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Taking *Nineteen Eighty Four* Back to the Future, or There's an Awful Lot of Orwell in *Brazil* (Not To Mention Python)

W. RUSSEL GRAY

THOSE OF US WHO ARE LONG OF TOOTH can recall an era when the only Miranda decision was whether Carmen would do a samba or berate Xavier Cugat with malapropisms. Since then we have come a long way, so far that even George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* now seems long of tooth. Or so Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* seems to imply.

Gilliam did not start with that grandiose intention. His inspiration was an overheard song—and its theme of escapism. Imagine a Welsh vacation beach—not sunny, white, and sandy—but overcast and blackened with coal dust. Gilliam, a transplanted American, was on holiday from doing Monty Python's animated effects. Gazing about that pathetic beach, he heard haunting Latin American music from a nearby radio: "Brazil, where hearts were entertained in June/ We stood beneath an amber moon/ And softly murmured: "Someday soon." To Gilliam those "escapist romantic sounds suggested that "somewhere out there, far beyond the conveyor belts and ugly steel towers, is a green and wonderful world," and this experience on the beach was the genesis of the dazzling interplay of fantasy and reality in *Brazil* (Forrest 78, 80).

When Robert DeNiro heard of the idea he called to ask if there was a part for him (78). Were *they* alive, one might imagine Franz Kafka and George Orwell volunteering for script duties—move over, Gilliam, Charles McKeown, and Tom Stoppard. Indeed, *Brazil*'s protagonist is a Winston Smith with Kafkaesque day and night dreams. And Gilliam's 1983 concept of the film was "Walter Mitty meets Franz Kafka to the rhythm of Latin sambas." But after script help from McKeown and Stoppard, Gilliam revised the concept to "Walter Mitty meets George Orwell" (Musto).

Critics praised *Brazil* for brilliantly capturing the spirit and style of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Michael Musto felt that Gilliam's film did so even better than Michael Radford's *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Musto found the latter "oppressively self-serious from beginning to end" and observed that although both films are thrillers "obsessed with the night-marish consequences of being a peon in a totalitarian world," *Brazil* "isn't chained to its machinery," but makes "fabulous flights of lunacy."

I agree with Mr. Musto. The Radford film has a curiously static quality. It is as if a tragedy is building, but in a society too literally like that in Orwell's novel—one in which tragic action is impossible. It is a society in which caricature is verisimilitudinous characterization because in Oceania only

one-dimensional figures could survive. Though the noblest human of his time, Winston loses his ultimate freedom—his ability to dream. In contrast, the escape dream of Sam Lowry near the end of *Brazil* enables him to transcend his torture. Paradoxically, Radford's film stayed close to Orwell's text, yet not close enough.

When not embalming *Nineteen Eighty Four*'s literality, Radford's film merely tinkers with the text. Why, for example, substitute "Brother" and "Sister" as terms of address for Orwell's (logically) desexualized "Comrade"? Why work to death Winston's dream vision of the Golden Country with outhouse door camera angles and O'Brien standing by Winston to gaze upon it (Orwell keeps O'Brien and the Golden Country in separate dreams)? Why the vision of Winston's mother with rats crawling on her? Ah, it dawns: perhaps the younger Winston "ratted" on his mother. Then why not have him "let her down," as it were, as when in the novel he dreams of watching her sink away from him in the saloon of a ship? And where is the poetically appropriate singing thrush that preludes Winston and Julia's intimacy in the Golden Country? Replaced by John Hurt's utilitarian "I want you."

Straight satire does not travel well alone, in print or on screen. Orwell leavened the grimness of *Nineteen Eighty Four* with dashes of comedy. Would that Radford had retained them. From the novel we recall Winston's low-comedy tripping of a co-worker in the canteen to get a seat near Julia, a Party orator changing in mid-sentence the name of Oceania's (latest) enemy despite contradictory signs and banners all about, and of course the almost sitcom situation when Winston is pneumatically barraged with falsification orders during a few minutes in his cubicle at the Ministry of Truth. Where the Radford film backed off and made Orwell's story too unrelievably a Book of the Dead, *Brazil* catches the novel's farcical bounce and adds a bit of reverse English: scenes at Sam's workplace, a deliciously timed terrorist explosion to blow up and rebut a store window TV carrying a fatuous interview with a government drone, interaction between Sam and his plastic-faced mother, and Sam's blocking of the pneumatic message tube at the M.O.I. to back up the informational (sewage) system with hysterical results.

