

MILLENNIAL PROJECTIONS

By

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CDM Prose

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PREFACE

This fictional compilation, dating from 1982, combines some sixteen short-prose pieces with subjects ranging from musical evolution to Christmas trees, Black Holes to Esperanto, and space travel to modern art. Of this number, my favourite is the title piece, 'Millennial Projections', a fantasy projection into a millennial future in which we enter the mind of a superman who is preparing to undergo an 'acid trip', view life in what is called the 'post-human millennium' from a spiritual leader's standpoint as he grapples with his counselling responsibilities vis-à-vis the superhuman flock, and sample a controller's perspective on post-human life from the administrative sidelines. One could argue that this is my *Brave New World*, but it was with a view to repudiating Huxley's cynicism that I set out to fashion so positive a futuristic projection, one which, though terminologically overhauled by subsequent philosophical writings of mine, remains, I believe, a valid pointer to authentic evolutionary progress.

John O'Loughlin, London 1982 (London 2011)

MILLENNIAL PROJECTIONS

Recently my trips have been getting better. I no longer panic, as I used to do, when the benevolent stimulant first takes possession of my superconscious mind. Neither do I suffer from those debilitating after-effects to anything like the same extent as before, doubtless because my brain has grown accustomed to accommodating it, and knows what to expect in advance. Nowadays I look forward to each trip with relish, eager to return to that blessed state of contemplation from which I'm temporarily ejected whenever the stimulant's effects begin to wear off, and one slides back into ordinary waking-life consciousness. I still manage to sleep quite well during the afternoon though, and can often remember some dream fragments shortly after returning to full wakefulness. Sometimes one gets a nightmare - as, for example, when visions from the pre-millennial past crowd in upon one's subconscious mind, and one perceives strange autonomous shapes parading before the mind's eye. Mostly, however, one's dreams are pleasant - at any rate, relatively so! For no dreams are considered of much spiritual value these days, largely because they pertain to the subconscious as manifestations of sensual indulgence. We dream, but we don't boast of or take especial interest in our dreams. Rather, they're to be endured.

Last night's trip was particularly vivid and engrossing, so pregnant with spiritual content were the static shapes the benevolent hallucinogen revealed to me! I am really quite proud of myself, to be able to create and experience such psychic treasures! I was especially captivated by the globes of transparent jewel-like lustre which issued, unimpeded, from my freed superconscious. They kept changing colour and size, sometimes becoming more numerous, and at other times appearing to expand into one another and thereupon become unified. I liked, too, the sickle moons and strange palatial edifices which emerged, as if from nowhere, to illuminate the darkness. They were like so many sequins studded on a black velvet cushion. I have never actually seen a cushion, but I do believe I've dreamt of one. Certainly I've occasionally heard mention of sequins.

My nearest companions here all seem to be in a good frame-of-mind this evening, eager, no doubt, to leave their mundane thoughts behind them. Companion 6 to my immediate left and Companion 8 to my immediate right are both quiet and positive. They haven't yet sought recourse to the Internal Communications Network which links each of us to the Spiritual

Leader of our particular commune. The Spiritual Leader seems relatively quiet himself, though he did offer a few words of encouragement to Companion 12, who apparently didn't sleep very well. More usually he is in contact with the Controllers now, though we lay supermen don't hear what passes between them. They prefer to keep us in the dark, so to think, concerning their plans and intentions for fear that we should become distracted from our own business of cultivating the superconscious as much as is superhumanly possible. Should I wish to convey something to the Spiritual Leader while he's still in conversation with the Controllers, my communication will be diverted to the nearest unoccupied Spiritual Leader in this section of the community. Since there is one Spiritual Leader to every 100 Supermen, and there are 6000 Supermen in our particular commune, I should be guaranteed thought-access to at least one of the ten nearest unoccupied Spiritual Leaders at any given time. Except, of course, when I'm tripping. But then one is usually too engrossed by the heavenly visions being vouchsafed one to be mindful of the Spiritual Leaders anyway - unless, however, one is experiencing a bad trip, when recourse to the Internal Communications Network becomes virtually imperative.... Not that the Spiritual Leaders encourage any of us to use it then. For as often as not they are tripping themselves and sometimes resent being disturbed. Nevertheless, access to a Spiritual Leader, even if not to one's own, remains technically possible at all times of the night and even at certain times of the day as well. If too many companions are seeking spiritual advice at once, however, one may have to wait some time before one can get through to a Leader. Fortunately, I don't experience bad trips all that often, as I hope to have already made clear. Nor, for that matter, does anyone else. Though that doesn't prevent a queue from forming, as it were, to obtain some spiritual guidance - especially since most of those in it have no real business being there at all, considering that they are not usually in such a bad way as they may like to imagine. Recently, however, the Spiritual Leaders have tended to turn a deaf ear, so to think, to certain supermen whom they know, from bitter experience, to be unduly alarmist. Needless to say, this has dramatically improved connections for those who really *do* need some spiritual advice!

