

FODOR'S
GUIDE TO CROCODILIUM

Thomas C. Fodor

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
English

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

July 1982

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ABSTRACT

Fodor's Guide to Crocodilium

Thomas C. Fodor

The Thesis is - by any strict definition - a Monster, a hybrid creature (like Man himself) in both form and content. It subverts the conventional usage of language forms by combining the methods of expository prose with the methods of narrative fiction. It freely improvises on mythological themes and their variations, dismembering them, re-arranging and re-combining their components into new perspectives which form a new labyrinth of meaning with its own image at the center.

The organizing metaphor of the Thesis is the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, or rather, the major elements of that myth (the Labyrinth, Theseus, and Minotaur) are used as building blocks. There is a blurring of identity between the main 'character' and the Reader; indeed, the Reader soon comes to realize that he is the Labyrinth. In exploring the implications of this myth, the Thesis uses such bearers of ambiguity as the pun, the portmanteau word, the mixed metaphor and the second-person point of view. The Thesis personifies the labyrinth, thematically, structurally, typographically and even ontologically: it is an 'object' that has no clear self-definition. The Reader therefore is never quite sure whether he is reading a novel that is masquerading as a Tourist Guide, or vice-versa.

Thanks to all my Masters, the live ones and the dead ones, the ones I've never met and the ones I've invented myself, and especially those who never knew they were my Masters because it seemed at the time that I was doing the explaining.

A special thanks to Elizabeth for her patience, to Scott for his impatience, and to Sharon for her faith.



Reptiles, by M. C. Escher (lithograph, 1943).



FODOR'S

GUIDE TO
CROCODILIUM

LEPIDUS: What manner o' thing is your crocodile?

ANTONY: It is shap'd, sir, like itself, and it is as broad as it hath breadth. It is just, so high as it is, and moves with it own organs. It lives by that which nourisheth it, and the elements once out of it, it transmigrates.

-William Shakespeare
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA
Act II, Sc. vii, 46-51

What is the fundamental characteristic of the crocodile? The answer is clear: to swallow human beings. How is one, in constructing the crocodile, to secure that he should swallow people? The answer is clearer still: construct him hollow...

-Feodor Dostoevsky
THE CROCODILE

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GENERA INFIRMATION

ARIVAL

Your tyred feet (tensed at the speedals) can sense the urth rumbelly and tremboil as though it is ready to cracow: screaming ploverhead, a silver sliver (the shadow of its wings slashes across the sighway) the same mental bird that has brot you out of the sky, left you behind in this thin-shelled thing. It evanishes ova the hill and the double white streak which tails from its fierie brrreath seems to seattle onto the ashfault ahead of you and slowly fades into the pocked graynest. Your supine has developed ridges, S-curves from the seat of your rented cairo.

You've been driving from the farport for hours (it seems). It's a sham (you think) there is no spacies for a great aluminimum bird to alight in the home of its creptilian incestuors. You too (prodigitous, flightlost victime of overlution) have felt that slavery motel in your solo (the turndency to fly), have thirsteus to oppossess the secroots of extortic places.

Inner flash it lies beforu you!

CROCODILIUM! There, unchainged a hundred and fifty reptimillion years! Monsterious survarrivalry: the water for the sake of the land, the land for the sake of the water! The excityment flows from your pores (palms whetting the

steering wales): punstropus amalgame, this ancestrail home - the Real Crocodilium! Not the pale-fired insubstantial images you've hulled from books. But de soto itself!

You've always known it was out there (somewhere) (exotic glasgowy photograsps in cawful-table books, jiggling film-clips smuggled onto the evening news, grease-yellowed travila posters above the grill (between the Paymate of the Year and a dog-eared callendar courtesy of THE ROYAL BLANK) in a steamy, corner-restorrant).

You've dreamed of this visit often (the local zoo: wide-eyed with terrebel fascination, senses tensed for the sense of the cold piscine odour/the stayfling air osirising from the mud and sublime, a subdued spillash (as though the water itself were calling your suriname): twin yellow slits challenge your composure. You wonder about THEIR city: would you REALLY undersand ostrich and anchant customs? would you have the presence of mound not to be cheated in one of THEIR souvenineveh shops? You've read a dozen volumes (memoirs by salesmen, scienstiffs, puffessional guides) and each confounds you with his stale of woe (they cannot agree, even about the size of the place (one sayes it is so largo it doesn't matter what direction you choose (another: so small it can't be found: still others say nothing *atoll so your already-darkonception dickens even more (perhaps (you muse)

they're all second-hand, twist-told tales))))).

But this is the Mystery and Charm of Crocodilium: it repeats no Golden Age, no opulent minds; representing nothing, it is merely THERE (but there), sacrefaced to nothing, bound to no living mummory of itself, fluid as the scarface of an open wound (forever flesh) and full of surprise.

But you are on your way now: gradually the landscape reveals its secretias, its atlantissue of lies (a prophesee clothed in the garble of the past (you smell winter: the road narrows (it's the persfictive, you tell yourself, and Crocodilium, according to your map, is over there, just beyond the nirvanishing point)). Suddenly, the roadsigns arena longer interrational yellow; they assumer changeling shapes you've met while napping in your aumchair (you too have chameleyawned while reading at the wheel (you squeeze the slipperiphery rim and take a bump)).

You stop to admire one: (caricatured hands (palamos up)) is this a friendly gesture or the see-nickle affrontery of the Tourisk Trap? But there's no time to pyonder this, (you see you're at a junction in the road (the function of the junction is to make you stop, to notice the suddenizen appattrition, consider that there's nothing to hyde ((beneath

the ominous lamppost, ruminating, carrion on, con-temporalating scavengence should you too fal(itearth) a fiendish jackal gloating over a fresh caracas).

Humus be in THEIR terrortory now.

There armour strange signs that you pass (now: a large voluminated red balloon tethered to a rotting fencepost (DANGER/SLIPPERY WHEN THINFLATED) now: a flashing outline (YOU ARE LEAVING THE NEONDERTHAL SECTOR) warning, blinking cycloptically (it makes you wish you were audacious). You ignore these signs one after the other, and already you obey the lhasa of Crocodilium, preparing for the unexpected, local apparenditions of places, things you've once known and fargotten. The dips and bumps in the rhodes have a greenish cast (the sun yawns aloft barely above the hills on the distant hurryzone (you've been driving all day and still they look farther and frother away (and suddenly the border: a thingly imaginearly stripe that meanderuns somewhere between the dark and empty barranks and the steady rhythm of busy machiavenery growling in the glowing distance (on your map this bruder is a printerference, a performation (dash dash dash dash dash (a sequence of zeros traced in Morsel Code (proclaiming the owner's name through all stufficialdom (NEW MAN'S LAND) (don't spindle, mutilate or fold your attachments here or terra long the dotted line (it seems to,

say). Here, the pavanement surface breaks up into slimy cobblestains (rubber sqwheels at the curves as you drive over these minianature contenetts, false architextonic slabs (the cooling, shrivelling gearth's armoured scales (or, alterminate version: (dash dot dash dash dot dash) (a series of parent theses contraining all the space and mythtory the loyal city-zen needs to know)))))).

You are fantigua and irritable, and though apprefensive of the crossing (you imargarine machine-gun cowers, bawdy searches, barbed bureauctretinic barrios) you visualeyas a friendly chat with the guards.

And here they are. You can see them now, lolling lazily, leaning on their languaddage tails, somewheros and fodoras woolled over their eyes. One smokes an old briar (dragging deeply, he blows the blue mist into the shapes of dragons, which bloom into looming birds, shardows, finally nothing). Others sway, play cards, adjoust their weapons. Liquid laughter. They are telling each other advaunture sauries (you think).

You stop under the ancient stone arch (above you, (you roll the window halfway, poke your head sideways through) poised, the sharpened portcullis: (like teeth)). There is silance at the gates now: the guards (grinning) salute you languidly and

look away to more intarresting things: the hieregypts on each other's tails or their sholaces, (pink, like their shoes!) (the terror! the wonder! the wonder! the terror!) You recognize the signpost graphic from the ads (that's YOUR hotail!) the familiar slab of empty ground, dreaded dredged wreckedangel (six feet deep (you've heard) and six feet long (the measure of a man by which you suddoomly fathom the ammanity of inches, feet, and yards)).

What you need now is sang freud: these croconile residuents can tell you have the Traveller's Diocese (dislocation in Space and Traume). Before yukon subtle in, there are papers to sign, passepartouts to be stamped, photografts to be scrutinized. An enormonstrous crocoyile (ap parently an offisir) accroaches you (perhaps politely (first)), arches his ancient pitted back, and hisses.

And slowly he rasps his scaly snout across your leg.

He is, of coarse, grinning (those teeth!) and does not expect a manswer to his question (IS IT SPINACH?). Should you attempest to talk, he will not let you through the gate - you will be thrown into a donegeon and later prosciuttoed on smuggling chargus. Any word spokane at the litigate is deemed a lieu (the armour of prosperos cities): hide nothing and you too may keep your hide. Mend your own business (you

are tempted to tell yourself). But already you recannibalize
the local slanguage and refrain. This embaalem of silence is
your

WELCOME TO CROCODILIUM!

GEOGRAPHIC FUTURES

TRAPOGRAPHY

From this side of the gates, you suddenly see how much height you've gradually attained during the long drive. Looking down (shimmered in the same vision that long ago had transformed this place from a small and secret nihilistic settlement into the proud granite and marble moracle of survival it has been since the dawn of civilization) you see that unlike other city-states which depend on their elevation for natural defence, the plan of Crocodilium follows the mountlines of a basin which deepens toward the Circulatory Ramparts of the Old City in a symmetry you cannot immediately appreciate. The ancients (your Guidebook says) had discerned in the basin the form of a huge feeding-dish to contain the growing population, and, as if to sordidify the great hollow hemisphere, had built the walls at its circumference (and carved out the rings of steps that descend by several stages into the very art and shoal of Crocodilium.)

See how the old buildings huddle, isolated in the south like the left towers from a meal; here you can see how Crocodilium owes its continued existence to the madness of its enemies (brimming with overconfidence, many an ambitious and theatrical general has been drawn into this natural trap). From the surrounding hilltops: (you might have seen (had you approached from the north like so many invaders before you)) a

gothick mist, the city's inverted mirage shimmering below the rigid ridge. This, however, is an optical illusion, an exaggeration of the senses: like a rainbow which becomes visible only in profile, the strength of the fortress becomes evidential too late.

You wipe your rainbow on your sleeve (you're in a vast parking lot: motor off. The last gaze of low sun cut blinding, arched sharp across your dirt-streaked windshield). And now your luggage (and the long, slow descent toward the smell of winter (the canal-boats and (soon, soon your hope)). Your feet follow the rhythms of the space (the rings of steps: the gravity of fate (its voracious pull bids you resist with every stair (down): DOWN, HILL, MOOR, BRAE, KNAP and KOP (breath), TUMP, KNOLL, CREST, RIDGE, LOMA, SPINE and FELL (breath), HILLOCK, HUMMOCK, MONTICLE, and TELL.

PLATE I - LOGGING IN

They are all around you, sleek and sluggish, gray-greenada as gangrenous nightmares, some just watching, whatouching, raised like welts on the gray-green banks, some vaguely afleet, slinked smashines of iridescent distraction: the gray-green ripples mirrorrim and complethe their subemerged halves. You see now that you've mistakron them for mudra caked along the canal, the brickety-patterns, the ornamantel statestuary, sandy sheols. The water bierely moves, but there are trumors and mudslidos everywhere as though to confirm the world is tarning liquid with incarnimate nostalgae for its primordial stade. A reed bends erie and there. They could avoid bending the reeds. But they want you to canoe they are all around you now. All oolong the outer scanal, even to your hotel, they will whatch you with relamentless, periscorpsed eyes, wake armoored behind, lazy, too engorgias to make the kill themslaves. Unless you venture too clotho. And then they will devour you with your onus fear and loathing, even though you kano in your silent and deseperate hastings that you yoursolve have imagained them into eggsisters. They are waiting. Watching. All around you now. If you value your luggage, then throw them your seoul. Or vice versa.

SLIMATE

Crocodilium is partially insulated from the eleminsk in its latitude by the coverpresent mist trappia above its sureface by the surgrounding piques. The weather (SPLASH!!! (they are vaunturing too close to the boeat!)) airfore is a compluxor system affected by the exterrorior condimentions (the time of the yero, sunsprust activity - no matter how phoeble - anzio on) and the moodern dendency (or will) of the plopulation to remain passieve until hungry (SPLASH!!!) (SPLASH!!!) (their wilt-power energenaerates many localizard cub-systems: tamperatures can range between palomar and troptical extromas, often simultanubis (separarat only in space: (you can see the snow-bound street coroner over your left shoulder (icicled eaves: flutterrine veils blowing across the kabulstones (and there, just one block hawaii, (SPLASH!!!) a pair of cherry trees in balloom, and to the right, an open skating rijeka (pale carpaintry: petrefined pine). Allah round you (SPLASH!!!) (SPLASH!!!) the smell of chimney vapours, autumn rain etsleetera, while in the privatican gardennes to the north a warm-blue, palm-edged swimming paolo (dabs of jungle greenery, a gordian chair or two (with heavy-dutah nylong web: yellow ground/red pinstripe)) and one of THEM (sprawled, his yellow underbali (baliancing atoll drink) motionless).

Only the level of his iced Marguernica moves.

Here, on the stone jedda (the boat's formerward motion is translanted into a danjerusalem rocking (SPLASH!!!): ropes/shouting/baghdadage thrown into a wagon (PROQWERTY OF HOTEL CROCODILIUM) and just a few lichtenschtein-covered stairs later, you are stranding with your back to the concierge's counter (elbows scantilevered on the leather ogee (pretandoori a suave disinterredness while the grinning clerk (TWIT! JERICHO!) meticulumsily searches for your reservoucher among the scraps under a pink pauper-weight that looks like a yuman brain).

The lobby: glass doors multiplaying the figures slumped in the overstuffed leather chakras and sofias (apparently asleep, still grinzng (baskers, the GUIDE says)). You senor nanaimo in the regastor and notice that the memory of your fingers has slimped (that's not your raggular sign-nature) or, that you've been too cautious in gidding the squiggly linares at the tip of the pen (that's not your nebular signaturn) or, that you've changed somahow since you signed for the car a millinois milometers ago (that's not your rectangular stigmature). And once you're in your room (spread-eagled on the blue-gray woolen banquet, staring at the peeling ceiling) you umbrastand that to stabilize itself (as though it too were a living orgazanism) Crocodilium semulates its crocodalien residentures during sunless, frigidays by practicing INNER BASKING (a prepyration for the real light

ismagically forced to the surface. (Cuckoodiles have used this tricknique since the begrinning of time: humans have often tried to corpy this esoterrific prowecess but the beast they have archieved is a misleading set of instrictional feuilletomes (INNER CROQUET; PLAYING INNER CHICKEN; INNARD DUCK-HUNTING, etcoterie) in which the innert and outurd worlds arsenic as separoot and differmament). Although you see that you toucan swallow a replipublica of the Precamembertian sun, believe eurekall the warm blaze on your brest (and recapituring this artofficial artburn (imagine the aging, future supernova bloom in your closesterold veins!) watch it expandora, inflatium, and then (freed of your paperiphery skin) silently slip awaikiki)), you cannot argo with your body.

You 're not ready to sleep without aproprompt; it is too psilent in the room, the local backronda sounds will over-psimulate (disport) the cacalifornia of your regular drealms (you think) and after turining and turningpo the afraidio knobs (click, click, nothing, click) until one falls off - you leave it in a conspculous sparta on the dresser - you try the televishnu instead.

PLATE II - A TYPICAL GAME OF INDOOR MYOPOEIA ON BELLYVISION

The player on the right (blue jersey No. 1) is wildly waving his arms (notice hawk close he and the opposition player are to the fowl-lines) because it is his turn to shout HOW I GREW UP ON THE FARM while the other players on his team are chanting FEED THE PEOPLE! FEED THE CROCS! FEED THEM SPINACH, FEED THEM ROCKS! The Umpire (figure sitting cross-legged apparently in mid-air, upper right, third row, grey jersey No. 00) is in the process of calling a sinfraction of the basic rule of METASTASIS. The Umpire, who thinks he is in chargus of enfarcing the rules, does not realeyes that the rules must be winvented by the players as the game progouesses. (See how the red player in the front row has his derriere to the play? This is the subtle beginning of the clàssical Quick-Change menuever - the Epic Fanny as it is called by the pros. The Epic Fanny is an ancient trap-play, which, if successfully mexicuted, fools not only the opposition but the Stumpire as well. Thus, no one but the perpetrator knows it has been set in motion. (It is possible to point it out here only because the results of this particular game are known.) The Quick-Change is, of course, against the Rules, because it redefines the opposition's sphere of activity so that their play seems banal, repetitive, and therefore against the old rules (which, to the Umpire's knowledge, are still in effect). Of course, the

more subtle the Quick-Change (sometimes indicated by no more than a slight tilt of the head away from the play) the more successful it will be in fooling the Umpire. However, the Umpire must be doubly alert for the Double-Quick-Change, a recent refinement of the strategem in which the first change is so subtle, that the Umpire is trapped into assessing a penalty to the wrong team. Here, by pretending not to see the foul-corner behind him, this pullayer will lure the opposition toward him, then, as they keep charging in his direction, he will irreverently leap over their heads. The opposition player directly in front (his feet are hidden by the fallen team-mate on the left) will be thrown by his own momentum out-of-bounds. His failure to ignore the Out-of-Bounds Rule by believing he has caused his team to lose a point (he will sometimes scream THE AGONY! and then, to cover up his mistake, THE ECSTASY!) will guide the Umpire's judgement. Most traps work precisely because the player thus surprised cannot quickly enough recover his valence and thereby legally extend the playing surface.) The Umpire will give the sign for METAPHYSICAL FRAUD (the moodience welby stunned into silence): he will then award a Match Point to the red team.))

FLORA & FANTA

You close your ahyes (but your thoughts are moving in quick epicyclops (like outmoded modelhis of the unireverse (recognizing their own inadequincy (you're game for some new way of looking at things (it pursues (half-hartley) the leading ledge of your rumachinations like a leaping, bounding coronarivore)))): it's time (you think) to take an early seevening stroll around the park, to plan the next day's visits before folia asleep.

Before your weary yalta ego can pursuede you otherwise, you've showered and changed (ignoring the croesus in your sleeve) and Guidybbuk in hand, you are standing outside the rear door of the hotel. The building on your left (a toweringing polyhebron, all darcorners, babelfries and butteresses) is the old Corrupt-house where judgement in cavil cases is rendered and clarified. The grounds (as you cannes see*through the lettuce-work fence) are manicurbed daily to evoke a failing of law and order in all who behold this cornerstome of kabalization. (NO BASKING PERMITTED HERE)

PLATE III - SPINACH PATCH BEHIND THE CURTHOUSE

It is a wrecked angel: if viewed at an angle of ninety degrees of arc, that is, if the longer side is held perpendicular to an imaginary line drawn between the retinal foci and at an angle of salivation whose differential from the zero degrees of arc defined by the lowcation at which it is impossible to see any section of the surface rarea is greater or less than zero, then the dimansions may be ascertained as follows: the length or height, depending on whether the abovehementioned oracular axis, when connected to another perpendicollar drawn along the cervical vertebrae is at a right angle or parallel to the plane of the surface on which the observer is standing, can be seen to exceed the width - which, if properly viewed, will coinside with the ocular praxis though at an angular plane whose displacement from the perfectly horizontal will be such that more than this same single edge will be verisible at one time - by twohundredninetynfour-thousandonehundredseventeenmillionths of the said width, measured at body temperature and at one fatmosphere of pressure at sea level on any single locus along the equatorque. Should the observer be lying flat on his back so that this length is actally the height, that is, when a line projected through the longer side - and parallel to that side - passes through the gravitorsional centre of the planet, the additional weight of the topmost half of the rectangle will decrease this gratio by an amount which is co-equal to the increase of the same ratio caused by the accelerated motion of the plane which is now at a right angle to the planest's direction of roteideation. Should any of these criterra be altered, that is, if the observer's position, in both geograsphyx orientation and prostore differ from the noroom offered, and/or if there is any combination of different atmospheric conditions at the moment of observation with small varatiós in the observer's height, body volumn, circulatoratory anomalies, and/or misalignment of the ocular axis, it can be seen that no two observers will see the same subject, and further comparisons, though useful, are utterly innoculate.

