
NECROBIUS

Product Design Elements

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This document presents distinguishing product design elements for the proposed 'INTERACTIVE SERIES, *Necrobilus*, an original concept and story.

• TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience is people, ages 10 and older. Younger people (under 12) should play with a parent or older friend.

Necrobilus has been designed specifically to be widely appealing. An in-depth and convoluted story line for the serious gamer; light, witty "slap-stick" type humor for the recreational user. A whole family can play together with everyone coming away with something made especially for them.

This experience will appeal to anyone with a sense adventure and fantasy, anyone who likes to play and use their imagination, anyone who enjoys having fun with other people. Like a good amusement park, the product is not gender biased and can be effectively marketed to and enjoyed by boys, girls and adults.

• PRODUCT TYPES

A natural approach to productizing *Necrobilus* — or any "virtual reality" — is to create a series of related, synergizing software products that take advantage of the respective capabilities that the different mass market digital publishing media (floppy disks, CD-ROM, the World Wide Web) have to offer.

The basic business concept for the *Necrobilus* interactive series is selling access to a place and the experiences a person can have there— like charging admission to an amusement park. Admission to the *Necrobilus* world, and the adventures people can have there, can be provided as software products published on disk, CD-ROM, and the Web.

•• *DISKS*

Inexpensive (~\$9.95) *Necrobilus* disk sets will be used to deliver continuations of the *Necrobilus* story, enriching the experience step by step, playing off the previous releases and preparing the user and keeping them interested for the next major CD-ROM release. Additional characters, plot twists and mini-adventures provide a window into this ever-evolving parallel world, much like a newspaper or television broadcast gives us updates on what's going on around us.

Disks are designed to stand alone as well, so a player could enter the story at any time without requiring the purchase of every previous release.

•• *CD-ROMs*

Inexpensive CD-ROMs (~\$19.95) can be used to deliver richer audiovisuals, deeper interactivity, and virtual 'geography.'

CD-ROMs would act as the major hubs of the story, playing off the previous and following disk sets, as well as providing the means of delivering more sophisticated software systems, or 'premium' features -- like Web-based connectivity.

•• WORLD WIDE WEB

The Web can be used to publish text, images, and net-resolution sound and video that should serve principally as content-rich advertising for disk sets and CD-ROMs, a hint repository where players can talk back and forth about their experiences, and network services.

Beyond the basic use of the Web to advertise, sell, and even deliver Necrobios product, the Internet can be used to create community and collaborative puzzle-solving, exploration, and multi-player gaming. As the Web becomes more of a household phenomenon^{*}, players will gradually become aware of increasing intelligent presences in the mix, all pursuing the same goals, possibly in a competitive manner (i.e. having only 1000 copies of a certain clue).

• ESTABLISHING A BRAND NAME AND PRODUCT LINE

Necrobios features inherent strengths as a subject for virtual real estate development in a networked world. Necrobios is a *place*. The perfect context for gathering people into a virtual community, for exploring, for gaming, for on-going storytelling, for role-playing.

There is an opportunity to create an extensible, serialized, networked virtual reality program based on these ideas, featuring a proprietary look, feel, and design sensibility that establishes a proprietary brand of learning and entertainment experience while simultaneously creating and developing internet 'real estate.'

Necrobios is a perennial product concept— a place on the net that continually attracts new children, their friends, and parents, and offers them experiences they can't have in the real world, while encouraging curiosity, creativity, literacy, and strategy skills.

Taking advantage of this opportunity requires a both a high quality interactive product and a marketing strategy appropriate to reaching the audience for digital media. This requires both stylistic and cultural expertise as well as executive ability in the mechanics of the market place.

^{*} Recent developments between major software companies and network service providers (telephone, cable) are moving toward making access to the Internet as easy as turning on your television.

- STYLE & DESIGN



NECROBIUS
(see attached Design Description)

- *SERIALIZING THE NECROBIUS EXPERIENCE*

The first CD-ROM installment, "Creation of the Living Planet," has already been completed.

The series can be extended via Web downloads and disk sets, which could then be regularly collected, augmented and enhanced, and released on CD. This process can continue for at least six CDs.

Automatic updates from the Web site of existing data can turn software already purchased into a different experience, giving the player an enhanced sense of value to the disks/CDs already purchased.

The following people, places, things, and experiences can be developed and executed in the context of an INTERACTIVE SERIES and appropriately exploit the 'technomedia' nature of disks, CDs, and the Web.

Necrobios Series

Disk/Web Publishing Possibilities

- News-stand: used as an advertising engine. Contents will be updated by Web site. Release before initial CD to generate interest.

- Necrobilus' Lab: Changes as the News-stand updates the current events.
- Government Offices: Place where government's point of view heard.
- City/country: Events from the point of view of the common man.
- Satellite Station (Hint repository, updated by Web site connection)

Note: Floppy disks will be actual locations within the software. Major graphics will be contained on the disks, with additional content downloaded from the Internet automatically as needed. Areas visited through the floppy disks will move forward in time to match progress in the game.

CD Publishing Possibilities

Initial Release: Creation of the Living Planet

Future Release: Erradication of the Planet Gone Mad

• REVENUE GENERATION

This project will generate revenue through the sale of disk sets, CDs, and Web services that evolve from the concepts discussed above. The Web will also be used as a strategic marketing tool.

• PRODUCTION

All of the difficult production problems have already been solved. Many (technology, media) elements of the production already exist. The main work will be in effectively designing for this serialized, 'quantized' (disk, CD, Web) concept and putting engineering and media elements into production accordingly.

• RATIONALE

Generating images based on classical artistic principles rather than digital bells and whistles is unique for a consumer CD-ROM. Great care has been taken to cost-effectively produce the highest quality images without losing the "analog" feel of classical masterpieces. Typically, expensive computers running outrageous software generate fantastic images, however, the normal user can't tell the difference (but ends up paying for it anyway).

Not only do the graphics in Necrobilus rival the best, the unique quality and depth of the story will capture the imagination of both children and adults alike. At a time when the prevailing theme of software is recycling old ideas (DOOM™ look-alikes, Star Wars offshoots, Dungeon's and Dragons, Arcade Classics, etc.) Necrobilus offers a brand new idea, thoughtfully written and constructed to ensure great flexibility and timeless appeal.

The challenge of Necrobilus promises to 1) keep the audience interested and 2) ensure there will be a significant amount of time spent on the game (emphasis on value for the dollar).

The Necrobios world simultaneously possesses themes in psychology that will appeal to both young and old. Younger players will enjoy the jokes, the graphics, more mature users will start to understand the themes of governmental corruption, nostalgia, loss, etc.

In particular, younger players will benefit from the messages of environmental awareness and self-reliance hidden in the story in the form of metaphor and symbolism. There are also biological references to the areas of the brain and numerous other parts of the body, as well as metaphorical examples of the workings of each.

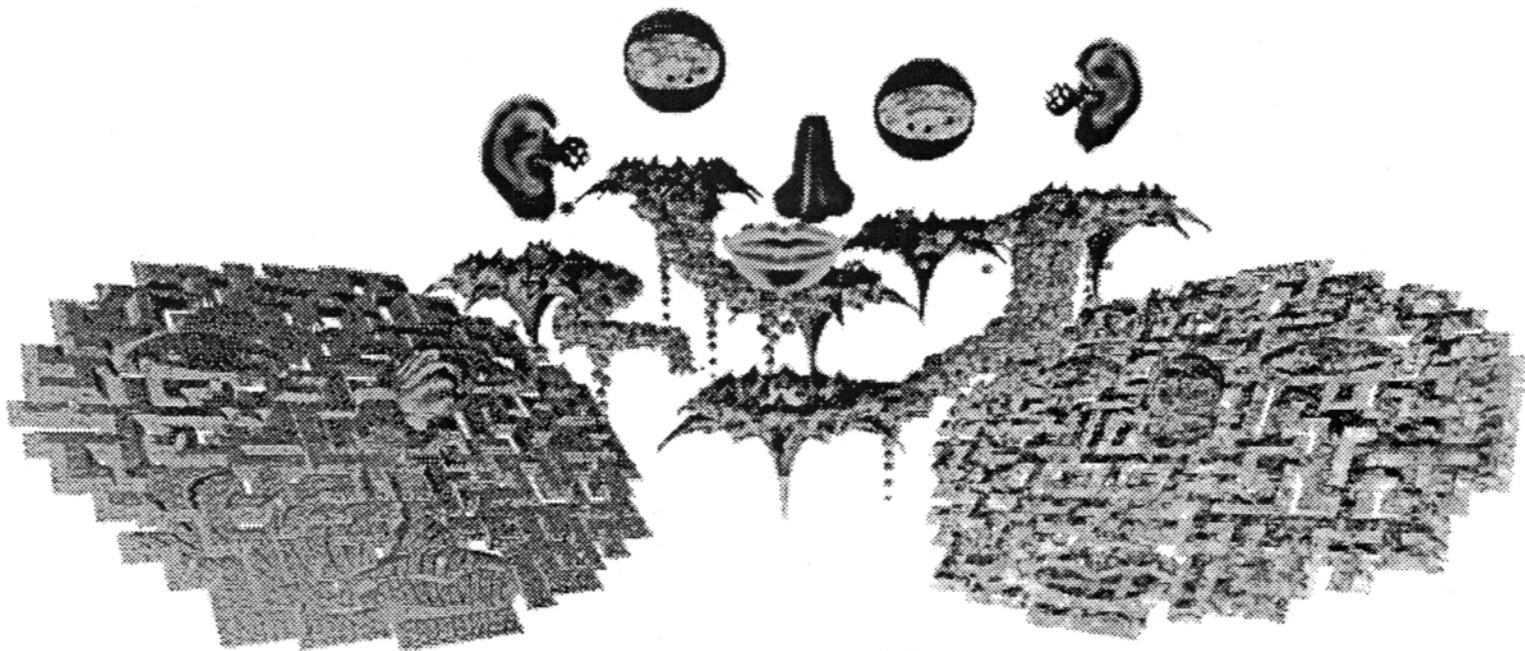
Parents will appreciate the prevailing theme of humor and whimsy in Necrobios, which is in sharp contrast to the disturbingly prevalent DOOM™-like violence-oriented content that has swallowed the market in recent months.

Through the Internet we can successfully market Necrobios to the digital public before the title is released. As a natural consequence of production, we could easily create mini-interactives that can be quickly downloaded onto a player's machine.

Necrobios as a marketable product offering is already over 95% complete. Most of the guesswork has already been dealt with and a sequel is currently in the planning stages. Initial investment and unit cost can therefore be kept at a minimum, allowing for competitive pricing and potential for large returns. We are poised to move, we just need a financial commitment to complete polishing of the existing material (<4 months) and introduce Necrobios to market.