It is strange our being in the dark about the Controllers. None of us has ever seen them because no Superman, whether lay or clerical, has a pair of eyes to see with. Neither do we have ears to hear with or a tongue to talk with. Our internal communications are entirely psychic, as our thoughts are channelled, through the Internal Communications Network, to the Spiritual Leaders. Thus none of us knows what a Controller actually

looks like, though we are told that they are humans and walk on two legs. This gives us some idea, but by no means an exact picture. For the nearest we come to seeing human beings is, as I've already intimated, in our dreams, and then more often than not in a distressing context, less because they are particularly nasty than because the dreams are largely atavistic. However, if contact with the Controllers is impossible for us lay supermen, it is of course quite otherwise for the Spiritual Leaders, who are connected to the external environment via special artificially-constructed hearing and speaking devices - the former enabling them to understand what the Controllers are saying to them at any given time, the latter transposing their own thoughts into speech for the Controllers' benefit. This two-way External Communications Network is invaluable to the Controllers; for it enables them to keep in touch with the overall psychic position of the superhuman communes and to regulate their behaviour and attitude towards them accordingly. Provided the Spiritual Leaders don't pass on false or misleading information, we get the trips we deserve.

But we're still literally in the dark at the moment, since the next spiritual flight isn't due to start until shortly after everyone has been woken-up by the Internal Alarm System at 20.00 hrs this evening. I happened to wake up early for once - perhaps by as much as half-an-hour before take off. At one time the trips wouldn't begin until some 2-3 hours after our waking up. But now that they are becoming longer and stronger, with the sleep period becoming correspondingly shorter and weaker, the Controllers waste much less time in getting the spiritual flight under way for us. Admittedly, this may seem odd to anyone not acquainted with our situation. But it conforms to a very cogent logic - namely the need to step-up the spiritual life by degrees while the sensual life ... of sleep ... is cut back, in order to bring us closer to the next stage of evolution, which won't only be above trips but ... above sleep as well, and thus nearer to the supra-atomic absolute of transcendent spirit. My hunch is that we are drawing closer to that climatic day when the old brain will be surgically removed from each one of us and we shall no longer be a collection of superhuman individuals but ... a Superbeing, or tightly-packed cluster of new brains, whose only *raison d'être* will be to directly cultivate the superconscious through hypermeditation, until it attains to independence of the new brain and so becomes transcendent. Well, we're still at quite an evolutionary remove from transcendence at present. But whether we're at quite such a remove from elevation to the post-visionary consciousness of a Superbeing ... is another thing! My guess is that the Controllers will operate on us at some time during the next decade. Having cut our sleep period down to less than

four hours and extended our tripping period to approximately sixteen, which is more than twice what it was when millennial life first began some eighty-odd years ago, there would seem to be little progress left for them to impose upon us in this superhuman context - a fact which would suggest that the major turning-point of the post-human millennium lies just a few years ahead. Certainly, there has been a steady increase in our tripping capacity and spiritual satisfaction during the past 15-20 years. Had someone informed me, 20 years ago, that I would be tripping sixteen hours a day seven days a week at the strength to which we've since grown accustomed, I'd have dismissed it as absolute nonsense! But times have changed, and now that hitherto improbable situation has become a reality. Possibly we shall soon be in spiritual flight for even longer, though I can't imagine us being obliged to go without sleep altogether. Somehow that would be quite impossible, given the psychological and physiological constitutions of our brains. Only when the Controllers elevate us to the superbeing stage of evolution will we or, more correctly, the ensuing Superbeing be in a position to go entirely without sleep. And then because it won't have a subconscious mind to contend with, but be completely above sensual indulgence and, by implication, the unheavenly prospect of having to endure periodic daymares!