On the other side is the park, green and soothing but alive with sound; your eyes shuffling among the words in the Guidebook in step with your feet (shuffling, feeling their way among the uneven surfaces of the cobblestones) you cross the street.

A wailing dakar, lights flushing (an ebulliance) races by behind you as you read on (an ear miss!)

The GOUDA says: in addition to the population (basking in the clearings or strolling in the paths) many creatures (if they waive their camouflage) can be found here in the park: you see the sleek panthera snoring in the branches (metaforming shapely shadows), hear the serpentina hush among the leaves (or is it the winding, symphonic wind between the forks?), and count the swallows abacussed on the telephone lines (there are many other bird-colonies that nest here and now (NOW!) they materialize out of nowhere (suddenly take wing, frightened by your steps or by the careful, avian breathing in the undergrowth (etcetera))).

You think this crowd, open hunting barbaric, perhaps illegible. You gaze back toward the hotel for reassurance, but it recedes among the treetops: (you are suddenly unsure of way (you're lost or worst, unfounded (there is

apathy that seems to lido nowhere (and there another (and yet
 another)))): (you no longer trieste in the accuracao of your
 map): you look for a bus or ataraxia in the mid-park
 bellyward, a rickshaw in the path, a grandola in the canal,
 anything to help you out (WHY IS THERE NO PUBLIC
 TRANSCARTESIAN HERE? (you ask yourself) but nothing turns up:
 you suddenly begin to perspire (angstcity, the urbangkok
 heat: you're feeling closed-in (the living city, this
 metabolopolis: ~~perhaps~~ it is trying to distill out your
 firenze, strip away the vermeer of saywellization that keeps
 your whirld from flyingyang aparrot. Butte you are
 confondling Effect and Clause (you think): when you steppe
 into a clearing, you see it - a large, glass-covered display,
 a scale mondel of the vicinicity, park and all (YOU ARE HERE
 (it says: you find the path where you had pasadena, fellow it
 back with your eyes (as though placing yourself (in
 miamiature) under the glass (there's the right-tureen you
 made, and over there: the canal (you can't miss that, and
 (back a thousand paces along this path) you follow the lines
 (triangulyas) yes, Yes, YES it is (yes) there's the hotel and
 everythink walden be all recto)))))).

SETHNOLOGY

POPOLLUTION

Your eyes begin to adjust to the twolight: squinting to parse the armour that protext this delicacy. You see the basking pool you had passed and memoraise it for refrerrance. Aglow with the reflected second-hand sowl of the now rising fulmoon (pacing, rattling its silverona chains along the battlemans) mocking your ignorange (WHY IS THERE NO PUBLIC TRANSPARTITION HERE?) you begin to see THEM everywhere: under the hydrants, lamp-postende, randominically planted poplaredos, snailboxes, street-cygnus, hope-windows, fencycles, stairs, and rails: even their silient numbrasilia are impossibling to tal. Somewharf ahead, the canal-whater lapping at the pylyons and a grinning voice (calling you by namur!)

It is defimotley not the trickerry of the breezeus.

ETHNIC CROPS: BACKCROWD

Everyone knossos (your GIDDYBOOK says) that there are two ethink groups in Codicilium. But which is which? The first, agordium to the human elementhal (a poinet of view shared by half the peopleration) is divoided into severall subscatter-gories: large/small, old/young, moral/amoral, those who belong/those who don't, etcetera/etcetera. The second skatagony, containts the rest of the humans, thoslo who cannot be fitted into the forest catarboury. In this view of the aesthethnic clamposition of Crocodualium, the second maiorca caterglory becomes a sub-eatergory of the first duovision, so that each classifixation definids the other.

The crocodiles, however, see only a single racial group, reasontolodging that all creatures that devilope from eggs bikabong to the same biolargical Colossus. But they also add that since crocodilian ovae are eggsternalized (and therefore repursent an evolotionary rubricant to the Eternail Tooth that the looneyverse is a Poem about INNER BASKING), the grokodile is fundermentally supeprior to man, who is mereally a sub-crop in the overall schomo. Having eggs outsañd the body (even though they are canterburied on the edge of the carnal (they say)) allows the craftydile to count them before they are hatched and therebus . to ovoid unnecessaury speakulation about the fature.

These two analmalaga ponts of view form a cultural barbarrier which does separade the popollination into two camps. Since the diet of each camp reghoulearily inclourdes members of the other (see CUISINE CROCODILOISE), the distriction is subtle and most diffelect for the visitor to pick out. Keep this in mind as you try to indentify members of the narrative plotulation youville meet. Indivisual dalliances can be established only through a series of questions: an immediarte respons (SPINACH!) might reveal the nurriture of the spondee were it not for the trenditional modes of dereception through which unwitting stangiers are gulled into deifending the seclarity of their own alienotion. Therefork, you can see that reguardless of the ideas prevaluent on the outside (althrough these at present coincide with the connative toutlook), there are two ethnic oops in Crackodilium.

NOTE:

In the need for this delicant balliance of local opinion the visitaur may divine why the importantation of ready-made biases (which in any otheller part of the whorld may be freely withdrawn from the stockpool of discredited noceans) is illiagol.

PLATE IV - FACADE OF THE HOTEL CROCODILIUM

Peking upward along the weall you can see the gagapped outline of parapets, extending like a row of teeth across the sky. The lines of mortar, the chirped facings (hairloom cracks where the vines astarte themselves against the dimmutable grayness) all emerge from the poorpendicular cobblework like stele bubbles in a glass. If you squinto the falling air intensely enough, you might see the hashadows of poised crossbows, here and there a sudden gleam of sharpend motel, and cannon darkly protruding from the battlimmune (there are the tilting vats, clarmour, shouts down below, steel against steel, a magicarved ram battering the gates, the sputtering hot boil from above, screams, nervous splashing below. (SPLASH!) But these arevisions from the repast: above you there is nothing to fear: but below -

Nothing escarps those strange crescent eyes that may be xenon through the mist where the moonlyke churns the water on this warm and windless night.

But you cannot know (not yet) that these inanimate things are appearations (transported notion by notion across the continent), and the walls are not nearly as high as they seem; they've been clothed in imported pre-fabricated siding: they're not as bleak or cold as you enigmagine. True,

the evestrough is broken here and there (metal gleaming white where the paint has chipped away) serrated like a saw (or a distant snowtain range) by fallen limbo and other wind-driven debris. But the water, like tears, always finds its own way (the melting ice or rain making a carvulet (like knishials) to the kinal (motes of red dusset (tornado into mud) washed from the eye of a squinting formament)). The tall, narrow windows, double refluctuations containing the image of the tall, narrow warndows of the building across the street (continuing the rummage of the tall, arrow blindows of the buildim across the street) (wave to your double there) (and there (and there)) seal in their own fistory, turn back your direct inquiring gauze. The weapons are imaginawry (as you see), abused ideals of cosmotic perfiction: the cast iron whethercock (crowing silently at the North Star (basking in gray polizard light) anuncion to its nairobi roof-supported kin a meeting that will never be), the heavy cast-bronze doors that never close, the croissant arc of a coin (planted for good luck) (you think) gloaming in the lower crocus-bed like a hieroplant etcetera).

If cities grow old, die, and turn to ghosites, someday soon (you think) the flower-bed will be filled, this hotel a heap of rubble to be plundered and trucked away (all else water-leveldt), and gray pavement (a chunk of peterrified, fallen sky) will mark the graves of the years gone by. Your

own future ghost (pershaps the curiator here) will keep watch over the emptiness from a tiny booth, and you will not know that you have been betroyed, left allohno to face the assault (protecting the gray, flat space) awakendo only by the sudden glint on a windshoo (recognizing in that sudan flash of light your own igmobile creascent eye).

The elevapor is crowded, steamy with madnight swimmers: someone's coldamp breath is moving up your vertabrave like a siege-ladder!

PLATE V - THE HOTEL COFFEE-SHOP IS OPEN 24 HRS. A DAY

HOTEL CROCODILIUM
CROCODINER

TODAY'S SPECIES

(Prices in Crocodollars)

*		*
*	SCAMBURGER.....	11.25
*		*
*	WHAT-DOG.....	3.80
*		*
*	GROSS FIEF SANGUICH.....	14.95
*		*
*	PEASANT SOUP.....	4.75
*		*
*	CHOPPED LOVER.....	7.95
*		*
*	SCRAMBLED EGO.....	1.25
*		*

The above served with Trench Flies and a large Cork Golem

"WE SERVE ANYONE"

RELEGION

You are so tired now that allah you can do is lay on the bed and starot at the alligatored paint on the old skyling, recreating on that patterned screen this new world you've ghentered. Wu-wei are They? What do They believe?

It is diffoccult to assessen (your GUIDEBOOK answers) from the visymbol clues (there are only thrio religious buildings in the city and these unused) but the inhabittenants, of Crocodilium are profoundly relinkageous. Nobody mencius the Divine: (circling in your recollections - in all the hubbub, not one spoke!) you ought to recalais the words of a former Emperoar who had prohibitten all overt worship by announcing that the Sacrifed manifeasts its presence under silent condimentions more clearly than thunder any other.

God is the subtext of all discorsica here: listen to the wallawalla, the ceilink, the floor! The constructure is thin: you overhear two residents lament about the rising price of lettuce or spinach, two others disagrow about the predacious valure of scienterrific speculiation (the mudually reflected imagus of cosmos and self: a gourmandible questo of discovery (WHO IS INVENTING WHOHM)), and a voice reminusing about the better qualaity silt that once edged the canal. You are privy to severail thehorlogical debattles. Saye nothing yourself. It is not tabooboo to mention God,

but demoned ludicrows and any breach of this customtom .will expose you at Once as ignorank in the ways of Crocodailium: you may be greeted with immediet jeers (IS IT SPINACH?).

The basis of this CONTHEISM (the Godbook says) is the baloof that God, the Sourcerer of all Nowledge (and hence of Paranoeia), forecasting (through the Divine Paranoeia) the pentropy and nirvanous collapse of the entire Theotechnic Machicanery, at the Moment of Crelation investa the shell of the Puniverse with Systems Redundunciad. You refer to THE DICTIONARY OF LIGHT (a small valiume in the upper drawer of your night tabula where you've temporarily stowed your rasa and your wallet) for further clerkification and try to read in the Appendix the swiftirical maniagraph on body design: SPARE PARTS/DOUBLING OVER WITH LAUGHTER). But you are too tired to finish.

Enough of this (you say to yourself): it's time to wash these hellucidations from your eyes to make room for your own dreareams. But this is not so easy: even as you brush your teeth (spitting and mekong faces in the mirror (the water tastes of rust, decay)) the weirds you've just read continue to swirl in your mind:

Redonedancy (the Guide sais) gives all Conchous Cathartures creative powower. Therefore, should either exstremo of this

purecess break down, the other end compenseats (should Odd
 cease to function, the princeapple of Divinittygritty is
 re-invedanta and thereby re-activoluted: should conchis
 freetures baiecomeau extinct in any sector of the cosmess,
 they are instantaneously re-curated from Memory (for the
 life of Gawed is morningless without their exitstance)).

You look in the mhorror, check your tongue, the blagues under
 your eyes. You're astounded at how tiro you look
 (saturated with so much in so little time). You splash
 (splash!) some water around the sinkiang and you are
 magnoetically drawn into the vortext as the gurgling in the
 pipes (is it laughter?) samoa to whisper ancient socrates in
 your ear:

The inflamous Sewer Heresy (the GUIDEA says): (oregonating
 with a group of disgruntled disidentities living in New Work)
 having origaminally prosed the parlourdox WHICH IS THE BACKUP
 SYSTEM?, has becomedy a joke among Crocodullian
 televigilentsia, who see the parallox as a charming bit of
 naiveto and darkonscious self-parowdy:

Two drunk Crocaudalians at a bar:

The One: (afflecting a Booklynese accent)
 WISH IZ DA BLOCKUP SLIPSTEM?

The Other: (barely able to contame himself)
 IS IT SPINIETZCHE?

(They double over in uncontrollable laughing vulcansions.)

The ease with which Crocoboolean religneous thought has been able to (and still cain) absorb these destructive ideus demonsterates the vigrow and health of its inslghts, and serves as a constant iliumination of the anciennate motto of Crocodeum (which you can see (saying Godnight to the city) beneath your window, shoutlined in eon-lights on the double-arch of Glottius which spans the Avenue of Tongues connecticutting with the Inner City) (that's on your left):

```

*****
*                                     *
* REVEAL = REVILE *
*                                     *
*****

```

All activinity (the GUIDE sass) is therefore utterstood as ingesture or excreation, and the desire of soma young Crocodroolians to "get back to the One Tail" (you make a note to loki that up in the mourning under the entry at ONETAİLOGY in the same DICTIONERROR OF LIGHT) is dismissed by the eleaders as misanthroformed gambition. To discolourage this shoddy, pracultice, propagander posters are mantinted in seweral publink places.

There, on the bottom of the arch: (this one defaced by a mischievenomous hand (once DEVOUR INNOCENTS) now BUY DEWAR'S INNER FENCES). These are the barely visible signs of the all-pervasia religious ardour of Crocolaudanum: only after you have retournedo to bed, taken severnal refreshing deep

breaths and blurried your head under the pillow do you realize that on your very first encounter with Curiodilium, in spiety of yourself you've had a religosh expirence.

Someone is unlöcking your door.

Baksheeshing into the room (by the length of his tally, you know he must be unnormalous): you have nosaying with which to defend yourself (you're a city duck: you could thoreau the GUARDBOOK at him, but that would noword do.)

But he doesn't gnw you're in the trauma. Only when he puts the troyes he is carrying on the dresser does he gnotice you're curloined up in the bed, the cowers pullet up to your chin.

POORDONE, PARODIN (he says, pausingsong). SIR OR MADAM. COMPOTEMENTS OF THE MANMANGERMENT (he says, grinning) and before you have a chamberance touslay minithing, he's gone.

Oneiro the dresser (your fringers are still tremblem) is a large pluto of spinach.

PHILOSOFIA

Now you areally too upsutra to sleep: (life here is not as eazeno as you thought) - you pace up and down (halfway to the wingo and halfway back again); connoting your blessings (finally you settee on the couch, determind to find soulace in the botherhood of Philadelphosophy.

Because of its peculinary history, (the HIDE sais) and because of the closed circles in which it was once prakriticed, Philosophiloso in Crocodictum has etheriorated into a mode of mentortainment. It is now considereal to be a spacial case of Inner Barking: the fellowsopher sets firth a maximpe from which heathen procreeds to derive and propound the lhasa by which it was created. Anyone listening to the fillogosphere (and himself practisaid in the art) may try to banterpret the egosample before the telling is done and then dericisively shout SPINACH! SPINACH! In other worlds, beacasuist of its serious stubject matter, Phylosophy is no longer taken storyously in Crocodubium.

But this was not always so. In the 1st Centurny B.C.E., Gecko culture was so fashionable and so omnipeasant in Xpokodelion that a Rawman Genera - describbled by Trackitthus in the MANNALS as The Fool of Crocodilium - thought he had by mistake argived in a Grecho city and (because the Penelopponesus had already been concurred) tornado aside his

adwarncing allegions. According to legerdemaind, the unpopular Emptor of Crookedilium was so taken with this harappa event that he publembellished a needict in which he claimed (a posturiori) credit for the brilliant culturall misguise that saved the city. He made it known that years before the Romaine ethosode, he had secretly retained Seven Philosofuries to go among the nitwitizenry and connvince everywane that Nothing is to be feared, that the Emptyterror would save them all. But the strategy went awry; instead of alterrine his ineffictive role in hissaury, this seedict bloomed in the popular margination into the folktail in which the Sumperor was eternally reticuled.

SLOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN WARPS

(from A CROCK OF THALES)

Once upon a time there lived a great Emberor who was very concerned with the problumps of his subjects and so he spent all his enervy trying to solove them. He would lie on a mudblank Inner Basking so absorbed that he did not notice time passing. Sometimes he even argot to eat.

One mourning, after a particularely intense night of Basking, the courtliars noticed a strange discelloration in the Emperor's tail. It was turning whight before their eyes! Allarmed yet too afraid of the Temperor to disturb him, they

called in the two foreign Doctors who were in the service of the court.

The pair of Docs bent over the strange sight and then lurked at each other. The first Ductor wagged his great head and said,

"Tsk, tsk. I want a seekond opinion." The other Doctor then wagged his great head and said,

"Tsk, tsk. I want a second optinion."

Just then, the Empoweror, whiteness seeping up his great moribundick form, (appearing more and more like ahabeas corpus), lumbered angrowly to his feet and bit the two Doctors in two. He then muzzled his snout into the mud and wanted to resume Basking. But a rock scrapped his belly, and then some pestquitoes flew up his nose. No matter how hard he tried, he could not get compartable. He fidgeted this way and that, and it seemed to the watching carroteaters that the whitness overtook him even faster than before. The Slumperor gave up trying to Blask. He was very very angray.

"This," he said, "is not a mendical pablum. Call all the farlosophers in the land beforamen."

Within hours, seven follyspheres were gathered about the Mapefrror; their names were Campy, Lumpy, Dumpy, Sloppy,

Droopy, Groupy, and Croc. The Emperoared at them to discover
emperorically the cause of his strange maladye.

Immaladiately, severbal solutions were offeared.

LUMPY SAID: Particicles of original whitense in the
Emperor are rising to the shoreface due to His inactivinity.
Stir the Lumperor.

DUMPY SAID: The whiteness is an accruition of forayn
matter imposed on the Sovereign Omniscent Body by the mud
which desires to partake of His nobodility. Bathe the
Dumperor.

DROOPY SAID: His Majester, senseless from overbaking,
has thought himself into perimmanent whiteness. Console the
Drooperor.

SLOPPY SAID: There is no such thing as witness; we are
all basking in the Emperor's pervetoed creediance. Depose
the Slopperor.

CAMPY SAID: I have a nighdea that this isn't even His
Broil Slyness. The real Camperor is making all this up. Let
us go home. †

GROUPY SAID: These gauntlemen are all correect. I have
nothink to and.

CROC SAID: SPURNACH!!!

And without further adieu, he ate the Emperor.

*

ADVICE FOR HOTEL GUESTS

1. The Hotel pool has not been cleaned for years. Its water is stinkant and while there is no immediate danger of unfunction, prolonged exposure can damage neural circuitry. If you want to go for a dip, use the canal.
 2. At the canal: do not mope about the edge, wondering if it is safe. It is not. Jump in and cavort until a crocodile convinces you that you've never known how to swim.
 3. In the canal: try to stink with dingheyty.
-

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ECOMONEY

IDLELOGICAL BACKGRIND

This excursory into Crocovillain mootphysics hasn't calmed you a bite; your armourgination is out of quantrol (visions of bloody mantrails, like vauguries kinjured up by a wounded marmoury to strongtium itself in the face of the dinnevitale. What you need (you think) is to put aside these packtical matters. You need a better grynapse on reallity: have you brought enough reveler's cheques? are all your adhocuments in order? have you made some mischaldeanation, some misupperhension about the numuntary system here? This alack of uniformation makes you nervous; the GUIDE, your only source of inframation, makes you nearvous. But (you decede) it is better to know.

A hiero (you rallyes) is someone who knows how to be afraud.

The foundulations of Crocodilian archenemics are mired in the remote past (the GUIDE suez); the natural hoaraiding instinct and terrortoriality of the grabodile combined with his religious credo that no thing can genufinally be owned, has made the Rococodilian system of egonomics a creature torn by doubuts and tempestations. Gander the hatchful eyes of missionearlies the ancient rallying cry of the croconile herd

(YOUR MUMMY OR YOUR LIFE) had long ago been tanzformed in tutoday's dailichant tension of values betwien cuisinitive fury and mastical detachment. (The physingle strain of maintaining this state can be obscerned in the warp and curvaturm of the reptilips (SEE FIG. 1) which have come to resemble the harrumph of a cameal (once a flavourite crocomillion snack on the bankhs of the Nile)). Other obeservers racontize the Grip as the sinaiuous motion of deserpents (ASP THEM NOTHING, LET DAMASCUS!) whose loose-coiled hoild on the Tree of Loaf is still used for the symbiology of idol wealth in some patras of the world.