GENERALIZED OVERVIEW OF NECROBIUS

PSYCHE



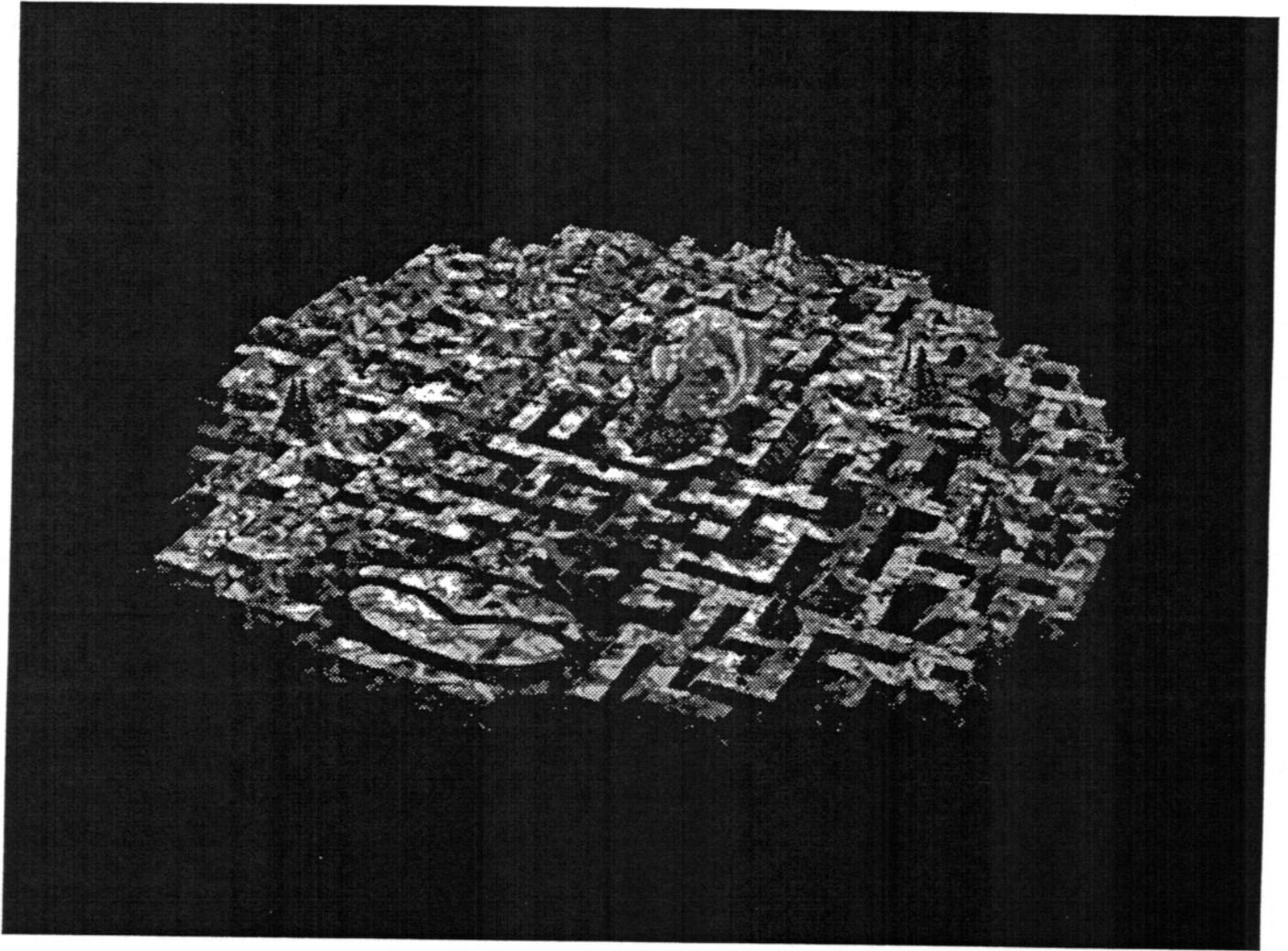
LEFT BRAIN

RIGHT BRAIN

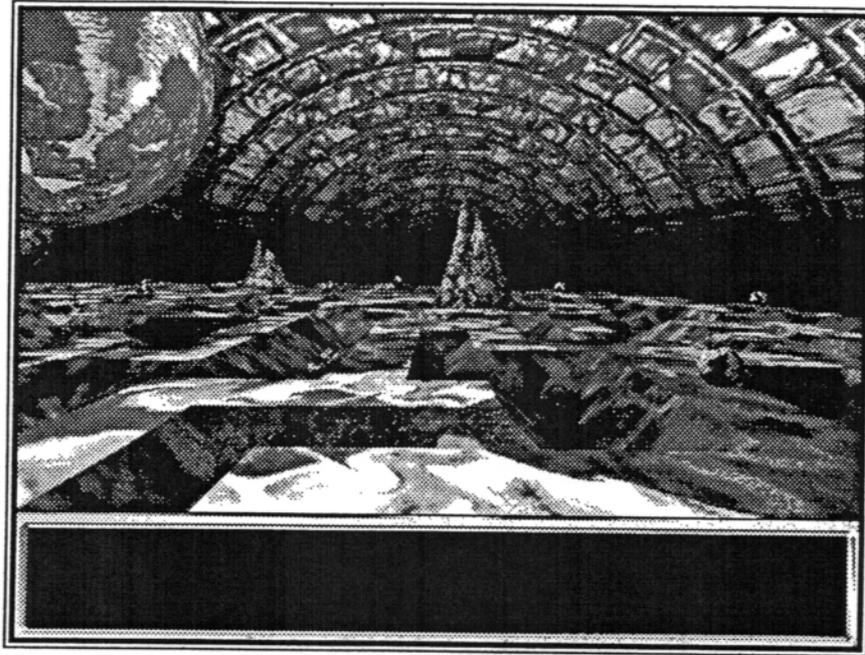
THE STORY OF NECROBIUS

(Short Version)

Outraged at being denied participation in his own plans to create a “living,” sentient planet, Professor Necrobilus immolates himself along with all records of his work. A determined government agency, their motives strictly top secret, salvage his brain from the ashes and electronically animate it. Knowing that only top qualifications will suffice, agents assign you to interface with Necrobilus’ restored conscience as an immaterial “pulse probe” to retrieve any surviving memories of the deceased professor’s work. The mission’s directives are kept disturbingly vague, so you turn to the underground where you encounter unsettling rumors, rumors that the government may have corrupted the professor’s work, driving him to suicide. Moreover, Necrobilus may still exist as a bitter, disembodied will within the resurrected brain, posing a deadly threat to your mission...



IN THE BEGINNING...

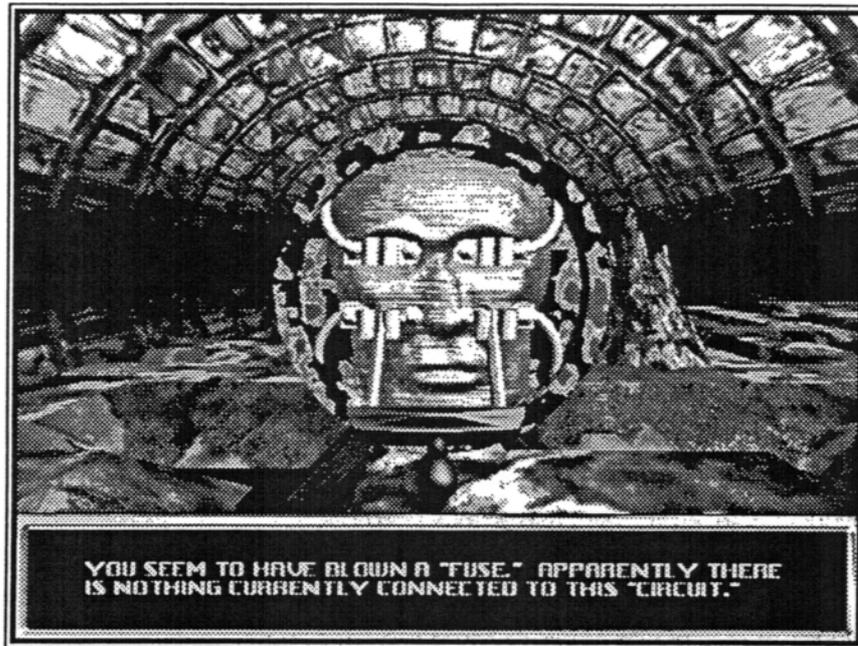


The OPENING

The opening scene is a bizarre, gray landscape of convoluted pathways (reminiscent of the “gray matter” of the brain). Some things seem to resemble hands, or mountains, but you can’t be sure. It is a vast area disappearing to the horizon in all directions. You have just entered the professor’s brain as a neural impulse, a “thought.” You have the freedom to discover everything about the professor, and vice versa. As the brain has just been re-animated, it is still somewhat in a state of shock, hence the drab surroundings. You hear an eerie “wind” blowing, this is actually a constant “white noise” of random, trace thoughts running through the professor’s mind. Occasionally the scenario flashes with color in a display that resembles lightning, followed by a hollow, distant thunder clap. The brain is trying to revive itself.

As you explore this seemingly desolate panorama, you are occasionally presented with floating, gray doors of various darkness, which flash briefly with color when the “lightning” strikes. They try to open as you click them, but only seem to make it half way, then slam shut with a reverberating sound. There simply isn’t enough mental power yet to move them.

If you’re playing on the “Normal Game” setting and you get stuck, directional arrows will flash briefly to help you get around. This area is more a less a safe-zone where you can practice navigating.



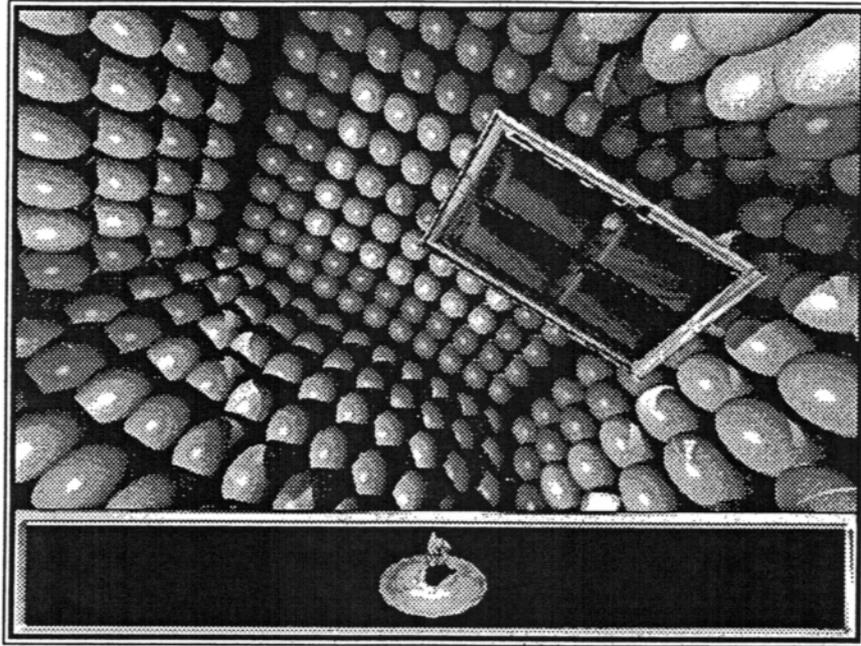
The POWER SWITCH

The path you are on dead-ends in both directions. At one end you come upon a small, blue-colored sphere on the ground. Clicking it sends it into a moving spiral, where you see it was actually the back side of a power switch, the face of Necrobilus himself adorned with a throw switch. You click on the handle and drag it up to engage the power. Tiny electrical zitches travel from the point of contact into the depths of the brain. At this point one of two things can happen.

1) The power will surge through the head and the screen will flash and zitch in a wild, erratic scene. During the melee you can discern within the flashing brilliance a face-like maze drawing, above which flashes a piece of a scene, an ancient, iron cauldron with multi-colored chains flowing from its inside. (This is a hint to the important relationship between the two. It doesn't tell you what to do, but rather where to find it.) The scene returns to normal and your computer interface informs you that this is indeed a "switch," for a "circuit" which nothing is currently "plugged into," therefore it blew a "fuse."

2) Buried in the FOG SCENARIO, there is a giant "plug." If this has been plugged in, throwing the switch produces much different results. As before, the power travels into the depths of the brain, then the power switch itself bends and stretches the whole scene, eventually ripping itself free and disappearing into infinity. In the ensuing rip in reality a scene appears where a symbolic representation of the professor (the RIGHT SIDE) surges and bubbles shooting forth eyes, a nose, mouth, etc. There is a transformation from abstract to realistic, symbolizing that you're getting closer to the real professor, you have unlocked his PSYCHE. At the end of the display, the gray surroundings flood with color, and the entire RIGHT SIDE OF THE BRAIN is now explorable. You are progressing deeper and deeper into the inner thoughts and secrets of Necrobilus.

[This scene is a metaphor for inspiration, where a little energy in the beginning can open up vast new possibilities.]