None of us can know, at present, exactly what such a perpetually wakeful life would be like, for we are unacquainted with post-visionary consciousness. What we *are* acquainted with, however, is the highest form of visionary consciousness, as induced by the benevolent hallucinogen, and are generally satisfied by our experiences. We are each of us a supreme artist when we tune-in to our visionary trips and contemplate the translucent gems of psychic art which enrich our superconscious minds. Appearance has therein attained to its highest, most sublime manifestation in a quasi-essential context, and all that remains now is for it to be totally eclipsed by pure essence, with the advent of the superbeingful millennium, for us to approximate to the Absolute. I, for one, am distinctly looking forward to going up higher, much as I appreciate the spiritual flights we have grown accustomed to making on the gentle wings of the divine stimulant. For then there will be no bad trips, and consequently no mental queues forming for the Spiritual Leaders' advice. Indeed, there won't be any Spiritual Leaders either and, thus, no class distinctions. The Superbeing will know only itself, which is, after all, the condition of the Omega Absolute towards which it tends, as it hypermeditates in collectivistic freedom.

But I digress slightly! We Supermen mustn't long too ardently for that

which is above us, otherwise we may grow dissatisfied with our present situation, which is by no means a bad one. The Controllers will act when they consider it propitious to do so.... In point of fact, they are acting, in some sense, at this very moment. For the Internal Alarm System has just come into service, to wake the more sensual Supermen from sleep and prepare them for the higher wakefulness to come. Were the Controllers to postpone implementing the next trip for any length of time, as used to be the case, some of those less than mindful Supermen might well relapse into sleep, and thus inhibit the subsequent efficacy of the mind-expanding stimulant. But, these days, the precipitous haste with which we are encouraged to take off on our spiritual flight precludes any such inhibition - a fact which testifies, I should imagine, to the strong desire the Controllers must have to pilot us safely to our journey's end in ever-expanding degrees of pure spirituality. Companions 64 and 97 are no longer as sluggish as before in coming awake, but they are still less than truly responsive, and thus responsible! They have only just communicated, it would seem, with the Spiritual Leader who pertains to our section of the community, to assure him of their full wakefulness. Once he knows that everyone is ready and waiting, he'll give the Controllers the all-clear. Should anyone prove recalcitrant, he will personally intervene with a brisk call to duty, which is slightly humiliating for the companions concerned! Nevertheless, it usually produces the desired effect.

Ah, now I feel a change coming over me as I grow more wakeful! The Controllers have evidently turned us on again and soon we shall be flying in the opposite psychic direction from dreams. This is when we really begin to live, to transcend our mundane selves through complete absorption in the trip, at one with our spiritual potential. I shall soon cease thinking, since thoughts are both superfluous and an impediment to visionary experience. Once properly launched on the spiritual flight, one has no time or inclination for thoughts!

Ah, already I can discern faint luminous shapes appearing before the inner eye on the impalpable screen of my superconscious mind! They never move, for that would be contrary to their omega-oriented essence. But they change colour and shape, they come and go, fuse and expand, retaining one's spiritual attention. Once fully underway, there is no possibility of one's relapsing into sleep. Nor can one crash, though one will eventually have to return to ordinary waking consciousness again as the spiritual journey draws to a close. This is precisely the consciousness, however, from which I'm now in the process of gratefully escaping. I look forward to a psychic *bon voyage*!

* * *

Their trip has been under way at least three hours now and I've only received one communication and that from Unit 37, who has suffered a little insomnia recently and finds, from time to time, the higher wakefulness a trifle unnerving in consequence. I advised the Controllers, a couple of days ago, to slightly reduce his dosage of LSD, in order not to overburden his superconscious. But I doubt if they took much notice, especially in view of the fact that Unit 37 has been conspicuous, on a number of previous occasions, for a tendency to react and lag behind. They probably thought his insomnia more of a ruse than a reality, and so decided to keep the spiritual pressure on him just in case he began to trail too far behind the others. Bluffing occasionally pays off, though not so much these days as when we were all comparative beginners. The Controllers are more usually sceptical than sympathetic now, because they are determined to encourage evolutionary progress along as quickly as possible, transforming us into a post-visionary life form as much for their own benefit as for ours. After all, some of them get rather bored with the status quo and are anxious, in consequences, to do away with it at the first possible opportunity. Now such an opportunity depends on two vital factors for its ultimate realization: the external and the internal realms must be aligned in developmental readiness for transformation. It is only very recently that the Controllers have mastered the requisite technology for removing the old brain from a Superman and realigning new brains in such fashion as to create a Superbeing. For several decades they laboured in vain, always falling short of their ultimate goal. Yet that wasn't simply because they lacked the requisite technology for effecting such a radical upgrading of millennial life. Indeed, they had possessed the rudiments of such a technology for years. It is just that a Superbeing can't be created until *all* the Supermen in any given community are brought to a uniformly high pitch of evolutionary development; until, in other words, their respective superconscious minds have been opened up and expanded to a point where post-visionary consciousness not only becomes possible for them or their successors but ... acceptable and intelligible to them as well. By itself, technology isn't enough to establish a post-visionary life form. Rather, it must synchronize with a certain degree of spiritual development in each Superman, else the ensuing operation to transform Supermen into Superbeings will fail in all but appearances. Until recently, the Controllers haven't desired or been able to fully appreciate this crucial fact - with