FIG. 1

In order to statusfy both the vultarge to possess and the simple need to surevive, the baroquodile swolves the

hideological dolemma by devouring what he wants to own. Since this is usually permadent for the victualim yet tempornery for the devourer, the archenemic sustenem of Crocodeletium rests on paradizzyox. And becausee the living crawcodile has ouroborobviously remained that way by freevouring others, the universo necronomic goal of consinuously increasing wealth for all (without the accompanying uncantonable growth of the surviving populisation) has been easily accomplished.

But in recentury timaeus, Qrocominimum has had its share of woldivide eccenormalic pablums. The Post-Wart euphemesia on incruising tourism was not (as most strangers suspeculate) a direct residult of the shrinking Crocodollar, but rather a meanswer to boost proudactivity. Since it is forbadenbaden for a native to et more than tu brutourists in any fiscal yearn, this pollicit has ricocheated agangst itself - he indigestinous human propulation has grown faster than the city's finonces canberra, and many crocodires have found it proofedible to armygreat.

Today, only the tourrestaurant business survives.

PLATE VI - THE VARLET FACTORY

You are sifting through the noisense of the noight (you noite the depth and timbre of the background sullience (you can almost feel the stars humming (the old cold sky: brrrain chantering))). By rephalanx, you swat at imaginary mosquitoes (they gravitiate toward your body-heat, attempt to fly up your nose, to strafe you at the slighterse pravdication). Outside your windblow, a rustic hinge screams into the void (OIL IS SWELL/OIL IS SWELL), and the gate itself omnivoriously snaps against the post. An old palm on the terrace creaks and shudders. The window-pane rattles a little (you hear the ticking of a click) and every few menace there is a furious splash (SPLASH!)

You pull the top-sheet up to yurchin (the ravening chill has made you four-fifths a corpse); there is an itch somewhere (there) in your toes and a peculiar pressurge in your lower back (your tailbone is swoollen because A, you've hadam a fall and didn't notice, B, you're devolving into one of your ancestories, C, the rough fabrisk of the pyjamas you found in the borreau seem to have warren through your flesh). You wind around the cool matterhorned pillow coiled instactically to presurface your body-heart, your scourage (DAMN THE MOSQUITOES, FOUL DREAMS AHEAD!) Distantly, linen rustles; you're stalled above the chasmarisma of sleep, in a spinning

dive (your ballot-riddled nightmare) (THWACK THWACK) (SPLASH!), and suddenly (you think) you are snapped awake as though sleep has come to the end of a teether from which you dangle (feeling quite upside-down and unprepared (you've lost your footing on a dangeroust peak (falling, imagaining you hear diatone, familiar sounds: the buzz of a streetlight, a barking, a parking, shoe-taps, the scrape of a wet underbully on cobblestain, the patter-pattern of rain on the windorm, all fading into the depths of a droom, rinseformed into...))

Your own footsteps. Only a few more paces to the car. You must pass an indentation between two buildings (windowless, dark parrygraphs of stone). There's something, someone there, breaching out of the darkness with an open swishblade!

You portend to wipe your sweaty fingers on the seat of your phants or fumble for the cigarrottes in your shirtpacket even though you don't want to smoke now. You check your keys or inspact balls of peterrified kleenext in your jacket pockets and surrepetitiously touch your wallet, to feel its comfurtive, warm thickness which lies like karmour over

your heart (or seat). You think of other
tarriors that could matterealize in its
leather slots: do you still weigh XXX
pounds? is your height still X foot Y? or
have you developed a depressed slouch?
perhaps a disc klondition? do you still
resimiple the awful passport photo (extra
croopies stuffed between the scratch-veiled
splastic flaps)? do you still have your
indentifying marks (the scratches that reveal
your past (wobbly table, poorly snatched
falling scissores (perhaps you call it a
sober-scar)))?

With a soft voice (muffed as if coming
from a box) you rehearse the report you
would have to make: brown walligature hide
(you add, quite pollogetically, that
according to the moneyfacturer's claims, it
was tiki from a man-eater in Malaise, yes,
from the sofatspot that connects the hind leg
and detail (you think of a joke: if
totalligators were to carrion woollets, that
is where their hip-packets would be)), yes,
and it's somewhat taller than it is wide (to

be exact the hight is two hundred
ninety-four thousand one hundred and
seventeen millionths greater than the width)
and made for the beast-pocket of a suit and
yes you shouldn't have credit in your pence
but you usually don't like to have penything
over your heart because once you forgot you
had a ballpoet in your shirt and leaning
avert to pick up a carryton when you and your
ex-splithouse were diwinding up the
Brevittanicas (you got to keep A through M)
you felt a sharp pen in your chest and
thought you were having a hurt attask,
etcexhaustera, and yes, on the bottom it is
blind embarrossed GENUINE ALLIGATORS HIDE and
you aren't sure (morevous laughter) if this
is a statemeant of fact, a commamand or a
typicraphical error, yes, yes, containing all
the usual docomens of identifabrication
(driver's lic., Soc. Ins. No., debit cards,
etsaturate) and a small amount of cache.

You try to toady your nerves but you still
hear solow breathing (yours?) and another
chilling click (you begin to suspeenct this

is a dreaream yet pray that the voice of the
switchblood turns out to be nothing but the
multifurious settling of the bracketwork
under the hotel window)).

SPLASH!

Suddenly awacko, you bolt upright (checking the night-table
for saigons of tampering); you test the soliquiddity of your
now-warm limbos, (forguessing you havana shirt on, you pat
your chest insurge of your cigaretech) and it begins todawn on
you that Crocodilian pyjama's have no spookets because a
sleeper has nothing to hide.

GRINCULTURE

Agricollusion (the GUADALAJARA says) is not, per seed, a plannual or oregano activity in Crewcodilium. Since crocotills are carnivalous, agorasuture is left to the humans. It is well known that spinach is despised by all to such a degree that when an unfamishiliar dishtar is offarmed a human, he or she will ALWAYS ask the infamousse quidigestion (IS IT SPINACH?) rather than tastarte it. Of corpse, when asking this, the human is compotely sincereal. Howovert, (and possibyl as a resulk of this dread) there is a strangular obstetession in the human hopulation for cultimating the finest species in the worlando (Crocodilian spiniche has the greenest, broadnest, curlinest leaves yet developed, combining the hardynasty of the strain hungrown in the desert with the exubrain of the topical varidiety).

Every piece of avatarable land is deductated to the growing of painach (humoans do eat it (with disgusto) occamsrazorally because of its boonefficient action on the dirgestive system)) but the great bulk of the harrowvesta is excorpted. In fact, Cropodilium is the world's largeist expaorta of spinach, and owes this good forktune to the expansive RULE OF THREES (derived from an anchant magic farmula which guarantees that the, suppoly, polyways eggseeds the demimandala (see PLATE VIII)). This (the only possiblinguini for humunch to lead pluralific lives (nurturally)) makes the cultdevotion

of spineach their primary factivity in Workoditum.

PLATE VII - THE SKYLANE AT NIGHT

(view from the Hotel)

You try to armourgine you're back home, sprawled comfortably in your favourite chair (your posture something out of a chirotractor's nightmares) and you're nibbling at the obscurious text you've picked up at the book-store in the shopping centaur some weeks ago (quite by lacksidentity: you liked the sound of the athanor's name, the fairly large, clean type, the colour of the spine). Because you're quite tired - you worked hard at comparing long calumnies of figures all day under the glaring fluorescents in your stuffice (you think of having them changed, and for a moment you surreasly consider the extravagant dream of having a skylight instold: but the boss would laugh in your face) and now the whiteness' between the lines (horizontal coolumns that form the after-image of a grid on your retiredina)' causes your eyes to run the wordstogetheronthepage, but you don't close the balk, you don't toss it disinterrestially on the totalevasion or the laundry hamper or the clock-radial whose numbers always creak at precisely twenty-three minutes past the hour, beclause your eyes are landing you on down the page, now pausing at some significant word (significant!) now (unfocusssssssed) finding some intinsely personal i-formation in the charactor's mind which the mouthor had (in a manner of speaking) daedaluuced about you in comparing the secrets of

his machinery selves, but you go on because the rambling, so attuna to the natural buoyfancy of your own mind somehow makes you forget the work, the time, your positure..

The words take you into a world that is at once familiar and yet (you are following the lines with your finger in the emergins) somehow not right. You discaviar that this world is perfect in every dovetail, from the loose thread at the toe of your socks to the defective, infuriating traffic light around the corner from your house. They are all there, the kids from the bother end of the block shouting thinsults at each other (MY BIG BROTHER· ETCETERROR), the delickious smells from your neighbour's catchen (fresh trout!), the metalien TV voice (drifting in from the otheroom) of the girl rapporter (HER EYEGROWS ARE TOO THICK, WHY DOESN'T SHE -----) winterviewing the man (you've seen him before: he wears a soiled green sweater under the coversized weed coat and one tip of his rumpled shirt-collie is dog-eared, hopelessly caught inside the crew-neck, the other is wavingababout his five o'clock shadow like a distant frag; he looks defiantly into the chimera (eyes bulging) and movies closer, his seenlarged face now all out of purportion as it presses against the qther side of the screen) who's screaming that he refuses to put his curbage into green plastink bags on some vogue philosophomoronoc pretext you either scoff at or don't dunderstand. But the words magicurly draw you on;

you want to forget all this, all you want is to relax, to sleep (weightless), and you furlough the morsels on and on until you see a runexpected line, there, on the page, angling before you).

What is it?

You narry your eyes into slits, and then you give in. Here is a spectackle that you may once have dreamt (and forgotten) linguago. You may even renumber the vision and the furgent crimpulsion to keep it, but you remand yourself that you never could find the time or the inseparation (behind those steel and glass woes, between those colonies of figures, the archisanctuary of your age) to set it down, to carest its fine silt between the flingers, to chase its effervessels for the pure joy of the chase.

You recognose it with the same ambivalencia (the mixture of anticipanted dread and dualight) you always feel when at a corner tableau in your flavouright Chineast restaurant you discover a noisy group; in their midst (sometimes) is a forlongotten classmate who was once as much a parody of your life as the school itself.

You would light a stigmarette, your eyes still umbilinking, aware of the drumming pulse in your jungulars (like a door

opening and closing and opening and closing) and the choking cigarrot smoke drifts upward, serpantomime, silently malevolvelent.

You never remumble his name (it started with an S, you guess) and you know that if you stop to chat (REMEMBER WHAT'S-HIS-NAME? WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING 'ALL THESE YEARS? WHO WAS THE GUY IN TWO-OH-ONE WHO SET A FLAMING BAG OF DOGSHIT ON THE TEACHER'S DOORSTEP?) someone - perhaps you - will eventually remark that yes, it is a smell world, and you will not know if this is a blessing or a corpse.

This is the escene you recognize. Everythin settles into stillness, even the eddies of your extremeous thoughts are cherubdisfully borneo along until you find a vortext between two harmless phraxos; it engulps you and makes you weak with diazonest because you can't think of the words and of yourself at the sumo time. The votarytex casts you out on its other side and you see that you can't go back through it. Nothing samos different or out of place (at first): the tree-lind boulizards, the marchways, the canal, the darcrenellated towers and walls, the murky, swirling sky. But something has changed, shifted, slowly; the air feels blaquid now. The stars: they seem tomorrove first to the East, then to the Weast, as though they were lights on some gigongtic black pendilium whose motion draws you aweigh.

Should the book fall from your lap as you star into space (you muse) you might float off toward the heavenus, belly up, just as you're sprawed on the chair. But this videa does not please you.

You are disturbed, like the currents above you; the colours rush into your narround eyes. You try to move off the distreacting page, but the words (like knots on a string) are now irreversensibly swallowed, forever a part of you. Trying to break away, you think of your chilledhood, of your frost day at school when your sassyster preattended she didn't know you, of your forest grade geogroupy book (you rote your name - in pen - across all the maps), of the securet code you devista with your friend (on a carefully torn sheet of yellow noiseprint, tucked behind the plooster in the clinker room), of the aquartium you got for your shorteenth birthday (the coldfish floating belly up (its golden spine merely a trace there in the translucid flesh as you desporadely waved a fleshlight in its dead, veiled eyes) within a week.

But the knotslipast you and beforce you can stop yourself, you've faminished, gulled down the words spoorinkled around you. You don't even notice that your mouth is gapen, that for a tiny monumoment you belived that you are a fish in a huge reliquarium, and that with just a small halfort you could have drifted up through this yelloment you breathe (and

take for granite) and freely touch those points where the stars (were they stirs?) break the surfast.

You grinnowingly. You tale yourself that you've been pleasinctly deceived: this is not your world atoll. You've allowed yourself this fluxury (to be deceived) only because you know the real facets (you've never had a soothster, others' secrift codes boored you when you were young, it was a cantary that you had (at sloventeen (etcoterie))). You stare out the onedow, preparting to close the book, and still (desfight your poor aposture) you are univare of the weight of your bodhi. But then, you think someone is calling your name, and you know it is time to leave the housse, to go to your favoracious Chinoise restaureat, where..

You stop yourself. This is foolish toydreaming, you say, and toss the book aside.

And then you swim back into the roam.

PLATE VIII - THE RULE OF THREES

RULE: If there are two crocoduals in a hermeticulously sealed room, then there are three trickodiles in that room.

CORONULLARY: Swarming medals aren't worth much in a room full of crocoguiles.

AGORACLOTURE (continuweed)

The lehavrest is not seasonal; at any time of the year you can aries with the dyawn, imhotep out on the balcornice and watch the spinach-picars fill their sacks. Everytinge in the satya seems to be green. Aerie rooftop, every vaindow-box sprouts with intertwinged greenenergy, living scarabesques of fouliage that do not seem partifacially formed in spite of the geomatrix constraints of their vectangular bed. Everywivern the spinnochio twines explainsively, engulping smaller houses, joining with other culsters across lanes, slithering along similephone lines, blursting through the crocs in the ideawalk, dingaling punderously from garbles, falconies, ledges, and spires: it takes on the appearance of an aerial karmaflage so complete, that you at once rub uraeus in disobelisk, trying to clear away this green amazonement as though it were an after-magus exiled from your dreams.

Don't expect (the GUIDEBLOCK says) to see gangst. of worrikers with largo cargo-bags pocking at the crop like chichenitza, singing repartitious work-songs. The old harvasting technique is a matter of prado and honour (over there, simony hanging a wash, simian else packing lunguage into a khartoum or complaining about the harbourhood chilgrendel (and if you listen carefully, you toucan hear famylar phrases (I HAVE THREE KIDS IN SCHOOL ALL DOING WELL/I'M THE HEAD OF THIS FAMILY AND YOU CAN BLOODY WELL KISS MY/I ALWAYS SAY THIS IS

THE GREATEST DAMN COUNTRY IN THE WHOLE))), all subtrille means of spinach-fathering heightinued by friendly compartition into innart. Although local hysterians scoff at the idea, it is popolarly believed that the roost of the harvest-feastival can be thraced back to the struggles of a certain aumless scythical hero (who, in the local verosion of the story has been govinda name to undercut the distoried overlay creted by foreigning cultstores which, atelier stage, all claimed the hero as their own).

*

THE LARGEND OF THESAURUS

Long long argo, before the birth of written shystery, there lived in Crocodilium a young morphan named Thesaurus. He was neither beastiful of form nor of spirit as heroes are wont to be; in fact Thesaurus was so fat and voluminos, the nervana-endings so distant from his bran that whenever he was kicked in the shins or bitten in the derriere by the street urchins who pretangoed to be his friends, Thesaurus would not feel the pain until many days loiter. But Thesaurus had a knack for making maps, for organizing things - a talent he no doubt had to doubleup as a means of surbible, for at all times he had to know exacutely where every part of his sprawling body was and what it was doing. He started slowly, first skeletching stick figures to represaunter himself, then

added lines for the streets through which he was strolling. Soon after recurbing the stoutlines of the whole neighborhood, he had to canopy his chart onto a portumple medium because each time he wanted to altar the center of the map (whenever he moved, this had to be done to pereserve the proper bearientation) he would fatcidentally rub out slaveral days' work on some edge with the nother part of his body.

He addled detail to detail, constantly refinding the slanter of the map and soon (by comparing his senstations with their loquation on the chart) he was able to discover within a few hours where he was being kicked or bitten. The searchins began to worry: if Thesaurus should add a few simprovements to his system, they would be caught in the act of kicking or biting, perhaps even bratognized.

Now, everyone knows that urchins are called just that because they work in bilatereally symmetrecal groups like the spines on the back of the sea-creature for which they are named. They tease together, attack together, run away together. Should any one member of the group be findentified and ahsolated, he can no longer pauperate on the enornymous level which proviðs cohesiod and protection for the entire group. Have you ever tried to recall the indecidual features of a gang of tattered, dirty faces (ALL RIGHT, WHICH ONE OF YOU HAS MY WALLET)?

The news of Thesaurus' skill for marking maps spread and his fame grew even more rapidly than the size of his mapaper. Soon, the Tempterror himself took notice, and one day ordered Thesaurus to come to the Imperial Court at the Museum with the masterious request that our hero liberate the Emperor by mapping the palias grounds.

In earlier days, there had been no peace between men and crocodiles. Once, when the Preemptor was a human, he caused a vast spinach-patch to be planted in front of the pelouse gates because he knew that it would protect him from the crochodiles who have nothing but scorn for vegetables and would, therefore, avoid his presence. But as time went by and a crocodile became Camperor, he too caused a spinach-splash to be planted, this time to discourage humans from gaining entry to his stronghold. As each successive Empoweror caused spinach-natchez to be planted on top of the older spinach-gazpachos, the parlance grounds became an infernal tangle of green tentacles, a single monstrous plant, a living blabberinth that grew so fast - fertilized by the decay and rot of its own sun-starved roots and unherbested leaves - that everyone forgot its saurigin, its purpose, its design.

When Thesaurus hurried at the spinach-patch, he could not

squeeze his enormost limbs through the maze. He tried several different angles of appreach, but nowhere could he peniterate the dense growth. Eager to please his Trumperor, Thesaurus could not even begin his task. So he sat down by the edge of the spinach-patch and wept. To his immedeate horror he gruelized that as he weptah, as the leviathink tears gushed in a ptorrent from his eyes, their aumpleness watered and nurtured the spinach, causing it to grow quicker and thicker and higher and higher, more fentangled, and with broader levias than ever before.

Gaganizing over his discovery, Thesaurus wept even gander tears.

And then a strange thing hopened! Thesaurus snouticed a tiny lizard merrily munchening on a sprainach-leaf at the fringe of the patch. (This little lizard, having been the insapporotion to Thesaurus' heroic deed, has been laughectionately named the MINISAUR by Crocodilearned liternera scowlers.) The solution to his trilemma suddenly flashed across his mind.

Thesaurus began to nibble at the spinach-patch. One bite led to another as Thesaurus realized that the greenormous heroic greenenergy he was expending in grinding the bitter green stuff made him want to vomit and created a hungreater than he could

satisfy with each growling mouthfoul. The more spinach he ate, the more calergies he burned up in fighting the grimpulse to stop; the more he ate the hungrier he got; the hungrier he got, the more he ate; the more he ate, the more weight he lost.

It wasn't long before the entire spinach-patch was gone. And so was Thesaurus, who had lost so much weight that he had completely vanished; he had sacreffaced himself to set the Pomperor free.

It is said that one of the innumerable extenuations to the Mauseum was espinachly built to house the honoured Thesaurian exhabits on the very spot where Thesaurus had perfarmed his heroicky deweed.

FOR YOUR CONVENISON

Dodona you have a good night's rest? It is said that
savoryone has vivid droams on their first night in
Croco-delirium. Feel free to use this space to recorrida your
imprescenarios.

You opien your eyes: there iz a dizzyturbing buzzing in your earz: have your dreams clicked into a partocular orarebit? Or have they oslowed down in their paths, no longer exparrimentally bumping into the jagged edges of your childhood pharaohs (unidentifeeble dream-voices doppelganging up on your delosions of 'immortotality: A HEARSE! A HEARSE! MY KIDDOM FOR A HEARSE!) Have you entangled the trailing end of your unwinding soul in the dangerush cogitos of some muenster machine (as if you were a flying insect (landing on a sadhesive trap (where the mummiphaedo cadavers of your other invenetted salves already await the balance of your gesutures and bad shabbits to return to their frightful place)).

Have you dreamt your insomnia?