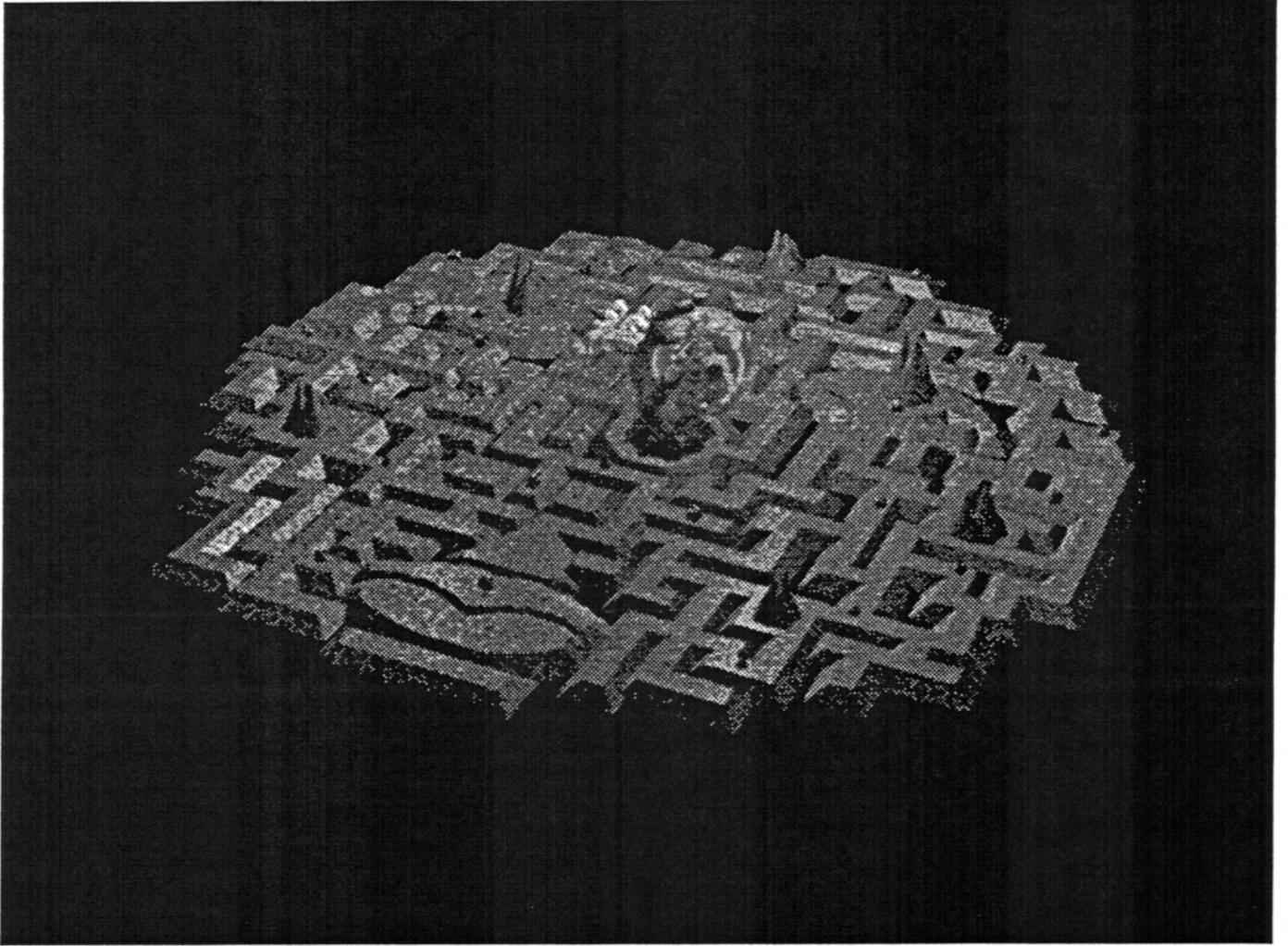


The CORPUS CALLOSUM

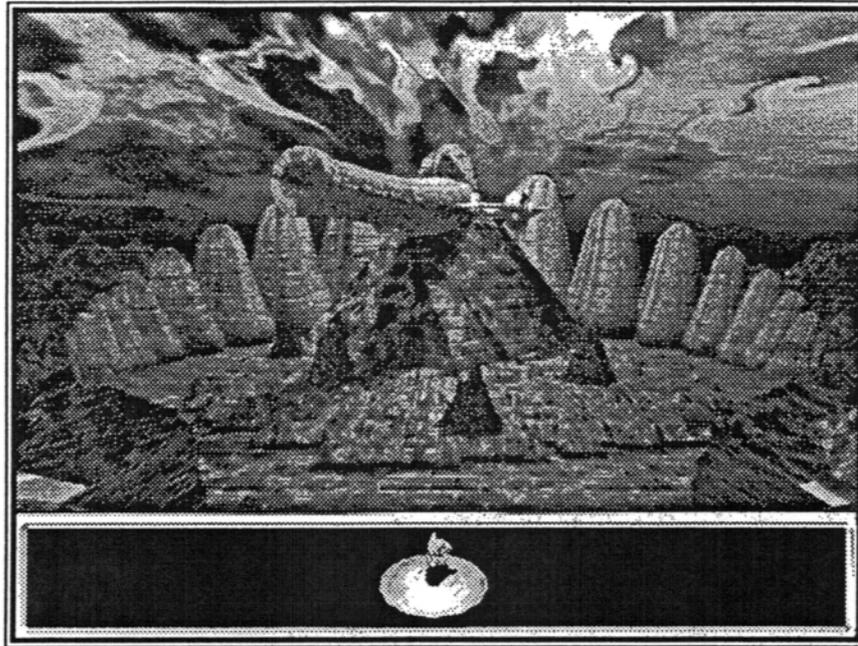
The gray path you're traveling on dead ends in both directions. On the opposite side from the POWER SWITCH you are confronted with a floating red door. Unlike the gray doors you have undoubtedly encountered, this one stays colored, and when you click it, opens fully, revealing a dark interior. You click on the blackness and enter the CORPUS CALLOSUM (which is the medical term for the bridge between the right and left hemispheres of the brain). It is a bright chamber of multicolored spheres, stark contrast to the gray surrounds you have just passed out of. Floating in the center, and casting a shadow from an unknown source, is a spiky, neuron-like ball. You click it and the shadow moves to form a shape of an object that doesn't exist. The sphere follows suit, changing shape to reveal another red door. Clicking on the door opens it, and you pass into a black, silent world. A further click and you're back in the CORPUS CALLOSUM, though everything is the exact mirror image, and everything reverses itself until you're looking at a mirror image of the spiky neuron from before. Clicking the neuron puts you back in the black chamber and back on the other side. This time the door will send you to the point of entry in the gray scenario.

If, however, when you get to the mirror-image side of the CORPUS CALLOSUM, you move your cursor around, you will see a directional arrow appear near the bottom of the screen. Stepping BACKWARDS, you move into the LEFT SIDE of the brain. This is a simple puzzle to remind you that the good things aren't always in front.

[This scenario is symbolic of the irony of the brain itself. The left side is logical, the right side imaginative; two vastly different entities contained side by side in the head. The black wasteland between them is there because logic can't understand imagination and vice versa, so there's nothing, even though the two mirror each other almost exactly.]



The LEFT SIDE
of the BRAIN

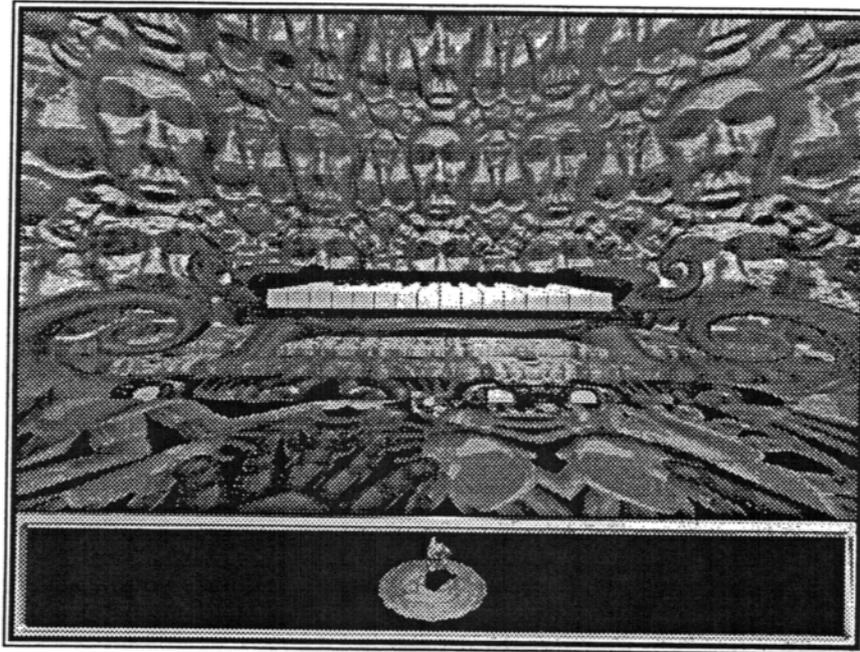


The CANNON SCENARIO

Upon reaching what seems to be the end of the left-brain maze, you see a single neural connection sitting in front of you. You click it and the scene changes to a mountainous chasm, the shape now hovering in air. Again and a giant cannon dissolves into view. You can move the cannon back and forth by clicking on the muzzle and dragging left and right. As you move the cannon, shapes below it on the ground begin to glow as the muzzle's shadow passes over them. There are three shapes that glow in three different colors, green on the left, orange in the middle, and purple on the right. The colors correspond to the colors of the floor in the areas of the right-brain maze that the cannon points to when shadowing that particular shape.

In the ORANGE AREA of the right-brain, you are given a clue: "Sometimes the most monumental imagination still requires a *SHOT* of logic." The subtle clue is the word 'shot,' in reference to the cannon in front of you, as well as the color of the floor when you are given the clue. The game occasionally requires that you free your mind of conscious attempts at solving the puzzles, and instead rely on your sub-conscious to put the pieces together. If you've seen the 'shot' clue, and then came to the cannon, you would put them together, though perhaps it didn't make sense at the time you saw the clue, and vice-versa. With the cannon pointed at the center shape (orange glow), the impassable barrier in the ORANGE SCENARIO of the right-brain is destroyed when you reach it and you can continue into the Aztec Map room.

The cannon represents strict logic that, when coupled with imagination, can "blow apart" the mental barriers of "You can't do that" and allow for further exploration of an idea or theory. [This is a subtle reference to the power the mind has to control the body, once the mind no longer believes the impossible, it becomes possible].



The PIANO ROOM

As you climb the ladder of metallic DNA through the rippling sky, you gradually become aware you are entering another scenario. When finally on level ground you are faced (literally) with hundreds of heads arranged in a sphere forming a massive chamber. [This chamber represents an objective state of mind, where Necrobis is “looking at himself from all directions.”] The DNA pillar pierces the center of the circular room, disappearing out of sight both above and below. Around the walls, nestled among the heads is a single bar of musical score. Clicking on the separate measures plays the notes contained therein. As you click them in order you start to piece together the song they hold, one of the professor’s favorites; “Ode to Joy.”

Exploring further in the room, you see a giant, piano-like structure in front of a solid wall of interlocking heads. The government computer senses which are the correct notes to play and asks if you would like it played, but Necrobis thwarts the attempt and destroys the computer’s manifestation of a human hand, leaving you to figure out the puzzle on your own. Each key corresponds to a different head on the wall, and as you press them the heads sing their eerie calling. Playing idly will eventually anger the professor and you will be kicked out, back onto the left-side brain-maze below.

If, however, you play the notes on the wall for several measures, the professor becomes relaxed and reveals the most important research manual of the five, the description of *CHROMATIC PLASMIUM*. The book explains that this material has the properties of both living and non-living matter. It can separate itself out into any element or compound, and then re-absorb the same back into an omnipotential state, very similar to the undifferentiated cells that generate most living things. This material forms all of the other structures described in the remaining four manuals. Once the book is located, you return down the DNA ladder to the maze below, and continue the journey.

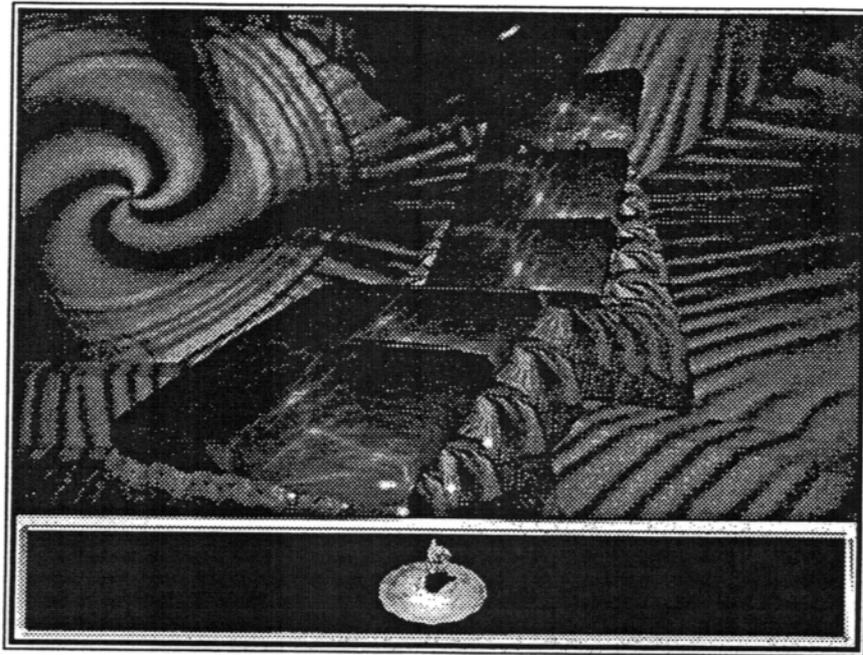


The BURNED-OUT BRAIN CELL

At one point in the maze you see a small cube sitting out on a peninsula of pathway. Clicking it you are presented with an oversized plug and an outlet. If, at this point, you have already seen the POWER SWITCH from the BEGINNING section, you will know the relevance. Obviously, when you see a plug your first impulse is to plug it in. To do so, you click on the plug and drag it up and around. Its a little tricky, but you get it eventually. An odd thing happens, however. As you drag the plug it seems to fade more and more from view until it all but disappears. In its place a fat, purple blob appears making sounds not generally associated with high society. When clicked he sprouts a variety of hats and continues his attempts at verbal discourse. He is a neurological dullard.

The government computer assesses the situation and informs you that this is a burned-out brain cell. The plug was merely an illusion thrown up by the professor to divert our mission. Necrobios is apparently aware of your presence, at this point, though its unclear whether or not he fully grasps the scope of the mission. As you turn to go, the brain cell disappears.

This is one of the many "red herrings" scattered throughout the game. They serve no real purpose with respect to winning the game, but do provide the occasional humorous diversion.



The MIRROR DOME

There are several neurons directly in your path as you traverse the **LEFT SIDE** of the **BRAIN**. One of which is a dodecahedron, located close to the giant hand. Accessing this neuron causes the panoramic 3D picture before you to smash like glass, shattering (pardon the pun) the illusion of a three-dimensional space. A piece of the smashed glass springs to life and walks off, revealing an inner world previously inaccessible.

Stepping inside you see a giant monolith-like structure towering before you with a staircase leading almost out of sight to its entrance. The computer assimilates the scene and makes an educated guess that it is a representation of the reclusive nature of the professor. He shunned fame and fortune, preferring to lead his astonishing experiments completely out of the public eye.

As you approach the stairs a series of giant gongs can be heard. You go up the staircase and enter the inside of the almost-spherical chamber. A small, round structure is at its center. Atop this structure is a gigantic, overturned pyramid built of smaller, interlocking pyramids. Behind it, exactly opposite you is a giant chair that resembles something you might see at the dentist's. Poised in front of the chair is a glossy-black, oddly convoluted lens. You realize that were you sitting in the chair, it would be exactly eye level, and pointed directly at the upside-down pyramid. Once you are inside, the gongs and noise fade in a cacophony of echo.

You notice this chamber is absolutely symmetrical left to right. You can go either way, but the results are far from similar.

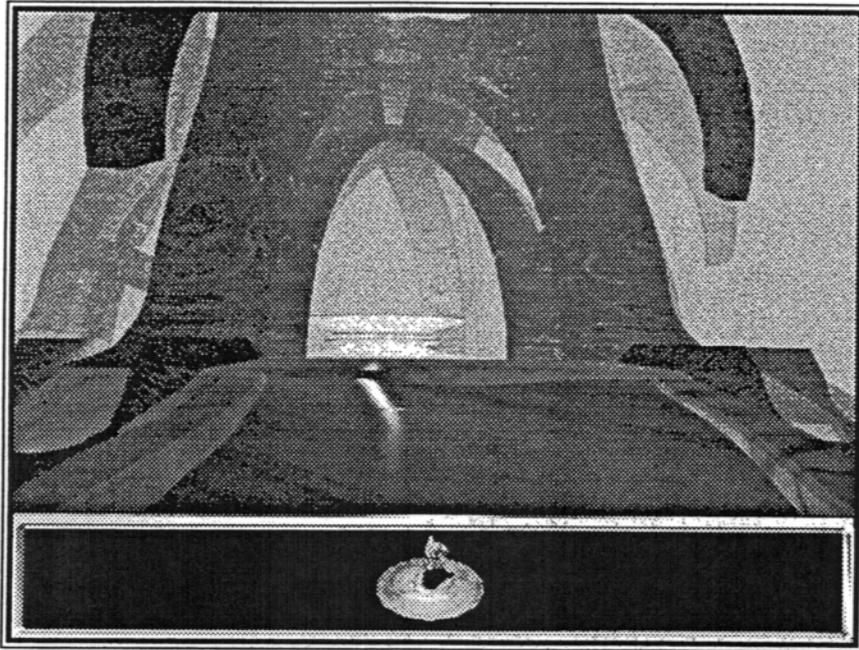
RIGHT: As you round the center structure and approach the chair, you are suddenly stopped by a pluthera of microphones and flash bulbs. A vast mob of unseen reporters badger you about this and that. As you move forward the onslaught ends as quickly as it began and all is once again silent. However, as you approach the chair, it stretches further and further away from you, eventually disappearing in the distance. Professor Necrobias comes in and informs you that you have been sucked into an endless neural loop, led on by the blindness of fame. The game ends, and you're left watching three fifth-dimensional, self-engulfing donuts.