consequences less than encouraging for both themselves and their superhuman 'guinea pigs'.

But now all that has changed and they are more keenly aware of the need to bring the Supermen's spiritual life into approximate harmony with their technological plans. Thus they are now less sympathetic towards and indulgent of spiritual slackness in the superhuman community than was formerly the case and more inclined, in consequence, to scepticism than to either compassion or leniency. This, hopefully, is only a temporary situation on their part; for, to be sure, they've already had to face one or two grave crises concerning individual Supermen, and will doubtless be obliged to recognize and come to terms with similar crises in the foreseeable future, assuming they persist with their current, rather hard-line tactics. I refer, in particular, to the case of Units 15 and 84, who each complained to me of insomnia and a correlative inability to properly integrate their LSD trips, which, in their opinion, lasted too long, under the circumstances, and were too powerful - given their comparatively-weakened psychological condition. I duly passed this information on to the relevant Controllers, adding, on their behalf, that I considered a reduction of their dosage advisable, in view of their evident lack of adequate sleep. It was noted by the Controller directly responsible to my sector of the superhuman community and, for a few nights, the LSD dosage was accordingly reduced. Units 15 and 84 - who, incidentally, weren't alone where this problem was concerned, but were simply the ones whom it affected most gravely - continued, however, to complain of insomnia and to request a further reduction in their dosage. Under previous circumstances and external regimes, such a request, duly passed via me to the Controllers, would almost certainly have been granted. But now that they had perfected the external aspect, as it were, of effecting a transformation in the level of life from superhuman to superbeingful stages, the Controllers were determined to crack down on laggards, or those whom they chose to describe as such, and summarily dismissed my request as detrimental to the overall psychic integrity of the community, which it was in their interests, they maintained, to safeguard from possible sabotage or subversion from within. The upshot of this intransigent attitude on their part was that Units 15 and 84, together with a number of other Supermen in a similar predicament, had their LSD dosages returned to the previous, from their point of view, unacceptably high level ... with, as it transpired, fatal consequences! For within a week both Supermen had suffered nervous breakdowns and had to be removed from the community - never, one suspects, to return to it. However, their more fortunate fellow-insomniacs

quickly progressed to a spiritual level on a par with the generality of Supermen, bearing the psychic burden of renewed high-level trips with a pressurized though firm mind. Nevertheless, the lesson - and there have been quite a few similar cases in recent years - must have gotten through to both leaders and led alike, though not, one can only suppose, to the former as much as to the latter! I only hope that Unit 37, with his slight insomnia, will duly pull through, else he, too, may 'go the way' of his less fortunate companions. And who knows but that such victims of evolutionary pressures serve the Controllers, in due course, as the most useful 'guinea pigs' on which to experiment - assuming they can be maintained elsewhere in some kind of alternative living context?

Perhaps I have burdened myself over-long with depressing thoughts? But I can't ignore the plight or problems of my Supermen. I am partly responsible for their individual well-being, both spiritual and material, and when something tragic befalls any particular one of them, I feel more depressed by it than anyone else, mainly because, together with my colleagues, I get to know directly about it, whereas each lay superman remains relatively ignorant of what happens to all but a few of his companions in the immediate vicinity. This is a consequence of how the Internal Communications Network is wired - each of the 100 Supermen in my sector being able to contact me but not one another, although some tangential contact on a very localized basis remains possible, some of the time, for those in any given vicinity of the sector. If matters were arranged differently, say more expansively, it is feared that Supermen would become distracted from their spiritual duties and might even collectively succumb to rebellious thoughts or ploys in the face of evolutionary requirement. Clearly, this isn't a situation the Controllers wish to encourage, since they have enough trouble with various individual Supermen without wishing to create additional trouble for themselves vis-à-vis the collectivity. Even *I* am relatively ignorant of the goings-on of Supermen in sectors outside my own, since as a Spiritual Leader one is brought into psychic contact with just a handful of those from adjacent sectors, and then only in an emergency - as when a Superman from some neighbouring sector desires spiritual counsel during a difficult trip but is unable to contact his own Spiritual Leader either because the latter is already engaged or, just as often, tripping himself, and therefore unavailable. Where more distant sectors of the community are concerned, one's ignorance is total. Our interconnectivity doesn't extend all that far afield.

