues reinstated?

Nothing has been said. It is too soon since the more than seven thousand years that there have been men. With regard to morals, as with all else, the least good is exalted. We have the advantage of working after the ancients, the skilful ones among the moderns.

We are capable of friendship, justice, compassion, reason. O my friends! what then is the absence of virtue?

As long as my friends do not die, I shall not speak of death.

We are dismayed by our relapses, by seeing that our misfortunes have been able to cure us of our defects.

One can judge the beauty of death only by that of life.

The three terminational points make me shrug my shoulders in pity. Does one need that to prove one is a wit, in other words an imbecile? As if clarity were not as good as vacancy, on the subject of points!

written by Isidore Ducasse, 1870.

LEAVING THE 80's #3 (DECEMBER) WILL CONTAIN:

The New Wave - An account of the radicals in Post-War Film; From Godard to Fassbinder and onwards...

World Cinema - Portraits of the key Japanese, Indian, African and South American Film-Makers.

The Hip-Hikers Guide to Jazz - An up-dating/adapting of another NME wall-chart.

Bolan - Paul Morley's in-depth analysis of the man who walked with God!

The Blues - question: Can white boys sing the blues? answer: Who.

Art Now - Is there any point?

Bill Burroughs - The most important living writer!!!!

Huyssans - A brief glance at a French genius.

Dance-Crazy - An investigation into one of the more Dionysian of our pastimes.

Skinheads - Are they all Fascists?

Jean Gabin & Michel Simon - Classic French actors who no one has ever heard of.

Kill City No3; Zodiac & John Wayne Gacy - More repulsive Yanks.

The Gemstone File - Extracts from Bruce Robert's conspiracy to end all conspiracies.

Basic Banalities - A classic Situationist text (from Vaneigem).

+++ 'Shampoo' and 'What's Going On' re-evaluated, fact-files on John Ford, Julian Cope and W Faulkner +++



THIS WAS GP51