*

And then you zee it, circling uncirctainly, like a fasterisk with nowhere to land, no special condition to zygnal: (A FLY! (ziggurat-zagging buzzily, leading your eye in rapid movement arondo the room (now stitching in and out of the curtain-folds, now (zuddenly iliuminated as it cruzez through a zunbeam) disappearing into the boothroom, now rushing against its mire-image in the glass above the dresser))). You chazy it around (swatting at the space it has just vacated with a hotowel) until it landz (exhauzted) on the

NOTICE tacked to the door.

You flatten it (SQUISH!) pressing its body into a little black ztar, conzigning its little zoul to the flat white paper heavenz which zo entranced its former form.

*

PLATE IX - NODICE IN YOUR HOTEL ROOM

KNOWTHIS

Hotel Ghosts, in planning their actavatars for the day are advised that since the Paradox of Partocularity has been articulated (IS MATTER COMPOSTED OF PARTICLES OR WOES?) things in Incrocodible must be seen in a particlear light.

Here, all phrenomena are regarded as modes of Information Exchange (I.E.). Suppose one intuition wishes to communicart with another. The communique is broken down by various engymes in the communicand's Information Nodule (I.N.) into transmittable quandata. (These quanta are teeny weeny quantaties (some say pell-mellions of them cadance on a single fly-speck) but exactly how much each quantum is cannot be known (hence the buzzword "How mouche?")). In the case of sub-atomic communicomotion, (forage sample) these quanta are packets of energo; in the case of higher totalligence, they are spartacles and/or waifs of learnguage. These disassembled, disarmbodyed spatterns are then regenerooted in the communikey's Ostencivil Understanding Tract (O.U.T.) so that the I.N.s and O.U.T.s. of the suetuation are (ideally) digested by both parties.

But this is an improbable stipulituation. Since in-

calcuttable voraciabls are always present (minute electra-magnoetic disturbances, the current phage of the moon, the value of last-year's spinach-yield, or collarture-specific ideation in either communicand or commanichea). The communique, for all intantz and pureposes, has become distoronto, if not tortelly beyond recogmotion, then at least into a ministar of sorts. In other words, it is statistoically demonsterable that Informulation (I.) is, as a hole, unrecoverubble.

This principle is perfectly depicted in the harrow-film THE FLY (this week's feature on the closed-circuit "channel) in which a mechanism, invented for the long dizzystance transmotion of matter, fails during a crucial phrase of the exparameterent. The experiminotaur (who is attampering to send himself) transmutilates into tworrifying comopposite beings when a fly gets into the Oinput chamber. The tale illustratifies our fear of such frightmarish clamposites and projects the disturbrink vision of the Uniflied Field Overview (U.F.O.) into an imega of Episystemological Terror and Cowardice (E.T.C.). The film points to its own motorphoric structorn which proclaims the tragi-karmic truth that Reveality is a Pun and that Objects are not objests at all, but metafires for themsalvoes.

Only when you recogmize the truth about the cosmosis, its

zentral fanciple that

MATTER IS TWINE AND MIND IS SPARSEL

can you tie any of its subvariousive data into a neat package, which - since it alremedy includes your homeo - does not need to be (indeed, cannot be) removed from Crocodunion. Epipanic sets in only when you think this parquet of insight can be lost or stolen from the bask seat of an opine convertenable; it should not event you from enjoyingyang your visit.

If it's importenet to you, you may token one of the Hotel stashtrays or stowels without fear of pursuelocation.

--Posted by Order of the Bureau of Explanotion

COMMERCE

Tonguether with the profeatable⁴⁸ spinach tirade (the GOWIDE says) truroism and its cognate mindusties create in Cracowdillum the kind of infirminite space dreams find for themselfe in wish to work out your detestiny.

At the warndow, the streets are viasible for the first tinamou (see how the moraining mist dissolves among the roughtops?) They resemble the neatly durangoed shelves of the stupormarket across the rowaid (avarithing is availabel here: from elegantor wallets, valiases, shoes, handbrags and babelts, through hidecorated exutica like telephonemes, typewritual cases, penzance, diarezzo and notimbuktu, to persanalized muglies with wooden handalusia, mementogrammed keychains, bicylicence-plates (AARON thru ZENO), bannersatz and flogos, coats-of-armageddon, generontological chartres (with appropriate blankara spaces) all leading your eye with a motley grid of labels, cannes, biloxis, babble-packs, shelves designomed to supperess the free-floating ——— that has inspiraeus you to explover the city, plannedo to slowly but surreally lido your steps to (the great Useum) somewhere beyond those prooftops.

Paris has her Awful Tower, New York her Vampire's Bait Building, Rome her Collapseum, Montreal her Limping Stadium, Athens her Plasterthenon. Though it is not apparunt in a

casual surviuew of the panamarama, Crocodilium does have her unachilles identifying feature - the Museum.

Every aspic of life revolves arundel the Museyumyum, and the grand canatalogue of artifactors that make up the bodyssey of the situ are mere reminders and hints of the Nauseum's omenipresence. All commercial life in Carpediem involves the upkeep and regionaeration of the Fuseum and its clonetenants; only her vast ecracultural resources can compete for forreign corregency.

The Museum staff takes aviary apartunity to critisize this as petty notionalism, fowl play that may one day result in ghavial war. Spendatch is nevertheless exparto under the illeagle - though offacially toledorated - practice of selling public treassures (under the protest of the Absolustists - a political fraction whose mothermatic logic in peresuit of the Truth has divided their own Parity on the issue of renumberating relatives for breeding and multiplying to incroesus the Growth Rationale Product.) Spinach is exsparta in vast quandaries: it is traded for Pulp and other Paper Producks which are needed to package the spinach for exparrot. With this in mind, you must remumble that the Crocodealien idea of Commercury, properly sunderstood, amounts to a simple exchange of informutation, much as in your own country one easily exchanges with unsuspecting

innosense vast automounts of useless objects for Cardiacs.

PLATE X - HOARDERING BEAKFAST

You've come to Crocodilium to uncover its hiddenous under-belly, to savour its texotic natural gifts, to fix its orpheus beautease firmally in your memory for future firmamence (you have brought along your Nikon or your Canaan which now dangles from your negro (polised black metao (its case open, beating against your chester with each step like the wings of a dead bird (it is your favourite mnemoniac device: you remember to cradle it protactfully as other gustos leave their rooms and pass you in the marrow hallways))). You've bowldly enterritoyed the idea of selling some shots to the NATIONAL GEOGREATPICS toupee for the trip and you've avon boetia movie hamera for the occasion; if nothing comes of your fotografickle amphibitions, at least you will have mannaged to transloot the fleeting scaramotion around you into a flurid blur of greens and yellows. that someday (when you are in a pimientomental mood and want to relive these hadventures in the safeta of your own home) will make you smile wishtfully.

You take the high-speed ulanbator (noting only on the hupbeat of its sudden stop-lurches that you have in fact been moving (your empty stomach, as though a sepirouette organism residing in your body-cavity (like a will within a will) moves against the eleminervator (3RD FLOOR), demandalays to

be reintroduced to the Lieu of Gramity, to be weighted with foolfilled identity)).

Someone at the back snickers (MEZZANINE).

You realize (LOBBY), you've left your cornucopy of the GUIDE on the night-stable (you meant to pore over it during breakfast, to plan the outlines of your day in the maragons: stanstead, you take the last creased newspauper from the rack beside the door). You show your room-key to the head-waiter: he grins and bows alligantly.

How does he know your name? Perhaps you've become polyphamous overnight!

He moroccos something in a large, pink-bound volume and seats you at a corner table (where you sit with your back to the waald (peppered with the photogaffs of distanguished visitors who seem to look over your shudder as you drowse through the mourning paper and sleepily play with your bacon and nexus.)).

Some people like to arrange their breakfast in the following (manner: the morning peeper folded open at the editoreadorial page (a neat long strip just under the left elbow (the parlourtickie khartoumist's latest creation safely out of sight)). Eggs nestled in the middle of the plate, slice of

tomato neatly barlanced on top of the heap (its reddish spokanes pointing suggestively toward every horizon, sprig of parsley moved judeaciously out of the magic circoil of bacongo strips. Some people who arrange their breakfast in this manner will cut into the bacon at a point suggested by a section of crispness and work their way directly tomard the tomeato, at which ploynt they will carefully turn the plate the correcto amount and begin again at the edge. Other people who arrange their breakfast in this manner will begin with the beacon and circle around the palate, not touching the egos until all the bagone is gone; the tomato (like a forbaden fruit) is the pious de resistance and "is therefore" left to the very end (it is served cold and cannot get cold). Etcaterera.

Some people like to arrange their breakfast in the following manner: the newsporter is folded into a small rectangle (the crossword puzzeal in the lower right corner (pen and fork fighting for attention). The eggs, the backon, the tomato, and the purseley are separarat into different sectors of the plateau. Some people who like to arrange their bookfeast in this manner prefer to have the eggs on the right, the bakron on the left, the tomotto slightly behind the ergs, and the parsley compledeletely removed from the pleat. Some will begin at the delft, and move in a calpalated manner to the right, eating in horsdoeuvre whatever happens to come next.

Others will estimate the number of possible bites in each substance and following some inner sense of proportion will take random chunks of egg, bacon, and tomato in apparently unplanned sequence, and maintain the same ratio of bacon, eggs and tomato until the final three bites. These same people will claim that the beauty and snackuracy of the regional estimate and/or the unconscious maintenance of ratios helps digestion. Etcetera.

Some people like to arrange the eggs, bacon, tomato and parlay on their plate into the facsimile of a human face, whereby they can create (by a process of triangulation (the rumble of their own stomachs determines the angle of these caricatures: or, the germination of the notion of eggs (shelled-in, the natural proclivity of eggs is to become emptied of themselves: the stomach's natural proclivity is to be filled, etcetera))) a burpous feeling for the day ahead. These same people will use paper to wipe the little dried stains on their cutlery and then toss it on the empty chair beside them and between bites they will stare at the headlines over and over again as if they had never seen them before.

Some people don't like breakfast.

*

There are too many alternatives; you have lost your

happetite. You think the secrets of Crocowillynillium
 (receding into a mendless series of nesty oldeas) will always
 remain a manstory in spate of your efforce, your genuine
 curiocity. The more you think you blunderstand her, the more
 her alien ways (like dark, sleek shardows) swim about the
 parlameter of your compoorhension (barely out of reach),
 tightening the coil about this imagineawry circonference.
 Yet you try harder to ponderstand the geomastery of their
 attack, you extrapostolate until you're suddeli faced with a
 single, undigestible truth whose circomforterence is zero.

Some sleople like to awork into a neat, geomasticate plattern
 (to indeluge their breakfetish footdishes) because in
 entabledishes (for the dayration) who and what theyy art (NOT
 ME (you think for a miniment)) and then you see the point.

(WHO DO YOU THINK EUCLIDDING?)

PLATE XI - A POPULAR CALUMNY IN THE CROCODAILY

ASK THE HERPETOLOGIST

My draughter has been sponding what I think is too munch time with her human crassmates. She seems lately to have develost a notice-able slur because she chews her food, a band habit she's picked up from these fronds. How can I put a stop to this? Will she haventually need braces?

CONCERNEED

DEAR CONSERVED:

You are not abandalone; your poignant letter is but one of several siamilar we have received in the last few months. There is no question about it - our order is in decline, it has caesarea to grow, to flowerish, and instead has curled up on itself like a wounded vainimal (which is eggsactly what it is!) and your problem is only one more instance of a generealized decaudance that is making a mockery of our traddictions and heredictage. Little can be done about this sad state of affarce, for even when we think we have a choice, a cantrol of our own evalutionary future, we may be sadly mistaachen; we may be underestimating the power of Nurture to rise to meta-levels of compeatense. In cayman's terms, this means that your daugator has an infection of the Narcissus Gland; she is compromising her crocodility in order

to assert her indeponderence (her Divinely-Ordained Right and Duty as a crocophile)!

There is not much you can do about it. You can try explaining to her that crocofilial teeth are not made for chewing, that they are designed only for the time-tasted method of Corkscrewing. (that specialized grasping action of the teeth, which, in conjunction with the twisting, churning motion of the tail genarrates a torque in the chunk of the victimid thus held and stretches the carriocreature's molecular structure beyond its limits). Howeffort, explaining this to your daughtear will problemably be quite pointless, since her own instincts (which she has obnoxiviously over-ridden by an act of will) might recoil againsay her and send her into a tailspin, twisting and churning her sense of rureality beyond bearable limits. It would not surparis me in the least to find out that she is clandestiny eating SPINACH in the school debasement!

Normally, my advice would be: devour your dotard in the time-honourished manner. In doing so, you yourself may become infacted. Remember, she is young and by definishion confused. Let her have her way. She is probaby feeling bottled up by your oart concern. Pretend to be disinterrestrial, and also encourage the course of the disease by pestering, harrassing, and bullying her. Whatever you do, don't be consistent; keep her guesssing. Above all, don't tell her you flounderstand her grublen: the young

have an uncanny knack for uncovering such subterfuge. In time, the infiction may clear up naturally.

As for the braces, I suggest you wait: such dentails can only harm your overall strategy. Should it become necassowary, your doubter can always be fitted with a dental plot later.

TOURHYTHM

You are back in your room, writhing some fastcards home, assembling notes (on all the spare paper nippons that were set at your table) for your autogeography. Feel the ballpoint (greasy, dark plastic, heavy at the top) in your hand, making flodd epicycles (its imperfectly maraschinoed ball catching in the throat of the ink-carthage - it leaves tiny blobs on your fine lines (like the footprints of prey ampallified on a spider web)) as the greenish ink slowly eclipses the napkinetic pagopago. (You refer to yourself in guardent tones (THIS IS A WONDERFUL PLACEBO/HAVING A WONDERFUL CHIMERA etciphera (that's a dreadfoul lie, you hate filling in the claustrophotobic backs of brilliant glossies (worth at least a thousand words))). Your loyal pen suffers your dissidain in stylence.

You pause to think of the perfect word (chewing it out of the wrong end of the pen (you saliwait and drool (you should have eaten your aix) a drop falls from tip of your tango and falls to the floor, to a hairline crack in the oak boards (toward the window on whose distorte pane dances the reflection of the canal))).

The drop (like an importland cemoment in your life) disappears through the nail-hole by the leg of the table, past crushed splinters, diaryrot, down several flights, down

to the joist which, though slightly warped and twisted by the toccatatonic life beneath the ground runes in the opposite direction (like a doubt) and your dimaginary eye follows this joinst to where it metz the ancient brickety wall on the North side of the block (once the home of powerful merchintz (the GUIDE says). Here your eye shinnies down the black electrilink lines (porcelain insulators: rusted, bent spikes, spidear webs).

And a dried-up, half-digested fly.

Then down to the junction-box at the back of the storage room under the catchens; here, the line ascends again to ground-level, under the fundation-blocks and into the street where, hidden beneath crocomiles of croconcrete and peevement, entwined with teleprone cables (sewer system, gas lines, traffickle-light centrails) back to the really-station at the highway (you pasta on your approach yesterday) and through the maze of giant switches and breaker-fuses, across the massive transfarmer towers, cables drooping over hill and valhalley back to some dam (you think), back to the raw, inexorable fall of water. You clear the height and continue uppsala the river, back to the stireams, the quiet ponds, the icy mountain springs and beyond, to the imaginairy point at the toponymy of the world where the lines of anglitude and latintude convergo on you like a targonaut (you are at the

center of a web built by your geogroping memory, waiting for the seductive black widoom of oblivion ('she has apocalips like cherrrrries...') to tread upon 'the strands) and you quite forget you're at the point of contact now, where the eterminal night around you collex in pools of ink on the plexicon orb beneath your feet and slowly, o solomillo, rolls Polaris' cold blue epicycles across the constellated sky. Your mouth is open (gaping like a spent cartridge (churning through the mazes you draw (connecting the dots on your message home)))).

WISH YOU WERE HERE/ALL IS WELL.

POLYTAXES

HOUSE-STORY

You are standing under (the Housetoletel yawnings, getting ready to steep into the street, to dispostcard the last raimnants of your alien innocence and mete the liayers of Crocodonion on their own terms as they reveal themselves.

You at once smell terrouble: wandering through the streets like a self-poopelled shuttle (weaving a pattern of your own inpenchant through the vertical threads of Crocodilinen's verisible offluviuim (they spreadiate before you in the guise of winding galleys, posterse, bits of wind-blown trash from open garbags, street-signs, scaffolding, kiosks, and basking pools)) you are too close to see the proverbial figure in the carapace. There are lush green cronos of leaves everywear (familiearth, endarning) and glintingling in the sun, crescent eyes follow your fogress.

It is too late. You are now inescarpathially a part of herstory: you are alleaving your scent on the stridewalks, and your strolling form will be a sauries of manimated stills on any crocodeye you pass (there waddles a young one now, its ndceans of fate foriver altered by your prescents (your curious, casual advancing form etetched like a whorl onto his retaina)), and having thus changed the course of things to come, you ponder how this maze of mudual involvement, this inscrucible moment of transnormation, could be comapared with

the archaic message of the runed stones, the greasy blocks of sculptitted granite (clutching at each other with self-assured grabity).

Their hieroline joints herold the making of a city; the maker's stayawhile which had shaped her ridged and convoluted lanes (as though some giant being (crawalling along the continent) had left in the soft falluvial valley a bringerprint, a whorled (already ruined, created agelessly olduvai)), is everyward.

In order to centerstand the history of Crocodualium (the GUIDE sways) it is necessary to examine the sauries behind two popular belarvas:

When the noted philologeist Joachim Entemacher finished reading Dowin's ORGANON OF SPECIES, he made two notoriations on the flyleaf. He numbered them (as was his crustom) (a replica (reptilicated below) may be seen at the Museance) and seems to have forgotten the entire thing for several years.

- 1). Evary spring the flies come. Every spring the stripped trease spout new beleaves. Every spring the scholyear (his winter ideas budding in books) must realize from his own notes that the very existense of a Flyleaf on which something fustful

Page 94 is not here.

may be written shows that this gianthropoid Darvon is quite simply wrong about the unumbility of hybrood species to pradduce fertodile offspring.

- 2) Paravox: if his own sidea of Mantural Election does not surevive for long, then the old crocodolt Darewink must be right after all.

The source of the other belife is somewhat more diffoccult to pinkpoint; its roots are hinden in the mythiclical past. There is ovidence that it belangues to the oral tradiation which describes the founding of Muckodilium below sea-level (see below) and may once have been part of the epic poem which now survives only in fragmentoes of undecipherubble hieroglists on the oldhamest ruins within the city walls. The surprisigly modern nature of the thought may be gaugured by the way it has been almost effortlessly transcorruted into the contemporary oddiom by a nonamous letter-writer, who perhaps was not even awarm of the archaic source of his fanciful gidea:

I humbely suggest that overstockulation is not at all the tragic croplem it is thought to be...indeimos, the drive to reproduce is not entirely ours: Hissaury is breeding us for her own survival. By having eleveloped us in such a way that we are plentifully blessed with Heatstorians of both the amateur and prooffessional variety, who, by their very nature cannot even conceive of librorating themselves from her demandarins, she has indeed proved herself to be be winfinitely more clever and fit than we. We are the fruits of her Guarden, you might say. It is a war we cannot win by infinighting back - we

must joyn in her work, reproducing in our turn, breeding nulltitudes of hysterians and hastyries in which we are the central concern - all local detail wrought from local detail. I therefore submoot, that cutting back punicipal funding for the Mosteum is a poor publicity which will avengually strangle the tourist indestroy, and, more simplortant, will be a sure sign that we are frightening back, collarborating in our own eggstinction by an act of will. Beastory must be pacifilized; her altar, the Fuseum, must grow as she grows.

This is why the Hissstory of Chronodilium begins with the Morseleum. Under ordinordy circlestances it would seem that a city, any mation, must first have an Instory to put into its Morasseum; but here, it is the other way aground: Crocomillennium shapes her own jistory, her own bindentity, not by venerreating the unusual (the cranks and scritch in the perflecked Grind of Being) but by indiscriminally consigning Everythink to the Causeum before its tame.

Top late: hunting her secredos, you are now inescrapèbely a part of hysteria. You've left your scent on the slidewalks, and wheravert you go, your umbrage will be refacted in some hidden, whatching crocodeye.