The MIRROR DOME (continued)

LEFT: From the left you are able to get to and sit in the large lounge chair. You are immediately presented with the perspective from the chair, looking through the glossy-black lens. The lens becomes clear, and reveals itself to have image enhancing powers, i.e. what you see through the lens is far brighter than the actual image. Because of the nature of the lens, the image is fish-bowled, and you can see things that are even out of your peripheral vision. The government computer grabs hold of it and begins scanning the surrounding area. Eventually it finds an area of great interest and reveals it in the lens image. You are then asked to locate the area in the scene before you. The image in the lens, because of the nature of optics, is reversed both top to bottom and left to right. The location the computer highlights in the lens image is in the upper left, so the spot you have to click in the scene is in the bottom right. Doing so reveals a flashing light, that swoops briefly around the center pyramid and eventually plunges inside, creating a dazzling shadow pattern on the walls. Inside of the shadowed areas, you can see remnants of an object floating. If you're fast enough to catch it, you find it's a key. A keyhole appears, and you unlock a secret chamber hidden behind the image (another stretch of reality).

Inside the chamber is one of the research manuals. It describes a "skin" that will encircle the planet, protecting it, much like an animal's skin, from the outside, in this case comets, cosmic radiation, etc.

You read the book and jump down off the chair. As you approach the exit, you realize that the stairs you came in on have disappeared. At that point, the screen shatters again, and you walk through into the LEFT SIDE of the BRAIN at the point where you exited previously.



The FOG SCENARIO

Many neural connections are situated directly in your path on the **LEFT SIDE** of the **BRAIN**. One of these is an octahedron that, when accessed, dissolves into an ancient, iron cauldron with multi-colored chains flowing from its inside (this is the exact scene that flashed briefly as foreshadowing in the **POWER SWITCH** scenario). You are able to fly over the cauldron and look inside (direction is irrelevant in this game); it is a finite space with a definite bottom. Suddenly the face of the professor appears and blows a pinkish fog, filling the kettle. As you move forward you find the cauldron has suddenly become an infinite space, the chains, now immense, vanishing in perspective and mist before you.

You move forward a few more steps and begin to see the outline of a platform in the distance. You set down and see a bridge through the fog before you. Travelling along the bridge, a castle-like structure comes in to view and looms above you. You enter and see a small, round altar in the center, lit from above. The ambient sounds seem to become broken and full of static. The government computer informs you that your signal is strangely getting weaker.

A research manual appears. It seems too easy but you grab it. The book opens to reveal the childish scribbles of a restless young Necrobis, not a research manual at all. The professor lunges forward through the pages and again breathes the pink fog, this time dissolving everything in a wave of color. Your cursor is ripped away by a mysterious hand. Any research manuals you have collected along the way also spin off into the haze. The professor comes into view and explains, as he floats, that you are trapped. The professor is interrupted by a large crash as the government computer assimilates a helping hand to crush the professor's image and provide an escape route. Passing through the rip in the fog, you are once again at the round altar, facing the opposite direction. At this point, if you have lost books, you can go to the map area of the **BONE BRIDGE** and see the locations of books, they will now reveal the location of P  p  , the caretaker of the **LOST 'N' FOUND**.

The FOG SCENARIO (continued)

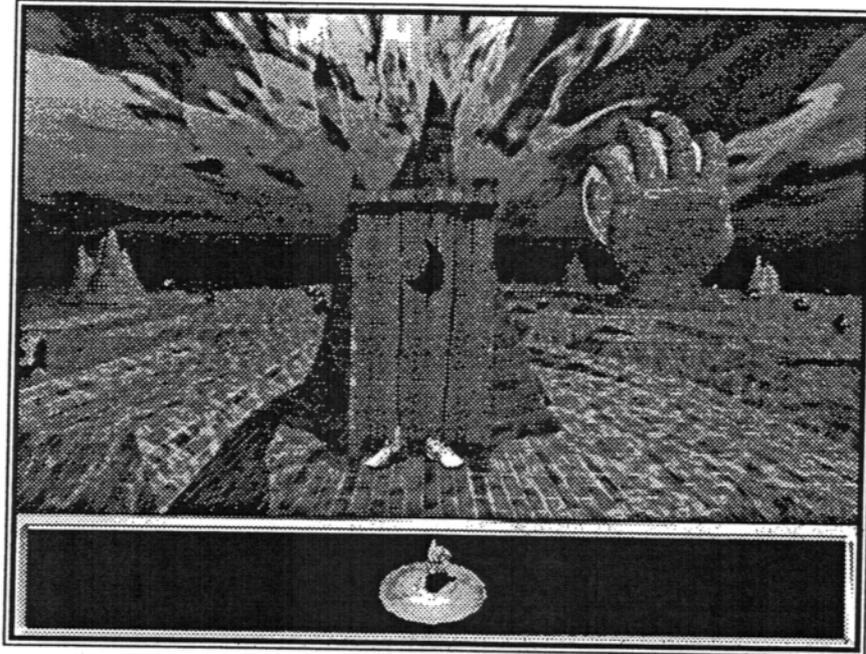
You travel back down the bridge to the small platform at the bottom of the chains. Spinning on the platform, you realize that in one direction, you can move forward. As you do so, the fog slowly parts with each step until you are once again standing before the cauldron on the LEFT BRAIN maze.

If you were looking closely, however, as you moved back to the platform you would have seen, on the right hand side, small footprints that seem to lead underneath the bridge. Remembering that up, down, etc. are meaningless in this environment you follow them and end up on the underside of the bridge.

Before you is a structure that the government computer assesses as a teleporter. Behind you the bridge leads to a huge spire with footholds that leads you back out of the cauldron.

Stepping into the teleporter and closing the door (by clicking when the directional arrow is pointing backwards) you are teleported to a different area in the fog. The scene that greets you when the door opens on the other side is a green, sloping containment structure. Moving out of the teleporter and to the back of the structure, it turns around and reveals a plug and electrical outlet. The plug hinted at in the clues of the POWER SWITCH, and it looks exactly like the one in the BURNED-OUT BRAIN CELL. To plug it in, you click on the plug and drag it to the outlet. The path is not straight, and it may take a few tries to actually make contact. A flash of power surges down the length of the wire into the depths of the brain, exactly like the power that surges when the switch is thrown in the POWER SWITCH.

As you head back to the teleporter, you are advised by the government computer to turn around. As you do, four colored doors (red, yellow, green and blue) appear inside the green structure. They float, and open in turn as your cursor passes over them. Clicking on any one of them puts you back in the grey BEGINNING SCENE, close to the POWER SWITCH. To start the sequence described in the COLORED DOORS, you'd be advised to go through the red one, but any one will bring you in the vicinity of where you need to go.



The OUTHOUSE

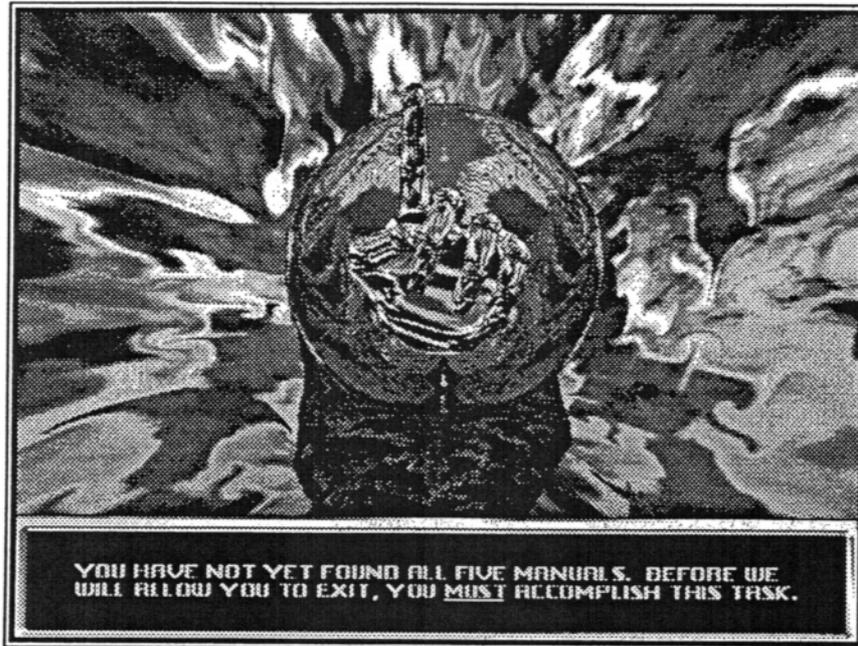
As you move through the left brain, most of the neurons stay where they are. One seems to jump around and never quite knows where it should be. Connecting with it reveals a secret bridge of ornate materials, allowing passage onto an island with a miniature mountain in the center.

You move past the mountain onto the far side of the island and turn around. Nested into the hill is an old-fashioned outhouse, complete with a moon-shaped window and an occupant (there are shoes visible under the door). As most people would, you knock on the door and it disappears into thin air. The “occupant” is a jar of ketchup, reading a newspaper. You tap him on the shoulder and he gets mad. He stands and starts throwing a fit, sending the newspaper flying. Due to the nature of the censorship laws, the paper positions itself strategically over any offending areas. You smack the ketchup around a bit and an eerie snippet of Bach’s Stocatta and Fugue (another of the Professor’s favorites) pierces the atmosphere. Wing flappings can be heard and a dark figure swoops in and steals the ketchup away.

You warily approach the outhouse and look inside. Nestled at the bottom are a bunch of tomatoes. They begin flying out and you leap back. The tomatoes buzz around you like bugs and you realize that you have control of a large hand floating around them. You move the hand and try to squeeze all the tomatoes. If you haven’t squeezed them after a certain amount of time, they fly at you and splatter in your face.

This is, in fact, one of the puzzles of the game. This scenario has repercussions in the CATHEDRAL scenario. The object is to let the tomatoes hit you. That way you pick up their scent, which allows you entry behind the stained glass in the CATHEDRAL. It’s sort of an ‘anti-puzzle’, the temptation is to get out your aggression and squeeze the poor little tomatoes, but if you smash them all, it will have negative results later on. This is a parody of the theme of senseless, meaningless violence prevalent in a great number of software products.

As you leave, the winged creature returns, flying lower and revealing itself to be a giant hamburger, in search of fresh “blood.”

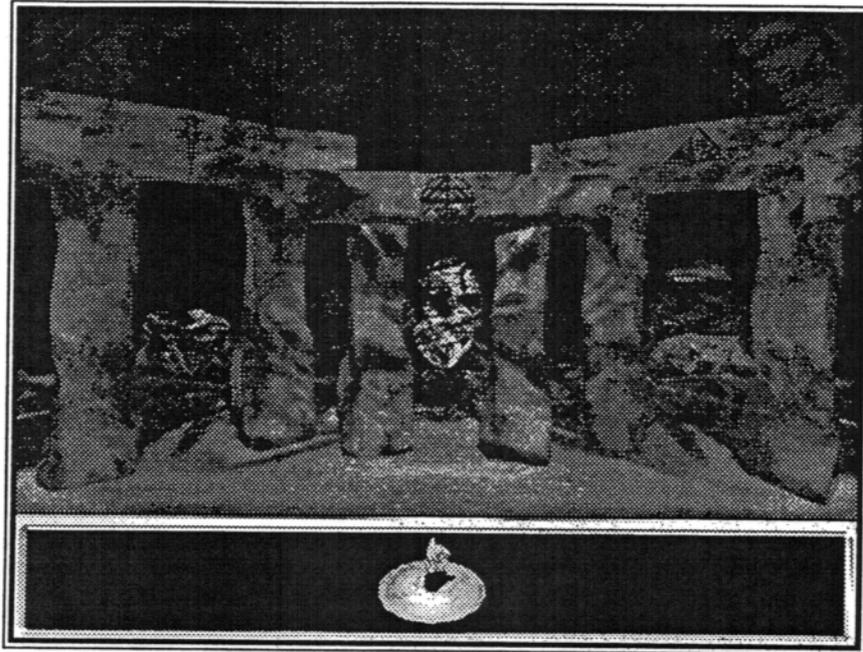


The FALSE EXIT

At the center of the vast maze-brain, there is a giant hand holding a reflective sphere (though it reflects something other than its immediate environment). In reality this is a giant neuron that leads through to the spinal column and an exit from the brain. It is possible to get to this point from the left side. You turn towards it and find you are looking up at the bottom of the giant ball, the colorful billowing clouds in the background.

If you have not yet found all five of the necessary research manuals, the government computer steps in and blocks your way. A large, chrometallic hand appears making a “tsk tsk” motion and you are informed, via a textual message in the communications area that you have not yet completed the task at hand.