As befits a filmed satire (which, unlike a novel, one cannot put down and rest from), *Brazil* seems wildly and successfully improvisational even after many viewings. The dynamic admixture of comedy and tragedy is one cause. Another is the resourceful use of background music, starting and ending with the title song. Like the film's visual effects, *Brazil*'s music surprises and delights. An example is the mournfully complementary saxophone solo when Sam just misses the fleeing Jill, whose name is given him by the Buttle girl. And when the dreaming Sam appears to rescue Jill from doll-faced captors and then faces a huge Samurai, we hear the stock exotic music made familiar by countless B-grade Far East adventure films—exactly the sort of fare Sam and his colleagues would get via the bootlegged TV programming on their computer screens when the boss is not looking. In at least two other scenes Gilliam's music slyly burlesques the action. When Sam is

riding in a transporter the James Bond theme can be heard under the main music. And during Sam's plugging of the pneumatic message tube we briefly hear notes of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (Mathews 34).

Perhaps the most daring and imaginative of *Brazil*'s effects are visual. A gamut of surprising effects keep viewers off balance. Even a cinematic *trompe l'oeil* occurs. On his way to see Mrs. Buttle Sam drives his three-wheeled Messerschmidt through a block of high rises with conical furnace stacks. Then a face appears; from Sam's point of view it is a vagrant holding a bottle of liquor. But a camera cut to a street view reveals an architect's model of the housing in a plexiglass case. As Sam speeds by the vagrant spills his booze on top of the case. There is also imaginative intercutting between day or night dream sequences and reality, as when Sam's efforts to locate and protect Jill are complemented by his knightly combat with the huge armor-plated Samurai. No less deft is the intercutting between antipodal realities. To thwart pursuing police Sam releases a modular house from Jill's transporter. His jubilation at the collision this causes is cut short by the sight of a flame-engulfed victim. Gilliam then cuts to Christmas music in a shopping mall. There, in another burlesquing of reality Sam's squaring off to fight a riot cop melds into his fantasy combat with the gigantic Samurai.

Other visual effects sustain the entertaining *burlesquerie* that prevents *Brazil* from becoming oppressively grim en route to its bittersweet ending. Tuttle's descent from Sam's high rise by Tuttle-launched cable recalls a James Bond stunt in *Diamonds Are Forever*; similarly kinesthetic is his arrival with the rope-descending rescue team during Sam's torture chair fantasy. Orwell, whose interest in popular culture is well documented, might well have appreciated the blue collar poetry of plumber as *underground* hero—and one whose ski-masked face resembles that of the comic strip avenger the Phantom, and whose interbuilding cable travel and wall-descending suggest an urban Tarzan or a web-slinging Spider Man.¹

Plumbing stoppage, which in *Nineteen Eighty Four* is an incidental symptom if not symbol of a stagnant society, gets expanded treatment in *Brazil*. The resistance "Brotherhood" of Orwell's novel has a parallel in the brotherhood of plumbers, Lowry and Tuttle. In an exaggerated homage to a farcical work scene in *Nineteen Eighty Four* in which Winston was a passive victim, Sam finds his desk avalanched with paper work being augmented by constantly arriving stool-like capsules from the pneumatic delivery system. Redirecting a flexible power conduit, he propels them back into the pipeline. The results are dramatic. The system clogs, the flow in the overhead corridor pipe backs up, the pipe bursts, and a mess of bureaucratic sewage (paperwork) flutters down. Sam here emulates the guerilla plumbing of his hero Tuttle, whose creative efforts in the ensuing scene at Sam's flat bring a barnyard cliché to technicolor life when he reroutes plumbing tubes into the astronaut-like suits of two officious Central Services technicians so that they burst from the brown pressure. Comments by Salman Rushdie are illuminating: some reality can be smashed only by unreality—the applied sources and resources of the comic imagination. In an appreciative article on *Brazil* Rushdie offers this anecdote:

I once worked in an office building in which some troubled anonymous soul took to destroying the lavatories. It seemed like motiveless, insane destruction, until one day, on a wall next to a wrecked water closet, we read these scribbled words: *If the cistern cannot be changed, it must be destroyed*. Another radical plumber, Harry Tuttle, would have been proud of him (53).

