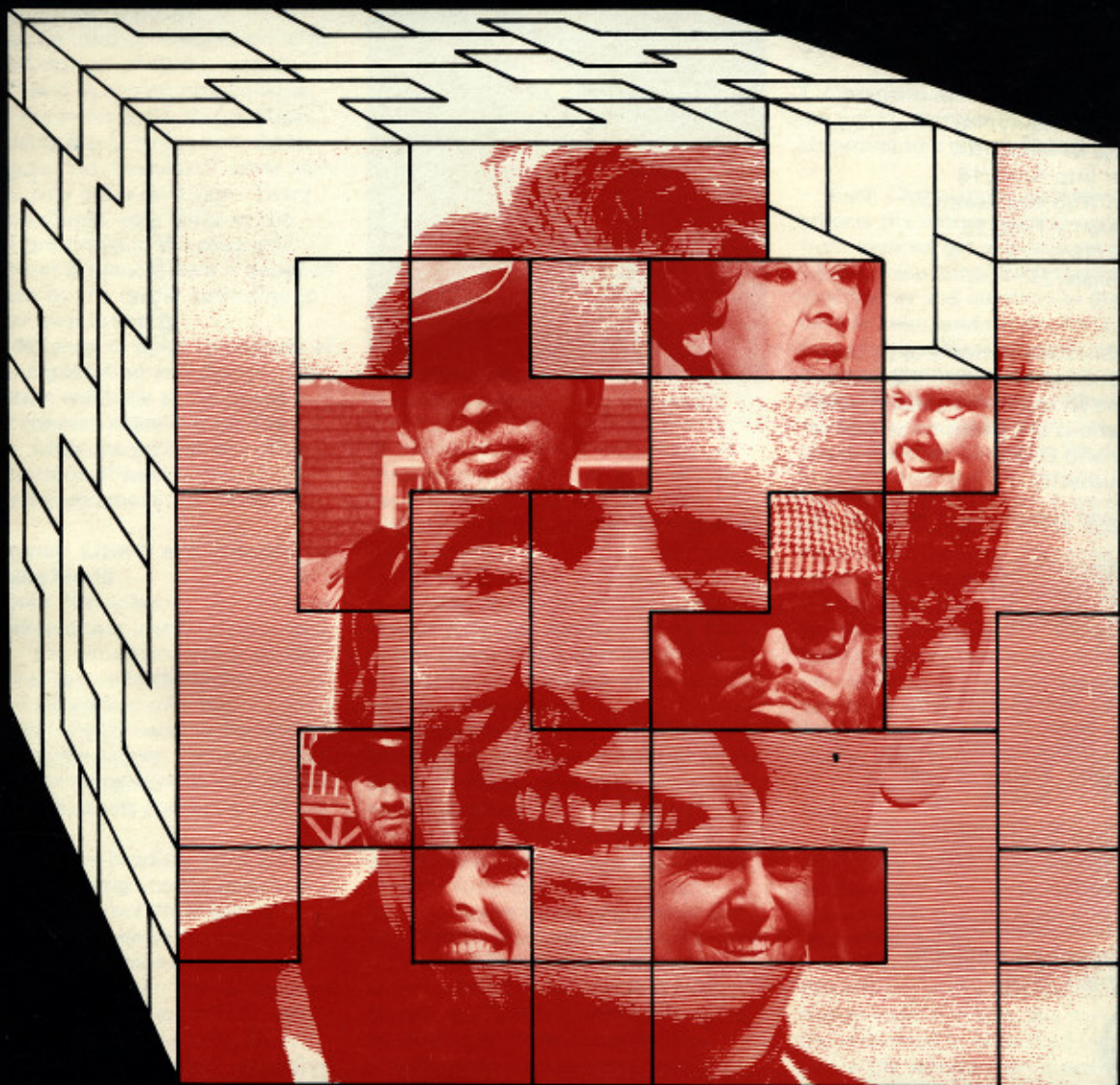


the Prisoner puzzle



The Ontario
Educational
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Videotapes

For information about videotapes of the programs in the series, *The Prisoner Puzzle*, write to: OECA Order Desk, Box 200, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2T1.

Part One: Introduction

How to Use This Book

This publication is intended for viewers of the television series *The Prisoner* who, intrigued and mystified by the programs, may wish to pursue some of the questions and ideas presented by the series. It will suggest some ideas for possible application of the themes to present-day life.

It includes sources for further study such as books, films, videotapes, and some resource people; and suggestions for questions to be posed.

It may be used in conjunction with organized courses of study, such as those offered in community colleges.

Like the series itself, this publication is deliberately structured not to conform to "do-it-yourself" texts with a simple, easy guide to follow. There can be no simple, easy guide to the material presented in the programs. The content presented here is designed to be used by the reader according to his or her own interests.

It is designed to open up avenues of personal exploration and change. The first section will look at the broad areas of concern examined by *The Prisoner*, while the second will offer interpretations of each of the 17 individual programs in the series.

The Prisoner: Liberty and Freedom in a Changing World

In his essay "On Liberty," John Stuart Mill predicted that man's relation to society, "the nature and limits of the power that can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual," would become the vital question of the future. Perhaps it has not yet been recognized as such except by the artists, poets and writers of the 20th century.

Where are we heading, what sort of future are we designing for ourselves by our actions now? What sort of questions should we be asking? In an age where government is assuming more and more power, legislating more and more laws, when we accept welfare states and industrial rule, what sort of questions would Mill be asking?

The Prisoner poses some of the crucial questions in the survival game humanity is playing; and it poses them in almost flawless film art. Like all great art, *The Prisoner* operates on many levels, so that you get as much or as little out of it as you choose. It has been hailed as the most imaginative and exciting series in the history



"I am not a number, I am a free man!"

of television, as a superspy story, as the best science fiction of its era. It has inspired people to share their enthusiasm in fan groups, to do something, to act.

On the surface a futuristic adventure story, the series tells of man's eternal quest for freedom, using the myths and symbols of modern man as effectively on television as Picasso did with paint on canvas.

"How free are we?" asks Patrick McGoohan, the creator and star of the series. "I think we're being imprisoned and engulfed by . . ." here, it almost seems unfair to continue in words, which cannot express his concerns as fully as the series does, but . . . "we're being imprisoned and engulfed by a scientific and materialistic world." *The Prisoner* not only shows you why McGoohan is concerned, but it offers alternative ways of looking at those concerns. For *The Prisoner* is an allegory that sets a man in unexplained captivity, depriving him of his liberty, privacy, and name. The series then tells of his successful efforts against all imaginable odds to regain his freedom. But he is struggling to gain his freedom from a world that strongly resembles our own world; only he sees it as a prison while we do not.

On the Nature of "The Prison"

1. The number of people being born per year is 132,000,000.
2. The world's population is increasing at the rate of two percent per year.
3. North America has twelve percent of the world's people.
4. Americans watch an average of six hours, twenty minutes of television per day.
5. Food production in the world will not be able to feed the world's population by 1985.
6. Ontario is plowing under twenty-four acres of prime farm land per minute for industrial use.
7. Canadians are the happiest people in the world, along with the Swedes, according to a global Gallup Poll.

Each of the above statements reflects the nature of this world, and from each we get a certain picture of what is happening. Each statement uses figures and numbers to make us believe them, and we do, for a large part of this society operates on numbers and we no longer question them. We use numbers to identify ourselves: our social insurance, telephone number, passport. We do not question numbers. Statistics, computers and numbers have become our truths. For each of the above statements, however, someone has equally valid statistics to prove that the situation is not that bad. "We will not starve until 1999." "Ontario is in fact only plowing x acres of farm land per minute." If you don't question numbers, what then do you believe? And if you accept a number, use your change card, what are the implications of your action on your own individuality?

In *The Prisoner*, the characters don't have names, they are called by number, and they wear badges on their shoulders so that they are immediately recognized by all.

McGoohan sees this as extremely threatening to the survival of the human race. For him, the survival of the individual is imperilled in a world where the average man is well defined while the hero, the individual, is little known.

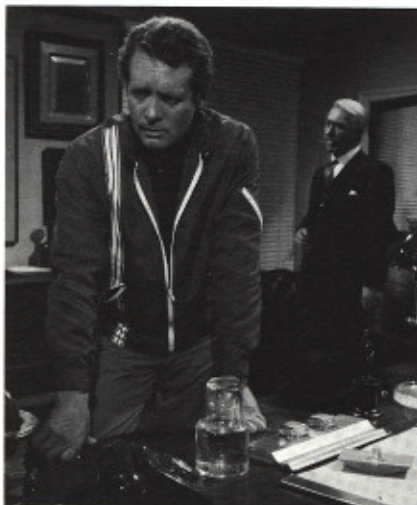
How do we get to believe whatever we believe? From the moment of birth, carefully noted down in numbers, we are taught by others and ourselves that some things are good, some things are bad, some things just are and cannot be questioned. We are

taught to believe in numbers, to believe that the more people there are who seem to believe in something, the more right that thing is. We are taught that quality of life means quantity of possessions, that the more we have the happier we will be. On that scale, Canadians have one of the highest standards of living in the world; but are we really the happiest?

The Prisoner is a product of its time, but it is also timeless. It was conceived by Patrick McGoochan, produced by Everyman Films, his company, in the mid-1960s. It was a time of the Beatles, Vietnam, miniskirts, James Bond and Kim Philby, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the first walk on the moon, Bob Dylan, protest songs, long hair and the Chicago conspiracy trial. It was a time when hippies gave flowers to the police to torment them, when young people all over the world opted out of society, looking for something better.

What makes McGoochan's artistry so important, however, is that he did not content himself with this time's particularities, but that he treated them as symbols, as signs. All of these movements and seemingly random events for him become manifestations of universals, of ultimate questions and issues that focused on one central concern: what is to be the most creative relation between technological civilizations and the individual? Another important issue related to the above for McGoochan is: who is to shape this relation, the state or the individual?

The '60s were an age when it was not considered odd to search for your own individuality, question the political structure or the status quo. It was an age of concern for the future, of hope for mankind, of love-ins and peace demonstrations. It was also an age of increasing computerization, mass media, mass acceptance. The



You've got to work to find the truth. No one else can show it to you.
Patrick McGoochan



One must live with the awareness of constant choice
Patrick McGoochan

young soon established their own set of rules. Blue jeans replaced suits and ties, loud rock music the sweet sounds of the '50s, and yet the code was the same. Blue jeans were as much required wear in one society as suits were in another. Had anything really changed in what had been hailed as a youthful rebellion, with thousands of young people dropping out of straight society? Is anybody watching anything out there but television?