Admittedly, there are advantages to being a Spiritual Leader, as opposed to a lay superman, perhaps the chief of which is that one doesn't

trip every night but, mercifully, every other night, so that one isn't quite so pressurized as the generality of Supermen but is comparatively free, on the non-tripping night, to meditate and thus intimate of the coming hypermeditation in the next evolutionary stage - namely that of the Superbeings. This arrangement enables one to think about various matters if thinking is what one desires or needs to do, and I have certainly taken full advantage of the opportunity this evening, mindful that the Controllers aren't particularly interested in communicating with one now, and won't be listening-in to me in consequence. Usually one does of course meditate; for that is far more spiritually rewarding. But a little thinking now and then doesn't come amiss, and in any case is often provoked by the communications one may have received from certain Supermen. After all, it is largely to be on-hand to receive such communications that one is intermittently exempted from the trip. Now although meditation is important, it plays only a secondary role, being, to put it crudely, a kind of sideline. Whether in decades to come - assuming our status as Spiritual Leaders lasts for decades - we shall still be exempted from nightly tripping in this fashion ... remains to be seen. Though it's not impossible that the Controllers will eventually bring us into line with the majority of Supermen and oblige us to abandon our mediating and meditating roles in the process, always assuming that we can be brought into line with them - a thing which, for a variety of reasons, must remain open to doubt! The only alternative would seem to be our destruction when the generality of Supermen are transformed into a superbeingful entity. However, that isn't something I should like to dwell on, even though there may be a grain of consolation in knowing - if one could know for certain - that one's brain wasn't destined to be operated on and wouldn't therefore be fated, in its ensuing new-brain guise, for subsequent evolutionary struggles and experiences, about which, in the nature of things at present, one can have only the faintest inkling.

But that is rather negative, and I have a duty to remain as positive as possible, if only for the sake of those Supermen to whom I'm personally responsible. They are now some four hours into their current trip, and I have yet to receive an additional communication to Unit 37's. At this rate, I might as well be tripping myself, though etiquette demands that one remains at the ready and, anyway, I don't particularly mind being obliged to think or meditate instead. I reckon the Controllers must be afraid that if we Spiritual Leaders trip-out as often as the generality of Supermen, we shall be unable to communicate with them as they would wish, since too much under the stimulant's hallucinogenic influence. They require middlemen, as

it were, to liaise with them from the vantage-point of a kind of spiritual no-man's-land in-between the opposing sides, and wouldn't want us to become too spaced-out and, hence, at too great a psychological remove from them. We are wired into the community in such a way as not to threaten, by our less uniform spiritual performance, its overall psychic integrity. Thus we're spokesmen for the superhuman flock, but aren't directly of the flock. I fear that we shall be destroyed when the time comes for Supermen to be superseded by Superbeings. Or perhaps...? Yes, the thought now occurs to me that maybe we will be removed from our respective sectors and turned into a separate community of lay supermen, with but a relatively tiny percentage of us still being obliged to play the role of Spiritual Leader to it? Well, that may seem unduly optimistic, but one shouldn't rule that possibility completely out-of-account. The only snag is ... could we become genuine Supermen after having functioned as go-betweens for so long? And, to be perfectly honest with myself, I can't be confident that we could.... Ah, something is happening at last! "Hello, A5 receiving."

"SL5, this is Unit 13, Sector 4, thinking through. I'm beginning to grow bored with my trip and wonder whether you could obtain me a stronger dose in future. Psychic contents aren't coming across as clearly or sharply as I'd like."

"Well, just make do with what you've got, Unit 13, and I'll try my best to get your quota upgraded."

"Much obliged, SL5."

So what do you know! And not even one of my own sector! These precocious Supermen can be just as big a problem for the Controllers to handle as the laggards!