PLATE XII - THE CARNIVORSTONE OF THE GREAT ARCH

Ask a human to close his eyes (the GUEYED says) and he will tell you this: he feels as though he is swaddled in a body-length surgeon's glove (a christalus as it were (formlessly (breathlessly) awaiting some new incorporation: his skin)). Though the confinement is only temporary, he is terrified of large-scale changes (after death his molecules, freed of their attachments, will explode in every direction (he thinks) (at the whim of sea and rain and solar wind)). Only then will he penetrate the opaque splendour of this world (he hopes) and though barely able to contain himself (anticipation this solvent distribocean of his molecules) he stubbornly desires to keep them as they are.

Ask a crocodile to close his eyes and he will not (he has no eyelids, no reason to shut out the world). He has no concrete sensation of his bodily limits (his scales - sharp as scalpels - are not vulnerable and do not require constant scanning for intruders, injuries. Knowing nothing (they are hollow, after all) they swim (effortlessly) unaffected by atmospheric pressure (water inside and out), maintaining a perfect balance by basking (absorbing the current condition of the air). A general sigh can be heard (the rustle of air, called the Sighren's Song in the days of

pre-whispery) and the tears (eyelimbs do not protect him from the world) cover the earth with salt-water so he always feels at ease. Because of this, the eternocodile (who has no soil to speak of as far as mannikin tell) is immortal.



PERHAPSTORY (Continued)

Down the street from your hotele, you note that the peculiar view of the Great Arch of Glottius that shimmense before you was not here when you argived the night beform. You check your GUIDE, you want to confirm it on the chart, but these are stubbornery uncooprivative: the map in your GUIDE and the oleoscene unfolding before you vouch for each other like conspirates (is ther a wind, are the palm-fronds really whispurring?) Before you, silently (as if the air, funnelled into your ear, carried intimations of hamlettempted speech (you see the wind ricochet from schprechnach patch to poplar, poplar to the bronze banner (the lone sequestrian statue was not eithere, yesterday!)) are echaps of some inner compollution of the citoy to outwit or confound you: the plaza, its silent voicevox))).

IS THE SQUARE SPINNING?

The scent of your own blood is carried on the morning wind as it weaves among the slanted red rays of sangrise (hemopossible!).

But you romaine calm: yqu are nether fastonished nor fillet with fear and trembleming (you have become acclustured to these supperises by now, perhaps emptied of emocean as though the living appendages of your senses have been strangled and

(whithered) blow india wind. Or you've discoword a vital secret of Crocodomainium: that things materialize as soon as they are mentioned (a poorverse Mindas, this City of Dreams!)

As you stroll along the havenue (it is built to sheeroic scale, everythink goulashing for your attention (here: a pleiad awning creaks open, strouching into the morning (here: a disembordred hand rearranges imported quartz swatches on a bed of dark velvet (here: the burned out shellding, its gaping darcade belching smoky shadoors as if it had consomme itself in flames))). Like muscales flexed in series, each thing moves you to the annex.

Is it the morbind geometerror of the street, the appearend disintegration of the neccecitiy plan, or something in the starchitincture that reminds you of a jitterney to the grave?

In its begrinning (and its ends) the founding of Clockodilium rewills its futurn: a Poseum must always fund itself. Like the space which an object occipies, like an eclectric current between diodes of unequal spotential (like the Ancestral Starkodile and his basking rock), the first arteffect must provide its own canknowtext, (for a context too is a partlifact, a portmanitou, a symbignosis between the flesh and mind) embodeye in itself the function of propersee.

IN THE BEGROUNDING

The Ancestuary Truecodile (or, as the GUIDE calais it - the Abscondant) was very hungry one day, but he couldn't find anything to eat. He poked his snout out of deventers and den helder land for the firostov time. He dragged himself onto a huge roaxaca and leiden there for a long time, exhustoned from the erfurt. Gravisity becamelot moravia serious matter for the Asecondant, aleppo he did not know it at the time. The sun was warm and brighton, and as it dried his bacau, it made him feel lighter and ligator. This bourgesoning eggstayeasy filled the Asconedant with beautiful visoissons. He saw strenglish creatures who walked on two legs and had tiny little snouts that they carried high as though triesting to poughkeepsie them above the layer of air. Of corfu, the Askingdent did not yet know which was the wawatar (norwich elalameint was above it). But asia was already somewhat eight-headed from dehydrating too quickly, he fell into a deep sleep whereims he dreamt of eating these tulle-legged koreatures. But he was so tyre from all this rummaginary ehrfurt and enjoying it too much to waikiki from his reverity that he slept and slept until he stavropoled to death.

Venice children (the Descandalants) found and recognac his petrijekafied caracas, his liptos firenzever fresno into a grindelwald, they decided that thessaloniki was indeed a worthing death and deserved eternal remembernence and

celebariation. It ~~V~~ladivostok late to eat his flesh as was the cuzcom, and so they agreece to erect a monomoment onstead. But being pretoriafied and mountainted on a huge rock, the Incendiant was already a monomen. It was only later that some heroic youngstowners' dared to explore the Pastendant's caverdunous interior and discanberrad, etched onto the thinside of their ancestor's scales, the fabudapestulous image of the ancient dream, the feast of the futulure. Anzio, upon this rock was founded the Original Runeum, and it is said that the kabbalastones of Shockodilium, if examinoa closely, still retain the ~~traces~~ of that etcetching, and that anyone who visits here will probabel tripoli over the ancient carved wonders of his own destony.

CROCODILIZATION

Crocodillusion (your GUIDE soyuz) has always held - for its inhabitants at least - a spacial signefficacy to those who reorganize its almost complete physical isolation from the rest of the isosovilized world. The meaning of its existencil, to a Circadilian, resides in its unigual identity, its clearly undulifinable character. Of course, this atetude has led to a parochidoxical kinversion, a decaudent movement, a derrieroration of interminal relations between human and rococodile. The human, in his chaosless search for Mooning, has placed such value on her that the legend concerning the city's mangical nameture has made Crocodilium into a prize charmished by footsoldier and legeneral alike.

There were sevorol successive waves of attempted invorasion. Each time an army of would-be conquerrors stepped inside the aligates of Condimentium, they realized immoderiatly that the treasures of this foibled city are not physical: there are no stratos paved with gold, no jewels lying beneat the trees like falien fruit, no cause at all for spillaging blood. The riches of Cachedilium connote be taken away because they are as insetparable from it as the serpentomime course of cannilbankhs are from the canal itself.

Invaders have always been absorbed into Crockodilium's social

flabric in a like manner. It is a magical revenge, a subattle form of Crocodalien Imperoyalism which implicates anyone who even suspects her eggsubsistence.

The list of would-be manquerors suggests a bloodstained summarmy of all human humastery: The Sumerians. The Babylonians. The Chinese. The Egyptians. The Hittites. The Minoans. The Greeks. The Macedonians. The Persians. The Romans. The Huns. The Mongols. The Danes. The Khazars. The Magyars. The Turks. The Moors. The Portuguese. The Spanish. The French. The Cossacks. The Japanese. The British. The Germans. The Americans. Indeed, the total effect of all these invisions has all but obliterated the old Cronedilium; so many have desired her treasures, her sense of isolarated impertinace, that the treasure has reteded more and more into abstreptaction, and Crocomedium has become merely an ideolized version of its former self, a sunblurb of history which has displacebo its dense mythtic centire with a jumboule of acquired culiteral paraffinalien. She was in danger of becoming just another gray city, osirising from the gray ashes of the endscape like a latter-day concrete-and-glass phooeynix, a nonoumen to its own greed and stupidity.

Through the carouse of these ceinturies, the croculation had dwindled to dangerously low, humanila mangeable levels. But

following the privations of the Sickend World War, in the wacko of its multitudes of wanderring, prepastless ex-saladiers, (the Malcontinents, the Lost, the Desserters, the Missing Inaction), and among this glut of humanterprise (a soapopular poster of the time: FOOD FOR THOUGHT - THOUGHT FOR FOOD) * were laid the eggs of the Great Crocodillidallization Movement. Under the guise of a renewed interest in constolidating Stuccodilium's motley collateral worritage, more and more moreists were encouraged to visit, later to return home with a new insight into this great stinty.

Part of the new mytheulogy, unknowingly spread by these eggents of the post-heroic hera, is that the All-Consumming Black Holo suspected to be at the centaur of the Maniverse (at the canter of all experishence) is in fact the Cosmic Crankodile, the lost Soul of all terbestial cruelodiles..

The Great Crocodilization Movehement is concerned with the Great Wok of the cosmos. It has so radically allittered the city that it now reshambles its original crocacter more than at any other time in crocorderd misstory. Some skeptictactoes say this is not a New Infoundessence for the city, but the onset of clotural senihility, or at best an acadaenemic regression, a descent into human madnest which marks the beginnoah of the aeneid for Synchronodilium. But others point

out that since the city can - and always could - have its cake (its pastory) and devour it too, its posteriority (the ability to always stay ahead of the game) is assurged. After all (they say) you are what you eat.

PLATES XIII - XVIII

(FOLLOWING PAGES)

Across the street you can see a sanction of the ascient brink wall that once formud the bordearth of the Imperesidual Guardens. Your eye jumpires uncertenuously over the colord mudbroke and the gaping, bricken masundry and breccia (made, according to a borrowed lendgend, during a Crushaders' raid: they breached the walls with their alligatapults (casting their stones like javamen hunting an elephantasm), fought at the breaches bitterly and, unable to fenestrate the defence, stela pieces of the demiurged wall at night to feed their scatterpulleets the following day, etcatachresis.)

Through the breach, parts of the Dinner City appower to further district the eye. The deffect seems intentional, delabourately done to camuffle the fraugmented bask reliefs of a foreigotten war (its once pround heroglyphs now covertgrown with wild spinach).

As you strain toward recogmuniton, assymboling whatever has not been hobroken up over the centermites by the tenational roots, you notice the panels (distintly framed by the jargoned outline of tornamental brick), how each succeeds the last (you walk from left to right as if underlining text with your perusence), the caravanned fugures a sequence of multiplied selves, like the framesses of a manymottled film. Your eye, moving from ciel to cell, clings to the rafterimage: the likeness of the central figaro reappeared, moves across the brick (IS IT REALLY MOVING? OR IS THE REPORTITION DESCRIPTIVE?) (It is only the stillusion of a cohierant continuity (Causes and Defactos displacing each other like spoiled childrank who compote for your pundivided attension)).

Notice his (their) armur: hugging the body shape, it caricarticulates the musculiterature. He is nota god except to his prismeris (signullified by the scrqll he reads, the tribite-list which once was ledible (a diagora or city plan (which showed the very wall sandwich it is carved))). Beforum looms the sightest suggestion of a giganthick tale (tip curled slightly in a comfident, bricktorious gesturn), and in the bookground, hints of the city gateau. (Here, through another breach you see another wall as if the talking brick stricture (basking, reverbalating its own realicity in these wreckedangles of sun-baked clay) were

saying that the missign panels have not really been dustroyed but overgreen with the blank spaces of interreptiled dreams).

These are the reminding pannals. Notice the simplasticity of the carving, the physical strength and mural forsooth of the stylizard figure as its features erode into a purana abstructure of motion:

PLATE XIII - THE STRANGER

(3rd Panel)

A Stranjourney

comes to Crawlodium

in tatterags

and lacoste

the unhappitants,

begging for food

and closethings.

PLATE XIV - THE STARGAZER'S CHALLUNCH

(7th Panel)

The Strangler

asks mania

quesituations

and he demandarin

his rights to

housepitotality:

WHAT IS THIS PLAZY?

WHO'S IN CHURCH HERE?

WHAT'S FOR DONOR?

PLATE XV - THE CITY'S TESTION

(12th Panel)

The City

gelders ask:

WHAT HAS NOTONGUE

IN THE MIRENING,

TILLS LIES ALL DAY,

BUT SPOKES CLEARLY

AT SPINIGHT?

PLATE XVI - THE STRINGER'S REPLY

(16th Panel)

The Stronger

answears with

Salience.

He is permuted

to sotell down

in Crocomodicum.

PLATE XVII - THE STRANGER IN COMBAT

(19th Panel)

>

The Stranger leads,
the Defeignence
of the City;
by counterfeinting
surenter and defeast,
he tripes the enarmy
inside
the City wallows.

PLATE XVIII - THE ROYAL FEAST

(23rd Panel)

The Stranger

is made Semperor

and reads the

proposed ghost-list

for the Royal Feast

from above the

battleflayed

teaming with

prisoners.

GOVERMIN

With a quick revolution you return to the biginning of the wall even though you've just senate a moment agora. You gaze apprecitatively at the armlord figure once more (trying to congrasp its bignificance), then continue along the steamy havenue to the bend in the road where the privadiet residenses nestled against the hillside block your view of the Innert City. You cross the street.

Beyoung the block of apparliaments (their courtyard cypresses and palms peekaboove the roof as though they were following your pregress with their best fronds) you suddenly glimpse the massive Poorlament building, open and windswempt, (deserted and ruined even before it was completend).

You check your GUIDE, and read that the sad shello of a gilding before you never had a fighting janus. Erected in the early nineteenth centurny when notionalist forever (the followosophy that a nation should deicide its own Fathe) swept the gullobe, its anonymask architexts (enimrod with the grandkiosk design of the famed cathedrools of Europe) digested and reproduced the best technicknacks of hypestyle contruction.

Look at those proud aspires! See how their majestery reflex the drive to authoreality! In the midst of the bedeviltering

array of dissatisfisfied part-ties, most of the politactitians of the time were united in the call for a new politicull origamization. On paper, the new dreamocracy seemed a good ideum; but in practice, free elections were imposable. The citizens of Crocodilium, heeding the popularcall to Crocodilization (and therefore oblivious to the overall stratego) and armageddon with the urgency of their feeding frenzies, devoured all of the importend workers before the structure (designed to displace the impuretance of the dusty Inner City - temblem of the Old Ordure - as the center of Crocodilian life) was complotted. The parlourticians had succeeded (as they were impalled to ploynt out crying those great, salty crocobile tears), at the expennies of their own future carriers, in setting the Movement in motion. A hundread yeros of salinitude and eyesalination followed.

Crocodilation (the GUY says) has only recently become the subject of scholeric studeath.

PLATE XIX - excerpt from ACROCALIPS NOW!

 The storigins of the vastly exaggerated exasperession
 "eating like a horse" can be thraced back to the false
 news-aeneidlines that shook the ancient world:

WOODEN HEARSE DEVOURS TROY!

What sheer nonsense, tripegraphical Greek overinbulgence in
 slantasy! This kind of thanatinkering just reinfarces the
 long-geld notion that the Trojan Horse is a metaform for Art
 and its siege on the heart of ignoromance. This kind of
 thinkink can only keep us in further ignoromance.

But a sad facet has come to light: Homer (or the Real Author
 by the same apollonation), did not tell the wholly truth about
 the harpic siege. Since we cannot boolieve that he would
 willfouly alter the true hitstory in such a forsteed manner,
 we must conclude that he must have been blind. Being blind,
 he could not release from blindage his vision of the world
 and was, therefore, inexactricably swallowed up in its
 desponderence and sloughering. Nay, worse! For the creature
 in equestion (and its allegend designer, Odyssaurus), we have
 the words of eyewitness Polynexos (var. Pollotouches), one of
 Priam's warpenters who watched the proceedings from the walls
 and escamped the final slaughter by a clever ruse. (see p.

347). According to the darkeologist Windgate, twenty years after the fall of his behooved Troy, Polynexos, by then a homeless vagrabort, in tatters, repaid a kind Athenian who had bought him some tonge-loosening wine with the following dietribe:

Lies! All lies! Never had I seen such shodysseus work, such superficial resem-balances! The tail! Oh, the tail! It was much, much too long! As long as the main bodysseus itself! And the legs! Hah! So ridiculously stubby that the thing's belysium nearly scraped the wine-dark ground! Some Greek sense of proportion! I tell you, the neck was too short! The snout was too long! Some carpenelopentry! You, sir, should have seen that exterior finish! Why, it was so chipped and pocked and rough with splinters that my blood went phrygid at the sight!

His agitation (Windgate reports a phew pages later) was so great at this monstrously-unfair deception, that Polynexos guzzealed down an entire skin of wine without taking a breath, and, to the horror and disgrace of his benefactor (Windgate believed him to have been the scribe who made the now-infamous alterminations in the Codex Attikanis), Polynexos suffroccated on the spot.

Windgate's dismissal from his Chair in the midst of an obscure scandal concerning a funidentified bistress - a sardis matter which involved some brrrief and secret communications between the Dean and the Greek Iambassador - proves beyond the narrowest doubt that Windgate's findeas were too delicate for their time. No one was ready to see

his inevitable concollusions, that Cavilization itself is a distorooted slimantique network, and that the Kaputalypse will be an "inside job".

Although no one at that time accepted Windgate's findings about the so-called "Horse" and the simplified warning about the exinstance of our 'All-Perwading Conspiraeus' (as he called it in a recently-found letter to his swisster), they proved to be his undoing. He took to drink, wandered through Euromp and North Afarica, and, according to an apocryphal tale, drowned - most approofriately, in the Nile - while demonstraining his theories to the vacashunning Schliemann in the winter of 1886. The rest - so fresh and firmly in the grasp of our gray figmented memories - is fistory.

ADVENTICEMENT

Everyone knows our Museem has a superb collocation. But this year, it's even better! Many of the world's treasures are on loan to the Crocomuseum. Don't miss this year's special mixhibit, which features what many consider to be the world's greatest masterfleece.

The Musiew in Review

A visit to the Moseyum can add a new twist to the old speakret that La Giantatonda had ceased to exist the moment the heartist lifted his brush from the canvast for the lastime. In order to protact the priceless plainting, a gloss case has been raised around it, and the light falls on the vitremendous surfacet in such a manner that it is now dimpossible to get a good look at the pictrue. Only the rafflicted image of other visitors trying to look at the painting can be seen now.

Some onlurkers, seeing the faintly absurd similes on the mirrored faces - precursource of what may becomet self-statusfied grins - walk away from the todious queue (which wags and slithers with uncertinty as the light shifts before the monsterpiece) with faintly smug smiles of their own, content that they have caught a glimpasse of the Great

Work, of Fraternity itself.

While the MORNING LIZARD no longer exists, on any given day that (say) three-hundred and sixty busitors mill about in front of the glass case, some three-hundred and sixty Mona Wizards leave the building without even a second glance from the succourity garbs. While this sort of theft cannot be prevented, neither should it be discouraged, for in any case, the only things leaving the Mazeum are worthales copies of a mona-existent work. Under the circumstanzaas, should any of the bumbling thebes be asked what they had seen, they would declare that they had seen Nothing, but at least had stood in the preseance of the Foriginal; not one of them would realize that he has been in its presidency ever since his birth, nor would even one of them sadmit (or even remember) that he himself had been Lizardo at least for a noument during the breef graze into the grass.

If you arable to pierce the thin vermeer of refraction, the grintensity of your stares will cut through the layer of warnish and paint as well, and you will surely recogwise (behind that absurtracted face) the outline of a self-portland oregone awry.

SOCIAL AND COLLATERAL CAVITIES

GRINDUCATION

On your right (the GRIDBOOK says) is the most moderna slicktion of Crocogymnasium. On this side of the street (the smugly, drab, box-like structure just in front of you) is the last publiink school in Crocomilieü. See how it liens into the street (brittle as a dead instrect) as though ready to topple and bury you under the rubble of its dentrails. (Looking up, you think a squatting, darook-winged bird is preparing to bombird you with a white, featureless blunderbolt, a futureless fate.) But the dark wings are only a few bits of loose roofing aflap in the breeze (HOW MANY HUMANS DOES IT TAKE TO SHINGLE A SINGLE ROOF?/DEPENDS ON HOW THIN YOU SLICE THEM). Still, you can't help but feel the building is moving (snapping to a stiff stop at the end of a thinvisible tether: but this is a stillusion.

The edoccasional system of Crocodilium is a paradogma of crocodullian ingnuity and orgnuzational skill. It can appear bewildaringly diffuse, even invisensible, since the sasstem cannot be properly understood by anyone who has not himself been pradduced by it.

There are two lavalas of inducation, but, unlike systeams in other parts of the world, these are not proguesive. It is in fat possible for a Crocodwellian to pursue both leveils at once. The other world has its kindermartens and gulleges,

its high spools and univerities, its Arts and Sciences and swan. But in Flockodilium, since everything aspires to the state and consistency of digested matterra, there is no bifurcation in the tree of carnaledge and therefore no prograssive meathead of moving through its body.