The differences I have remarked between *Brazil*, Radford's film of *Nineteen Eighty Four*, and Orwell's novel are significant because *Brazil* is not, like Radford's film, an attempt to re-state Orwell's novel; rather, *Brazil* is a meta-statement that envelopes the dark ironies of totalitarianism in one of the luminous mysteries of the human spirit. *Brazil's* controlled yet imaginative exploitation of elements from *Nineteen Eighty Four* argues more for parody than re-statement; but even the term parody does not do full justice. Salman Rushdie's interpretation, which I find felicitous, goes beyond parody. To Rushdie, a celebrated author and a member of the Production Board of the British Film Institute, the pertinent setting is a matter of where the film is "at" ideologically. To Rushdie, *Brazil* is about imagination soaring above the banality, oppressive reality, and mass-produced fantasies in which totalitarianism would cage it—as Jill is caged in one of Sam's dreams and indeed as Sam's head is at the end of the film. Rushdie relates the clouds in *Brazil's* opening and closing scenes to the fleecy ones in which Sam soared in his escapist fantasies (53). They symbolize the free form and movement of the imagination.

I am leading up to the proposition that, in contrast to Orwell's (and Radford's) ultimately grim message, *Brazil* uses *Nineteen Eighty Four* and its late 1940s time frame to make a stunning spiritual affirmation. And, ironically, the ultimately upbeat and idealistic (beginning and) ending of the film was the contribution of Gilliam's real-life "Big Brother"—studio head Sid Sheinberg.

Without the cloud scenes in its opening and closing, *Brazil* is indeed a downbeat film, closer to a restatement of *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Before these scenes were in the film, Gilliam persuaded Steven Spielberg to watch *Brazil* in his private screening room. Though Spielberg loved the film and later was quoted as calling Gilliam a film genius, he told Gilliam after the screening that the ending was too grim (Mathews 42). The cloud scenes were not in the opening and closing of the international version of *Brazil*. In his book about the David and Goliath struggle between Gilliam and MCA-Universal president Sid Sheinberg over the editing of the American version, Gilliam partisan Jack Mathews acknowledges Sheinberg's influence on the final shape of the film:

Gilliam used Sheinberg's suggestions in editing both the beginning and ending of his American cut. The international version opens without music. The first image is not sky, but the TV screen. It ends with Sam in the torture chair and the gray walls of the tower as a depressing backdrop. Sheinberg said that the end would be more palatable with clouds as a backdrop. Gilliam had bought sky footage from the producers of *The Neverending Story* to use in case his own smoke clouds didn't work. The footage was spectacular, and Gilliam agreed that those two changes worked (228).

The effect was remarkable. Rushdie, familiar with both versions of the film, praised the upbeat American ending. On a personal plane, I recall being approached by a Florida student after I presented a version of this article at a conference. He was delighted because now he understood why he liked *Brazil*. Had he seen both versions, he might have known immediately why he liked the American cut.

Where then, or what is *Brazil*? It seems to illustrate Dwight Macdonald's definition of burlesque, which is clearly different from parody in that it uses a familiar model or form as a vehicle to deliver a satirical statement on a subject outside the model (558). A parody would ridicule the model itself and let matters go at that. Thus in terms of Macdonald's distinction, familiar elements from Orwell's novel serve in *Brazil* as points of departure for an independent satirical statement—in this case advocating the superiority of the imaginative to the totalitarian mind—an outcome not found in *Nineteen Eighty Four*—film or novel.

What are these familiar elements and how does Gilliam build on them to make *Brazil* a satirical comment on the passivity and defeatism of accepting Orwell's formulation as the last word on the subject? For one, even though Gilliam's title refers to the song and not the country, its geographical non-meaning bespeaks a *doublethink* process. Indeed, in a world where Greenland is icy and Iceland is mainly green, and where the most repressive governments may be called "people's" republics, why not call 1940s Britain Brazil?

Also, both *Brazil* and *Nineteen Eighty Four* are quirkily unfuturistic. Rather remarkably, thirty-six years after 1948 Orwell's Winston Smith is contending with out of order lifts and defective plumbing, making do with a variety of shoddy "Victory" products reminiscent of World War II, seeing "steamer" or World War II buzz bomb damage, and finding archaic curios in a prole shop. Similarly, *Brazil*'s Sam Lowry wears clothes out of date even by the standards of his contemporaries—and, like other citizens, can see quaintly old fashioned art deco TV sets in store windows. Reviewer David Chute fairly reflected the technological funkiness of Sam's society: "a junk deco world," which looks as though Britons had "to rebuild an entire technological society from the contents of their thrift shops" (58). Sam, however, is more adept than Winston in manipulating the gadgetry for his own ends. When work piles up he sends capsules back into the system, blocking it. Furthermore, while Winston could manipulate the system to create a nonexistent hero (Comrade Ogilvy), Sam rebels more decisively by "killing" Jill's file in the main computer in a heroic attempt to throw off the police.