* * *

Apart from the regular beat of the large mechanical pump, which was functioning as normal in its capacity as life-sustainer for the 27th Superhuman Community of New Cork North-West, the only other sound for the past twenty minutes had come from the tall, thin, elderly comrade to Controller 16's left, who was still engaged in dusting the control panels to each of the three large computers that stood against the wall there. Not just the sound of the small mechanical duster in his bony hand, whining unobtrusively as it sucked-up whatever dust its insatiable mouth came into contact with, but the no-less unobtrusive sound of Controller 9's footsteps and body movements reached Controller 16's acute ears, where they were channelled to a mind that was becoming increasingly bored by a lack of

both interesting thoughts and interesting stimuli, intellectual or otherwise, coming to it from without. Languidly, Controller 16 noted on his plastic wrist-digital that it was barely 08.00 hrs, which meant that he still had another half-hour on duty before he could retire to his living quarters and settle down to some diverting holography or computer graphics, such as few people bothered to contemplate these days but which, more out of perversity than genuine interest, he nonetheless persisted in contemplating, if only to prepare himself for a decent sleep. Later, if Comrade 98 was in the mood, he would recount his recent social escapades with Comrade 52, who had a reputation for eccentric behaviour. Comrade 98 was bound to be intrigued, providing, that is, he wasn't tripped-out like a Superman and in need of supervision - as occasionally happened when he was off duty! At present, however, Comrade 98 was sitting in front of the dashboard in one of the remoter parts of the Tripping Centre, mindful, no doubt, of his duties as Principal Controller for sectors 25-30 of the Superhuman Community in question.

At that moment the whirr of Controller 9's mechanical duster ceased and, with delicate footsteps, he returned to his customary post beside his rather bored colleague, bringing with him the now dust-gorged contraption which, with scant formality, he duly dispatched into its container at the base of the dashboard-cum-desk-cum-drawer in front of which he was now standing.

"Well, Comrade 16, how goes it at present?" he politely asked. "Looking forward to your break?"

Comrade 16 nodded his clean-shaven head and simultaneously answered the first question by informing his senior colleague that 'it', meaning life or things or duty, was still going rather quietly. There had occurred but one communication from Sector 3 of the community in the past forty minutes, which totalled, with Sectors 4 and 5 included, no more than eleven communications during the entire session - from 02.30 through to 08.00 hrs.

"Very quiet this morning," Comrade 9 agreed, as he sat down in front of his dashboard. "They were busier during part of the first session than we've been throughout the entirety of the second. Which is pretty much to form these days."

Comrade 16 nodded in tacit confirmation and remarked that Coms. 11 and 35 of the first session had noted twenty-four communications from 20.30-02.30 hrs, most of them from Superlink A2, who had to cope with an overspill from Sectors 1 and 3, as well as attend to his own. Superlink A5, on the other hand, had been relatively quiet, despite his having to stand-in

for Sectors 4 and 6 when required. Only two communications from him, and that late in the first session - at 00.15 and 01.30 hrs respectively. Otherwise, merely routine communications on the hour.

"I expect Comrades 8 and 54 will receive more communications than we've had, when they come on duty for the third session at 08.30 hrs," Comrade 9 opined.

"Yes, the late-period trip can be rather more exciting from a Controller's standpoint," Comrade 16 confirmed, drawing on a combination of experience and imparted information from successive third-session comrades. "It's then that some tripping units begin to weary of or grow impatient with things appertaining to their respective psychic experiences. No two units ever share exactly the same trip, you know."

The pigtailed head of the Senior Controller bobbed in sagacious acknowledgement of that fact! "Each Superman is virtually a law unto himself," he declared, a shade wistfully. "Not that their experiences differ to any marked extent. After all, one trip is pretty much like another when you come down to the basic psychological facts of the matter. But, of course, not all brains respond to the stimulant in exactly the same way. The better-constituted ones respond to it with more alacrity, as a rule, than do the less well-constituted ones, whose superconscious is not so far evolved. Also you have to make allowances for the sleep record of any given tripping unit. A Superman whose subconscious has inflicted a daymare upon him during the afternoon will be less well-disposed towards LSD in the evening than those of his companions who dreamt pleasantly. If he recalls parts of his daymare during the trip, he may slant his attitude towards it in a negative direction, and that, as we both know, can lead to a less than satisfying experience!"