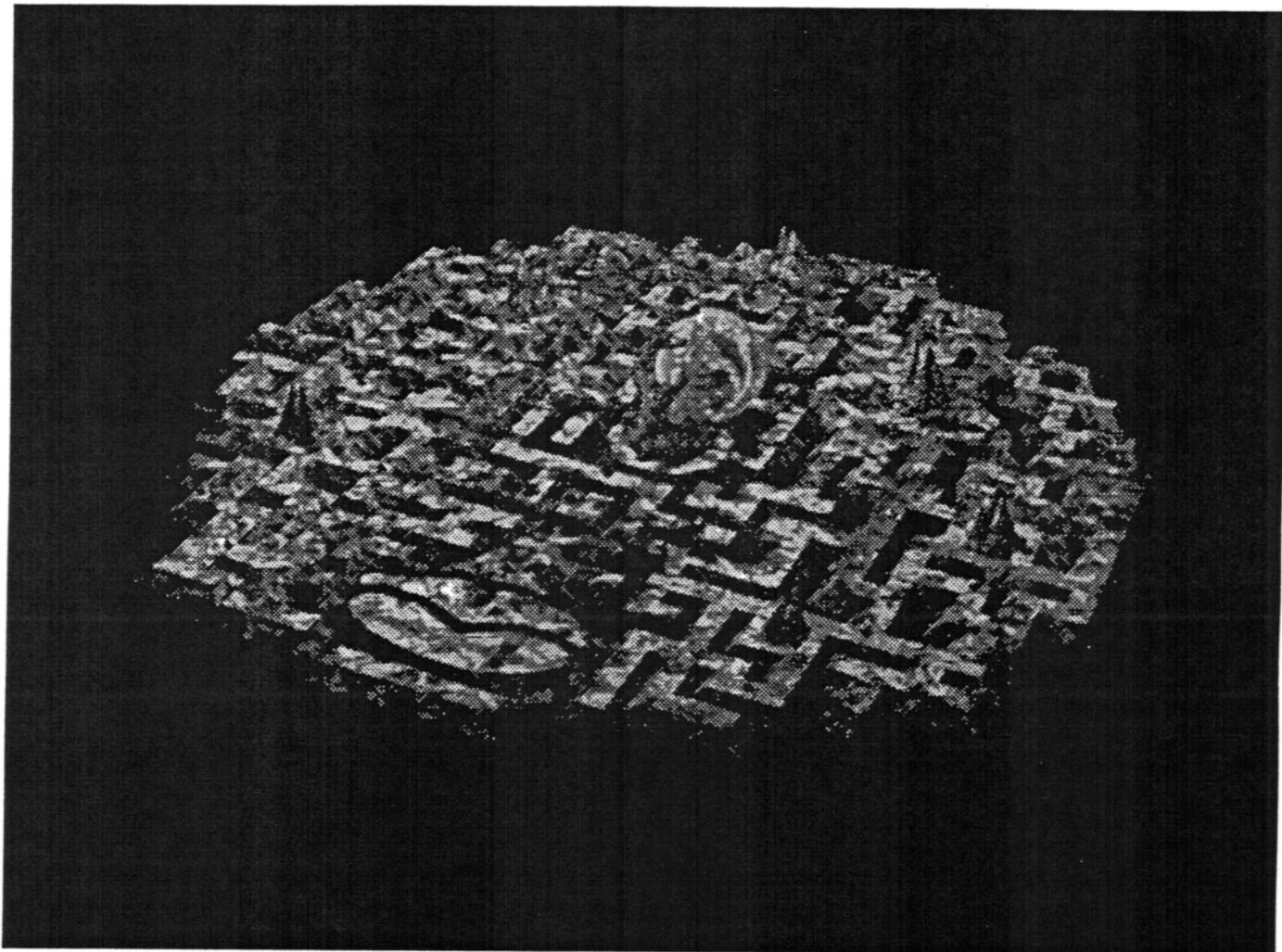
If you have found the books, the professor senses that you are about to escape and intervenes. You see the giant ball of heads from the INNER PSYCHE (INSANITY) which spins down to face you and proclaims “First you must find me!” This is a hint as to where the final showdown will take place. When you see it again, you’ll know the end is at hand.



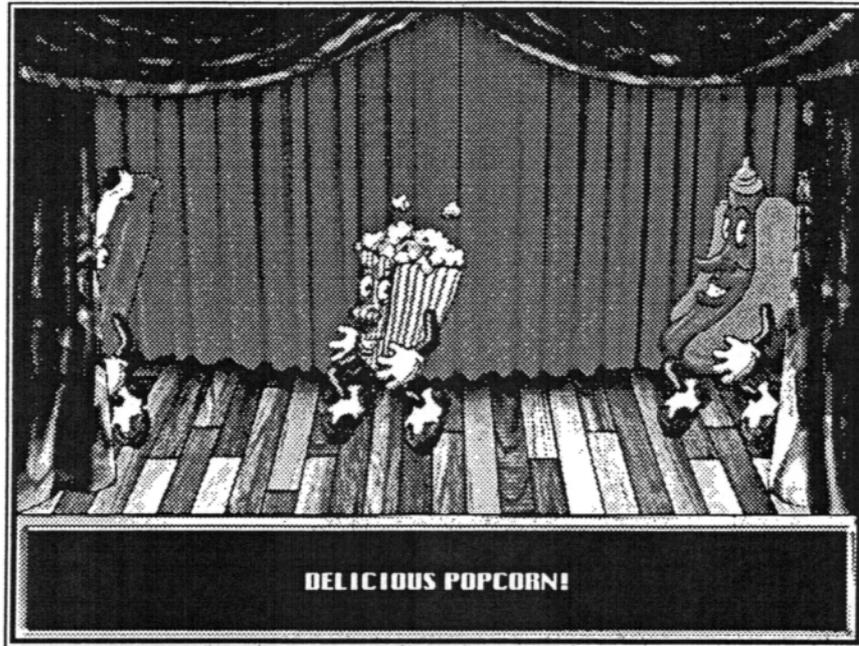
STONEHENGE

Though described in the LEFT SIDE, this area has entranceways (twelve to be exact) scattered through the LEFT, RIGHT and PSYCHE areas. Stonehenge is essentially a clearinghouse of information. Here is where the professor has put together, for his own personal use, a chronological series of memories that show the decay of the planet, his attempt at saving it, and subsequent actions thereafter. This is a chance for you to go to history class, and see the truth as Necrobilus knew it.

The locations of the entranceways are mapped out in the map room at the end of the BONE BRIDGE. Most often they are distant neural connections that when clicked, create the illusion of a second ground plane, atop which a ghostly Stonehenge monument looms. You enter the illusion and are standing in the center of the ancient ring of triptychs, encapsulated memories sitting between the pillars of each. Each time you enter, an additional memory becomes "active." Looking something like cocoons, the memories spin when viewable. You get closer to them and watch the story of the professor's life unfold.

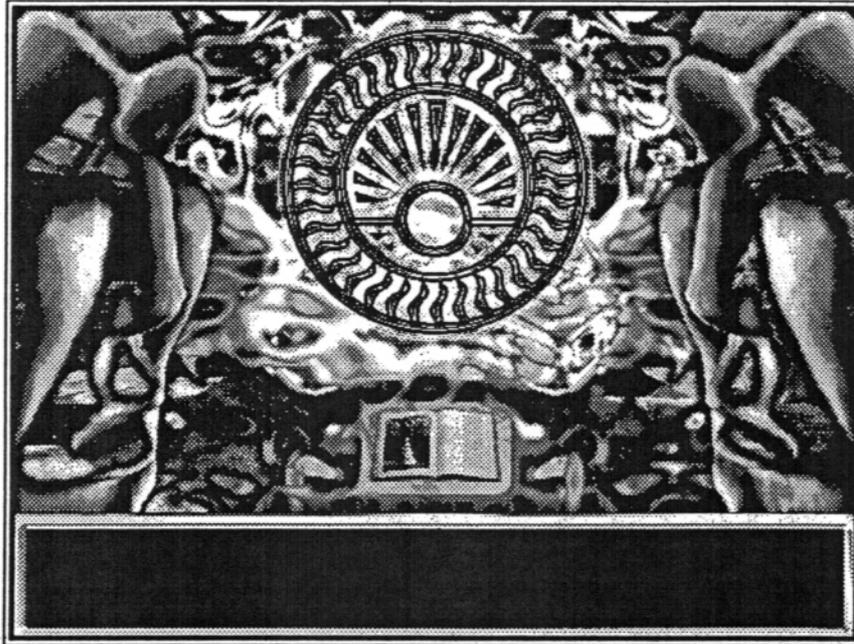


*The RIGHT SIDE
of the BRAIN*



The INTERMISSION

There IS an intermission!



The MYSTIC HEADS (RED AREA)

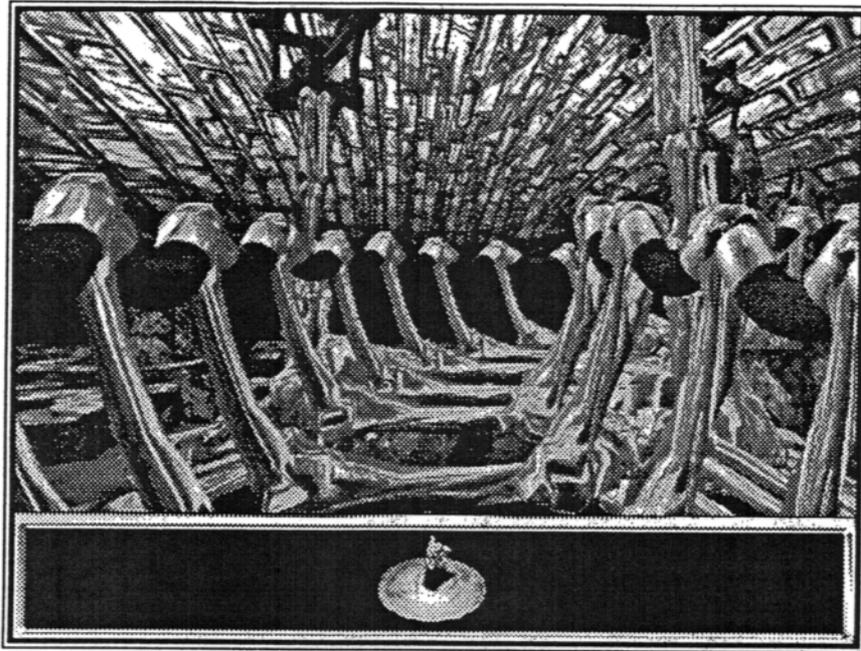
A spherical neural connection in the RED AREA sends you to an area of the brain replete with memories from inside of the professor's lab. Two giant heads appear, representing the two halves of Necrobius' analytical nature. Before you is a stone palette carved with the negative image of a research manual swathed in fog. If you have acquired any books by this point they appear at the bottom of the screen.

Dragging a book up to the stone tablet, it sets into place and the heads begin to speak. It is Necrobius, thinking to himself about his work. To him it was, of course, first person, but as you are listening from the outside it is third person. For each manual, you hear his own contemplation leading to the discovery of that particular element of the planet, as well as see the symbol he used to represent them in his own work. These will become very important in the INNER PSYCHE (INSANITY) as a sort of "secret password" to placate the mad professor enough to get close and speak with him. Backing away from the lab the heads dissolve and you find yourself back in the RED AREA at the exact point where you left.

The **Rainbow Doors**

As you traverse the RIGHT SIDE, you encounter numerous floating doors tinted with every color of the rainbow. The floor of each location is also a unique color. In the BABY SCENARIO, one of the television channels turns to an NTSC colorbar, then is rearranged by an irate leprechaun into the spectrum of light. This is a hint to the fact that the object of these many doors is to pass through them in the sequence of colors in a rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet). Having done so, you will be dropped in the VIOLET AREA and a neural connection before you will begin to glow. A rainbow shoots out and a bizarre research manual, flapping as if it were some ethereal bird, fades into view.

This is the BOOK of WISDOM, the sixth manual that the government has no record of, as it cannot be tangibly described and therefore not understood by the computer. This becomes vital in the INNER PSYCHE (INSANITY) to prove to the mad professor that you are determined enough to approach him.



The BONE BRIDGE / MAP ROOM (ORANGE AREA)

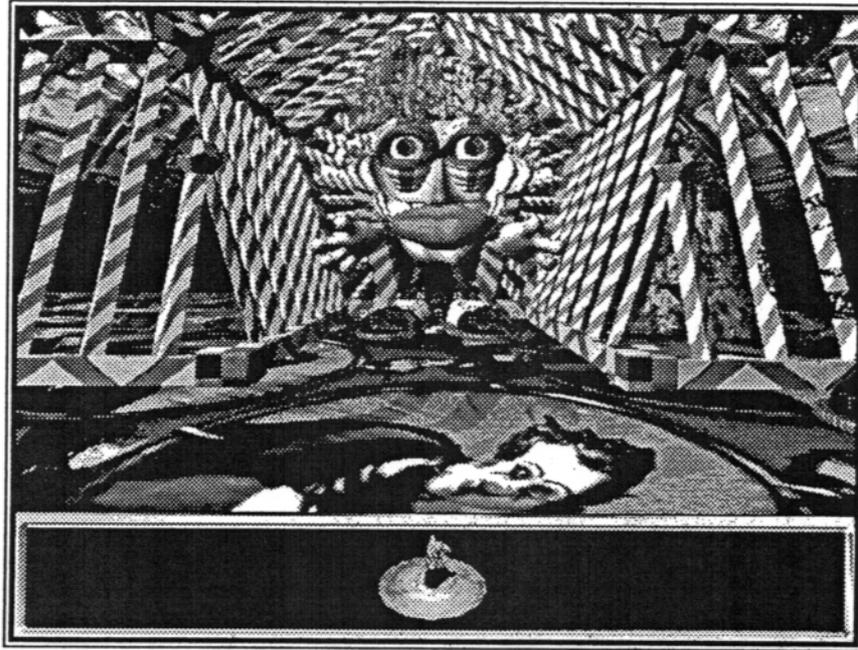
Another spherical neuron causes the appearance of a massive, curving bridge built entirely of oddly glossy bones. As you walk up the slightly wobbly structure, you notice the way is blocked by one of the many small mountain structures scattered about the lobes. This is one of the objects represented by the tiny mountains under the CANON in the LEFT SIDE. The sound of tribal drums becomes apparent from a distant location beyond the obstruction. As you touch the mountain, you hear the sound of a canon firing and the whistle of an incoming projectile. Depending on where the canon is pointing, an explosion will occur on the left, right, or directly in front of you. As the bridge is in the ORANGE AREA, naturally if the canon is pointing at the tiny orange-glowing replica the mountain before you will be obliterated by the incoming canon ball and you will be able to continue along the bridge.