Early in both works there are grimly ironic touches. Winston Smith's tragedy of false hope begins in April, Chaucer's hallowed pilgrimage month, but also, as T.S. Eliot would have it "the cruelest month." And the ominous thirteen struck by the clock foreshadows Winston's bad luck while making the point that his society is on military time. *Brazil*'s main action begins with a terrorist Christmas bombing and a TV interview that reveals

that the rebels have been at it for thirteen years. Thus Gilliam's ironic opening has a twist. Winston Smith is the only real ideological rebel encountered in Orwell's novel. But from the outset of *Brazil* it is apparent that rebellion is not just a solipsistic mind state of the protagonist—hence it is not as futile and isolated an act as in *Nineteen Eighty Four*.

Also prominent in both *Nineteen Eighty Four* and *Brazil* are government slogans. In the novel they have two functions. FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, WAR IS PEACE, and IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH exercise the populations's doublethink mentality; and the ubiquitous poster legend BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU promotes an atmosphere of paranoid docility. However, *Brazil*'s more numerous slogans provide chorus-like comments on scenes. For instance, when the careless squashing of a bug on the ceiling of a computer room causes a misprint that dooms Buttle instead of Tuttle, the room's wall poster wryly comments LOOSE TALK IS NOOSE TALK. The base of the Ministry of Information's monumental bronze eagle proclaims THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE. Yet reminders in the Ministry's lobby, offices, and halls proclaim SUSPICION BREEDS CONFIDENCE, DON'T SUSPECT YOUR FRIEND REPORT HIM, REPORT IN HASTE REGRET AT LEISURE, and WHO CAN YOU TRUST??

Though both protagonists work for an information agency, Lowry is more farcically involved with associates and surroundings. Early on, he and records colleagues surreptitiously view TV sharply different from the Two-Minute Hates of *Nineteen Eighty Four*. They echo *Brazil*'s back to the forties leitmotif by watching old movies on their telescreens. Kurtzmann, their undersized "Big Brother," is always a split second too late to catch them at it. The opposite of *big*, his name fits: he is too wee a man to prevent escape from bureaucratic boredom. Sam also interacts with the humorously named Helpmann, whose paralysis symbolizes an earth-bound lack of imagination and obliges him to solicit help to go to the lavatory. At the Ministry of Information Sam also has farcical scenes with the drolly named Jack and Jill—an old friend who has become a torture technician and a feisty lady who comes to complain and leaves with an ally.

Jill, of course, is his love interest. Like Winston, Sam has a love affair with an attractive, willful lady. But Jill Layton's revolt is not an assertion of sexual independence but rather of her sense of social justice—a faculty lacking in Winston's Julia. In another switch on *Nineteen Eighty Four*, it is the lady who seems sexually repressed. Jill reacts violently during Sam's attempt to finesse her away from the M.O.I. guards; shortly thereafter she literally tries to run him down. Like Winston, Sam has a prophetic dream of his lady. But when he first sees her in the flesh there is an ominous overtone: he sees her reflection in a (bad luck) shard of broken mirror as she looks down from the rim of the Buttles' ceiling hole—like the one from which police will descend to arrest them later.

The use of children in *Brazil* initially seems to be a recycling of one of *Nineteen Eighty Four*'s horrors. Their playthings are military toys, and one

street game outside the Shangri La Towers seems to be called “interrogate the suspect against the wall.” In another scene uniformed children are in the M.O.I. lobby while a nearby soldier lectures on automatic weapons. But once these points of reference with *Nineteen Eighty Four* are established, *Brazil* transcends them. When he is representing the agency that nonpersoned Mrs. Buttle’s husband, Lowry is energetically attacked by her son—a far cry from the treacherous behavior of the youthful Spies of Orwell. And, outside the Towers Buttle’s daughter informs in a positive cause, providing the desperate Lowry with the fleeing Jill’s first and last names. In one of *Brazil*’s blackest sequences childhood innocence is juxtaposed with routinized professional cruelty: Sam sees torturer Jack Lint entertain his toddler while in the next room a new case awaits Jack’s ministrations (Dowell 67).