"Though if the daymare-haunted Superman gets in touch with his Spiritual Leader in good time, the latter should be able to recondition his attitude and thus return him to a calmer frame-of-mind," Comrade 16 remarked with purposeful calm. "Superlinks A2 and A5 each came through once during our session with accounts of this problem, which, fortunately, they seem to have solved."

"Just as well for us!" Comrade 9 rejoined, a wan smile on his thin lips. "Otherwise we'd have had to bring the Supermen concerned down from their trips with a local injection of counter-acid solution, before their negative attitudes began to affect those in their respective vicinities." He paused a moment, as if absorbed in deep reflection, then asked: "What about the first session? Did Comrades 11 and 35 receive similar communications?"

Comrade 16 checked through the electronic record notes of the session in question and answered affirmatively. "That's usually the worst session for this particular problem," he continued, "because the closest in time to the Supermen's sleep period. With the second and third sessions, by contrast, it's generally the insomniacs who begin to pose problems - our session providing three cases of psychic strain again. It's a wonder we don't inject more powerful sleeping draughts into them."

Comrade 9 sighed faintly while gently shaking his aged head. "We used to many years ago," he confessed, for the benefit of his junior colleague, "but these days we're afraid of the consequences of such an action on their tripping capacity. It wasn't simply that a drugged Superman would sleep longer than his companions; he'd sleep deeper as well, a thing which had a counter-productive effect on the quality of his trip, and tended to undermine the psychic integrity of those tripping units in any given sector of the community where heavily-drugged insomniacs were to be found. So gradually we cut down on sleeping draughts, until, as per current procedure, we scarcely ever apply them at all - not even in genuine cases of insomnia, such as are still encountered from time to time. The emphasis in the superhuman millennium is on upward self-transcendence, in consequence of which it would be morally wrong of us, and bad for the more spiritually-advanced tripping units, to simultaneously cater to downward self-transcendence in all but a minor and, on the whole, tangential way, such as pertains to the occasional application of weak sleeping draughts to those whose persistent insomnia might otherwise pose a subversive threat to the psychic well-being of the community in general." Having said which, Comrade 9 relapsed into one of his customary reflective silences, which was just as well from Comrade 16's point of view anyway. For, within less than a minute, a communication came through from Sector 5 of the community, obliging him to resort to headphones as he acknowledged its reception.

"Go ahead, A5, this is Con. 16 receiving."

"For the second time this day, I must report that a Superman has requested an increase in his dosage of LSD," the artificial voice of the superlink in question responded. "And all because he claims that his current dosage is insufficient to last as long as he would like. He's beginning to lose height in his spiritual flight and is afraid that the next few hours, before he can return to sleep, will be less than rewarding."

"Which unit is this?" Controller 16 asked, as he recorded the communication in shorthand on his computer (the voice recorder normally employed in this service being temporarily out-of-order).

"Unit 63 from my sector," A5 promptly answered.

"Very good A5. I'll look into this request and see what can be done."

The amber communication light on the dashboard in front of him duly receded and, removing his headphones, Controller 16 turned to his senior colleague and said: "Thus has another tripping unit requested a stronger fix! Apparently, the first request A5 put through on this subject concerned Unit 13 of Sector 4, and it came through to Comrade 35 at 01.30 hrs," he added, consulting the record notes of the previous session.

"There would seem to be a growing body of discontent, as it were, with current LSD dosages in certain sectors of the community," Comrade 9 observed, as he scanned other recent record notes for Sectors 1-5 on the bright visual-display screen in front of him. "At least 10% of the 500 tripping units in those sectors are dissatisfied with their current doses - as compared with 20% who take the opposite view, for one reason or another, that their trips are too protracted and powerful. Whilst in-between, some 70% who appear resigned to what they get."

Comrade 16 noted the respective percentages in his computer and opined that the only reasonable thing they could do now was to remove the precocious tripping units from the sectors in question and create a more advanced community out of those and other such units from other nearby sectors, in accordance with the newly-discovered technique for removing Supermen from any given community and transferring them elsewhere.

Comrade 9 grunted judiciously and agreed, over a brisk nod of his head, that that was probably the most viable solution these days. "Thus are 'the quick' weeded-out from 'the slow!'" he added, not without a flicker of amusement. For in his mind's eye he saw comrades at work removing a brain from 'the tree', as the support system was colloquially called, and transferring it, with the assistance of a special trolley on which a small mechanical pump and an oxygen container ...