Television is a mesmerizing medium to McGoochan, and a part of "the Village." You can't take time to think about it, put it down like a book, walk away from it to assess its impact. It works with images and speed and time in a way typical of this age; it never stops. If it's in front of you in pictures, you tend to believe it.

The power of media in our age to manipulate and control was a frightening prospect to McGoochan. Their potential for Fascist-like persuasiveness must be analyzed and checked. Edmund Carpenter, in his fascinating anthropological study of cross-cultural patterns of behaviour with media called *Oh, What a Blow that Phantom Gave Me!* (Bantam, 1974), supports McGoochan's concern about media. In essence, Carpenter says, "You Can't Say 'No' Pictorially":

It's easy to say "No" verbally. Words are neutral symbols which stand for a reality but do not resemble that

reality. A picture, however, often resembles reality, especially when that picture moves. This makes pictorial media enormously persuasive. It requires an act of will to disbelieve what one sees and even greater will to accept the reverse of what one sees. (Page 163.)

If television as a medium continually says "yes," then Carpenter maintains that we must train ourselves to provide the "no" by mounting ideas, questions and other materials. McGoochan in *The Prisoner* raises another issue: what will happen to us if we no longer have the freedom to say "no"?

Since pictures can seem more real than words, which used to be the basis of communication, and since most people are not aware of how they get to see what they see, the visual reality is easily manipulated by those presenting the television programs. For instance: commercials. Commercials are based on a concept of "average"; they must appeal to the widest audience. They generally have more time and money spent on them than the programs they carry. But who really believes in the "average" housewife talking deodorants at everyone, mopping her floor with glee, washing clothes endlessly?

Commercials then tend to reduce our uniqueness and individuality. They reduce our concerns with "self" to

"common denominator" or present us with artificial models of achievement, so that we are no longer anything but part of the mass. What happens to our freedom in this situation?

McGoohan has stated that advertising is one of the greatest curses of civilization. Commercials tend to create false realities, not for those creating them, who know very well what they want—to sell more of their product—but for those watching, who have no way of knowing whether the commercial is illusion or reality.

There is an ancient Chinese parable in which a man dreams he is a butterfly, soaring with the wind, free to reach the sun, and when he awakes he is uncertain whether he is a man who dreamt he was a butterfly, or whether he is a butterfly dreaming he is a man. Which is reality, which illusion? We live in a world controlled in every aspect, dominated by technology, dictated to by electronic machines, our truths sold to us by numbers. In place of the myths of old, of heroes and villains, of good conquering evil, we have television heroes using not goodness, but guns to conquer. People want and need to fit in, and if it means buying the right clothes or the right car, they will do it.

Where does the individual thinker fit in? *The Prisoner* offers a suggestion. In the last program of the series, "Fall Out," the prisoner No. 6 regains his freedom. He is recognized as an individual by his captors, and is allowed to escape to his world, which is perhaps only his dream. He is offered the opportunity to become the leader of the Village, to become No. 1, but chooses to leave instead, to continue his own life with his own beliefs rather than play with power. He does not need to act out fantasies to discover his own power, that of an individual being. He has no need to conform.

Can an Individual Survive?

For Patrick McGoohan, creator of the series, it is absolutely vital to question, to question yourself and others, continuously, to accept nothing on face value. In the series, there are continuous surprises, things metamorphose in an instant to totally different and unexpected things, nothing is obvious, nothing is what it appears to be. A dream visually induced by the Prisoner's captors, in the third program, "A, B and C," becomes the real life of his captors, so that they are living out his dream. Minds are interchanged, people are other people, change from friend to foe and back again, time and space are continuously mixed. As the viewer watches *The*

Prisoner, he becomes aware that much of what he thinks he sees is seen through the mirror of his own perception, and that his world, like the village setting of the prisoner, can be questioned, should be questioned. But the way in which it is questioned, the choice of questions, must be individually decided and acted upon. Not only does this matter of choice relate to the Prisoner's dilemma, but also to the viewer's situation. What complicates the questions and decision-making for the viewer is McGoohan's choice of television as the medium for his messages. McGoohan in many senses asks the viewers to break away from conventional patterns of television broadcasting, to begin making their



Nothing is obvious. Nothing is what it appears to be.

own symbolic meanings and not to receive passively, but to take an active part in the series' development. Art then becomes for McGoohan both the doing and the sharing.

On television and film, basic information comes through the eye and the ear. Making a film as flawless as *The Prisoner* is a long, sometimes tedious, sometimes joyous task. From conception to the final product, everything is controlled: the manner in which the actors act, the director directs, the cameraman shoots, the editor cuts, the sound and music effects are added, the tracks mixed, all of these add up to the final film we see. One would have to be a serious film lover or a very enthusiastic student to analyze all the messages so carefully constructed in *The Prisoner*. However, here is an example: the average length per shot in the programs is four seconds, which means that in one program approximately seven hundred and fifty images are shown. All have been carefully structured through all stages of production to transmit particular information. If one can quantify for a moment what is really not quantifiable—the power of words—each of these films would be the equivalent,

say, of reading *War and Peace*, and all in the space of one hour. This is not meant to degrade the power of words, but to point out that it is necessary to become as familiar with the tools of television as with words, the tools of language. Knowing these tools of television, together with their effects on us, is a means then of controlling the languages of conformity, of perceiving meaning.

Consider the following examples, all of which are common ways of greeting people:

1. How are you?
2. How are you feeling?
3. I hope you are feeling well today?

The first would bring a short reply, the second a longer, detailed reply, and the third would probably be the introduction to a much longer conversation. What words we choose to use and how we use them are of course only part of the communications process. What voice tones we use, how we use our hands, whether or not we look the other person in the eye, all contribute to the impression we make on the other. However, words form the basis of the communication, and the moment we verbalize a thought or a question, we are using a syntactical structure that provides the framework not only for the response, but also for the type of thinking we do. An order is established and maintained.

A child, until it learns to identify pain in words, accepts it; once it has learned to use words, it knows it feels pain. It is impossible to dissociate words from their syntactical structure; it is possible to use words illogically and arrive at a nonsense statement in terms of logic but a totally relevant statement of another type of logic—that of disorder as opposed to order, the intuitive as opposed to the intellectual.

The Prisoner uses its tools in much the same way as someone who deliberately creates a nonsense statement to say what he means.

Each program looks at the institutions that society has established through the eyes of No. 6, as an outsider looking in at foibles and follies. He sees them critically, examining, questioning, all to find out why he is being held captive. In the last program he breaks out of the prison while all but three of his fellows scatter in panic-stricken terror, from the same holocaust through which he is released and for which he is responsible. Who is now the prisoner? The order in the village has been destroyed, the prisoner set free, yet the village continues to

exist all over this world, wherever people accept an order and values simply because they are given.

Ways of Seeing: Some Examples

The series is a classic example of a work of art that can be seen on several different levels. When it was first screened on television ten years ago, it was hailed as the greatest science fiction event of TV. It has since been recognized as a classic, and interpreted as a mythological allegory, a psychological study, a political statement. It is all of these, and perhaps that is the brilliance of the series: it allows each of us to see in it what we choose. For its plot lines enclose all kinds of myths, archetypal characters, symbols, even nursery rhymes, all of which contribute to its power.

As a political statement, the series is an examination of the classic struggle of an individual for freedom. In psychological terms, it deals with the attempt to integrate the three aspects of personality into a whole person. As a mythological allegory, it can be seen as the struggle for good over evil, of the evolution of the human race from a lower condition to a higher. It must also be remembered that each of the programs was conceived as a part of the total series, and that to isolate one and assume that it represents the "meaning" of the series would be to deny McGoohan, as the creator, the rights of an artist. It would destroy the essence of the series.

"The Village": Fantasy or Reality?

In "Arrival," the first program of the series, the Prisoner is gassed and kidnapped while asleep. He awakes in his own house, but discovers that he is not in London but in "the Village," a quaint and mysterious town of no name. In the ensuing programs, the "Village" becomes the setting for a variety of encounters the Prisoner faces in his efforts to escape. Many times it seems that the Village cannot really exist, that it must be someone's fantasy.

It is both: someone's fantasy and yet a reality. It does in fact exist in Wales. Its name: Portmeirion. It is a complete private village set on the shores of Cardigan Bay, a resort town designed by architect Clough Williams-Ellis. He had sought the perfect site for the realization of a dream, and he has designed and built up "the Village" for the past thirty years. What better place to set a series so concerned with distinguishing fantasy from reality than a village designed around a dream?

However, "the Village" of Clough



Does the village really exist?

Williams-Ellis becomes even more of a fantasy for McGoohan; he changes its idyllic, fantastic values into a nightmarish delusion that artistically works as a haunting symbol of hidden controls beneath a veneer of peace, a puppet stage where marionettes unconsciously move at the bidding of a hidden puller of strings. Paradoxically "the Village" does exist, but does not, except in our minds.

The village becomes the prison for No. 6. He finds it full of gadgets, all designed to keep him constantly under surveillance. It has doors that open automatically to greet you and close just as secretly to entrap you, music to wake you and put you to sleep, loudspeakers that reach over every part of the village with announcements important and nonsensical, or both. "Ice cream is now available. The flavour of the day is strawberry." It has sophisticated electronic guards to prevent you from escaping, including "Rover," a mythical monster ball living in the sea, who rivals any of the monsters conquered and slain in our ancestors' tales. And it gains a hero: a man who is willing to take a stand, fight for his truth and deny the reality so cleverly constructed around him.

No. 6 never gives in; he never talks, or gives his captors the information they seek of him. Instead, he stalks his captors, using their own methods, until they are forced to recognize him, to answer him, but with answers he is certainly not expecting, so that the

process is one that changes him as well.

The universal mythic hero is a powerful man or demigod who vanquishes evil in the form of dragon, serpent, monster and so on, and who liberates his people from destruction and death. So wrote Carl Jung in *Man and His Symbols*. In older times heroes were easy to identify. But today who are our heroes? The men who first walked on the moon? Or the men who made it possible for men to walk the moon? We have reached an age where we are too rational to believe the old myths, to adhere to any religion; as a result we no longer have the medicine men to protect us. Instead we have the protection offered by an affluent society and institutions like government and labour unions, to which we turn more and more. The role of government is expanding at an incredibly fast rate. To protect us, it has to become involved in more and more fields. More and more of what we are allowed to do is regulated by law, usually at our own request. In *The Prisoner*, the situation has been taken to the extreme; the society is totally regulated, but no one knows by whom. People in "the Village" elect their representative, No. 2, but he only plays with power under the direction of No. 1. And no one knows who No. 1 is. Are there parallels in our world?