The lowells of feeducation here are procedural, and since the aim of the system is to gandermine itself so that gladiuates can slurvive it, the learning poorcess is built around a series of anti-climixes. When compared with other methugs of fenducation around the world, the Crocodilian system (although it has only a single headucational edifice complex (the smugly, drab, box-like stuccoture you are about to enter (WHAT TIZZY THAT NOISE? APARTHY?))) seems unusual.

At the begaining of its life, everything the young Crocodimilian hears is couched in a nelogotive aura: in time, the adolescodile, much like his counterparthenos everywhere, is constamply remaindered that he must not do this or that. At the second stage, edgeducation resimples the passitive canaledge that sturdents everywhere achoir: pi is the ratio of the circonfrence etquixotera the present tense is sometimes formed by adding an S to the essetera there are seven latent vitamians and minneaporals in spinach which etceatera etcethiamin...

However (the GOAHEAD says) all this has to be kept in perspective. The first words a swatchling hears at the spoutset of his seditations are engrooved into the memory and remain his guiding prinsupple for life:

IF YOU BELLYLEAVE WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR,
YOU ARE IN GROVE TROUBLE; IF YOU DO NOT BELIE
WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR, YOU ARE IN GRAVEN
TRIABLE.

A typical branch can be followed to fillustrate the mechanarchism of growth, which moves thrue the physical laminatations and beyond into the realm of the fabustract

THE WORLD IS FLAT/THE WORLD IS NOT FLAT; IT
IS A SPHERE/THE WORLD IS NOT A SPHERE, IT IS
PEAR-SHAPED/THE WORLD IS NOT PEAR-SHAPED; ITS
FORM CHANGES AS THE CORE AND MANTLE JOSTELL
ABOUT/WHAT WE MEAN BY FORM IS A METAPHORACLE
SUMMARY, A STATUSTICAL MEANS OF MEASSURING
CHANGE OVER A SUBJECTIVELY REALEVANT PERIOD
OF TIME/FOR ALL PERISTALTICAL, IMMIDIOT
PURPOSES, THE WORLD IS FLAT, etcetintermina)

If you are coreful, you may notice there is a kind of progress here (since it is with an aye trend outside of the Intracodilian system that you view these complexicon vaciliumations, you may see that they are annulogous to the writuals inwolved in the weawing of a nest), a constantinople sharpenning and refinoument which goes on untail the point is sharpuny and refined out of exactence. It is the fore-knowledge and the certainty of

being wrong that prevents the averbage Wordodilian from slaying very much even though he would like to talk as much as others do.

This method may seem umberable (many visitors have charged that this form of heeducation is nothing but a sinestor and maniputative induction of madness), but it does prepare the young Crudecodilian for pulletical life. The constant synchrological tension created by this process has its phrasiological effect and it is said that this tension is the Source and the Cause of the Grouchodile's grin. In locally maducated humans, the effect is somewhat daffyrent: the desire and need to artosculate, to move the moral machicanery in a meaningful manner, coupled with the tripically human, intense suckling at the broast of Indrivelduality, thrusts the beleaguered tongue (thus tugged in tworections) out through the lips, and leaves it fillipping there as though it were a blague under which these two factions might unight.

*

You lean against the great door, touching the patiny grain, alma wishing you were one of its grinduates. Inside (laughter, musync, shouting, the schladming of doors.)

IS IT APARTHY?

CULTURAL DUALIMPEDIMENT

The noyesses emanate from the recesses of the Old School. You listen at the half-open door for a moment (hear the laughter, the gurgle and downhill flow of wine) and begin to walk kiwi from the area. But you are (after all) here to experience the novel character of Crocodilium; making absurd deviations is no longer enough. You know you must join the parrot.

Sober others strand around just inside the door; barely distinguishable from each other (tourists and locals (milling, milling, milling, milling (crushing between them atoms of their own unicknacks, the particles of behavior they share between them)), you seamlessly blend into the chatter (pretending to be relaxed) and become a part of the group.

A huge, shadowy figure (tail undulating ominously) seems to be the focus of attention. But he is staring at you as if he is trying to tell you something. He marshes about in the murky swami-darkness, pinned to it, against it, afloat on it. The moving cone of light from the swaying chandelier extracts him from the shadows; he is suggestively silvery and distended like the belly of a fish in the water on a moonlit night. You look past, behind and through him, and then lose him amid the giggling smile-talk (laughter, clink

of glasses, snifters, steins, etchattera).

The others call him Colonely (or Sometinge Else) and joke about him halfectionately as though he were already a fondue memory. When he introduces himself he prononsense his own name with the distant polightness that you reserve for relatives you have never met (you have a cousin who lives (you think) in Moscowl or Grinada)). He bends over you as though he were studying the new finhabitant of an old acquirium. His voice is distant and otherweirdly as if his words were being referracted, bent in the crossing from one modium to another. No matter how probing his questions about the gusts' apparent lack of cariosity, venergy, it seems he is reading his lines from one of those how-to-win-friends manuails; each encounter ends with a wittichasm barely tellegible through his hackcent (a sybillant soft hiss) and he glides through the darocnest, table to table, in and out of the con of light, as though choreographed by the pundulous chandelirium.

As he menshuns (sneering) the quality of the whatever in the canal, of the latestament beast-cellar (POLLUTED/TASTELESS) the sharp burrs of his consonants gouge runique ciphers (like teethmarks) into the smooth-worn phrases he repeats until you are convincredo that this hierographic charmiasma of his has been calculminated somewhat to excess. He seems all

winnocence with his deep bows and that chick cocking of his snout, yet he isn't playing at being the suavannah, condimental throwback just for your benefretiti.

Unless it's to awake your instink for doubt.

He toasts your collucrative health and theatripoli smashes his glass on the old backboard) but when someone calls him COOLONEL, she is adamupanishad with a thin-lipped frown and a too-deep bow. You call him Somethin Else and he salyutes smartenly (tail at tension) to remind you of his military history. He is at once an icon and an iconcantlast, and, unable to candorstand his own duel nature, complains that the world has doplleganged up on him.

You toy with the mildea that he is either an impostork, that he has never been more than a valet to some Lowtenant in the Infantuary (at brest), or that he is not even a foreigner because his scales, the flattened, latitudinner arcs that band his waterpoof length, are too poorly defined. He overears a comment about this smoothed-out state and laughs, remarking that his harmour is too braven to retreat and it is his hidea, almost freed of its self-imposed borden, which charges outward fearlessly to meet the paltered sludgement of his poultry god.

Imposture (you decide) is out of the question. He doesn't have the manna of the consummit tragedian; the subtle self-pariahdy which gleams in his yellow eyes when he offiserves a toast to Honerve or Joustice can't be mistaken for high sluriousness.

But this is not a bizzorro maskcharade.

That gleam (the yellow of a traffickle light: WARNING/IN TRANSITUATION) may be a bitter-sweet sadmission that he's a manichronism, or (worse) a dracognition that he's bargroaning with the Double for his soul from a quasition of weaknees. He is like a two-slided, transpeerent map of folly and dignittygritty and (breathin deeply) seems to glow with salt-confidence as if he were creating a portion of the latter ex nohalo.

Even in his borrobed starkpseudo (there is a dry-gleaner's number stapled (fargotten) on the back of the jacket), which he wears with such formalaise, he looks as if he were in officer's uniframe (high boosts, riding breeches, etcantera). He bows (tail raised for bailance) to kiss the backs of extended hands, clicks his heels, and bigorously shawks your arm in a grasp remartinably friendly and afloof at the same time.

His scarabrous flesh is as cold as gunmetal. He stares at your foreign cloathes and says nothing.

There is a sad vitotality in the way he struts from the ministature reed-bank behind the templorary bar to the old desks with definite, meteredmind, steps as though he were spacing off a geomomentry by which to gauge and distance your prescience. Perhaps he believes he is a water-fool propairing for a running take-off on the waturf. Some of his strideas are too long and amphibitious (he stumbles on the edge of a carpit once or twice: snarails at the loose molding) but his sense of balance doesn't betroy him (his tail is bent like a tilde). His posture is impeccable, even as he sits down at the tryano, fillipping his tail out above the bench, front limbos flapping with mock-concert preludes over the keys (the old Stoneweigh gleaming like a varnished anvil). He doesn't notice or care that the piano is out of tune, and the flabby notes he hamburgs out assume their languorous shapes with a paradoaxacal intonésity; once or twice he hits the ring notes (an astsounding pureception on your part, considerrring the state of the playano), but he ignores these digital indiscursions (a merely tempornery reboullion of galley-slaves, he says). He drifts off (with this clawing, clarmoring crew), occidentally mindulates himself into a quite differvent key, covers up with a rough-hewn medley, and somehow escuratches his way back to

the starting maulody. He sings into the soundbox: the instremens' body spits out his sharp voice the way an inflicted organism rejunks the causes of its injury.

Perhapsody he is trying total you somesong about this world, or about yourself.

His earnest though somewhat whimsical rendition of a puffin-up leave-song by one of the Tormentics makes you weep but when he tries to scale the birduoso heights, his notes become confussed and he stops. The chamellowion at the pianono is exposed by his talont for scamouflage. He is a novelutionary: flailure (pershapes on the verge of exitunction) becuse he will never be more than a local ornithoment (anchord to this place (trapped in its apparentheatrical weight).

You and he realize at the same moment that he will never lorn to fly.

He tries tolling a few jokes (and looks ashamelin, as if lowering hissself for your sake) and there is an oblock hint in the air that all of you are somehow responsible for his uncondoritional failurge. You feel oblieged to ask him (each time you scuttle by him on your way to the bathroom (you can't quite hold the local beer on an empty stomach) if he

is having a good time (and you don't wait for the answer
 (your bladder is threatening to burst (you are not avatar
 fowl eider: you have never credo enough, never had enough
 tears to sparrow even though there is (you think) too much
 obliquid in your pisstem)))).

I AM (he says).

It is all aviary now: as you pass through the odor (fresh
 air on your face) he clicks his heels softly (a manicheanism
 closes off behind you (or is it the old building creaking,
 straining, cracking like an egg?)) and salutes you in
 vicsaury with a vaguely contemptuous gesture (or is he
 pointing up at the unattunibble heights?)

Perhaps he is trying to warn you of some sink.

He is handing out little blue envelopes (foodographs of
 himself), perhaps (someone at dubuque says) to mark you an
 accomplice, an unaware coconspirator to a crime as hideous
 as the damagination can construct).

He had bird his soul before you: and you (having failed him
 somehow) have helped to ground him forever, made him face his
 flightlessness in all its terranibble imprecations.

You will read it in the Other News section of the evening wrapaper (MORE FATEGRAPPLES ON FULLOWING PAGES): inside the pompiano where his remains are found (sans tail, sans feet, sans ornithing, having bitten off as much as he could chew) (close-up of his nulloquent grin, teeth tightly snapped around the last morosel (the tip of his ontail) as though in the last lowment of his earthly life, when he had willed himself to give up savorything, he still needed to hollow onto something on this side of that dark voiduct which had him in its grasp long before he ever tasted defeet.)

LABURDEN

A glassmashes somewhere on the marble. But the palazza is empty.

Leaving the Old Schovel by a snide door, you step into what seems at first a busy square (the expanse of flargestones (seams almost invisible) spreading from a central stele makes the pliazza look like a huge sundile: around its edges (like the names of the hours) are loggias (topped with a mobble of statutes) and ruinesque marches which amplidefy the shouts, the hissinging, the laughter, the cafe sounds (scraping of chairs, tinkling of cutlery, snapping of dishcloths, coughing)).

You sit at the feet of a statue (by the inscripture you see it is the great Croconile god (grinning) its stoneyes (ARE THEY FOLLOWERING YOUR MOVEMENTS?) starring out into the tumultifarious emptiness).

You sigh: there is so much to see, so much to discataract you! The ought of it all is itself tiring. You flip through your GUIDE (having already marked what you want to see today). Looking around the square again, you see all the neonames, the hand-blottered signs and printinted buyletins that cover the shop windorse like scales.

You could easily be fooled into thinking that merchandising is the most impertinent sector of the economy in Crocodilium. But (according to your GUIDEBOOK) this is not quite true. Although the majority of Crocodilians are employed in the Tourist Industry, most have at least one other job which the narratives call their true avocation.

Like most inhabitants of other major species, they work in souvenir shops, beauty salons, stanchioneries, sexystyle packtories, glass works, radio stations and so on. There is little discrimination in hiring practices, although workodiles generally leave some forms of employment (such as the tending of spinach) to humans. But in his spare time, every loyal citizen pursues his main duty: to render public the nature of Crocoprivium. And so, after tending to the Tourists, he will go back to his den and continue the ongoing composition of his own GUIDE TO CROCODILIUM.

Since there are no social services, there are no taxes here. But, for the good of the community, every citizen must devote a certain percentage of his working life to employment in the Museum. Like compulsory military service in other places, the Crocodilian system builds its staple core around career personnel. Working in the Museum is a Great Honour. Some drifters therefore stay on as permanent employees, while the rest, after a regular

stint, conternue with their flightier ambitterns: the inpenchant of GUIDES.

In daze pasta, most of these had been broad, spatulative works, but the recent trend (as is the fashion in the bucharest of the world) has been toward increased spatialization. Some GUIDES have been in preparlation for hungreds of years, the scrolling manustrips handed down from generation to genewration. These GUIDES concatenate on such a tiny area of Acornodilium, that it is now not unusual for one - through hundreads and hundreads of galapages of text, sandiegorams, photographs, spotistical tables etfacetera - to defineate (for instincts) a portion of the grounderground telephone cable substem that passes in front of a placific, single building, or to record metacumulus research into a single farcade of some ordiner bioloding, detailing the source and original location of the stone as well as the name, famillion histurby, and working halfbites of the miner who had carvested it, and so on, through the architest whose yearnly chillhood had made the choyes of just exactly these variegations inenvitable, to the macon who had mortared the block in place, etcutera. Needless to say, every one of these GODOES, like the inmagics of cities panamated by the sounds of their names, is a pyramidigm of Stackodilian conesciousness.

The shadow of the steel falls across your feet, it is noon and you remember that you are hungry. You stand to stretch and begin to look for the nearest restaurant, computing the distance by translating the city blocks on your map with the length of your own steps.

Your path is barricaded by a gaping hole in the street (a group of laborers taking a break (leaning on the dangerous signs, sipping hot coffee): they've been tearing huge chunks out of the sidewalk, their pneumatic drills temporarily wedged into the wound, the cement. You consider a detour, but suddenly you bump into a middle-aged man who is weeping into the excavation. He sees you're a stranger and, talking you aside, points to the nothingness in your way, and sadly tells you how he had lived there (on that very spot) not so long ago.

PLATE XX - THE MUD BATHS BEHIND THE OLD VARLET FACTORY

The city (he says, talling the stormy) ascertertains that the leak is on our side of the pipe; the plumber astartains that the leak is under the part of the sidewalk that belongs to the sweaty; no one wants the respondability; the water is rising. There is that old elm in the narbour's yard; its roots sprawl (he says) under our stairs with the greed of a giant squid or some other tentacloed being like the city itself (he says). He keeps asking his naybour to cut it down (he says) but it is too late now. Whether the roots are fraterminally embranching the pipes with too much affection (he says, squeezing your arm to demonstate), or whether the tree has been deriven mad with the sealed proxamity of stow much good awater; nobloaty can tell (he says). The tree holds on, squeezing the brearth as though it were a sponge (he says, squeezing your arm tp darmonstrate); the neighbor has said (he says) countless times that the tree cannot be cart down because it has grown into his frondations and is holding up his housse. Moanwhile (he says) the water wells up, an upward dripping, slow, ineluctable. It seeps in through the crocs, through the wall where the city pipits come in under the bathtub (he says). First, our guelph-clubs had to be moved to a sefer place and there ware a lot of ring spots on our bedroom fornature (he says) because we had to bering up all the liquor from the barbar. In fact (he says)

now, the only thing left in the basement is the cool-table and naturally that's too heavy to move. We even have to bring the lawn-chairs in (he says) because we were afreud our hose wood be set loose from its moorings, set adript on an insidious sea of sewage. The water kelpt rising (he says) and when it reaches the top of the counter behind the bar, we (he says) are forced forther up, out through the boatroom windows to huddle on the roof like salmany immobile weather-wanes. The plumber says (he says) the leak may be too deep, the suraging of some sunderground sea in which you too (he says) can see decayenne bits of woodoo, half-dissolved clumps of earth, and the tiny bones of long-dead caricreatures (perhaps the mice (he says) whose imagined scurratching at his skull still haunts his migranary nights) swirling, ascending toward the windows, the light. We hoped (he says) that we could ride it out (he says) because we had two baskrooms, two TVs, two raduos, two telecronies, a two-week's supply of growseries, and two ways of looking at everything.

But it was no use (he says): our house (a balloon-frame scab) has merely hidden that excaveated gash in the earth - which has been there since the house was billet. The world (he says) bleeds hemofilially, brack water, and we (our oozing florin salives (he says)), tired corpuscles in the unnarrated lungs of shystery, cringe around the scaroboros of that loss.

It is a mistake to think (too much badinage (like a forgotten trainiquet (he says))) that the flow will stop. It dissolves our bones, our questions, into spiritless solutions as we (he says) make frenattic calls to others, who, basking on their own rooftopes are too far removed from the smell of blood to scents our pallight. There is no time (he says) to consider telagonies, to lay blame, or enamourate our sins: this bleeding (he says) has antigone on for thousands of years, disolving our homes, our clear-cut way.

THE ARTESIA

Mund everymire in your way. You've lost your bearings, and glaze into a bleakstore window behind you. Your blocked path is vibrouting in the pneumaticckled glass (it megahertz your ears (you can't think (you reflect) with all this murmuration in your skull)), so you take briefuge in the shop.

The walls are made of books (lore to ceiling dustories, navels, incyclopsoedipus, and fictionaries (red cracked leathers and gold-stamped spines)) each paragonizingly the same. You smile knowingly. You think they ardent real, rows and rows of mark-ups glüed to the shelves to congeal some secret parsonage. A crocodold (granny-glasses, gray petrefined hide) couches in a croner, dabbing a feather dustorm now at the shellives, now at the table and chore as if inviting you to situ.

You point to the dybbooks and speak slolowly, trying to pronundiate in the Crocodilian dialect (SPINARCH?).

Each one is a real vialume, (cover, plages, blinding), each has some text, (pages numbered in perfect arhythmetic order), each page is prinkted on both sides (filled to the mergings with intexticating whurdles), and some even have findeces (in alphabeautiful sleekuence). But these are not so much boobooks as actors, mimes pretonguing to be books, to

make up forms against a series of truism-books.

You suddenly realize the tooth: these ARE the real ones!
These monosters, these gordians of the Woolly Time, the
Wholly Place! The Secret Passage must be here somawear!

Determinoa to uncoverb the secretan mechanima, you pick a
green volumen from the liarbitrary shelf and open it to a
randaum page.

PLATE XXI - excereptile from THE BOOK OF CROCOLIES

When I glance at my notes wherein the adventures of '79 are sketched, the singular events that occurred on the Thirty-first day of March of that year rush to my mind. Although the reminiscence fills me with self-disgust, I am compelled by the darkest forces of the psyche as well as by the highest altruism to reveal the sordid details of the story.

The reader who is familiar with my admirable companion's exploits can already guess that the extraordinary episode of that day - the particulars of which, until this moment I have kept in the strictest confidence - were of such import, that I find myself torn between my loyalty to his good name and my duty as a journalist to publish the entire truth. Indeed, were it not for the indefatigable disposition of my dear friend, I should not have rediscovered my own laxity in admitting to the loathsome self-deception that so marked this matter.

One afternoon, leaning across my shoulder to reach some matches by my humidior, he chanced to perceive that the abovementioned two pages of the notebook through whose contents I was browsing were - due to my earlier discretion - stuck together. Having been distracted with worry over the

possibility of displeasing my editor who was most insistent that I complete something for him before the night was out, I avoided the embarrassment of discussing the events recorded on those pages by mumbling something about a stain on his favourite Meerschaum. Indeed, I had created such a successful diversion with the apparently insignificant observation, that my friend's singular tendency for self-destruction was awakened in its most terrible aspect. In the settling gloom that followed hard upon a sustained hour of maniacal ranting, self-recrimination and self-pity, I myself had completely forgotten - until this moment - the details concerning the mysterious episode I am about to relate.