The mother-son relationship of *Nineteen Eighty Four* also gets a Gilliam twist. While Winston went back in time via dream and memory for traces of his missing mother, in *Brazil* Sam’s mother appears to go back in time through cosmetic surgery. In Sam’s vision of her near the end of the film she looks as young as Jill. In an inspired farcical moment as her face is being stretched by her plastician, Mrs. Lowry chides Sam for not acting *his* age (by accepting a promotion). In a delicious takeoff on *Nineteen Eighty Four*, facecrime apparently occurs in *Brazil* when aging ladies look their age.

During arrests in *Brazil* an Orwellian cliché is carried to almost absurd visual extremes. Before our eyes the accused becomes unrecognizable, an unperson. The police shroud, shackle, and render speechless the unfortunate Buttle, whose name had become (dare one say) a rhyme/crime for being too similar to Tuttle’s. Also, exaggeration is applied to the crashing sound effects of police break-ins in Orwell’s novel. In *Brazil* a circular section of ceiling falls to permit the lowering of a fireman’s pole—reminiscent of Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, for police to slide down. As today’s street people might put it, “What’s coming down?” A surprise arrest, of course—no Miranda Decision applies here—and the roof literally falls in on the accused.

Dreams and/or fantasies enrich the characterizations of Winston and Sam. When we first encounter him, Winston is so hate-conditioned to repress sexual desire that he fantasizes beating Julia with a truncheon and shooting arrows into her. Then, one of his dreams, a bright one, is set in his favorite meadow, where Julia sheds her clothes. At mid-novel the dream comes true: she stirs a latent erotic response, and he overcomes his hate-conditioning. In Winston’s sylvan scene with Julia, Orwell used a winged creature—a singing thrush—to represent the union of hope and love; later Winston associates that thrush with his love of and hope for the proles.

In his dream-fantasy Sam wings above ugly realities to romance a winged Jill in the fleecy clouds of his unfettered imagination. He has not yet met her, but it is as if their immortal souls are in harmony—winged entities that transcend the spatial and temporal limits of their earth-bound and mortal bodies. The soaring Sam envisions a special kind of love, for, as Plato would have it: “Only the soul of a philosopher, guileless and true, or

the soul of a lover, who is not without philosophy, may acquire wings. . . .” (*Phaedrus* 249. Stockhammer 242).

Sam eventually meets and loves the real Jill on earth. But as their affinity becomes more physical, less Platonic, and more dangerous, images of confinement replace the earlier clouds, dominate the visions, and even merge with Sam’s real activities, bringing him, as it were, down to earth. For example, in his third vision Jill is caged aloft in a cell tethered to tentacle-like ropes. When the dream cuts to reality, Sam is enclosed in the transparent square-blocked walls of an elevated train. Arising belatedly from his dream and his seat, he is caught in the car’s closing doors. Another vision of Jill trapped aloft cuts to the reality of Sam in an M.O.I. elevator which high-jacks him. Finally, after they are in custody following the violence in the lingerie shop (and Sam’s combat with the armor-clad *Samurai* whose face turns out to be a double for his own), Sam wakes up behind the wire mesh of a paddy wagon full of suspects.

In contrast to Sam’s quixotic flights, the winged creatures associated with *Brazil*’s government are inanimate or earth-bound (in one case, chair-bound) and invariably unadmirable. In the cavernous M.O.I. lobby a huge bronze eagle’s pedestal proclaims THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE. Yes, one suspects—on the day that the eagle’s statue flies. A reference to eagles also appears in one of the government’s fearful posters: WATCH THAT PARCEL/EAGLE EYES CAN SAVE A LIFE—apparently a reference to terrorist bombing tactics. In another example “Sparrow” (it sounded so, though the script says Spiro) is the name of the fawning, snobbish headwaiter who reappears in one of Sam’s visions near the end of the film as a funeral director and fingerman for the police.

One of *Brazil*’s strongly implied points is that a totalitarian society’s tentacles anchor the imagination. Like the plumbing and heating coils of Central Services they extend into everyone’s living quarters. Significantly, Sam revives from one of his imagined efforts to cut Jill’s cage from its tethers only to find himself entangled in utility coils.