Probes

This introduction could now under-

take to posit an ultimate meaning for *The Prisoner*. But our intention is to present options and new beginnings, not sum up or close off avenues of exploration. It is best then to raise questions rather than to provide answers. We must keep alive the puzzle.

- "Are there no longer any great men, just great committees?" Is it part of McGoohan's concern that the world concerns itself only with such large numbers, with collective decisions, that the person is forgotten? Can an individual still shape his or her own world?

- "In privacy I am, in public I am prisoner." Since so many institutions control our external world, must the individual challenge all impositions on the internal self? Are our minds our own, or under the power of others?

- "Why must there be only one meaning?" If living is a process of analyzing, questioning and deciding, why then is the individual's quest for meanings so limited by authorities?

- "He who creates the puzzle holds the key." Are our problems and limits of our own making? How much do those who create our puzzle rely on our assistance in making it?

If art is both the doing and the sharing, then Patrick McGoohan's *The Prisoner* offers all of us the opportunity to find our own keys, and even the right to create our own puzzles.



"I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed or numbered!"
No. 6

Part Two: The Programs

Arrival

A man is kidnapped and becomes a prisoner. He begins his quest for freedom. Who is he? Who has abducted him, and why? Where is "the Village" and what is it? Why do people have no names? Who are prisoners and who are spies?

The prisoner, labelled No. 6, tries to escape, but he is told by No. 2, who seems to run the village under an ever-present but invisible No. 1, that he cannot escape, that there is no way out of the village, and that he will be kept there until he divulges his reasons for resigning from a top secret service position. As No. 2 puts it, "A lot of people are curious about what lies behind your resignation. You've had a brilliant career. They want to know why you suddenly left." All No. 6 has to do is talk and he will be free. But he will not, and the scene is set for a long struggle as his captors devise scheme after scheme to coerce him into giving the information. After his attempted escape, he is brought back to No. 2, but finds a different man in his place. Whoever is No. 1 trusts no one, and his second in command never remains in power very long.

Extensions

On the surface, it seems that the prisoner has been abducted, an elaborate reception prepared, the interrogation begun. It seems the beginning of a classic spy story, and yet the unusual nature of the village, the constant surveillance, the significance of the numbers, the slogans like "A still tongue makes a happy life" all add an aura of menacing and very well-planned brainwashing. Why would anyone go to the trouble of establishing such a village at such expense, staffing it with its own spies as well as prisoners, equipping it with the most effective electronic surveillance gadgets, to get information out of its captives? Why not just use the old methods of torture and drugs? Why did the creator of the series, Patrick McGoochan, feel it necessary to make his prison not the classic prison of grey walls and steel bars but a village that is totally self-contained with, as No. 2 puts it, "everything here—water, electricity, a council democratically elected"? Why put a spy story in a set that so strongly resembles a tiny model of the real world? Since McGoochan conceived the series as a way of expressing his own protest against an insidious age, as a "splash of objection," "an attempt to take a stand on things I feel strongly about," it would be worth while digging beneath the surface.

"Just fill in your race, your religion, what you like to read, what you like

to eat, what your hobbies are, what you were, what you would like to be, any family illnesses . . . and oh, any politics." No. 6 is told at the labour exchange. Give us the secrets of your individuality and let us make you a pawn forever. Recognizing that to talk at all to anyone would be equivalent to giving in, the Prisoner maintains his silence and begins his lonely journey to maintain his individuality.

In "Arrival" the dice are thrown: the Prisoner wishes to remain an individual, fighting against the imposed order; his opponents, the antagonists, wish to make him conform to their order, to make him submit to their will, and divulge the information they need. It will be a question of whether or not the individual can be made to conform, lose his individuality, become one of the crowd and hence no threat.

In older times, heroes were easy to identify. In modern times the hero has often become an anti-hero as in the writings of Albert Camus and Heinrich Böll, for example. Does No. 6 fit into either of these very large categories, or does he create his own? In this program visual symbolism is used that may be analyzed from a mythological point of view. No. 6, for example, descends through a tunnel to hand in his resignation, an image recalling the descent of Orpheus. But No. 6 hands in his resignation in order to liberate himself from forces that are limiting him. Is No. 6 then a hero in the classical sense, or an anti-hero?

Are there other symbols used in this program that might act as clues? Why is the Prisoner given the number six—are numbers symbols as well? They are invested often with religious connotations. The *Dictionary of Symbols* points out that the number six connotes "ambivalence and equilibrium" and is used sometimes to represent the human soul.

These clues and symbols suggest that *The Prisoner* can operate at a mythic level and that its elements—sounds, movements, pacing, juxtaposition—combine to support the mythical meanings.

We instinctively support the Prisoner, but we should ask ourselves why. What's wrong with a number? It works as well as a name. Yet a name is far more important to each of us, for in it we put all our own beliefs about who we are. A name preserves our identity, both for ourselves and for others. Yet we often accept numbers as identity: our social insurance numbers, our addresses, our telephone numbers, our charge card numbers, our passport numbers. Those are



A still tongue makes a happy life.

acceptable, because they are merely additions; when numbers threaten to be all we have, to be substituted for names, we tend to get a little edgy. What are the values we attach to names, and why? Are they really as important as they seem? And what are the implications of our present feelings for the future, when computers will deal with all of us by number?

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The Chimes of Big Ben

The Prisoner teams with a new recruit to the Village, and attempts to escape. They develop an elaborate scheme that involves No. 6 in an arts and crafts exhibition. They manage to escape from the Village and land in what appears to be Poland; a friendly fisherman helps them get shipped in cases back to London, where they find themselves in the Prisoner's London office. Familiar faces greet them, and immediately the questioning begins, "Why did you resign?"

The Prisoner hesitates, prepared to give an honest answer. Big Ben chimes the hour, and the Prisoner glances at his watch, set to the correct time when he left what he thought was Poland; Big Ben's time tallies with his watch. But there is one hour's difference

between British and Polish time at this period of the year . . . the Prisoner is back in the Village. The escape he carefully planned was really only a plot on the part of his captors to get him to speak.

In this episode, we see the struggle for power continuing; but who wins? Does No. 2 triumph, since the Prisoner did not escape? Or did No. 6, in discovering the plot and not revealing the reasons for his resignation, win? Is it merely a draw, in this game played to such extremes by the authorities?



Are you married, Big Ben?

Extensions

Although on the surface this program's story can be seen as a classic struggle for power, it might be useful to consider the whole confrontation in psychological terms. Alfred Adler, the Viennese psychologist, suggested that the most important of all our concerns is a striving for superiority. In Adlerian terms, the Prisoner is struggling toward the growth and self-perfection that constitute the mature person's drive toward power. It's not so much control over other people as control over himself, a drive toward self-realization.

What do his opponents represent? The Village could be viewed as the personification of a different drive for power, the kind of power we associate with modern institutions, such as government, which we the people chose to create, or institutions established to help the government, such as crown corporations, or institutions that are self-created private companies, for example. Each of these institutions has power over us, power that to a large degree regulates our freedom. The government makes the law, governmental agencies set the rates for the necessities of life, and private companies help to set our life styles by selling us con-

sumer goods, which are produced on an assembly line for assembly line people. So the struggle symbolically can be seen as the classic struggle in psychological terms of an individual fighting to remain an individual.

Consider how many times a day you come into contact with outside powers, and what effect they can have on you. How many organizations control you? How many can foreclose your mortgage on your house or car? How much power do the police have over entering your home, and what are

your rights to privacy in the light of such laws as the War Measures Act? Consider the implications of proposed laws and developments in the light of past occurrences. What powers might be delegated to institutions, for example, that formerly belonged to the people? What trends can you detect in the current government policies, and are they leading where you want to go?

Note: This program was originally broadcast as Episode 8, which perhaps will change some of the perceptions of it. For instance, the Prisoner agrees to work with the Village authorities for the first time; if it is seen as the eighth program, the impact of his agreement is much stronger because it is the first sign of a break in his uncooperation with the authorities. Similarly, the use of the name "Nadia" does not strike us as that important. Yet after eight episodes this would be the first time anyone in the films is referred to by name. It becomes of great significance, particularly when the Prisoner discovers that Nadia's story is very like his own, and that she also seems to be a strong-willed individual. Only she retains her name. Is that to make her more appealing to the Prisoner so that he will trust her and play the game?

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A, B, and C

In the effort to discover why the Prisoner resigned, and to break his silence, the new No. 2 decides to resort to dream manipulation. With the help of an experimental process and an untested drug, the Prisoner's subconscious thoughts can be converted into electrical impulses and finally into pictures on a television screen. The dreams can then be directed by those watching, so that they can program him to meet the characters A, B, and C. They have been selected from the Prisoner's file on the premise that if he had been going to sell out, which

might be a possible explanation for his refusal to talk, these three would be the most likely buyers. The experiment proceeds in three stages, by the end of which the Prisoner has begun to play the dream game as well, manipulating his dreams to show his captors that he can play better than they. He changes the game, trapping No. 2 in his own plots.

Extensions

When this program was conceived ten years ago, dream manipulation was a threatening possibility, but one that seemed far in the future. Quite rightly, most people fear this kind of manipulation far more than physical manipulation. For dreams have a very special significance. The recognition of the importance of dreams has gone far beyond Freud's original interpretations. Dreams have been recognized as symbolic representatives of reality on a different level from normal and logical reality. When lab volunteers are deprived of "dream sleep" for just a few nights, they hallucinate, become wildly irritable and even depressed. Also we have learned that we all dream, even if we do not remember having done so. But we are slowly

learning that we must dream in order to maintain our sanity and balance.

Dreams have a peculiar power for us; they communicate in illogical images our own unconscious realities. And they are an invaluable way of transmitting unconscious or intuitive knowledge. In *Man and His Symbols*, Carl Jung describes dreams as of the highest importance; as communications from the unconscious, they offer guidance or advice that could not be obtained from any other source. A dream is an important and personal expression of the individual unconscious.

On a collective level, dreams become the myths that we as a culture develop and which shape our development in unseen ways. Consider the importance of both individual and collective dreams in your own world. Isolate the major myths that exist today. Do dreams have power? And if so, what are the implications of such power for our present society, based as it is on rational, logical premises?

This episode also brings up the question of the survival of the individual. For perhaps unconsciously, we are being manipulated by drugs similar to the one used in the program, and worse. The manipulation is voluntarily begun, though maintained by pure physical addiction.

If parents are using Valium, why should Ritalin not be used on their children to make them less hyperactive and jumpy, to help them get along in school?

Is it justifiable to drug people without their consent or knowledge because they have broken the law? When is it within society's rights to impose the use of drugs, or psychological manipulation, or hypnosis? More important, how can society be stopped from so doing if the proof that it is happening is unavailable to the public?