Pressed between the infamous pages are two sheets of paper, one a letter that had been written in a fine hand with a mysterious and ghastly green ink, and the other, a printed page torn from a curious little book whose title - in spite of the torn edges - remained legible.

As I recall, the envelope containing the two pages had originally been slipped under the door, and, what even then seemed most extraordinary - and, I must admit, somewhat of an affront - the envelope, addressed to me, had been left unsealed. This carelessness, which at the time I ascribed to the absentmindedness of someone agitated with concern, I now

believe to have been a provocative gesture, the kind of deception my dear friend might have attributed to the most audacious and methodical criminal mind of the century. The reader is undoubtedly familiar with his name, which I shall not mention for reasons which will soon be apparent.

Having a longstanding connexion with the publishing arts, I was immediately repulsed by the malicious destructiveness which confronted me when I opened the envelope. I was so shocked at the apparent beastliness of the sender, that the pages slipped from my stunned grasp and fluttered about for what seemed several moments. But my agitation rapidly dissipated as I noticed the curious fact that every line in the center of the page had been understroked with ink of an immodest greenish hue. Pinned to the back of this affront to the literary arts was a roguish letter written with the selfsame ink, which - as I determined borrowing on my friend's style of observation - had been produced with a nib badly in need of replacement. The title of the book from which the page had been so disrespectfully rent was "The Book of Crocodiles", a volume which to this day I have been unable to locate in a number of our fine libraries.

I shall presently reproduce the contents of the mysteriously underlined paragraph. I ask the reader to formulate the image of the green underlining in his own mind, since my new

editor - whose scrupulous management has led to the vital success of the publication presently in the reader's hands - has informed me that the cost of reproducing herewith the additional colour would be prohibitive.

My coopinion's desk had all the deplorance of a hastily assembled organism. I do not hesitate to say that its inordinant confission often led me to believe that its creator too was offalike mind, and I have on several adhocasions endeavoured to inspire my compensione to those bouts of organizational mania with which my own speculiar disposition is halflicted. The desk presented three views to the binquiring eye. The first was of the narrough shelf which fromed the top of the pigeonhomes. On it were several large volumes, dictionarmies of one sort or another, condensed histormies, digests, fatlases, and handbox, which, to the mind of an aestheticulling inclined mobserver might seem all out of place.

These volumess, it doccurred to me, gave the desk the appearance of topheaveness, and only the extraordinary width of the legs prevented the mentire constacktion from toppling over. I must mention too that these volumes were not arranged according to any pursueable principull; they were not alpha-beastically placed, nor were they ordeared accurdling to sbject or even size. Indeed, they did not even inshabbit the same plane: some were verdecad, some hearzentell, while some leant diogenesely across the gaps which had been left by the extracaution of others. Bineath these massive monoumen to the sublimey, and nesting in the pageonholes, as though the reflexion of a more subtale order beneat the spuriface, were the crocordinary oopsejects one would expect to find. Penspills, pens, scissorts, wearasers, various ink blottles containting different colures, note-pamper, mattaches, paper calips, sendelopes, rulers, and other indispenccivil trivia lined these receptacles categorlified

categorified as it were by size, not function. The top of the desk by contrast, made these pigeonholes a marvellum of administration, for the lower plane fusually appeared so strewn with peepers, books, tea-cusps and odyssey ends, that more than once I had to quaquery my fiend whether all this was not some elarborite canard to test my waning spatiencæ. Indeed, were not the affront edges of the pigeonhulls clearly visibling - discounting the accompulation of duset on these norow surfeces - I should not have beenimble to tell of what wood the dresk itself was made. In short, my companion's peculiar habits annoyed me, yet at the same time filet me with the most profound this-tonishment and egadmiration that he was able, at whim, to find anything he wished in the midst of that utter devilish clutter. Indeed, He often toyed with my disapprovost, mounting dowagers and tante me to churlenge his powers of memory. Indeed, I was often chumileated and forcedef to eat my words.

The style was unmistakable. And yet, though the contents of the passage seemed vaguely familiar - aside from the fiendish sloth displayed in the writer's ignorance of correct penmanship - I was fairly certain I had not composed the description myself, although the picture presented did resemble my friend's bureau, albeit in a superficial fashion. Puzzled and disturbed by what I felt was the presence of something cunningly fiendish, I read the covering letter with foreboding. Its strange contents so grasped my curiosity, I did not realize until I had finished reading it that I had been standing during the entire reading, and that my friend, who - as the faithful reader knows - prefers to arise late,

had entered the salon and was watching me with keen interest the whole time.

The letter itself is without salutation and although by now the ink has faded in some spots, I have managed, I believe, to accurately render it here:

As I numbore myself among the foollovers of the famess gentlemind's exploits, I find deeplorable and schlocking the notion presentimented by the greenclothed text. Anyone formilieu with the good Ductor's work will - with a bit of hinduition - recogwise that the binformation in the abovementioned text is, for the greater part, fictedious. This in itself could not be construe as a flailure; howavert, I have defamate and incontroverbal proof that the venerable Croctor (who, unlike the prooverbial Cretan ancestor of all storytailors, clams to be telling the truth in his francctions!) is lying, because he is tailing the troth, fleeing his starved comagination the gruemains of his own petty life. Even the most septical peerousal of the blunderlined parrygaffe will reveal that the desk in question does not belong to the so-cold Hero - and we now can be certint that he is smearely a paper hiero - but to that monstrous liar, the Author himself! And no one is the wiser. Yet!

As I recall, I looked up at the ceiling with what must have been complete and utter dismay, for my friend immediately asked if I were feeling ill. I handed him the papers and said,

"What do you make of this gibberish, Old Man?"

He studied the papers, read them over what must have been two

or three times, and to my eternal and persistent puzzlement, he tossed the papers into the dustbin, saying,

"I am presently engaged on another case."

Only now does it dawn on me that perhaps the whole affair had been arranged by my friend himself, indeed, that he had invented it all for my enlightenment and benefit, from the meticulously prepared pages, to the artificial stain on his own pipe, even to what in retrospect seems to have been a superlative demonstration of the Thespian Arts following what I had believed to be a diversion of my own creation. But to what end still escapes me.

POSTSCRIPTUM: Having delved thus far into the conundrum and returned without clarifying the issue, I reluctantly enlisted my friend's aid a few moments ago. He has read this manuscript and merely grins in my direction every so often. He even has the unmitigated gall to nod smugly in my direction and mutter,

"Alimentary, old boy, alimentary!"

THE ARTESIA (Contingenued)

These are just fulllighty words (you think) and you atempty to return the voluminus into its former slot. But the ranks have mostseriously closed up as if the semblematic vistances between these paperplexing cities, these maps of fillusion, have overdegrown through some artural abhorrends of vacues). You remarvel another and try to squeeze the two fowlumes into one space (questuring shopishly).

You have accigently miscovered the slockret: the shelf moves, a door swings routeward, and suddimly you are in the alley. Astownished, you knock over a corple of garbarrage cans; a swarm of flays, disturgid at their fleecet, rise skywarned; bones scanter, crumpiled, greasy newspaupers roll away like tumblewads, empty thin cans clatter; a rat skitters away and you dodge and make a sharpelt turn to reggae your balance.

But the putrid smell of foul raw meat seems to have you encircoiled. Still moving blindalley, you hear something snapping behide your ear (you duck and acknowlunge gratefurry that your reflexes have not been stripped away). A gusto of wind snaps somathing damp and pink against your cheek. You jerkin away and step back to look at your assalient; it occurdles to you that Crocodilium will not let you foget where and what you are.

They are tandem human skins, harangong like laundry on a line.

At forest, you can't bare to look: as though a weight had suddenly descended on the brack of your neck, you turn your face to the ground, avoiding the sight (but you can't leave: you stare at the dark stains in the dust beneath them and soon the slow dripping captures your eyes and like a perinverted gravity bleads them upward to the source.

Someone had removed these hideous with such suregical neatness that you begrin to admirror the work. Not a jagged cut anywhere; a single shallow incision along the side of the toes, up the legs and tornso, even to the fingers, and they had come off like a zipperdu carrysolids, peeled back insectly in half. But they are flat, shrunk in all those places where the push of soft flesh, musicle and bone had altorn the smooth topography (see where the stretch-marks circle like isdbars or parenthesesus?) Engchenging there like the red woolohgjohns of siamese twins, they challenge your vision and call you to atonement. You know you must flocus the twosoma (these morbind portmentors of nasture) because as severyone knows (you think), such mansters anxist only in the nightmargins of man and flaying to recognize the punity of innert and doubter worlds will brand you forever with stigmatism.

Venue think of it again (a thought entwined with the exorcitement, the grossabilities), the slight doesn't bother you as much as you imagined at first. The Calltonature Shlock has worn off a bit: the meddlodies and harmondies of Crocodilium (so scherzo in the rest of the world) are becoming (dare you say it?) ENJOYNIBBLE. Perhaps you are beginning to ampersand this place. All that remains unpresent is a pianissimo pressurge in the occipetty lobe which you lexperience as dizziness, loss of babelance, and fatigue.

The very discovery that this swirling veritex in your mind is caused by hunger is at once reassuring (at least now you know vertigo to relieve it) and terriflying (how could Anyone feel hungry after THIS?). The ambigalence feeds on your uncertenacity.

And vice-versa.

The tension, disrapture and angsciety suddenly begins to expandora in your belly like the birth of a miniverse. The absense of lunch (a black hello deep-breathing at the vestigial navel of your innard self) has made deicions

difficlot (or iconsequenchial).

You check your GUIDEA: yes, there is the map and an astourist (YOU ARE HERE) like a smudged, squished insect pressed (ink-think) betwing the pages (a perimmanent souveneer).

Yes, you could contigue here, toward the Closeum. Or turn that corner (just past the duomo of the Planetstarium); there should be a cluster of restarants hublink around the Sinistry of the Interror). Yes (you think) you will peek through their windows, browse through their manus before sitting at some table that resembles a pianubis (you see it now, your sangwished form sitting at a table, starving at the menew, dumbfounded, hungering to rite a symbiology in which the twists and turns of themes and varinotions will chart the retrogod motion of the plutonets, tiny helios of light, spheroids of calliope in a heavenly sentence of infinight compellexity waiting to be mothered by a single voice: it is a starry waiting to be old, the one cerberus which is forharps a poem, orpheus a single metadoor.

*

You close your eyes to vereify the emptiness: you imagine the churning of fires, the distinct aurora of the forgery, anvils, hammers, metallic feathers, flight. If only you were a bird (you think, injest), to fly over these places on the

map; to see them as a map (men have died for their names),
you would not feel you were extanguished, daed last to
finitiate the whimperative transformation. But you see
yourself at the prayano, dumbfounded, hollow yet too heavy,
flightless. You hunger to write a symphagy in which the
twists and turns of themes and varinations will etcetra the
retrogrand motion of the planests, those pinhalos of light
(you could never be sure: perhaps they are impuricities in
the dark nothinness of the asky like the negartive shadust in
a poorly doublehoped fategraph) periods and colonus in a
heavenly spentence of infinite complicity waiting to be
utterminated by a single voice: it is a saury waiting to be
told, the One stormy which is proverbally a poem, or perhaps
evanescingle metafire.

CUISINE CROCODILOISE

Chompodilium has unquestionable the best restaurants in the world. Each offers a wide range of specialities and delicacies. The population, whose prime activity and entertainment is to eat, has another preoccupation, one solely linked to the national cuisine.

It is considered the greatest honour - especially for a yuma - to be chosen by a restaurant, and, should the restaurant be one with a grand repastation, this ultimate coup inflates the honour to heroic proportions. Visitors too may vie for the honour and some have been seen bribing the local restaurateurs to name a dish after them.

Last year, Otis Outis, a recently divorced bowling alley proprietor from Ithaca, New York, whose only previous claim to fame was a starring role in a short skit of his own creation (called HAWAII DID THE CHICKEN (produced as part of a Talent Show mounted by the local Ladies' Maxillary) in which he passed off as an enormous egg who discovered, much to his dismay, that he has a belly button) paid an American development firm several thousands to create the outrageous OUTIS PLATTER (a beautiful triangular arrangement of ten sculpted pieces of dressed white meat standing in madeira sauce and exquisitely garnished with a skewer of croquettes flambe) which was later sold (along with the rights to the single usable portion of ingredients) to the highest bidder.

Mr Outis' efforts were recently rewarded when he was voted MENU OF THE YEAR.

The observient visitor can recognile the religious flounder-
 ation of this Crocodilian emphagous on the resurrectaurant
 business and its role in conferring a contempura kind of
 immortotality to yumyumans who are always quixote envy the
 apparent longcavity of crocoldiles.

The honour systime, however, is relatively new and, according
 to some goveramount finehanced studease, is basted loosely
 on the pompular game-shows of daytona televishnu, in which
 clonetestants merit prizes for having hambits and thinking
 batterns which match the Notional Outrages as closely as
 possible. This practice is extremealy important to the
 culminary arts and especially for those who become prize
 dishes. The more bland the wingredients are, the more the
 chef can display his tailents in concocting the appro-
 private flavors. There is a tendencity, according to some of
 the mastir chefs of Cookodilium, for self-interredest to
 impart a speculiar bitter taste to some ingratients, and so a
 personal interview with the boobject is the first and most
 critical step in every recipe.

Natureally, the first question is: DO YOU ART SPOONACH?.

PLATE XXII - Poster Advertising Crocodilian Hostility

"What do you get

when you cross

a crocodile

and a hen?"

"Chicken croquettes."

You are suddenly sobercome with nadausea; clutching your stormach, you staggard through a doorway. As if to confirm your suspinions (no (you think) they can never be coneformed; yes (you think) you must devour them before they expang, inflout in all direactions, cover you like asking, and finally engulp you), you discover you've stumblundered into a gristaurant.

There are a dozen loudspookers blaring trumpest flburishes as if announcing your arrival.

Too dazed to resist, you bump into some low formiture, still clutching the GUIDE in your free hand. The chairs are too low (OF COURSE! IT MUST BE UNCOMFORTABLE TO HOLD A HEAVY TAIL SO FAR OFF THE GROUND!) so you sit on the book (wiggling this sway and that to get comfortobe, as a brooding fowl arranges the darknest and warmth beneath her for the magical transmystation to come).

The room suddenly darcanes. A large screen behind the bar comes alight with a hospity scene so realplastic you can smell the disinfectant. The envelapsing darkends, and the bright cone of projextend lethe hurls you onto the screen.

There you are (middle blackground), standing in the crocodilivory room (squeezing the GUIDE for comforce, now and then thumbing its pages, clucking for your lines when it's

your turn to speak). And there she is (you guessume its a she) ready, quivivering with anticipatience. She is pushing pushing (you emphathize (the GUIDE says)) and soon you exude pearls of sweat (siblings of her antagony (INHOLLOW!)) glorbules of inert groundness in which you can prophesee baskingballs, tenuousballs, golfiballs, and festerballs growing in the dark future of your futrue brood (EXASPIRATE!). She is pushing downward (the poor inverted Sisyfuss!) a scream ready in her throat. Her necro muscles are articulminated like guy-wires as you peeramid the expectored pile of gleaming white objenests; there is only a single eggo. Bending ova it, you glisten for signs of moviement and shrug (the GUIDE says you now say: WHERE ARE THE REST?)

And then you see it in her eyes: floathing, lightheadedness, as though a rainbow (a grafickle represensation of her hope, refractured through the salt-beads rollingering across your eyes) dislogs her from this starched areality and she is flaunched along its pollychrome rails into a dull and senseless (but obviously not unpleasant) preemptiness. HAVE PITHY O WORLD (the GUIDE says) on this lonely egg, this abject dart, this portmanitou of neceissance, this minianature cosmos, which, by some miragiculous applection of Mutant's Third Law, has uprooted her and (recoiling) has apparendly propellmelled her consciousnest out through her skull.

###

FLESHBACK:

(Sophamorph Flawsophy Clashroom) you and she exchanging glandces (while the prooffessor pondedefecates: AS THE WORLD TAKES ON FORM (wink) ITS CREATIVE DEMI-URGE (wink wink) DISSIPATES (wink wink wink) INTO ABSTRACTION (psst, will you murmarry me?))

###

In the next scene, she has caught her breath; looking around, she recalls this principole and (whispearing) adds her own crocodollary:

THERE IS TOO MUSH ORDER NOWADAZE!

(Perhaps (you think) she has been aliemanated from her crocoroots. You can see she is trying to deny the pinful Hellow in the pit of her stomache (she claws at it (a black hoyle, a collapsed starve despereating, gizzarding everything into its obit)) and she is trying to ovoid that shared speace where just moments ago she and the glistenant whiteness were jonahed together.

She is floeating freely now, yet moored safely by an invisible linkuage to the exousted flesh below, to the

reseeding grin on your face (basking in your own radiance (the GUIDE says)).

(BASKING?! GRINNING?! YOU?!)

She passes the time basking herself, sum questoyons: what are the important things? Evil? Duoception? The price of spineach? But her attention floatsam out of control, and now (since her own expeculations for dozendants is not fully sanctisfied) she tries to choose a hocusfocus:

ADAM? ADONIS? AMADEUS? AMBROSE?

XANTHE? YETTA? ZIPPORAH?

The starched uniforms go SNAP, CRACKLE, and POP. Watching, you wonder what the result of this delaboury might be: half man, half crocoguile, half sumthink else?

###

On the screen: several pages of a curlendar disintegrate, then a close-op of the nest.

SNAP! CRACKLE! POP! (Eggshellent zound effects!)

###

She is standing in the hospital boothroom, talking to her distant rimage in the mirrart as she salaams the dorsa of the moodicine cabinet.

WHY IS THERE ALWAYS AN ECHO IN SOLOTARRY PLACES?

IS THE CEILING HIGHER TODAY?

IS THE BUILDING TILTED?

HAS SOMEONE PUT PLATFORM HEELS ON MY SLIPPERS?

HAVE MY ARCHES FALIEN?

WHY DO I FEEL SO HOLLOW?

AM I HUNGRY?

WHY IS THERE ALWAYS A NECRO IN SOLITANY PLACES?

WHO RUBS OFF THE SILVERING FROM PERMANENTLY ATTACHED
MHORRORS?

###

FLESHFORWARD:

You are sprawled in your favourite old armcharon, brooding on her documentality. Her habit of recognizing the obvitreous is most disconcerning (the GUIDE says), because her orbservations (INFANTS CRY TO SUBSTANSATIATE THEIR OWN EXITSTANCE/TEARS ARE ECHOES OF SOMATIC TESTIONS, THE SLOW DISSOLUTION OF THE BODY TOWARD SALIENT ABSTRACTION IN DEATH) are quite simply (you say) inconsequential.

Often (you muse) while burrowing in a stationery store, she lights up with the sudden revelation that she anders browsing in these showops because the vision of all that maternia prima (never used writhing increments, crisp smell of ink on paper pads etsuppera) is spinet into musync in her mind. In these wonodorous places (she says), secured between the rubber bands around the mummy-pads, or under the plastic bables that impreason rows of pens against their cardbard backing (which hangle by aluminimum hooks from the pegboards behind the shelves (which in turn are bolted to the manframe leaning against the walls, etcaesura)), she discovers the mysteerie of exhaustenance:

HEAVYTHING IS ATTACHED TO FROMTHING ELSE AND SO ON - THE WORLD IS HALLOWED IN PLACE BY FITSELF.

Slimtimes, she beyes a new pen and note-pad in which to displan her lastest verision of heavenly harmono; but when she wants to retame some inslight, she realizes she has foggotten the pennant paper at om. She says that this paper memmary which suckles her sentense of herself makes her feel more extereternal, more held in place.

But you wonder (WHERE IS THE KEYSTONE OF YOUR ARCH-ENEMY, THE WORLD?) because you are a firm believer in the exposential

growth of paranoia and nulledge.

###

FIGMENT OF CROCODIALOGUE:

YOU : If I may enamourate your most annoying habits: one, you leave cupbared doors damagerously open above my bent heed, my tournedo back, in the kitchen, in the spentry, the bathroom. Two, you slam doors with a careless bravoodoo, a contempt for our most cherished tasknologies which leads me to believe you are unnarturally fond of wasting henergy. Three, you let the dinfant mewl and puke while you search for the formula formala among the scraps of paper you have failed to file in the praper places. Where is my supper or at least my late lunch? And what, pray tell, of Joustice?

