“Before entering upon Mr. Rodman’s own relation, it will not be improper to glance at what has been done by others, in the way of discovery...”


I am grateful to the persons and authors whose work I have utilized in the making of this one.

The debts to M. Verne and Mr. Melville are too extensive to repay, or even adequately to acknowledge. Reading their works has made me the writer - and the person - I am today. My theft here of their creations is not something I will here try to justify. Yet it is true: the worlds that they created have become our worlds.
Chapter One contains language and concepts from “Concepts of Stroke Before and after Virchow” by Francis Schiller.¹

Descriptions of the Soliton, staring in Chapter Two and continuing throughout, paraphrase Russell’s work on Solitary Waves.² I’ve also drawn on the Wikipedia entry on Waves of Translation³ as well as the Heriot Watt University Department of Mathematics site.⁴

Chapter Two also contains specific vocabularies used by the British to render their colonial subjects as Other, as intrinsically murderouse: the words Lascar, Dacoit, Dacoity, Thug, and Thuggee were appropriated from Sax Rohmer.⁵

Chapter Three draws from, and contains sentences from, the 1910 *Encyclopedia Britannica* article on the Indian Mutiny⁶, and from contemporaneous


⁴ [http://www.ma.hw.ac.uk/~chris/scott_russell.html](http://www.ma.hw.ac.uk/~chris/scott_russell.html)

⁵ Sax Rohmer, *The Mystery of Dr. Fu-Manchu* (London: Methuen) 1913.

narratives. The phrase “fresco of bloody handprints” is from Richard Collier, as are some of the descriptions that follow.

Chapter Eleven’s description of the tunnel frames, and method of construction, contains lines from the *Illustrated London News*, 25 March 1843. The description of the explosion on board the *Great Eastern* quotes from that of *The New York Times*.

Chapters Nine through Thirteen contain lines from the diaries of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, as archived at Brunel Archive at the University of Bristol. They also contain lines written by Brunel collected in Adrian Vaughan’s *The Intemperate Engineer*. There is a description of the tunnel-making machinery from *Stories of inventors and discoverers in science and the useful art*. Chapter Nine also contains a line from the song “Auto Salvage.”

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7 Mainodin (Mu’in Al-Dīn Hasan Khan) and Munshi Jeewan Lāl (Jīvanalāla), *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi* tr. Charles Theophilus Metcalfe (Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co.) 1898.


Chapter Nineteen relies upon, and uses two paragraphs from, the contemporaneous account of John C. Deane, and includes lines from The New York Times, 1861-61. It also contains, embedded in the text, a mondegreen of a lyric by Iggy Pop from “Kill City”; a line from Iggy & the Stooges’ “Gimme Danger”; a line from John Cale’s “Barracuda”; a line from Television’s “See No Evil”; a phrase from the Doors’ “The End.”

Cyrus Field’s musings on the necessity for pursuing the cable are taken from the contemporaneous account of Captain James Anderson. The interpolated poem about Sir Humphrey Davy is by Edmund Clerihew Bentley.

Chapters Twelve, Fourteen, and Fifty all purport to be articles from The New York Times. Chapter Fourteen is verbatim. Chapter Twelve is verbatim save the addition of some final sentences; Chapter Fifty originated in The Times but has been somewhat altered to suit.

Chapter Thirty-One contains a phrase taken from the title episode of the television series Naked City, which title and episode were written by my father, Howard Rodman Sr., to whom the phrase is used as in homage. The image of

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16 The London Times, August 19, 1865.
death-by-bell-and-clapper in Chapter Thirty-Six is from a 1914 episode of the French silent Fantômas serial.17

Many of the specific incidents in the life of the *Great Eastern* are deeply indebted to James Dugan’s *The Great Iron Ship* (cited below).

The notion that Sir James Anderson, captain of the *Great Eastern* during her cable-laying days, was also the captain of the ship *Scotia*, mentioned in the first chapter of *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, was reinforced by the article in *Appletons’ Journal.*18

Nemo’s musings at the end of Chapter Forty contain words from E. M. Cioran.19 The phrase “a man who is sure what is true,” used in Chapter Thirty-Six, is borrowed from Leonard Cohen’s “Master Song.”

The description of the Indian postal and telegraphic codes in Chapter Forty-Eight comes from *HOE & CO’S PREMIER DIARY.*20

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17 *Le faux magistrat*, written and directed by Louis Feuillade, based on the novel by Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre.


19 E. M. Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*, tr. Richard Howard, (New York: The Viking Press) 1975. The complete, unemended quote is this: “Show me one thing here on earth which has begun well and not ended badly. The proudest palpitations are engulfed in a sewer, where they cease throbbing, as though having reached their natural term: this downfall constitutes the heart’s drama and the negative meaning of history.”