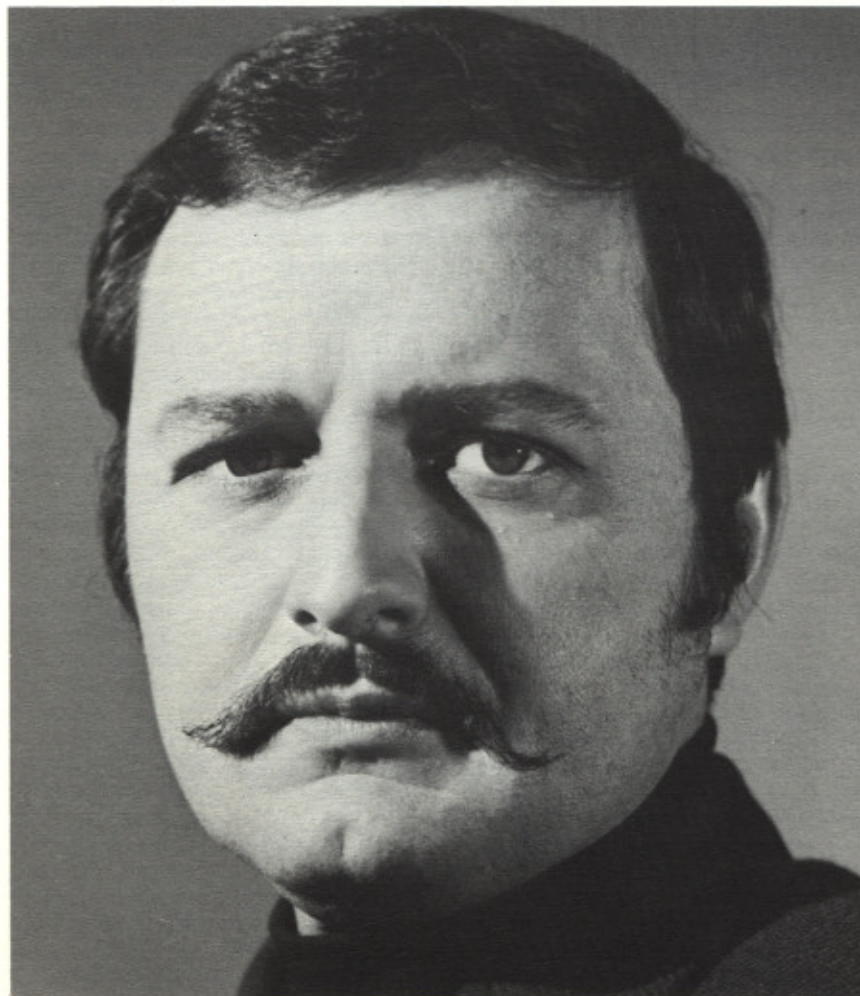
Perhaps it would also be useful to look at our present-day media as institutions that manipulate. Patrick McGoochan and his family decided not to watch television; "There's a brain-washer for you. All that advertising, the preoccupation with the trivial, with the way things and people look rather than how they really are," he said. What is the impact on masses of people addicted to television when it is so obsessed with surface?

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C.R.T.C., *A Resource For the Active*



Do people in dreams have power?

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Publications and research material on addiction and drug usage are available from The Addiction Research Foundation, 33 Russell St., Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S1.

Free for All

It is election time in the Village; a new No. 2 is to be chosen. No. 6 is challenged to run for the position. A typical election campaign is mounted, in all its hysteria. No. 6 begins his speech: "I am a person. I am not a number. All of you at one time were persons." He is sentenced by No. 2, for what he terms "a serious breach of etiquette", to undergo a truth test. By the time the Prisoner emerges, he realizes that he has been the subject of exhaustive brainwashing, not totally in control of himself. Yet he is still sufficiently master of his own mind to attempt to escape. He is returned to the Village, where he rejoins the election campaign and finds himself saying the things expected of him. He wins the election, and attempts to free his fellow prisoners and himself. But once again the Village wins out.

Extensions

One does not have to look too closely at "Free for All" to see it as a close parody of present-day democratic processes. The speeches that promise everything and say nothing of the true feelings of the candidate; the hysterical convention rallies; enthusiastic yelling from carefully selected mobs even at the wrong places in the speech; the media exposure in the form of profiles of the candidate, written before interviewing him. It all hits far too close to home. Examine the electioneering process in your district during



"I am not a number. I am a person. All of you at one time were persons."

the next election. What are the qualifications necessary to become a politician? How good is the media coverage, or is it all very predictable, toeing party lines and not seeking out the individual man or woman beneath the mask? Why does your candidate want to run for office? Is he public-spirited or particularly concerned with making life better through use of power? Or is power a means to his own end?

"It doesn't matter who is No. 1, nor which side is running this," says No. 2 in answer to the Prisoner's questions. Perhaps what the program is saying is that the essence of this process is no longer the beliefs and values held by individual candidates, and which are expressed eventually as the values of a nation by its prime minister. Perhaps the important thing is the wrapping, the packaging, the selling, to give us the illusion that we have participated in the process, and then to keep the masses out of the process of governing. Examine whether this is so or not; analyze news coverage of an election you can get close to, and check out that coverage with your own perceptions. What is missing or different? How can we go about changing the "wrapping process" of elections back into a democratic process? Is this feasible or possible? What are the impacts of electronic media on the process? Not only as they are used now, but in the future? What of a future in which referendums are held on issues via television, then people phone in their votes to a computer?

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Reisman, David. *The Lonely Crowd*. New York: Doubleday and Co, Inc., 1968 (rev.).

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The Schizoid Man

Efforts are made to convince the Prisoner he is someone else by confronting him with a double and by putting him through a brainwashing process that changes his tastes, his right-handedness to left-handedness, and even his instincts. Brought face to face with his double, who has assumed his identity, the Prisoner summons all his will power to fight against the steadily mounting evidence that he is someone else, but finds that everything the double says and does provides the Prisoner with more confirmation that he is No. 12 and simply imagining that he was once No. 6. "Once he begins to doubt his identity, he'll crack," says No. 2. But the Prisoner learns what has happened and how it was achieved, and begins to manipulate things himself. He manages to convince No. 2

that he is really the double and the Prisoner has met his death; arrangements are made for him to leave the Village, his work completed. But then once again the plans are foiled, and the Prisoner remains a captive in the Village.



When you read a mind, pay attention to the small print.

Extensions

The Village continues with its efforts to break the Prisoner's silence by destroying his sense of identity. Skillful, realistic brainwashing techniques are used to convince him that he cannot be No. 6; he is put into the position of having to prove that he is a number. This program perhaps most strongly points up our preconditioned beliefs, and how conditioning works. The question of what individuality means in a conditioned world is implied as well as how we can distinguish reality from illusion. Our world is not as diabolically controlled as the Prisoner's, but since we have not been trained as he has, we have to look just as hard at what appears to be reality. For conditioning will train you to believe that almost anything is real, and unless we have a strong foundation to stand upon, or some useful clue to point out the way, it is most likely that we will not be able to perceive the techniques or methods and so be able to cling to our reality. First developed by Nobel prize winner Ivan Pavlov, conditioning involves use of positive and negative impulses to teach animals and people what to do and what not to do. Pavlov rang a bell each time his laboratory dogs were fed, and before long, all he had to do was ring a bell and the dogs' mouths would water. B. F. Skinner took con-

ditioning a step further, teaching rats in a box to press a lever to obtain food. His experiments showed that both pleasure and pain could be used to induce learning; the pleasure of eating, apparently made possible by pressing a lever, could be replaced by physical pain, if this were the conditioner's wish.

How are we affected by conditioning, which need not be of this very overt type, but more often subtle and invisible? Red lights at intersections bring most of us to a stop, but there is no physical compulsion. All of us are deluged by advertising, some of it taking advantage of old conditioning, some of it conditioning us for the first time. What about built-in emotional reactions, which we all have to anything strongly associated with good or evil? Look at one's reactions to the swastika, to air raid sirens, to certain tunes? How much conditioning has gone into this process?

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Kafka, Franz. *The Trial*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1969.

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The General

The Prisoner is the only member of the Village community to rebel against the latest orders from No. 2. Everyone is to attend sensational new lecture classes introducing a new kind of schooling that promises a university degree in three minutes. Success is guaranteed. The crash course method is a marriage of science and mass communication, using a subliminal process by which information is projected through a "sublimator" at a speed thousands of times faster than the eye can record. It is imposed directly onto the cortex of the brain. Whatever the tutor chooses to teach can therefore be mastered, and remembered, by his pupils in moments. The Prisoner rejects this learning, and attempts to find out who the General really is. He discovers that the Professor is rebelling against the system he himself created, and that the General stands alone. The Prisoner demands to see him, and

bullies No. 2 into allowing him one question to the computer. It self-destructs, and things return to normal in education in the Village.

Extensions

We see the Prisoner as hero, saving us and the population in the Village from a system of learning that appears on the surface desirable, but is merely another way of controlling men's minds. For under the General, people will gain knowledge, but lose the ability to think. The system is portrayed in all the splendor and pomp associated with academia. An institutional board meeting is parodied with men in dark glasses, dressed in identical costumes, thinking exactly the same things, all converging to discuss the situation in a carefully controlled, guarded room.

An important topic, education. Are our children handled the same way as the Villagers? Are they merely pawns in a game played by schools and boards, perhaps not intentionally but nevertheless destructively? What is the function of learning? What is the importance of rote learning, without the ability to think for oneself? What are the possibilities of television as a learning tool?

"The General" is one of the simpler programs, but because of its contents, certainly not one of lesser importance. Consider what McGoochan says: "The wild beauty of a child's mind is one of the most unspoiled things you can talk about. It's a responsibility to preserve this in your children and make sure the seeds flower." "I think the first discipline a child should be taught . . . is to find his own answers, instead of watching all the people being interviewed giving answers."

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There are rebels within the system.

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Many Happy Returns

The Prisoner discovers the Village completely empty one morning, and after a long and harrowing journey back to his home, he finally arrives in London. He returns to his old office, where he is interrogated. But there is no freedom in escape without explanation. Where is the Village? Who runs it? Why does it exist? The authorities promise him every assistance in his search for truth. He finds the Village, which ironically means failure and a return to the Village.



It's a long voyage home.