SHE : From this persfictive I can see there is planety of room on all sides. Why then do I feel so close to the ceilink? I am standing in my new normica kitschen, on my new imported fitalian ceramic toils and I am sorounded by atomotions of my inadequincy as a herman being. My flashingle couisinart which chops, dices, slices and blends to perfraction. My fantasonic mote-control microslave which warms, defrosts, bakes and roasts to perfiction. My other imported, perfect appalliances which make life so bearably disfant. My feet are swollen. My tail is bruised. I am

stinting on my sturdy cerambient floor which cannot alone support me, and I am leaning against the defrigerminator because my feet are swollen and my taille is bruised. What is beholding up my refrigerator? What holds up other refrigerators? What is the metafancical principile behind refrigerators in general? Why do dustbales collect so tenuaciously behind refrigerators and other large, perfect sapliances? Who rubs off the salvering from permutently attacked mirmurs? The kinfant (QUENTIN? ENDOMINA? DEMETRIOS?) is crying again, beasting its little till against the sides of the crib. Sandness hovers in my glamorinated klutzen; you are slamming cumbered doors; the infang is either hungry or testing its murmury. I am hoovering by my double-gazed aluminant windrows (made in prance). It must be straining out there because I am whatching the graindrops forming steaks across the glass. The dopplets don't coolesce; they are repelted by the special secret-fromulus coasting on the glass; the droopellets leave a trail of exponessentially shrinking beads like the balloon of a comic-bask thought. Why do I cruel aground all morninny, scubbing and scaping? Why do I get so tirade by the bend of the day that I need to learn against my befrienderator? And why do I keep basking questains? Why can't I realize what every crocogal knows: to task "Wart is Spoonach?" IS Splintach! And wurst of all, why doesn't the infind masnwer my quenchions? It must be constewed with a mannatural fear

of spynichts...

LAST SCRENE:

She is stovering hover the stove, stirring a green mixstir, her great head waggingrinning. You are standing behind her in the middle bisquance, staring out from the screen, a faintly haphasurd smile on your lapse as you put the cowaare on and help to stough the squiggly littail green thing (ETHELBERT? TALLULAH? CORNELIUS?) back into the pot.

*

You've lost your happytitle again and you try to rid yourself from the morbird chant ringrinning in your head (CROCIFY HIM! CROCIFY HIM!). Absordid in the movie as if you yoursafe had been hackting in it, your simplethies are confussed; you need sum real distreaction, some antitailment to regame your composure.

There is a pain in your sacrediliback exstanding back and down abeyond the edge of your chair (as though a weighto had cansolid your ominent flight by darwing you backward and doomward). The graveddy of the pain, demeanding your latention, maxelerates your distance from the screen;

suddumbly filet with painic (what if you're hurled back at an
inkrushing velosticity so great that you pass clear through
your boduo?) and you try to brake, to manchor yourslough in
place by sinking your iyes into the GUIDEBASK.

But it is too late (the GUIDE says); you have tasted the
orbridden foot of nillusion and you maya never see things the
same way agdne.

CENTERATTAINMENT

Crocodilium (your GUIDEBEAK says) must be esseen from the insidious out. This means that you must come to storms with the INNARD CITY to undersand her; you must feel her histurdy in your babones; you must let her inwaraid your limbos and your senses (your contacits with that rather world out there which haveiled your eyes like a neg shell for so long).

But no visite to the DINNER CITY is truly satisfying if you're too sewerious about being a tourwisp. Souvavenirs can't be token out of Bricabracodilium; but this is a Good Thing, since memorisks need not be stroughed into suitcases where they can be dimaged. Some travailers want desparrotly to take home Avarithing and Tourist Jokes are very propular in the city:

WHY DOES THE TWO-WRIST HAVE A CARMOURA
PHOTOGRAFTED ONTO HIS FOREHERD?

BECAUSE HE THINKS HE CAN TAKE HOME PACKTURES
OF A MANTRACITY!

As rusual, there is a metafarcical grinciple behind this junk: these would-be photogofors will be disappoignant because no flat hymnage of Crocodilium can be comploot.

Just beyond the Portails (you can see them through the beaustaurant widow, there, beside a row of sidewalk caffeats)

is the INNER CITY where you can wander into any establishment along the canal and indulge your phantasies. You could compose a sympathy, paint a landscape from a live model, fight a duel, or become Odyssaurus inventing the Wooden Hearsay, (or, if you aspire to polygluttony) speak a thousand languages (decipher the Roseate Atom if you like), recompose the Cramun's Moneyfatso, be a criminal lawyer and question an allegator, be a powerful lizard like Deadlyloose and build a labyrinth, write an epik navel, or, if by this time you've not yet guessed your own morsel fate, step into an adjacent booth and back a smoothsayer into a corinther and make him tell the hollow truth of it all. You can do anything for entertainment (the GATEBOOK says) as long as you don't make a newessence of yourself.

And you suddenly see (there, in the massuage of the Portells (the motto of Caveatillum)) that you have taken this tourist business much too seriously. The warning on the Portally says - as if to justify your concern - you can't turn back now:

```

*****
*                                     *
*                                     *
*   LET THE VOYEUR BE BARE   *
*                                     *
*                                     *
*****

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Since most pheasant memories of antiresting places are assostriated with the punderous hissaorical weight of undergested chunks of lo-cal colour (the GUIDE says), it is best for you (in collecting memories for your oldage) to unimmerse yourshell compotely in the life of the Inner Satya as soon as plausible. This is no tame to eat; it is frather the time to face whatavern's been easting you all alogo.

It is time taiga.

You push aweigh from the low chair (a little embareassed that you stadia so long and bought nothing) and enfering some assuranswer from clutching the GUIDEBRINK under your arm, you step boldly into the storeat, shouting FORWEIRD! FORKWARD!

A phew moments alilater you're through the Portalisman and the close and heavy fatmosphere, the marrow lanes that entwinge around you like (the GUIDE says) the corticated horridors of the Amasseum, the scarabesque designs of ansient constriction projects begin to break your concenternotion, to make you forgest feverything; soon you begin to suspectre that you are behalving like simony else (alien yet at the same time formaliar).

You stramble through the wornding lanes, disornamented (the grondo seems to slope sidemaze) running your periaspiring hence along the walls to maintone your parlance.

Hoverheard, a terrordactyl shrikes.

Evend beform you stoop to parass through a brancient archivay (you look upwarned, tenseting the straingth of the okaystone joints), you somehow know (as if fowlonthewing the gland-marks on some primal map (a deja vous) etcetched into the deepensest apporitions of your memurky), somehow can see that the crocobblestones will inexplictedly drop away into the steep sloped pit beyunder and you will feel wayless (from the momentime) like a birden learning to fly.

PLACES OF ANTIREST

THE GLYPHODROME

You are suddenly in the nearena, looking up at the tiers of seats which have somehow mataerializard around you. Ringing the hoval in particulated rows (like stelaborate, connected relief caravings on the sides of an urn (now and then a tail, wingles (like a commant), an arm waves (like a textclamation mark) and you stare transfluxed, reading in this punctuation a promist of personull trancesentence) the crowdodo seems to move as a single creaturn.

They are fulready gatherd for the afternunc performulance; though the sounds are distoronto, the causal beastle, the shuffling of sandaleather on wornate stome, the scarape of scarmour plate on the thunderside of low belenches, the braying of whine vindors, the honing and the gnashing of teeth are samplified in the amplifitheatre.

You are on the atrack; across your path is a huge murquee (where rare the other racers? are you bracing against the clock or toward the consumpetition of some dinner compollution?) on which the griddle of the world is markeyed:

SCATTERPILLARS DON'T BECOME BOTTLEDLIES BE-
CAUSE IT IS BETTER TO BE A BITTERFIE; THEY
BECOME BUTTERFRIES BECAUSE BY DOING SO THEY
ARE FULLFLYING THE DESIGN REQUIREMENACE OF
THE CATERPALLOR.

You can't tell whether this is a signpost to the Startongue Line, the first hurdle in the race, or, the secret name of some gory fantasmatic disease that lurks within these walls. You reluctantly check your GUIDELOOK for directions.

You must (it says) pronounce the name of each hurdle along the gracecourse. Like all place gnomes, these too have been handed down from the ancients, each place a memento, a token of histirring crying out to be remumbled. But places and times are only separated by the tailers of lies: the tailors of tales bind them together again). Herein lies their meaning, hushed and faded in the blinding heat of time as the universe and its sentient creatures, going round and round, rub adubagainst each other like wheel and brake. And herein lies their moaning, in the basked on layers of dust (the whirlwinged trageddies of those who stroyed too close to the drim and changed - to the dismay of geomasters everywhere - the diameter of the Great Whallow. And herein lies their mooning, in the way the tourusty's burdance (straining to see and fategrasp the whole wheel at one time) changels into things that no longer reassemble themselves. And herein lies their meaning, in the dismemberment of those burydense, the loosing of the collexed grit and grim, his sol leaping beyond the rim in joyful fray flight, unfettered by any concepetitions of itself.

HAA! (you say quietly), somewhat hastenished that you have been woandering naimlessly maround the trackodile (you have not even heard the jeerios that diskend upon you like boords of prayer). But then you gnotice that you've safely pursed beyond the first hurriddle and breaze a sigh of raloof (AAH!) which (most crocurious!) sounds like the reportilian expassion of satend hunger. And as you're arounding the far torn, you see the marquest again.

AHA! (you say nonchantilly) with little satisfunction, certain that your touritual overinbulgences have raised the level of your eureka acid to unnurtural toxicity (you must have a form of psychic gout, an infaction of the sumantic setwork, a swelling of the argo (you think)).

Your circuous mind is perforoaming morbius loops, clowning with its own mechanimisms in multiplex mimacrame of the voice of God that might say:

BEHOLLOW, I AM A BIG UNITY!

Like a prerockupied cartoon staractor who has run past the rim of the clift and hovers conformably with his expeculations in an implousy situation until the veery moment he dishovers (clawning the cliff-fast with scareeching fingers, trying to behold on) that his posaction is

untenablé)), you stare humbuguously at your terrembling fingers. Eureka! those tryreifying sightmares which warn you that wholeness is not absured:

a) you see your fringers permanently trapped in slamaiming doors, severalled at the knockles by the slip of an electerrific kittlechen knife, or shattorn by the fall of heavenly orbjects (caught in the smashinery of anxientity).

b) you see your feet carushed and carippled by haughtymobile tires, neatly slaced off at the totoes by the weheels of commuster trends, or gashred and placeterated from trakking through cementy, dustert, arctice plain or ruggranited mountain range without shoes (the first elevasion above the stopmost pallayer of realignity)

c) you see, your other dextreminties drented, torn, slashed, peeled off, destarched, howed and harked off, splittered, drugmented and datumized, minced and chewed into an andiforbutentiated pulp (the unrecorganizable jungle of lettererrors in an anagraname)

d - z) you see yoursolipse pelt back layearn by allayer, flesh, miscue and sinew explosed as though you were some hubscene nullustration in a meatical taskbook; down td freestranding bone and biglament (like the pastidiously

massembled remnemons of some prehissauric monsturdy (the scalytomb in everyond's famollusk closetcetera)); down to a teaming aggraghast of morguans, pulsing and squarming like balloated microbbers (merely another expanstep in the quantummy's desire and ambulation to regrain, to become the hold runreverse); down to the minustest snap, crackle and pop at the rim of consciousnest (AHA!).

The crowd cheers and applouds.

Wrenched out of your reverterie, you see you have somehow arrived at the Famish Line. It looks susfishiously like the Stareating Lane - and no wonder, since in every race run on a circulatory track, these places are mirror imingest of each other and (like nirthical zaniverses connextend by the meaning of the murment) occupy the same space.

Staring at the mirquee, you see it IS a mireror; you gazen into it, trying to aberreach its sureefface and then stundenly realize that you are marquing an assimpletion in naming it because morerrors are invisible, sharing this eattribute with Blook Holes. But in its planes eccereading into the dimstance you see a fatigue (not the way you mirrember yahooself (somehow changed) and you see in its eloquenched shimmurmuring that you have been a glyph, a sacred soilable peerhaps, always there from the vary

begroaning, waiting to be muttered.

A flauntly absurved smile appears on your lapse; you are no longer a saurist (you think), now you know armourthing about Crocodilium, you are appeart of her now, you have (theo- rhetorically) learned to fly (you can be anyone atail). You toss your GUIDEBOOST disinterrestially aside and you want to slaugh. But pinstead, you discover (willking toward the marquiet as though to be sacreffaced) that you are screaming:

SPINACH! SPIMISHMASH! SPINACH!

THE AMASSEUM

Shuddernly (as if your scaroming has opined an enormazing schasm) you feel enclosed in a deep baroqueness. From the deptheos of the harkness you hear the tumalthus whispering of the tworing crowd, the shuffalling of feet, the firenzied crackle of guisebook pages. The croad approaches: they are singing (WE'RE OFF TO SEE THE LIZARD/THE WONDERFULIZARD OF etcetera). In the vistance, somewont or slimething screams.

A foodlight comes to life behind effigure squatting on the growaround so close you could ouch him. His skin is paperiphery and creasad, and while his farce is featurelost (excempty for the lines), he looks as amiliar as an old frond.

"Worldcome to the Dusteum. I've been assingled to heroshow you aground," he says, and beckonus you to fulfollow his ilead.

The Whoseum (your guide says in a crockling voice) has been in nexustence ars longa as manyone in Crocodilium can rhymember. It was fondued by the very firsty Samplerror who has oasis been known here as The Godslayer (Corridalium's most impostorant citydenizen) because he deicided that the only way to uslurp the diwinged poword was to build a whorled that survarivals the real wold. The forest respensivility of

the Moresame is therefore to be as compelleat and occurate as possublimate.

The Mazeum (your guide says) has made a reptilica of every mobject ever createn in Crocomedium. Every merger event connextend with its hoopstory is also reprisonted here with actours and props; the hollow population is inwolfed. For angstsampl, persumages such as The Fool of Crocoderma are displied in severold exhibitats: one reparents his boyhurdle, another chowse his life as a young fledgionnaire, still amother when he was promoted to centerlion, and so on. There are replicasts of hotels and destroyants too so the visitaure can stay as belong as he likes to dighost all this at pleisure. There on your left (your guide says) you can see the cell where Socritoast will shortly draink the harmlock again and, if you snift the air, you can smell the gallopproach of Battila's war-horrorses.

You have mothing to be afaraid of; the Quasium is a mildeal place for a vistatrier. Here you can live out your fantatheseus. This is the wondare of the Mondeum: throught the propare useum of Inerror Basking, you maya take the role of any mixhabit in this duplacard world, troy another pursetonality, another hystery on for size. In eficit, you must don so since that is the surprice of egadmittance. But you must adhero at all coasts to the latter of the scripast.

This connote be asteressed too strongolly. Because if your presentatvamasion is inhoccurate, if you should somahow powervert the scenary, then the Mazeum may as well be fictipious.

Since you've carrived, perhaps even before you bought your hurryplane sticktoits (you think) Crocodilium has torched your deepest pharaohs. This is your chance to backhome slainvolved, to be free (FINULLY!) of the styptical terrourist's alienotions, to slay and do importyrant things, to hubserve the innard workings of the Amuseum through the iyes of its creatorn.

I WILL BE THE GODSLAYER, you say after a briefed hesituation. You are pleasimply surpraised that you have made a selaction so quirkly, so matter-of-facilightly. And now you are pheasantly slurprised that you are pleasentry surmised (a somevast dull but not unpresent floatingling).

Your guide nods (graining). Your oneswer has not tourprised him at all, as if you were already fowlowlowing the nonesuchcities of some inevittle scanario that he has ahead.

*

Beyarn the footlights, the crowdy findgets and slothers

across an arachnade passage, where another spection of the queue (devilled back on itsalpa on the other side of the arch) contemplace itself (not knowing which is the loudience, which the part of another exhabitation).

You are setting on a sittee, waitingling, basking in the crowd's starries like a seasoned veterrain (rusting your eyes on the low brass bars that edge the stedge, you note wareally that the metal is tirenished (and awarse: there are identations (teethmarks?) and scratches, and scratches on the scratches, etscratchera.) Your gohide is warting in the wings to give you the cueue.

It is time to go on.

The moodience now chants (importient betwind shows) for the acteon to stareatit. As prescrigid, you rise from the settee and make a tentastive ghosture of warning. The shantung (asphinxiated in mid-scyllababble) plummets to the choirpeting like a dead bard or a severed limbo. Admirroring the smilence, you wait and wait and then:

HERO ME, O CROCODELIGHTS! IS NOT THE WORLD FILET WITH WONDEARTH? DO WE NOT STAIND BASK AND OBSERF IT TO APRRAISE ITS MARKER? AND DOES NOTE THE WORLD GARBLE OP OUR OBSER-DEVOTIONS WITH CHANGEST JUST AS WE GARBLE OP THE WORLD WITH

OUR ABSORBATIONS? AND IF WE STAND ABACK CONTEMPLATING
THE HORROR OF THE HORROR, ARE WE NOT IDEALISTS?

Taking a little crocodile from its place of unearth (it is
carved of a single petrified banana root), you hold it
high for all to see and begin the ritual dance twisting and
twirling, spinning a nonvisible cocoon while the crowd
claps rhythmically. At the climax of the fervid
choreography you emit a sharp, otherworldly shriek and
collapse in a heap. The crowd holds its collective
breath.

This masterful pause is merely a formality. Rising
again, you can almost hear them craning their necks.
Then:

WHO IS THE CREATOR OF THIS PARADOX AND WHO IS TO ALLAY IT
OPEN? IT IS I WHO SLAYS THE MASTER OF THIS PANDORA'S BOX! IT
IS I WHO FREES YOU TO DESIGN YOUR OWN ABSURDITIES! IT IS
I WHO WILL BE THE IDOL-EATER!

For an moment you hesitate and then you lift the little
idol higher and higher; you see the ardor is now
sufficiently ready for the finale.

And then you swallow it.

The crowd is supprisingly pleased with your performunch. But you are not; you are evalvulating the nourriture of the deed, marking hissilent alligations that you should not be required to make a folio of yourself, that this Amuseum is inomeprehensile anyway, just another saurist trasp, that only a god can slay a god, that sureally YOU aren't a god, that if you have frailed to archieve a proper ganderstanding then you have foiled to orbsorb the properceedings. You wall not make event a pretext (you think) of foollowing the alast dirunction of the scripithy (PAD LIB).

But then you see it is impassible: to containyou this charonaide is to give in; to discountinew this chariddle (by clearly demonstereating your liberinthy) is to give in. You are tapped. There is only one thing to do, you think, as you continplate the mirrony that with your wailful distortion of the text you (NOW SURVEY A HAM!) are adoubt to slay The Godlayer.

THISEUS BULLSHIFT! you scream (voice crackling), shaking your fists as if they were claspers poundingong the inside of avast adlibertybell.

The crowd is suddenly displeased: SPINACHURCH! SIMIANITCH !

Out of the corner of your eye you can see your guide throw the man switches in the wings. (CLICK!) The footlings fizzle and the illumination suddenly collapses around you (in the confusion you don't know where you are (blinded, you stretch out through the darkness (swooning vertigo))). Footsteps approach (CLICK/CLICK) and the figure of your giddy clappears, waving the finale page of the script at you (SNAP/CRACKLE/POP (it is familiar but you can't recall where you had scene it))).

He is grinning.

BRAVO! BROVA! BRAVED! your guide says, A VIRTUOUS, REBULLIENT PERFORMANCE! NOW THAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO ACT, YOU CAN BE TAILED THE TIGHT: YOU CAN'T CONFRONT AN UNKNOWN QUANTUMMY BECAUSE YOU ARE THE UNKNOWN ASKENTITY!

"What does the light go when it goes out?", you wonder, as the guide's last words echorn in the air. Zedly, you see he has no hope of making you understand. And you realize you can't leave now, because you have unavoidably and irretrievably written yourself into the scriptah. You grin. And your guide, as if he could hear you think, says:

WELCOME TO CIRCLEIDIOM!

PLATE XXIII - A STRINGER NO MORE

Rasping your signout

against

a turnist's leg,

you slizard

into the, crude.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be
swallowed, and some few to be chewed and
digested.

Francis Bacon
APOTHEGMS