20 *HOE & CO’S PREMIER DIARY*, (Madras: Hoe & Co.) 1961. Reference is made to this book’s telegraphic codes in a scene set in the mid-1840s, ten years before telegraphy was widespread in India, and sixty years before *Hoe & Co’s Diary* was first published.
The discourse on the 1867 tsunami is indebted to the USC Tsunami Research Group.\textsuperscript{21} The description of the flash flood in Uttarakhand in Chapter Thirty-Nine draws from news accounts in the \textit{Global Post} by Drs. Manpreet Bajwa and Harman Boparai.\textsuperscript{22}

In Chapter Forty-One, the phrase “iron will of Mr Field, whose final triumph was that of mental energy in the application of science” is from Marden’s 1901 booklet “An Iron Will.”\textsuperscript{23}

In Chapter Forty-Four, the lines \textit{The sea so deep and blind.../ The club the wheel the mind} are from “The Faith” by Leonard Cohen. The lyrics to “John the Revelator” are taken and modified from versions of the song by Blind Willie Johnson (from Harry Smith’s \textit{Anthology of American Folk Music}), but also versions by Nick Cave and Depeche Mode. And the repetition of the phrase “down there” in that chapter is an homage to Abe Polonsky’s \textit{Force of Evil}, the importance of which to my writing cannot be overestimated.

The phrase in Chapter Forty-Five, “failure in the simplest duties of love,” is from a remark by William F. Buckley, Jr. about Natalie Robins and Stephen Aronson’s book \textit{Savage Grace}: “Seldom has there been so devastating an exposure

\textsuperscript{21} <http://www.usc.edu/dept/tsunamis/caribbean/webpages/1867viindex.html>

\textsuperscript{22} <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news_regions_asia-pacific_india_130705_junes-flash-floods-uttarakhand-india-leave-devastation>

\textsuperscript{23} Orison Swett Marden, \textit{An Iron Will}, (New York: Sun) 1996.
of consequences, for the most sophisticated people, of failure in the simplest duties of love.”

Chapter Forty-Seven draws on the text and map of *la semaine sanglante*, from the section written by the Lettrist and sound poet Jean-Louis Brau. The quote about the old world and the new is taken from Gramsci.

Further details on the commune are taken from Lissagaray’s 1876 tome *History of the Paris Commune of 1871*, and from Ernest Vizetelly. Use was made of the maps in *Paris par Arrondissement* and of the maps at the University of Chicago Library.

Chapter Forty-Seven also makes use of a line from Elvis Costello’s “Beyond Belief.” The decision to in this chapter ascribe to one of our protagonists the appellation “number six” is a homage both to the 1967-1968 ITV television series *The Prisoner*, and to John Simmons’ novel *Monsieur le 6*, itself an homage to the number assigned the Marquis de Sade when he was imprisoned in Vincennes.

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26 <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/collections/maps/paris/>

I relied upon the Wikipedia articles on the Hungerford Market and Hungerford Bridge for details about the bridge chains that ended up in Bristol. John McIlwane’s book on the Clifton bridge was invaluable, as were the pieces at the Bristol visitors’ website.31

The staffs of the Brunel Museum in Rotherhithe and the Musée Jules Verne in Nantes were extraordinarily helpful and patient when I paid visits to their respective institutions, opening their doors to an American stranger; and on Cape Cod, the staffs of the French Cable Station Museum in Orleans and the Chatham Marconi Maritime Center in North Chatham were no less generous. I owe all of them large thanks. I am greatly indebted to the late Michel Roethel, in whose Paris bookshop dedicated to the work of Jules Verne I spent many fine lost hours, and whose hospitality and conversation were far more inspirational than he would have any way of knowing.

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31 <http://visitbristol.co.uk>
Goldenberg, Brent Green, Maggie Hanbury, Dante Harper, Doug Headline, Peter Herman, Melanie Jackson, Ricky Jay, Erik Jendresen, Henry Jenkins, Tom Kalin, Steve Katz, Nick Kazan, David King, Dione King, David Kipen, Tim Kittleson, Ken Kwapis, Dan Lansner, Jonathan Lethem, Gloria Loomis, Tom Lutz, Scott McGehee, Maureen McHugh, Walter Mosley, Mimi Munson, Geoff Nicholson, Nicholas Meyer, Dennis Palumbo, Robert Polito, Jon Raymond, Eddie Redmayne, Rebecca Rickman, Adam Rodman, James Schamus, Joan Schenkar, David Siegel, Marisa Silver, John Galbraith Simmons, Dan Simon, Zach Sklar, Tiahna Skye, Steven Soderbergh, Louise Steinman, Robin Swicord, Frank Wuliger, Barry Yourgrau, Wendy Zomparelli. The support of Steve Erickson has meant everything: Steve was the first person to read any of this manuscript, and he excerpted a chapter for publication in *Black Clock*, in Issue No. 10, and again in Issue No. 13. He gave me faith to continue this project when I thought that I just can’t go on.

The support, encouragement, and kind guidance of Sandy Dijkstra and Elise Capron of the Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency was as generous as it was invaluable.

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The app ‘Freedom,’ which suspends one’s access to the internet for a specified period of time, was a godsend. The website http://750words.com was deeply useful as goad and incentive. I also when in need would consult “Oblique Strategies, or Over One Hundred Worthwhile Dilemmas,” the deck created by Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt, 1975 edition. It is one of the treasured objects of our house.

Without Anne Friedberg, Tristan Rodman, Mary Beth Heffernan: quite simply, no book. Their love, generosity of spirit, and faith as I wrote this manuscript knew no bounds. Their support throughout was in wild excess of what can be acknowledged or repaid. And anyone who knows me knows that the revisions of the last years would simply not have been possible without Mary Beth’s dogged and literate optimism, which every day continues to inspire.

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