Extensions

This program has the elements of a mythological journey: the long voyage by sea, the hazards encountered on the way, the desire to overcome the enemy, causing self-defeat. It has strong parallels with *The Odyssey*, Homer's great epic. Can any of the characters in the program be compared to those Odysseus meets: the Lotus Eaters; Circe the sorceress; the cannibals; the Sirens? It seems a modern heroic epic. It has the same themes woven into the journey: escape, survival and return home, but always with the modern perspective: the Prisoner is carefully shown that the things that happen have many different explanations, that his reality is not necessarily accepted. How does a modern hero cope? He keeps on fighting, despite what appear to be impos-

sible odds. He could drop out, join his captors, give in; what keeps him going?

What keeps the crusaders of our times going?

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Dance of the Dead

Death lurks in the gaiety of a carnival and the Prisoner is put on trial when he makes an audacious bid to foil his captors. In this episode, the Prisoner for the second time has to deal with a female No. 2; he is also assigned a female observer. He discovers that an old colleague is a new captive in the Village, and that No. 2 tries to use him to make the Prisoner talk. He finds a body of a young man on the beach, and a radio, the first electronic tool he gets in his possession that might be able to tell him where he is. Instead, he is informed on by his observer, and brought to trial (a very peculiar type of trial, with Napoleon and Caesar as judges, and Little Bo-Peep as prosecutor). He is sentenced to death, but escapes the mob that is trying to kill him, ending up in the private chambers of No. 2. "You'll never win," he tells her. "How very uncomfortable for you then, old chap," she replies.

Extensions

This is one of the strangest programs in the series, a masterpiece of intrigue and mystery and subtle allusions. It seems to deal in shadows; it foreshadows the court scene in the last program. Its substance is shadowy enough to give only a hint of what is happening beneath the surface.

From a mythological point of view, the program bears distinct similarity to the story of Orpheus in the Underworld. In that myth, Orpheus strikes a bargain with Pluto, lord of the under-



A peculiar trial, and a peculiar judge.

world, in his effort to regain his love, Eurydice. What are our associations with the myth of Orpheus? His descent to the underworld resembles the journey of a man into his own dark areas, his unconscious.

From a Jungian point of view, the Prisoner would be seen as a constantly struggling individual attempting to reintegrate his various "personas". His whole journey would then be totally imaginary, all taking place in his head. The programs we have seen do give some indication that this is a possible interpretation, but in this episode the allusions have been made much clearer. The characters he meets on his journey would be representatives of his various selves. According to Jung, every male has a complementary female part of him called the anima, and every woman has a complementary masculine element called the animus. Are the strange figures in the carnival representative symbols of myths and dreams? Is No. 2 the Prisoner's anima? How do you know whether an anima or animus of you really exists if you can't see it?

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Golding, William. *Pincher Martin*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1968.

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Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling

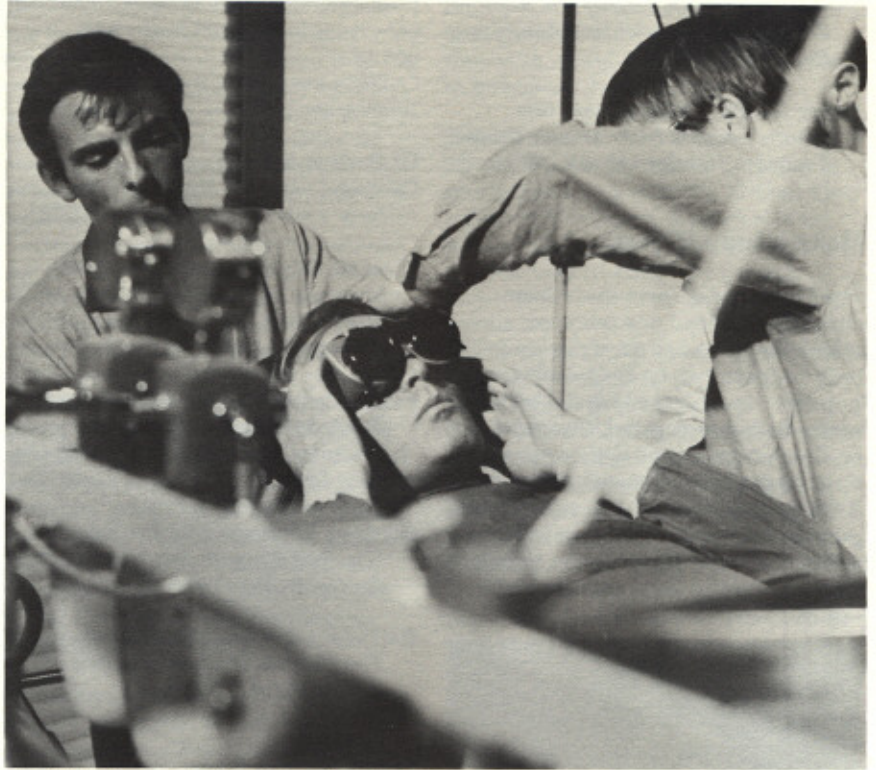
This is possibly the richest, most complexly rewarding program in the series. It begins with a piggy-eyed Colonel arriving in the Village, summoned from Outside to participate in the most ambitious plot yet. A Doctor Seltzman, who has since disappeared, has invented a technique of mind transplanting, and Village Control has managed to steal part of it. They can transfer a mind, but they are not sure they can transfer it back again with safety. The Prisoner, No. 6, and the Colonel (presumably a power in some unknown country) are going to be used in the experiment.

Next we see the Colonel in London visiting No. 6's old house, and making contact with No. 6's bosses and his fiancée. And his mind is our hero's. How can he persuade anyone that he is really the missing English agent who resigned mysteriously and who has been gone a year? All he has in common with his old self is his handwriting. What intelligence organization could afford to believe in him? And as for his fiancée, he despairs of telling her his real identity, but settles for assuring her that he is a friend of her lover's, with intimate messages for her.

His urgent mission must be to find Dr. Seltzman and get himself changed back. Because he, in his former life, was a friend of the scientist's, and knows how to find him. It's a race against time, with a British agent pursuing him, and a Village agent pursuing them both. Dr. Seltzman and the Colonel/No. 6 are kidnapped to the Village. This is what the Village powers wanted—their scientist is now captured and will not refuse to perform the experiment in order to restore his old friend to his own body. But will he kill himself after? Will he consent to work for the infamous Village, when he refused to work for anyone in the world Outside? The ending is sensational, and the solution satisfying.

Extensions

"Make him unsure of his identity and he will crumble." This is the best plan yet that a No. 2 has had. How important are bodies anyway? Our hero, deprived of his marvellously fit and attractive body, must resume his life in a new unappetizing shape. How can he carry on where he left off with his life in London, with his superiors, with the girl he loves? This is the first intimation we have had that the Prisoner has



How important are bodies anyway?

a fiancée, that he is a man deep in love. And he must meet her again in another body. A host of questions are aroused that involve all of us. "Will she know me in this body?" "Will she know that inside this unsightly bulk I am really an athlete, a romantic hero?" "Will she see the real me?" A real princess should know that under the mattresses of fat is her true lover. Is this girl a real princess?

The girl is bewildered, distraught. She seems to recognize this man, and yet she does not. She has the mind-addling experience of being made love to by her lover in another man's body. How common is this experience?

All through the London sequences of this program the viewer has the nagging suspicion that a mistake has been made. Why is it No. 6 in the Colonel's body who has been sent to London? Surely it should be the Colonel in No. 6's body who is sent to infiltrate the British intelligence service. But why should a service be infiltrated that has been amply infiltrated? The Village is after bigger game. It is Dr. Seltzman they want. They suspect that No. 6 can find him and, desperate to regain his own body, will find him. No persuasion, no torture, no bribe would have broken him, but this identity switch will. Since he has no memory of what has been done to him, he cannot foil his enemies. Like Tam Lin in the ballad, like the heroine of Barrie's *Mary Rose*, he has been in fairyland, a sinister nether world, and time is different

there. He is staggered to learn that a year has gone by since he resigned. "A year! Where have I been?" Rescue will not depend on him this time, but on the scientist.

Dr. Seltzman is the first personality we have met in this series whose powers for good are equal to the hero's. He is the magician, the shape changer, a man of awesome wizardry, but of an Einsteinian goodness and gentleness. Like Prospero, he chose to break his magic wand, put away his terrible invention and resign into obscurity. But the fight for the enchanter rouses him from his retirement. Retirement for him is not possible. He must use his powers on one side or the other, and he does use them, with staggering effect. The Colonel then finds that he is sorcerer's apprentice at a drastic cost.

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It's Your Funeral

In this program we deal with ritual murder, assassination and scapegoats. For the first time, we get a picture of the Prisoner's normal day. His daily routine involves a walk, a climb up the tower, a physical workout (you knew that had to be there), a boat ride, a chess game, purchase of the newspaper. We see an enchantingly picturesque sequence of Japanese wrestling on a trampoline. The red-kimonoed, white-helmeted figures float through a trampoline ballet to Japanese music. This series is rich in such incidentals. Yet we know now they are not really incidentals.

A young girl wakes the sleeping Prisoner. She has news of an assassination plot and wants his help in preventing it. By this time both No. 6 and the viewer of this show are sceptical of everyone. Is she a lady in distress or a pawn of Control? It comes as no surprise, then, when we learn that she is drugged and sent by "them." No. 2, a bland young man of a decadent handsomeness, knows all about her and the plot because, in fact, he is behind it. But why does he want to involve No. 6?

There is an assassination plot, all right, and No. 6 gradually penetrates its coils. The girl claims to be the daughter of an old watchmaker who wants to assassinate as an act of individuality. He is the only person in the Village, he says, who still wants to act. And he has the skill; he has a little explosive device that can be detonated by radio.

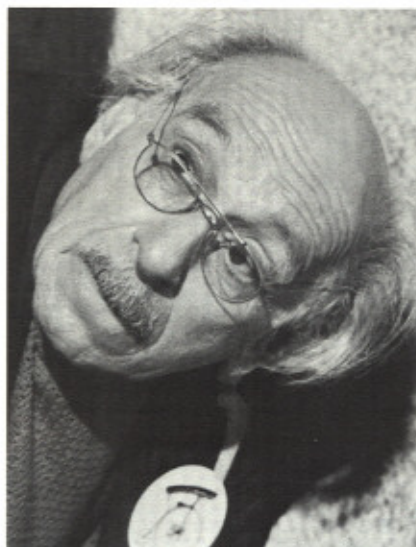
No. 6 warns No. 2, not because he cares about him, but because he thinks the murder plot will be the excuse for enormous reprisals. No. 2 pretends not to believe it. What is going on here?

Then the Prisoner encounters an older man, the *real* No. 2 (if a No. 2 can ever be real), the No. 2 for whom all the others we have met have been interim substitutes. It is *he* whose life is threatened. But warning him has its hazards too. The young No. 2, the heir, has told him No. 6 is full of assassination plots, that this is his characteristic quirk. The real No. 2 asks the Bureau of Visual Records for proof of these incidents, and they are embarrassed. (Surely a strange lapse on the heir's part?)