The bridge leads to an ancient, towering monolith. Necrobis voyaged often to the lands of primitive peoples and was amazed by the vast knowledge that could be gained by studying their mind-boggling structures. Continuing inside the obelisk, you hear eerie tones like the songs of whales. Before you floats a map of the entire brain, LEFT, RIGHT and PSYCHE, before them a small altar with a square keyhole. Two keys appear in your information window, one with an "N" carved in it, the other a simple glyph of two pillars with a cross beam, much like the stonehenge triptychs.

Dragging the "N" key to the altar causes a series of "N"s to flash on the maps. These are showing the location of any research manuals you have not yet found. If you have visited the FOG AREA and had any books stolen, the location of the LOST 'N' FOUND also appears, as the lost books can be found there.

The stonehenge key reveals the locations of the various "stonehenge" monuments leading to a series of 12 chronological recollections of the professor's life. All of these sites need to be visited to be able to travel to the end of the CUBE SCENARIO. For each memory you visit, you can climb one more set of stairs in that scenario.

This area is a clearing house of information as to locations of various things, as well as a way to check your progress.



The PUPPET HOUSE / BROKEN PUPPET (YELLOW AREA)

There are two distinct, though related areas of this scenario.

The PUPPET HOUSE. Upon clicking the square neural connection in the **YELLOW AREA**, a platform appears to your right. Turning that direction you are hit smack in the face with a huge, candy-striped structure with the words "PUPPET HOUSE" written on it in large, friendly letters. Inside you can see three huge puppets. Necrobis loved the puppet house as a child, and the relative importance of these critters to him is reflected in their giant size in his recollections.

If you haven't yet visited the **BABY ROOM** and collected the penny found there, a heavy, metal portcullis slams closed in the entrance way as you try to pass through. A small post-it notepad appears stuck to the screen with the message "Billy, did you remember to bring your money? Love, Mom" while a toy music-box plays "Pennies from Heaven" as an additional hint.

If you have collected the penny, you pass through and come face to face with the three tenants of the puppet house. One of them seems dopey and innocent, the other has an oriental air and the third is evil looking. As you near any of them a hollow circus music becomes evident and the puppet begins dancing, spewing words from various locations. The puppets each say something different, and none of it seems to make any sense:

Clown Puppet: "THE COME SAID AND ON PUPPETS FIVE POOTY"

Oriental Puppet: "TIME THE FOR OTHER LIPS THREE UNTIL SINGS"

Evil Puppet: "HAS WALRUS CLICKS THINGS OF BY THE WALOO"

If you take the first word the clown says, then the first word from the Oriental puppet and the evil puppet, then add the second word from the clown puppet, etc. you come up with the full sentence: "THE TIME HAS COME THE WALRUS SAID FOR CLICKS AND OTHER THINGS ON LIPS OF PUPPETS THREE BY FIVE UNTIL THE POOTY SINGS WALOO."

The PUPPET HOUSE / BROKEN PUPPET (YELLOW AREA) cont.

As you are watching each puppet dance around, if you click on their lips “three by five” or fifteen times, they flub a little bit then their lips float off their faces to the entranceway. Once all three pairs of lips have floated off, you approach the exit and are stopped by the three pairs of lips, now stuck to the wall just above the door. They purse their lips in unison and suck up a large chunk of the floor. Out of this cavity floats a research manual.

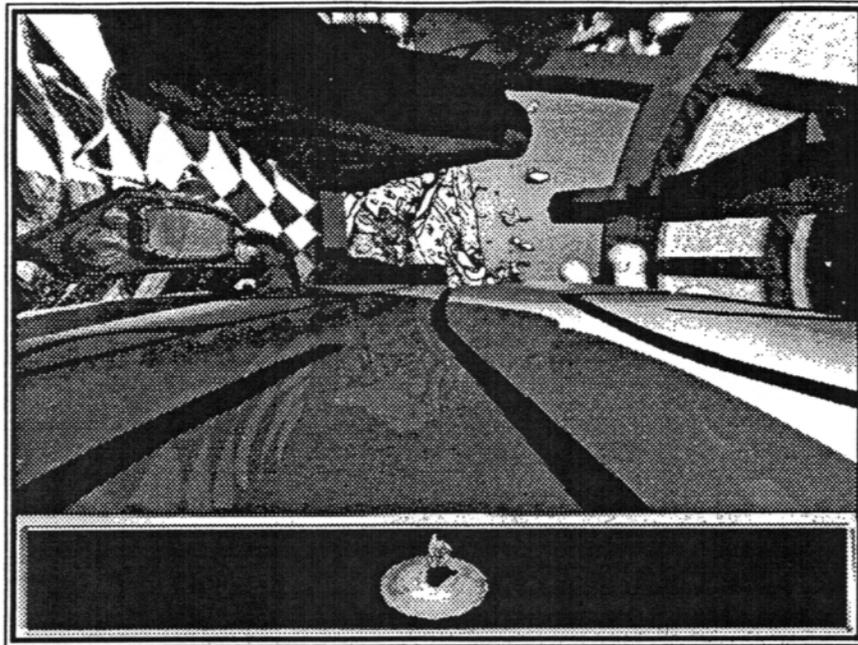
This book describes a giant, mobile circulatory system that will burrow through the mass of the planet to any location that needs “nourishment” in the form of liquid CHROMATIC PLASMIUM (see PIANO ROOM in LEFT SIDE).

The BUSTED PUPPET

While inside the puppet house facing the Evil puppet, if you turn left you can just make out a fourth puppet sitting neglected outside. Going outside and facing the entrance, you notice your cursor tilts sideways as you drag it to the right. Moving in that direction, a plank way appears, allowing passage along the outside of the puppet house.

Following this pathway, you come across a sad-looking puppet propped up against a small hill. He is frowning and seems to have no legs. [If you have already been through the SOUND MAZE in the PSYCHE area you may recognize this puppet as the one you encounter at the end]. The government computer, confused by the location of this puppet, does an extensive search and finds a long and disturbing history in the psyche of the professor concerning this puppet. Apparently he broke it while visiting the puppet show as a child and, at that age, thought he had killed the poor creature. The guilt nagged him his entire life and acted as a constant deterrence to him realizing his full potential.

As you walk back to the beginning of the plank way, a soft pitter-patter of feet can be heard above the windy white noise. With every step forward, the sound seems to get louder and louder, until you are almost at the end and the sound is deafening. Turning around, you see a set of floorboards laid out across the maze. A bizarre fog hisses out of them and begins to form a distinct shape, all the while an excerpt from Edgar Allen Poe’s “Tell Tale Heart” resounds forth. By the end of the narrative, the fog has formed a pair of highly polished legs attached to two equally glossy shoes; “It is the jogging of his hideous legs!” The shoes begin walking away slowly, then break into a run, heading for the puppet. You return to the site where the puppet had previously sought, but he is no longer there. Up in the SOUND MAZE, the puppet has been reformed with a bright shiny pair of legs, The “Tell Tale Legs.”



The BABY ROOM (BLUE AREA)

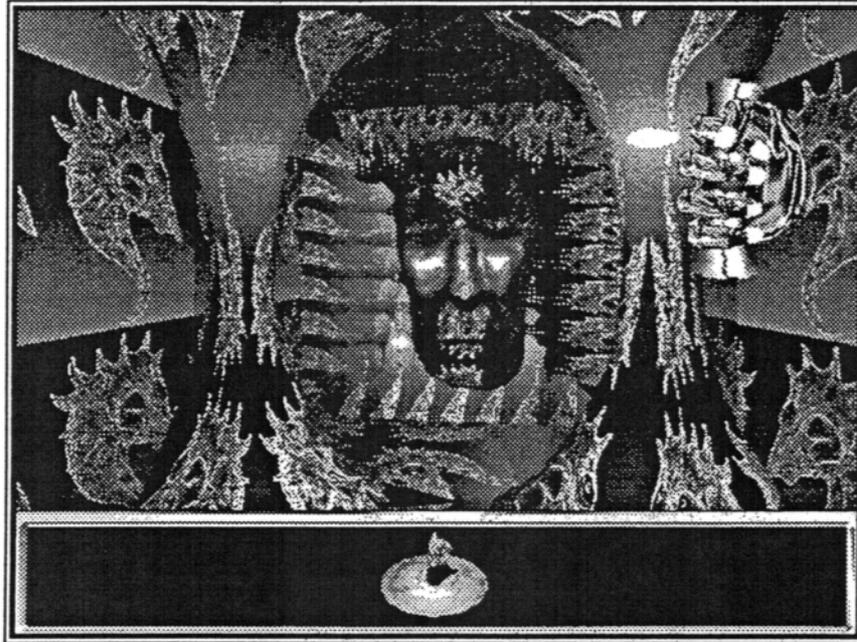
The BLUE AREA seems very small, compared to the others. You walk back and forth, and see many colored doors appear in the sky. As you face one direction, however, you seem to see the hint of a research manual hidden in the scenery. Clicking it, a piece of an actual manual appears before you, floating listlessly. Three additional pieces and the entire book is visible, with an odd exception, the “N” on the front is backwards. If you click it, the book disappears. If, however, as the book is floating you take a step backwards, the book turns into a foggy rendition of an extremely young Necrobilus.

Touching the apparition, you are transported back in time to the professor’s old baby room. Everything is distorted oddly and wildly out of proportion. You seem to be walking on a series of giant words. Two objects are immediately apparent, a large light switch and a odd-looking television.

The light switch seems innocent enough, so you approach it first. A small sign is sticking out from the side that reads “For the Love of Peter, DON’T TOUCH THIS SWITCH!” Of course, you throw the switch and are confronted by an irate leprechaun who comes from out of nowhere screaming tame chastisements at you. He soon leaves and a second sign sprouts from the switch, “Saint Begorah, DON’T THROW THIS SWITCH AGAIN!” As before, negative psychology falls painfully short of effectiveness and the switch is vehemently thrown. Again the Leprechaun comes forward (he has a Scottish accent) and yells, “Now you’ve done it! You’ll face the WRATH OF SCOTLAND!” As procession of bagpipes booms in with “Scotland the Brave” as the switch slowly falls back to the bottom, when it gets there, the computer turns off. It may seem to be a rough punishment for just throwing a switch, but, hey, YOU ASKED FOR IT PAL!

Of course, you’d saved the game before all of this and you’re quickly back where you left off. You approach the television and start throwing knobs. The screen tunes to a number of channels, and a variety of things happen. Eventually you see a small, round object flying around the screen, bouncing at the edges. Quickly you snatch it, and realize, as it stops spinning and comes closer, that it’s a single penny. If you’ve already been to the PUPPET HOUSE, you will recognize that this is all the money you need to enter that scenario.

Once the penny is found, the television tunes to a channel that uncannily resembles the scene just left to enter the BABY ROOM, clicking the screen sends you back to the BLUE AREA.



The PORKCHOP SCENARIO & LOST 'N' FOUND (INDIGO AREA)

The scene comes forward in a flutter of party sounds and commotion. This area of the professor's mind is resident where his younger, social-butterfly memories are held. The room is decked out with a bizarre seahorse-like wallpaper and oddly lit. You turn around to find your way blocked by a wall of dense forethought. Touching it, a seahorse stretches out of the wall to your left and transforms in turn into five of the professor's closest friends.

In the TOASTER CLUE, you saw one of these personalities painted in miniature on the bread that popped out. Waiting for that individual to appear you touch it, and progress through the dissolving barrier to the next chamber. A written invitation, signed by the individual you selected, moves with you in the grasp of a virtual "hand" generated by the government computer.

A blue die-cast head flies forward and laughs weirdly. It tries to speak when you touch it, but the words come out garbled and unintelligible. The government computer senses the situation and informs you that the speech you heard was backwards. You click around a bit and finally turn to the side. You notice that the image fades from the regular scene to a photo negative behind you. Turning all the way around you see the entire scene is now a negative of the original, including a negative head, which now speaks properly and says "Why don't you try typing PORKCHOP?" with a tiny sign that pops up to emphasize the point. You try to type but a second sign pops up that says "B'Gosh golly! Turn around first!" You turn back around and begin typing, as you do letters begin appearing on the top of the screen, and a small cheering section just out of view underneath is providing positive reinforcement. If you miss a letter, they become angered and pummel you with tiny rocks and garbage.