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The comic and the tragic are intertwined in *Brazil*. To ridicule not *Nineteen Eighty Four* but the unimaginative and anti-idealistic expectations of the stewards of totalitarianism Gilliam playfully exploits such elements of Orwell’s novel as its doublethink process (*Brazil* the state of mind is not in South America but 1940s Britain), its quirkily unfuturistic milieu, its ominous opening, its language in uniform (government sloganeering), its information profession protagonist, its love interest, the attitudes of its children, its mother-son relationship, and its memorable physical and mental actions (noisy “Gangbusters” arrests, prophetic dreams).

In addition to the foregoing macroburlesque of *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Gilliam offers a *pastiche* of high and low cultural allusions that keep his audience delightfully off balance (mournful saxophone, Far Eastern background music, James Bond theme music and Bond-like stunts, and even a

passage from Dukas's semiclassical potboiler *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*) while complementing or otherwise enriching the twists and turns in *Brazil*'s plot.

And it all works magnificently, held together by a dynamic alternation of comic and tragic effects, resourceful use of background music, and audaciously effective visual techniques ranging from *trompe l'oeil* to increasingly subtle intercutting between (night and day) dream sequences and reality.

Thus *Brazil* dazzles the senses. What more should a work of popular art have to do? One can hope that it will simultaneously stimulate the mind, as the very best escapist entertainment can do. One thinks of the effect Raymond Chandler had in mind for his type of popular art (detective stories): "an effect of movement, intrigue, cross purposes, and *the gradual elucidation of character*. . . . The rest is spillikins in the parlor" (Chandler 19, emphasis added).

Brazil is about moral victory, or the ultimate inviolability of Sam Lowry's imagination. As in *Nineteen Eighty Four* the system wins, but not as totally. Another comparison to detective fiction may help. Even the very best of the private eyes do not send all of the villains to prison and reform their society. As David Geherin has sagely observed, that kind of solitary hero wins by not being compromised or assimilated by his milieu. Society resists reform, and corruption is not completely eradicable: the hero wins by not succumbing to it (6). As one of Hemingway's valiant bullfighters demonstrated, if you don't let them defeat you, then you win. To the pessimist this insight is solipsistic; to the realist it is existential.

Certainly the captivity and torture of someone as eminently decent as Sam Lowry is tragic—part of the cost of his realizing the consequences of violence—never mind by whom undertaken—upon the innocent. But the victory of Sam's imagination suggests an ultimately happy ending. In this sense *Brazil* resembles a tragi-comedy—a dramatic work in which comic and serious elements combine and "the action . . . seems to threaten disaster to the protagonist, but (the story) eventuates in a happy reversal."²

Brazil's ending happy? Yes, in the sense that Sam Lowry's imagination has the last word. In the rescue that Sam fantasizes while in the torture chair, Tuttle and his guerillas neatly reverse the previous cable and rope imagery that symbolized restraint of the imagination. Tuttle's band "rescues" Sam by rappelling down the walls of the torture temple. Though the rescue is illusory, the success of Sam's other means of escape—through imagination—is implied in the dialogue between Jack, the mind plumber, and the wheelchair-bound Helpmann. Though Sam's head still is confined in a cage-like restraint, his imagination has taken him elsewhere. Thus Helpmann's lament: "He's got away from us, Jack," and Jack's forlorn "He's gone."

Then, as in the cloudy aerial scene at the beginning of the film the clouds appear, closing in on the altar (of mind altering) of the torture temple and symbolically reaffirming the power of imagination to rise above the most adverse circumstances. Sam's element, the heavenly clouds, has im-

pinged upon the government's chair-bound one. Though the state has anchored his body and caged his head, Lowry's integrity remains intact. We hear him completing in his mind the escapist lyrics from the cloud festooned opening of the film: "Brazil, where hearts were entertained in June/ We stood beneath an amber moon/ And softly murmured: Someday soon."

The title celebrates not a place but a state of mind—the unconquerable freedom to imagine. And, with the Bogart of *Casablanca*, one of the bootleg films Sam overheard at work, we might all lift an imaginary glass and make a toast: DREAM IT AGAIN, SAM.

NOTES

1. Salman Rushdie deserves credit for the Phantom and Tarzan identifications.
2. For these definitions I am indebted to M.H. Abrams' revision of Dan S. Norton and Peters Rushton's *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962.

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