But it is not a lapse: the important thing is to convince No. 2 that there is a plot, and that he is the victim. Because as soon as he has this knowledge, his behaviour is very strange. Or rather, his non-behaviour. He waits with a numb resignation, and refuses help from our hero, who cannot understand

such apathy. Apparently murder of the retiring No. 2 is no such rare thing in the Village—in fact, it may be routine. If not now, it will be later; if not here, then outside. "Preventing is only postponing," he says. Foiling this plot will only mean hours, days, weeks of anguished waiting. Even when he knows the means he is apathetic.

And what a beautiful means. The Village has a tradition of Appreciation Day—when the retiring No. 2 hands over the gilded chain of office to his successor, and the assembled Village express their appreciation with the unveiling of a monument. It is the medal that dangles from the chain of office that contains the explosive to be detonated from a distance. The whole



To be an assassin is to be an individual.

Village will observe this assassination, a public execution. Appreciation is Assassination.

Only No. 6 fights this beautiful scheme, in despite of the victim. It is he who captures the detonator, while the ceremony is going on, and turns the plot against the sinister heir. The fatal chain is transferred to the heir's neck, and the detonator is handed over to the retiring No. 2. The device that imperilled his life is now his talisman, his shield of escape.

Extensions

In primitive communities and many not so primitive a king is chosen for a term, and then, at the conclusion of the term, he is slaughtered in a public ritual. His blood is a libation to the gods, ensuring the future health of the community. Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, describes many such rituals, the stuff of legend. In Shirley Jackson's short story, *The Lottery*, folksy, homespun villagers meet once a year to hold a lottery and stone the innocent "winners" to death. The Village is following an old and honor-

able tradition, and the resignation of the designated victim is part of the tradition. No. 2 is like the doomed man in Hemingway's short story, *The Killers*, who lies in numb patience, waiting for his murderers to arrive. Like No. 2, he knows that prevention is only postponement. Each knows that he is the chosen victim in an inevitable ritual that appears to him right and fitting. "That explains everything," says No. 2, when he learns there is no explanation.

How many of us accept or take part in this ritual? Is it not common enough in office politics? And on national scenes it occurs with a daunting frequency. In Canada we have so far escaped the murder of a head of state: does this mean we aren't primitive enough? Or that we haven't evolved enough?

We have only to look to the south to see the tradition in operation. Why do so many Americans *want* to believe that presidents elected in a year ending in zero will die in office? Does the belief make it more likely to happen? The fatal year comes around again in 1980. Will the belief trigger off some Oswald, some John Wilkes Booth? Or will the belief of No. 6 triumph, the will to defy, to fight and defeat the oppressive pattern?

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Checkmate

This instalment begins with Rover's bull-like roar as it rolls through the Village on some sinister mission. The Villagers are at play on a giant chessboard on the green, and pay no heed to Rover. The Prisoner joins in the game, and sees a living rook swept off

to the hospital for defying the rules of the game. No. 2 brings our hero in to see the treatment given the Rook.

The Rook, released and "rehabilitated," is approached by the Prisoner. Is he spiritless, or is he still rebellious? The latter, it appears, and he and No. 6 engage in an escape plot. They assemble a radio in order to contact an offshore ship. No. 2, on the watch as ever, programs No. 6's girl observer to be in love with our hero. She is given a locket that is a "reaction transmitter"; at any sign of the Prisoner's escape her alarm and anxiety will be transmitted to Control, and the game will be up. So even though the Prisoner rejects all her overtures with suspicious scorn, her love for him will betray him.

The Prisoner takes the betraying locket, and the escape plot progresses, with a "Mayday" call to a passing ship. The ship responds, and the Rook rows out to it on a raft. Village plotters immobilize No. 2 while they wait for the ship to pick up the Rook. But the raft floats in again, empty. No. 6 rows it out again, but the instalment ends as it began, with Rover's bull-like roar.

Extensions

What went wrong this time? In every program new methods, new defeats are seen; there is constant development. We have had a glimpse of this No. 2

indulging in a karate chop; he knows how to use an enemy's strength against him. No. 6's superiority, his natural authority and power, are the means to defeat him. The rebellious Rook and the other plotting Villagers are sure he must be part of Control. He is not uneasy like them; therefore, he must be in the Establishment. In an environment where all power is used to control, how can they trust his?

The program says much about power, and it also says more about love. No. 6's girl observer, treated in the laboratory to be in love, is disconcertingly like any girl in love. Her language, though—"I only want to be with you," "I could make you so happy," "I know we belong together"—means only "Love the Watchdog." Her catchwords are the same in any Harlequin romance, and they are the words of Cressida, of Juliet, of Cleopatra. Must they always be signposts to danger? How can real love ever want separation? Is to be in love always to be in pawn to the queen?

The plotters' password in this sequence, "Tonight at moonset, rook to queen's pawn 6," has reverberating meanings that echo on and on.

Of Further Interest

Kaufman, Bel. *Up the Down Staircase*. New York: Avon Books, 1973.

May, Rollo. *Love and Will*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1973.

Living in Harmony

Even the opening credits of this sequence are different. We seem to be into a conventional television western, so that we may feel we have dialed the wrong program. But wait. Here is our familiar No. 6, sauntering into a classic town of the old American West. Welcome to Harmony.

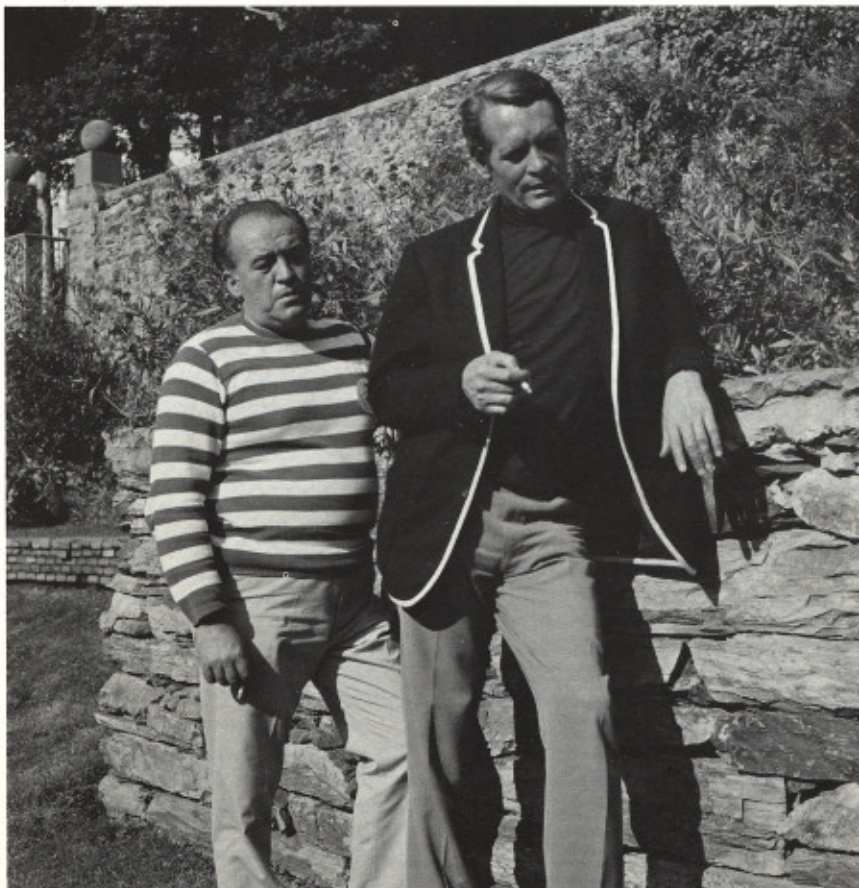
A corrupt judge wants him as sheriff, working for him. A kid gun-fighter, an obvious maniac, wants to challenge him. A pretty saloon girl wants to love him. All these cardboard characters are so familiar. What have they to do with the Village we know and hate?

Our lone stranger has turned in badge and gun and does not want to work for the judge. He escapes from the town, is lassoed and dragged back, and stashed in jail. The saloon girl arranges his escape and is brought to trial for it. When she is found guilty, the stranger knows he is involved. "When you work for me, I'll let her go," says the judge. Our hero takes the badge, and the girl is released. Will he be forced to shoot the baddies, especially the maniac kid?

He still refuses to wear a gun, even when a fistful of baddies attack him. Even when the kid shoots a man in the saloon, our sheriff comes in without a gun. The town is annoyed: "Git some guns on you. You're wearing the star, you know." A man who supported him is murdered. The sheriff loads his gun, but then throws it away.

Only when the deranged kid comes after the saloon girl and strangles her does the sheriff tie on his holster. But he takes off his badge first. In the showdown the kid falls, and the judge is gleeful. He has made the stranger shoot. But "I'm quitting," says our hero. "You work for me, guns and all," is the ominous answer, and there is a general shootout. The stranger falls and becomes the Prisoner, awaking from induced hallucinations. A short run away from the fake western town is the Village. No. 2 (the judge) and No. 8 (the kid) mull over events and wonder if they've achieved a victory. The numbered prisoner who played the saloon girl is sobbing. She returns to the fake saloon where she loved the Prisoner and he killed for her. Enraged, No. 8 follows her to strangle her and again No. 6 comes to the rescue.

The sequence ends with No. 2 contemplating the scene of disaster, like a survivor in *Hamlet*. His experiment has cost two deaths. Are they the deaths



"Rook to queen's pawn 6"

he wanted? Did he want any?

Extensions

The sequences in *The Prisoner* have taken the form of so many myths and classic tales that we should not be surprised when it moves into the guise of the best-known modern myth—the Western. The stranger who rides into a town seething with problems; the lawman who wants to turn in his badge; the gunfighter who wants to stop shooting but the world won't let him; the corrupt judge who has the town in his pay; the soiled dove in the saloon who can yet flutter her wings for freedom and true love: we know them all from scores of stories and films. "Living in Harmony" has resonant echoes of *Shane*, *The Gunfighter*, *High Noon*, *Destry Rides Again*, and a host of other cinema classics, as well as the television familiars like *Gunsmoke* and *Maverick*. The script is made up entirely of clichés:

"Harmony's a good town."

"I'm not for hire."

"People don't like questions here."

"You can't hang him—he's done nothing wrong!"

"Now git."

Further recognition comes when we see that the plot is the same one we are used to in the Village. The hero has turned in his badge and gun and doesn't want to resume them. The authorities want to break his resolve and bend him to their purpose. "Make him kill and he will crack." Did they win?