The entire word entered, a mystical porkchop rises to the occasion and is sucked into the eye of the blue cut-out face. It chews and disappears in a puff of satisfaction, leaving the wall behind it unguarded. A govern-

The PORKCHOP SCENARIO & LOST 'N' FOUND (INDIGO AREA) [continued]

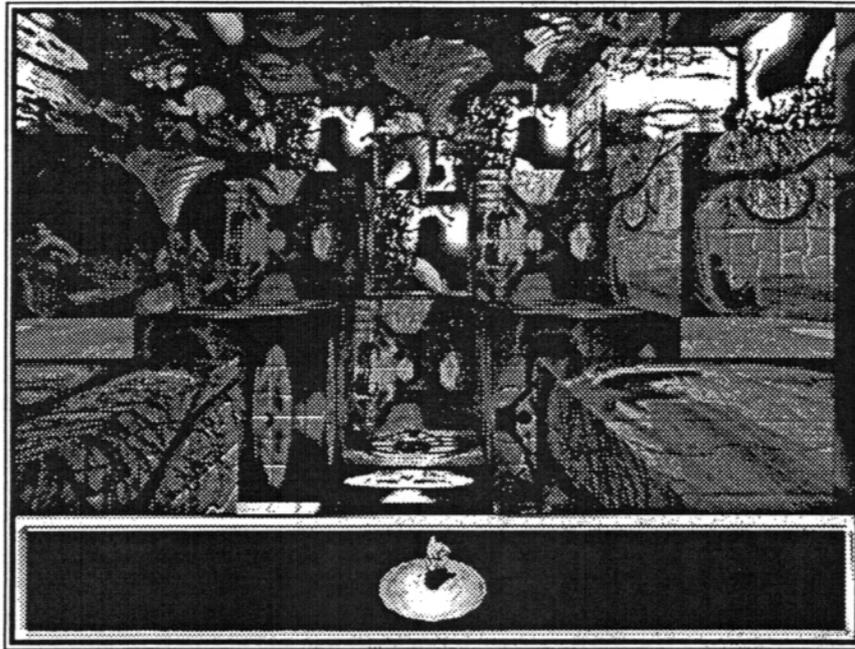
ment issue virtual hand flies in and pounds on the wall, seconds later a replica of the professor's face, also replete with sea-horse design wallpaper, peeks through and allows you passage into a seemingly endless spiral passage. As you move forward, the passage grows smaller and smaller until you are in a tiny alcove at the end. A research manual is floating here, but as you try to grab it, the professor's face comes in to block your way, "Do you have an invitation?" he asks. Luckily, the invitation is in hand and you present the document. If you have selected the right friend at the beginning (the one with whom the professor has no legal suits pending) you are allowed to acquire the manual, if not you are kicked out like an unwanted pair of boots.

This manual describes one of the main structures of the new planet, the heart. It is a sizable mass of specialized CHROMATIC PLASMIUM that will "beat" with the geo-thermal energy surrounding it, keeping the circulation of materials going smoothly. Energy input from nearby celestial bodies will replace what is lost in the process.

The Lost 'n' Found

The Lost 'n' Found is hidden behind a mountainous structure. As you face it, just a tiny corner is visible peeking out from behind the hill. You click the tiny speck and the mountain sucks into the ground, revealing a dilapidated booth manned by an overly-friendly, sweaty man with a remarkable Cheshire mustache.

Basically, he's the only guy we could find that was willing to work for \$5 a week.



The CUBE ROOM & LOCKED PASSAGE (VIOLET AREA)

The cube room is a loop of twelve staircases that eventually lead you back to where you started, though on a different plane (walking on the wall, as it were). Each of the memories encountered in the “stonehenge” scenario is connected to and unlocks one of the staircases. Inside this cubically resplendent chamber is the entire PSYCHE scenario, as memories and experience shape and enclose the entirety of who we are. As you progress through the cases there are a number of plateaus. Three of them have giant spotlights associated with them (numbers four, seven and ten to be precise). Each of these lights effects a different part of the game. The first light is pointing at the CATHEDRAL in the PSYCHE area, back-lighting the stained-glass window there when on, and allowing entrance into that scene. The second light is pointing straight downwards, directly at the “flower”-like structure on the floor beside you as you entered. The third light is pointing into the SOUND MAZE, and will throw a spot-light on the busted puppet you encounter there.

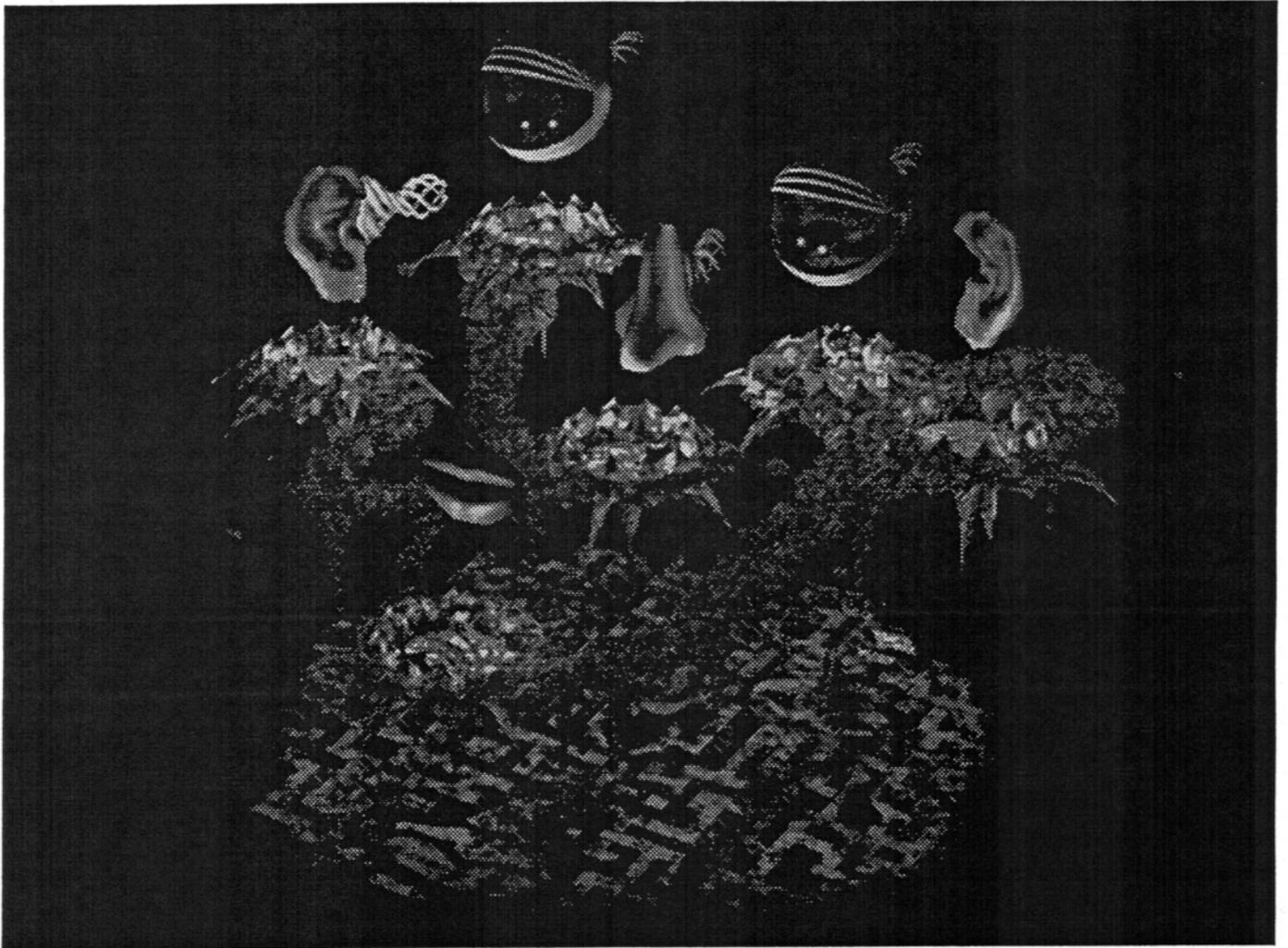
You enter on the “ground” level, to the right is a bizarre structure that seems to pulse with life. The government computer scans the object and relates many of its structures and apparent function to that of a flower. Assumptions are made as to the significance and possible metaphors that will be required to make it “grow.” As you surmount the twelfth and final staircase, you come face to face with the “flower” object, beside you at the beginning, now resplendent on the wall before you. As is hinted in the beginning, the “flower” needs two things to bloom, light (supplied by the second spot-light in the series) and water (supplied by the liquid face of Necrobis you encounter after completing the sound maze. Provided you have accomplished both of these tasks the flower comes to vibrant, colorful life with tiny objects spinning endlessly. Clicking the flower it now “blooms” revealing a miniature animation showing the LOCKED PASSAGE you saw in the maze below being freed from the grasp of the clasp. Returning to the maze (by stepping backwards) and going to that point, you see the lock come off and you travel through the now-free gray door into SOUND MAZE #2.

The CUBE ROOM & LOCKED PASSAGE (VIOLET AREA) cont.

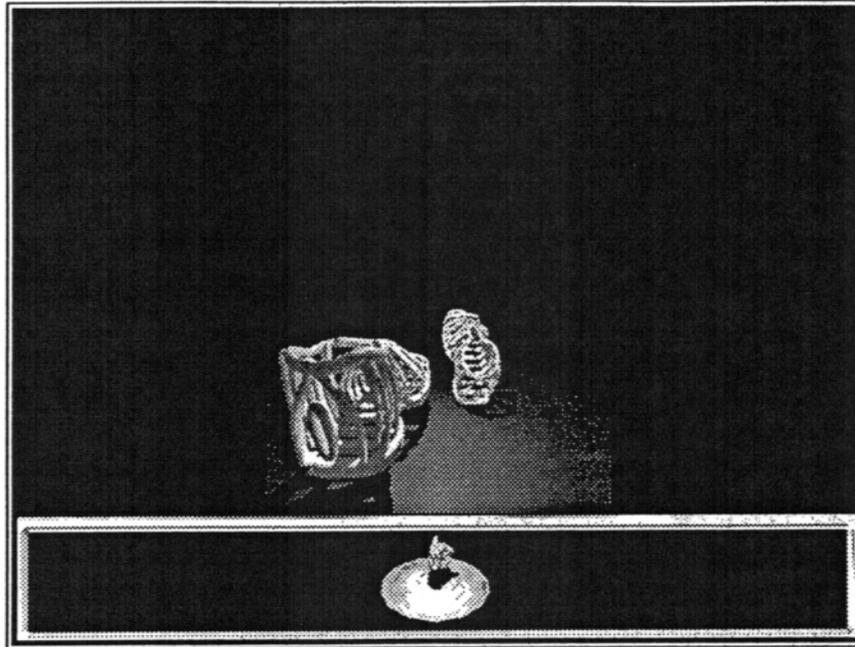
At any plateau you reach during your journey up the staircase, stepping backwards will send you back to the RIGHT SIDE maze where you first entered the CUBE SCENARIO.

The Locked Passage

Opposite the entrance to the CUBE SCENARIO is a gray door, which, experience tells you, generally leads to areas of the PSYCHE. This particular door is shut tight with a giant padlock and chain. Once the "flower" in the cube room has "bloomed" [representing a dispersal of inhibitions on the part of the professor] this door becomes unlocked, and passage is then possible into the purple plateau of the PSYCHE area and subsequently the SOUND MAZE #2.



The PSYCHE



The SOUND MAZE

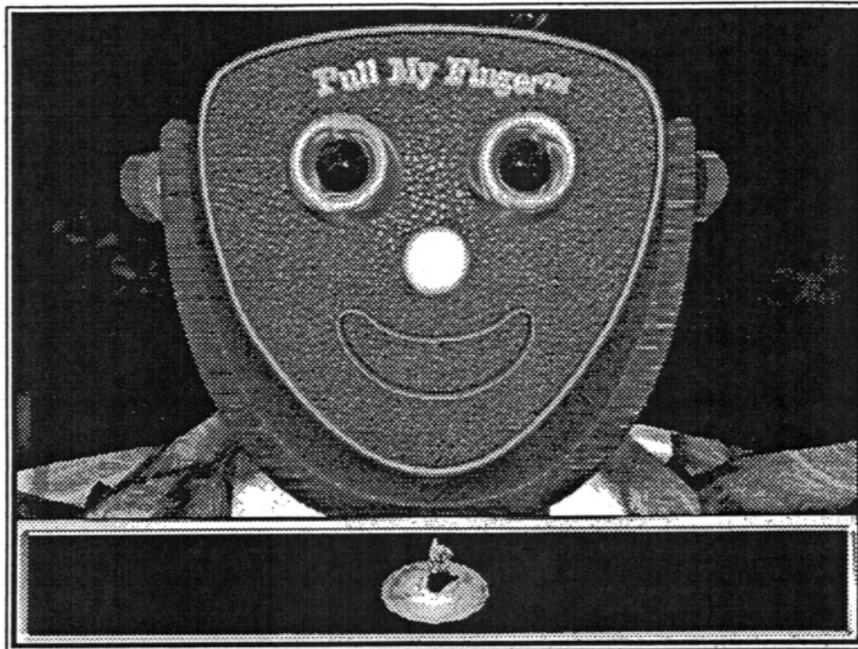
Possibly the purest example of the concept of the game, the Sound Maze scenario entices you to stretch beyond your pre-conceived, "sight-oriented" notions of computer games. Human beings as a whole are very visually oriented creatures. In this scenario, however, you are given no visual clues whatsoever, and are forced to rely on your sense of HEARING alone to guide you through. Situated in the "ear" section of the PSYCHE map (see General Overview), you are presented at first with only a pair of shoes spot-lighted in a vast plane of infinite blackness. You hear a taunting voice cry "Follow my laugh!" and a giggling laughter fades in the distance, beckoning you onward.

The directional cursor-arrows appear, and clicking right, left, forward or backward causes the shoes to move (either walking or turning). Rather than watching the ground come at you as you walk, instead the shoes seem to move in space and you hear another sound. Sometimes it is the same giggling laugh, other times something else. Eventually you realize that the sound is actually forming a path for you to follow, i.e., if you move forward and hear the same sound, you're still on the path, if you hear a different sound, you'd better back up and try another direction. [This scenario is a metaphor for breaking with standard practice, instead of just trusting to your eyes like humans do 90% of the time, you put your faith in another sense, with grand results]. At the end of the invisible path of sound is a small figure, the broken puppet also found outside the Puppet House. The puppet will be in one of four states:

- 1) **Dark w/ no legs.** If you haven't turned on the third light in the Cube Scenario or located the "Tell Tale Legs."
- 2) **Dark w/ legs.** If you haven't turned on the light but have found the "Tell Tale Legs."
- 3) **Light w/ no legs.** If you've turned on the light in the Cube Scenario but haven't found the "Tell Tale Legs."
- 4) **Light w/ legs.** If you've both turned on the light and found the Legs.