After all, he did shoot. But on his terms, not the judge's. He took off his badge first. Is this better? We've always known the Prisoner was not a Quaker, not a pacifist—in this story he socks someone in the first minute. He is forever in fistfights. Is he right to fight on his own and not on authority's orders? How can he be so sure of his own judgment? Apparently he is sure this enemy is always wrong.

Another interesting aspect of this program, "Living in Harmony," is what the psychologists call countertransference. In therapy, if the therapist is not careful, the patient's characteristics, which may be weaknesses or not, may be transferred to the therapist. To be helpful, his involvement must be great, and may produce his own defeat.

A 1955 Alec Guinness movie, *The Prisoner* (anticipatory title?), dealt with just such a situation. In this program too, involvement means defeat and death for two players in the game that was to break No. 6. No. 6 sees



A cardboard role can take over.

almost immediately that the characters he was living with are cardboard cut-outs. The players animating those cut-outs cannot so easily shake them off. Both the woman playing the saloon girl and the man playing the mad killer find their roles more attractive than their Village personas. They are led back irresistibly to the scene of their dramatic activity, the girl in love, the man in hate, and for both it is the end. Even cliché cardboard lives were more real and valuable to them than their lives in the Village.

Of Further Interest

Campbell, Joseph. *Myths to Live By*. New York: Bantam Books, 1973.

McLuhan, Marshall (with Wilfred Watson). *From Cliché to Archetype*. New York: Pocket Books, 1971.

A Change of Mind

Our Prisoner wants privacy; he is anti-social and needs "treatment." Recalcitrants in the Village must confess publicly. "We will tell you what to say." And what they say is ignominious: "I am totally inadequate—believe me. Believe me." No. 6 tears up his confession and rejects his own record-

ed voice confessing his inadequacy. He is "sent to Coventry", isolated for being "unmutual." He must be "converted."

No. 6 meets a victim of conversion. He carries a strange scar or wart on his temple. In spite of all warnings from No. 2 and an appeal subcommittee, No. 6 remains unmutual and is dragged off to hospital for forcible conversion, which the Village is invited to watch on closed-circuit television. A technician lectures over him as he is "treated" with a bombardment of ultrasonic beams on his frontal lobe. This will produce permanent dislocation, say the doctors.

No. 6 awakes in his home with a sticking plaster on his forehead. He foils a plot to give him a tranquilizer in his tea and sees that the lecturer drinks it instead. Stepping out, he meets the other victim, who laughs as he points out the sticking plaster. But No. 6 is not as "converted" as they think. Two rowdies find this out when they attack him and are beaten, to their surprise.

The lecturer, in her relaxed and tranquilized state, is an easy subject for hypnotism, and No. 6 gets all the information he needs from her. He gives her further instructions: when the clock strikes 4, she must . . .

He confides in No. 2 that he now has peace of mind and is sorry that he resisted so long. He wants to make a public confession and thank everyone for his conversion. No. 2 orders everyone to the public square. No. 6 is in the middle of a public confession when the clock strikes 4 and the woman's voice comes over the public address system, "No. 2 is unmutual!" The mob, programmed to attack at these words, is putty in No. 6's hands. No. 2 must flee.

Extensions

Conformity. What will we resort to to enforce it? According to R. D. Laing, madness can be interpreted as non-conformity to a particular environment. In another environment it is sanity. How do we treat our "nonconformists"? Our hospitals for the insane have treatments very similar to the "bombardment of the frontal lobes" indulged in at the Village hospital. Not too long ago lobotomies were looked on as the solution to many mental illnesses. Now they are discredited, but what will the next panacea be? When a whole environment trusts the doctors, how can one individual hold out in distrust? It's a rare person, like No. 6, who can turn their own techniques against them. No. 6 spotted the weakness in the girl who, in her relaxed state, said, "I am higher than No. 2." She was "high" and she was brought low, and No. 2 with her.

What are our pejoratives, our terms of abuse and criticism? We do not attack those we dislike with "un-mutual" yet, but we say "antisocial," "uncooperative," "offbeat," "non-creative," "aggressive," "irrelevant," "unmeaningful." Do those words mean what we think they mean? Have they become labels for behaviour that is not comfortable for us? What is the latest jargon pejorative? When is a label really a libel?

No. 6 won no permanent triumph, but only another skirmish in his war with Village Control. The last frame in this sequence shows the dwarf butler with the umbrella, the constant attendant of No. 2, strolling into view. No. 2s may come and go, but the permanent bureaucracy, the undislodg-able authority, goes on.



What will we resort to to enforce conformity?

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Kesey, Ken. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. New York: New American Library, 1975.

Laing, R. D. *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*. Toronto: Penguin Inc., 1967.

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Toronto: Penguin Inc., 1971.

Postman, Neil, and Weingartner, Charles. *The Soft Revolution*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1973.

Hammer into Anvil

A beautiful woman, No. 76, has slashed her wrists, but No. 2 is ruthless in subjecting her to an inquisition. He wants to know where her husband is, and encourages her to betray him by telling of her husband's adultery and disloyalty. When this method fails, No. 2 tries another. The girl's shrieks bring No. 6 to the rescue, but too late. She has jumped from a window, and lies dead.

No. 6 rebuffs an invitation to No. 2's, and is attacked and dragged to a forced interview. No. 2 threatens him with a knife. They quote Goethe at each other: every man is either hammer or anvil. This No. 2 is very confident of what role he is to play in

the blacksmith's game: "I'll break you, No. 6."

Now No. 6's behaviour becomes very peculiar. He engages in a series of strange activities: going into a shop and listening to the opening chords of several records of Bizet's *L'Arlésienne*—all the same; taking notes; marking a headline in a copy of the Village newspaper, *The Tally-ho*. The shopman, concerned, alerts No. 2, and No. 6 is put under constant surveillance. No. 2 is unstrung by our hero's continuing activities, and sets an agent to search his home. The agent finds a note: "No. 2's instability confirmed" and No. 2 thinks he understands. "No. 6 a plant!"

Everything No. 6 does seems to confirm suspicion. He goes to the beach and leaves a sheaf of blank papers in the cabin of a beached boat. No. 2 refuses to believe his testers who tell him they are indeed blank. They are lying to him—they must be in league with No. 6. A psychiatrist telephoned anonymously by No. 6 is called up on the mat and falls under suspicion because he claims not to understand the call. None of No. 2's awesomely competent technicians can understand these incidents. They must all be in a conspiracy against him. Birthday greetings are sent to No. 6 from No. 113. It is not No. 6's birthday,

and No. 113 is dead. No. 2 demands, "Why won't people understand how suspicious this is?"

No. 2's agent offers to rid him of No. 6. "It's the only way." But he fails. A few more incidents involving a clock that looks like a bomb, a pigeon with a message and a signal with a mirror complete No. 2's panic. He rages at the experts who assure him there is no threat in any of these things.

No. 6's confiding talk with the agent ensures that the agent too will be mistrusted. "Traitor!" screams No. 2 to the agent. He even turns against the dwarf butler who serves all No. 2s. The dwarf butler packs and leaves.

No. 6 visits No. 2 in his power environment and admits to being a spy for Xo4 to inspect the Village, just as No. 2 suspects. "I always knew it; you didn't fool me!" Completely broken, he consents to report himself. "No. 2 needs to be replaced."

This sequence does not even end with the familiar shot of the Prisoner behind bars, but with the steel doors closing on No. 2.

Extensions

"Paranoia," as Webster's Dictionary describes it, is "a mental disorder characterized by systematized delusions, especially of persecution." Does "Hammer into Anvil" give us a text-



Who will become the hammer and who the anvil?

book case in No. 2? After all, the Prisoner was plotting ceaselessly against him, so that the persecution was real. But No. 2 revealed his vulnerability so patently from the beginning that he made his persecutor's job easy. His mistake was in causing the woman's suicide, and he caused that because of the man he was, a man to be hated. Other No. 2s the Prisoner has been able to ignore, even when they were harassing him constantly; this one he is out to destroy.

The program shows the uselessness of all that flawlessly functioning technology (which suggests that at least 80 percent of the people kidnapped by the Village must be skilled repairmen) because however complicated the machine, it is operated by a human being, and No. 2 can't trust any human being. No test, no mechanism can convince him, because he *knows* that everyone is out to get him. Everyone is as subversive as that romantic rebel, Bizet, whose trumpet notes start off the chain of events.

Of Further Interest

Dostoevski, Feodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Toronto: Penguin Inc., 1968.

Hoffer, Eric. *The True Believer*. Scranton, Pa.: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1966.

The Girl Who Was Death

Cricket on the green and something funny is going on. A beautiful blonde spectator seems to be signalling, and the ball goes into the bushes. In play again, it proves to be a bomb, and Colonel Hawke, an unfortunate player, is murdered. He was a spy on the trail of a scientist with a rocket that can destroy London. No. 6 takes his place.

Forget about the Village for the time being, and see our special agent, in a succession of disguises, lured on by the beautiful blonde, who attempts to distract him from his pursuit of the mad scientist. See him as champion cricketer throwing the bomb ball off the pitch to explode harmlessly. Watch him in Inverness cape, deerstalker and mutton chop whiskers gulping beer at the local and reading the message at the bottom of the mug: "You have just been poisoned." Barely escaping, he has time for another assignment and then escape from death at Benny's Turkish Baths. The trail leads on to Barney's Boxing Booth and three rounds with the Killer. The blonde watches approvingly as he wins.

She can't help but admire this superman. Off at a fun fair, in the



The girl of your dreams.

Tunnel of Love, she confesses, "All my life I've been looking for a worthy opponent." She is just ahead of him, like a will o' the wisp, on the roller coaster, on the caterpillar, on joy ride after joy ride, but he cannot catch her.

In a car chase he discards cape and deerstalker for the frilly shirt of a riverboat gambler. The girl's voice tells him: "I love you madly. I'm going to do you the honour of letting you die superbly." Trapping him in a village with murderous "butcher, baker and candlestick maker," she reveals, "My name is Death." In fact, she is the scientist's daughter.

But it's not easy to kill No. 6. He deactivates the machine gun trained on him, foils the moving spikes that threaten to mince him, swings out over the mined floor and escapes from the room with the cyanide-breathing candles. He has still to duel with her from a steam shovel, dangle from her helicopter and follow her to a cave and tunnel leading to an underground laboratory.

Pictures of Napoleon are every-

where. When a Napoleonic soldier appears, No. 6 knocks him out and dons his clothing. The mad scientist, who thinks he is Napoleon and wants to avenge Waterloo, is no match for No. 6, even with the help of his daughter, Death. It is but the work of a moment to immobilize the soldiers (he has fixed their guns to backfire), to defuse the lighthouse-rocket that will lay London in ruins, and blow up the scientist and his fatal daughter in their own contraption.

As he roars off to safety, we return to the Village and applauding cries from children. No. 6 has been telling them a bedtime story. To No. 2 (the scientist) and his blonde assistant (the girl who was Death), watching from afar, he calls, "Good night, children."

Is he addressing us as well?

Extensions

Just as "Living in Harmony" comprised all Westerns, so "The Girl Who Was Death" comprises all spy-thrillers, old and new, from Poe and Conan Doyle through Sexton Blake and Fu

Manchu to modern Hitchcock, James Bond, and *The Avengers*. While the story rattled along in all its nonsense, if No. 2 were really paying attention, he could discover revealing aspects of No. 6's character.

He sees Death as in love with him. Which is not the same as his being in love with Death. When he finally caught up with her, he was not interested in her. But he is attracted by the thought of her and wants, and obviously needs, the challenge of outwitting her. The mysterious blonde in white is also a stock cliché and allegorical favourite, and here, as Death, she calls out all No. 6's ingenuity, persistence, and bravery. The seductive Mata Hari who lures men to doom here has no debilitating effect. No. 6 finds her a thrilling opponent, one who summons up all his reserves of energy and daring. There is something not entirely tongue in cheek in his storytelling.

What fantasy images do we have for ourselves? Are they projections of any reality?

Of Further Interest

Hammel, William M., ed. *The Popular Arts in America*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1972.

Kuhns, William. *Movies in America*. Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum/Standard Inc., 1972.

McLuhan, Marshall (with Wilfred Watson). *From Cliché to Archetype*. New York: Pocket Books, 1971.

Once Upon a Time

We open on a view of the Green Dome, power centre of the Village. The dwarf butler is serving No. 2—the original No. 2, the one we knew at the beginning of the series. He watches the Prisoner in his eternal "school" blazer, pacing his room, and says, "Relax. Why do you care?"

The Prisoner is put into a narcosynthesized state, to relive his life for No. 2—"degree absolute—double night time"—and reveal his secrets. "What is in your noddle?" With recapitulation comes manipulation, as No. 2, disguised as a succession of authority figures, tries to make his subject more submissive. He quotes Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage"—the Prisoner will enact the seven ages of man, all in one room.

But father, headmaster, boxing coach, fencing master, judge, employer, German captor (No. 2, with a blindfold on, enacts all these roles) fail to make No. 6 anything but a rebel

and resister. "You must not grow up to be a lone wolf. I will see that you conform." But No. 6 does not, and always at the question, "Why did you resign?" he attacks. "You're sorry for everybody—is that why you resigned?"

Dragged behind bars, No. 6 does admit that he resigned for peace of mind. "I know too much. I know too much about you." When asked to do as No. 2 bids, No. 6 replies, "I'd rather die." No. 6 will neither kill his tormentor nor yield. No. 2 shrieks in frustration. Which of them is behind bars?

The butler unlocks No. 6 and No. 2 snivels, grovels, pleads with him. Time is running out. No. 2 takes poison and dies. The butler and the bald supervisor, whom we have seen in nearly

transference occurs. No. 2's involvement makes him very vulnerable. He is attracted to his subject, and feels his own personality weak in comparison. Are both No. 2 and No. 6 aspects of the same personality? For we are approaching the end now, and we know these enigmas must resolve themselves.

Of Further Interest

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Importance and Meaning of Fairy Tales*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1976.

Koestler, Arthur. *Darkness at Noon*. Toronto: Penguin, 1970.

MacLean, Alistair. *The Guns of*



"You must not grow up to be a lone wolf."

every instalment, now treat No. 6 as No. 2, and offer to take him to No. 1 as he requests. They pass through the room of his life to . . .

Extensions

"Once Upon a Time" would have been a good title for the last instalment we saw, "The Girl Who Was Death." Instead, it is given to this one, recapitulating the Prisoner's life. But is it his life? School, sports, war, job—it's certainly a very sterile one. No love, no friendship, no relationships, no mother, no female at all—what happened to that fiancée we met before? We see only the authority-challenging aspects of his life—and only the ones that could serve No. 2's purpose. Is this No. 6's real life at all? Is it his life with all the real parts left out? It's a fairy tale: Once upon a time . . .

As in previous episodes, counter-

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Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. *The Cancer Ward*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1974.

Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. *The Gulag Archipelago*. Scranton, Pa.: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1974.

Fall Out

An end is come. The end is come.

This last episode is the only one that is not self-contained. It continues on from the preceding one. "We thought you would be happier as yourself," the supervisor and butler tell him as they lead him past a bust of himself. The triumphant strains of the Marseillaise melt into the Beatles ("The day of glory has arrived"; "All you need is

love").

A judge presides before a court of faceless, hooded clappers. They are there to resolve the question of revolt. No. 6 has survived the ultimate test—he has proved the right of the individual to be an individual. No longer is he No. 6—he is now called "Sir." But this is the judge speaking. Can the prisoner trust him? Can we trust him?

"Sir," enthroned, is spectator while the cases of revolt are heard. The first is the kid from Harmony, who keeps singing "Dry Bones." He is charged with nonconformity and revolt, and the judge is angry, but all "Sir" has to say is "Don't knock yourself out, young man." The accused is held until after our hero's inauguration.

The next revolutionary is our late defeated and, we thought, dead No. 2. His beard is shorn and the assembly laughs at him. "What is deplorable," he says, "is that I resisted for so short a time." Had he been a No. 6 before he became a No. 2? "I died," he tells us, "and you couldn't even let me rest in peace." "Sir" asks him if he ever met No. 1. He laughs. He too is held until after the inauguration. Like the Kid, he is tied to a stake.

The third revolutionary, the judge and court applaud. Why? It is our recent No. 6 himself.

The judge makes him an impassioned speech: "Lead us or go. We have a price. We have the means for you to desert us and go anywhere. You are free to go. But you have been such an example to us. We need you. We plead for you to lead us. Sir, we are all yours." But when he tries to make a speech, it is drowned out by applauding cries from the whole assembly, and they, and we, cannot hear a word.

"We thank you," they finally tell him. "Now you are prepared to meet No. 1." He descends to an underground corridor where the two "revolutionaries" are tied and sealed, laughing, and next up a winding stair to an operations room. Amid the instrument panels is a hooded, masked figure labelled No. 1. Under the top mask is an ape mask and under that his own . . . is it a mask? The figure faces him for only an instant, then flees.

The Prisoner resorts to violence. He manipulates the panels to cause a holocaust, a countdown to destruction. The two "rebels" are freed and accompany him as the rest of the Village evacuates in a general panic. Even Rover, the Ball from the Sea, perishes.

We next see our three "revolutionaries" driving along a highway, singing "Dry Bones," with the butler driving. Whose side was he on? The truck is like an animal cage in a circus parade. The Kid gets out to hitchhike, but the



others go on to London, 27 miles away. They get out and catch a bus. Farewell to No. 2. The Prisoner takes the butler to his house. The butler goes in, while the Prisoner roars off in his car. We last see him on a wide, empty road, just as we did at the beginning. Or was it the end?

Extensions

"In my end is my beginning." And both, as in T. S. Eliot's poem, are in a wasteland. Is the Prisoner on his way

to resign his stressful, top-secret job, as he was when the series started? Was his whole Village experience a prolonged nightmare, a nervous breakdown that preceded, or accompanied, his resolve to quit? "I know too much. I know too much."

"Fall Out" is like the last chapter of *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, which ends with Alice crowned, applauded, cheered, and resorting to violence to get herself out of that world. The eerie trial, with its judges



"Sir, we are all yours."

and prisoners and shifting identities, also has masterly echoes of Kafka, of Pirandello, of Orwell, of Beckett. But Carroll said it all first.

It's a shrewd Establishment ploy, when faced with a maverick, to give that maverick a position of power. "We need you. We are all yours." It's hard to resist that plea, and the sellout is often accomplished. But what is it after all, to be a king or queen, if you are only a king or queen of chessmen? The king is a pawn as well, only a less active one. No. 6 sees this final temptation for what it is, and fights it out with his various personified identities, and wins clear. It is not worth anything to be No. 2 in this world; it is not even worth it to be No. 1.

Can These Bones Live?

Why does the Kid revolutionary keep

singing "Dry Bones" and why do the others take it up? It is practically the theme song of this last instalment. Read Ezekiel, chapter 37: verses 1 to 14. In fact, read all of Ezekiel up to that point. It expresses the mood of Patrick McGoochan in this series. The world he sees is a valley of dry bones. *Son of man, can these bones live?* He sees himself as a watchman over a new Israel, a prophet giving warning. *An end is come. The end is come.* "Oh hear the word of the Lord."

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Carpenter, Edmund. *They Became What They Beheld*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1970.

Gardner, Martin, ed. *The Annotated Alice*. London: Penguin Inc., 1960.

Tillich, Paul. *The Courage to Be*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1952.

An Epilogue

And so, we have come full circle. The series ends exactly where it began, with the same shot of the Prisoner. The wheel has turned a full revolution, and pauses only momentarily before continuing on its never-ending path.

Now, we might look at the information in the series from a slightly different perspective. We could begin with a question. Why, for instance, were the words "circle", and "wheel" used above? As Jung observed, the circle is a natural symbol of "Oneness", the ultimate state of people who have achieved an inner unity. The word "circle" might lead directly to the possibility that the series was in fact an exposition of certain themes found in Jungian psychology such as, for example, the re-integration of a personality through recognition of its different masks. Is it possible that the three men who gain their freedom in the last episode ("Fall Out") are meant to represent alternative aspects of one major personality? Why does the Prisoner repeat the dance of the young man near the end of the program, while he is talking to the policeman? What is the significance of the rocket? Or the long journey through the tunnel? Or the use of nursery rhymes such as "The bear went over the mountain" or the gospel song, "Dry Bones"?

The series' conclusion raises many questions. McGoohan said, "If there are answers, they are contained in the last episode. Number one—the horror figure hanging over it all—is revealed as the Prisoner himself. He tears off a mask—the face of an ape—revealing a bestial self which has been his greatest enemy."

What are the implications of this statement for the series? McGoohan has offered us in *The Prisoner* his view of the world and himself. By recognizing "the beast within", he takes responsibility for the world he helps to create. How many of us are willing to recognize our own beast and take responsibility for *our* world, both within and without? Perhaps W. B. Yeats, in his poem, "Among School Children", throws light on this issue: "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, How can we know the dancer from the dance?" How can we know if we would face such a responsibility unless we begin to look?

"Be seeing you."