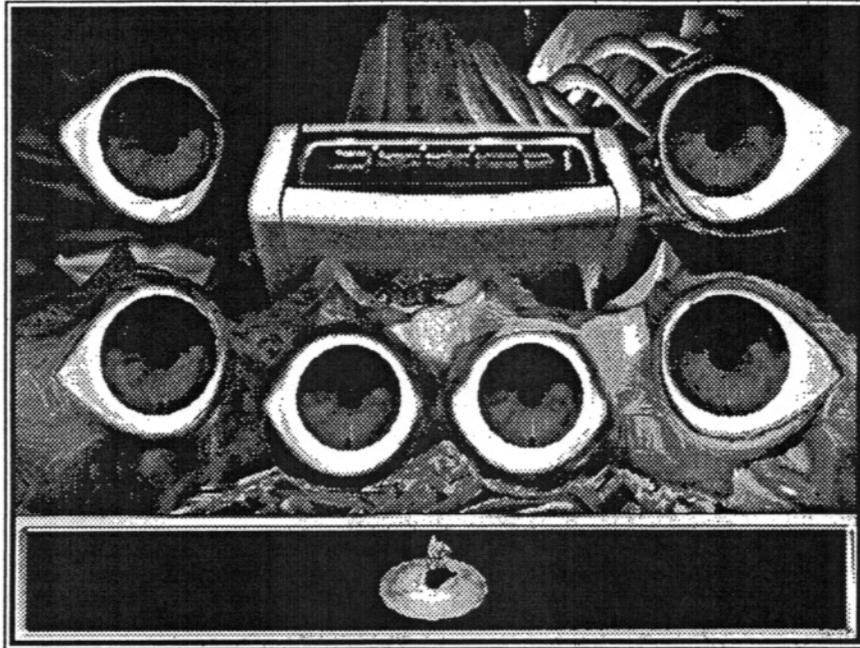
In the first three states, you simply hear the puppet lament a bit then move back to the Ear section of the Psyche level. In state 4, however, (puppet both lit and with legs), the puppet smiles as you greet him and gets down and funky with a rappin' dance. Click him again and he flies away, revealing a secret passage into a hithertofore inaccessible portion of the professor's brain. [This scenario represents the ability the mind has to convince itself of anything. Here the puppet is fixed by selectively altering memories, which in turn relieves the professor's lingering feelings of guilt and allows the player into personal realizations that never would have happened otherwise.]

SOUND MAZE #2: is identical to the first Sound Maze except that it starts in the purple platform, has a different map and leads to the Inner Psyche (Insanity).



The VIEWER

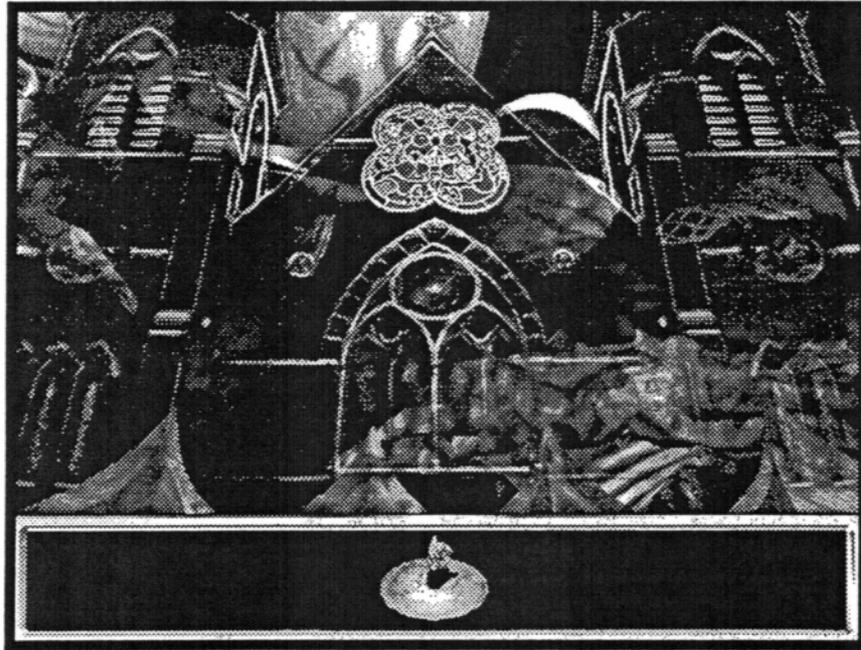
Experience the Magic!



The TOASTER CLUE

This area looks much like any other, a platform with a mysterious pattern on the floor floating in a vast expanse of blue. The one exception is a conspicuous green form directly in front of you. You click it, something flickers to the left, you look that way and click again, this time its the right-hand side that glimmers. Click again and the entire screen splits in a number of places revealing three giant sets of eyes hiding beneath. The eyes open and blink intermittently, all focused on the center area of the screen, as if something of great importance were there. A Toaster fades into view and you begin to hear a distant jack-in-the-box winding up with "Pop goes the weasel." At the "POP" part a piece of toast flies out and settles back into place. A scene of some kind is depicted on the roasted bread. The scene is one of five different people you meet in the PORKCHOP scenario, this is the clue as to which one you should choose when you get there. Or if you've already been there, you'll recognize the scene.

As you step back the toaster fades and the eyes close.

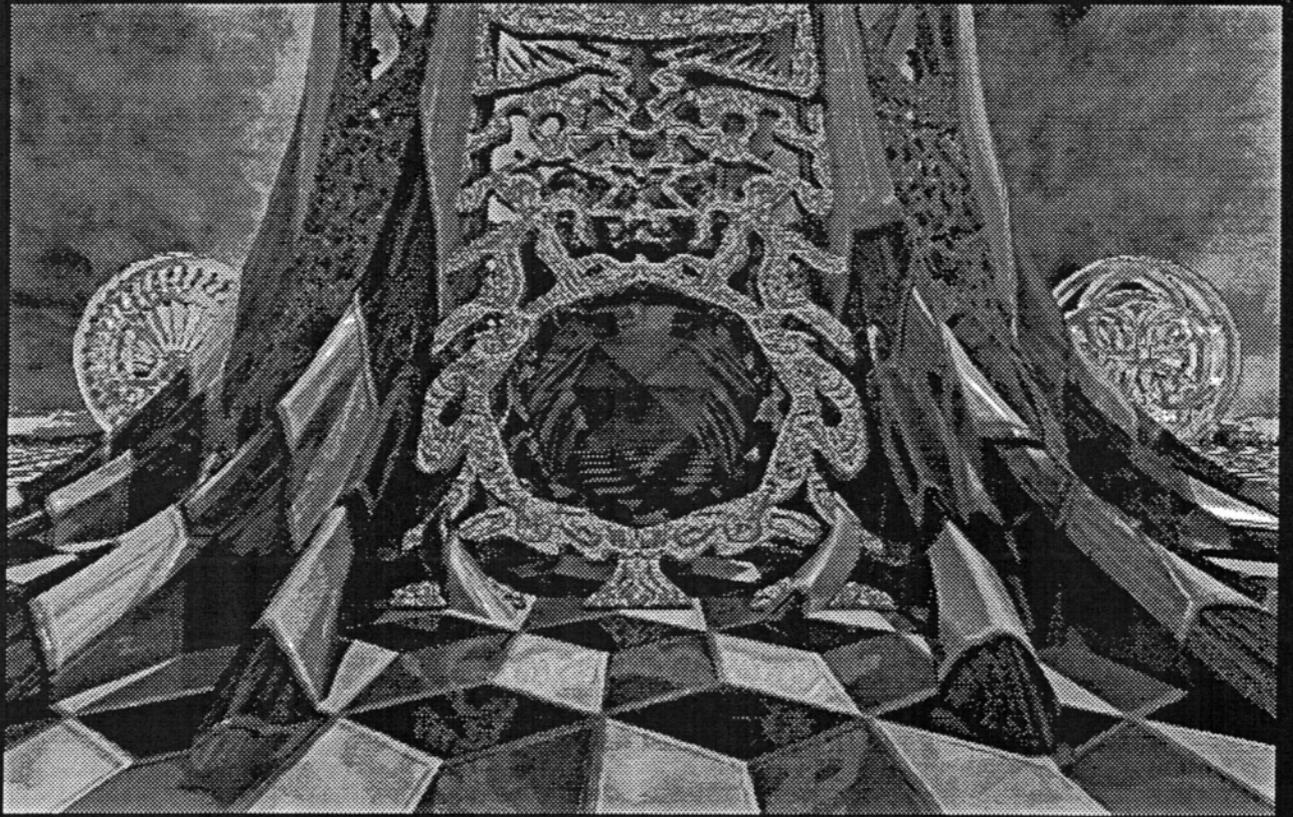


The CATHEDRAL

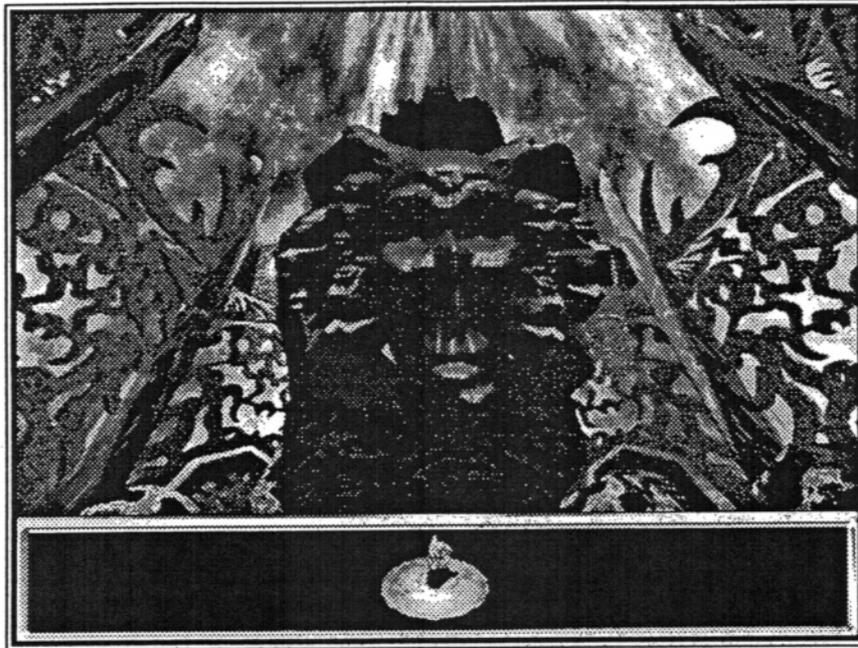
The Cathedral is visible in the PSYCHE platform accessed through the gray door in the ORANGE area of the RIGHT SIDE of the BRAIN. As your turning on the platform, viewing the grandiose panorama around you, you will see a directional cursor pointing up. Rather than go up you look up and see a hint of a Cathedral, outlined more like a reflection against the backdrop. There is a stained-glass window flanked by two prominent spires. The scene is dark and you don't seem to be able to get any closer.

If, however, in the CUBE SCENARIO you have turned on the first light in the progression, you will see the Cathedral in full glory with the stained glass window pulsing with light. Here you can approach, and you notice the window itself is a facsimile of the professor's face, though the eyes seem to have been replaced by tomatoes. The "nose" of the window stretches and a sepulchral sniffing booms through the void. The tomatoes are reminiscent of the flying tomatoes in the OUTHOUSE scenario. If you haven't been hit by the tomatoes there, you aren't carrying the scent and the stained glass window frowns, pushing you away. If you have been hit, the window smells this and smiles, dissolving to reveal an endless tunnel wherein a research manual is floating.

Naturally, the book you see here describes a series of giant spires, to be located at the north and south pole of the new planet, which will act as giant "lungs," circulating and filtering the atmosphere of the massive being.



The FINALÉ



The INNER PSYCHE (INSANITY)

This is, for all intents and purposes, the final showdown. The ambience of this scene is again the windy white noise that has been prevalent through most of the game, but there are undertones of laughter in varied personalities. The “floor” is an interlocking pattern of cubes replicated to the mountain-line horizon. The “sky” is a violent pattern of clouds, suggesting an approaching storm. At the center stands a lone structure, surrounded by an octagon of elaborate golden gates, each cradling a giant green gem. Your pathway through this plane is blocked by huge floating glyphs, revealed to represent the five research manuals in the MYSTIC HEADS area. The entire scenario has a glossy finish, and the various components reflect infinitely between each other.

As you approach each glyph, you are presented with a representation of the research manuals you currently hold. You have to match the glyph with the book it represents. If you do not succeed, Necrobilus becomes enraged and blows you back to the beginning. If you choose correctly, the glyph turns to glass and you pass through it. There is one glyph for each manual, so it's best to have them all by the time you get here so you won't lose out.

As you approach each face of the gates surrounding the inner structure and peer into the giant gem, you see a faint image from another area of the brain. If you touch it, you are transported instantly back to that point. One of the images is of a scene you haven't seen before. It appears to show you standing inside the gate structure. If you click it, the gate disappears and you are indeed able to enter. You are peering at the bottom of the giant hand from the brain-maze below. This time, instead of a reflecting sphere, there sits in the palm a giant sphere of rainbow heads, each one the face of Necrobilus (this is the scene presented briefly in the FALSE EXIT if you tried to leave with all the manuals).

The INNER PSYCHE (INSANITY) (continued)

As you peer up at the heads, they seem to be flattened against the sphere. If you have gone through all the rainbow doors in order, the Book of Wisdom you acquired by doing so appears at the bottom. Throwing this at the heads, they spring to life. The red head is before you, staring off into space. You begin to hear the story of corruption and greed that drove the professor to suicide, in his own words. As the red head finishes its piece, the sphere rotates and the orange head is now above you, talking in a different voice. [The sphere of heads is meant to represent the neurotic schizophrenia of the professor. Each head is a different color and consequently a completely different personality, but they all have the professor's face. The probing and prodding you've been doing all through the game have driven him mad.] Eventually you get the whole story, and the violet head swings down to face you directly.

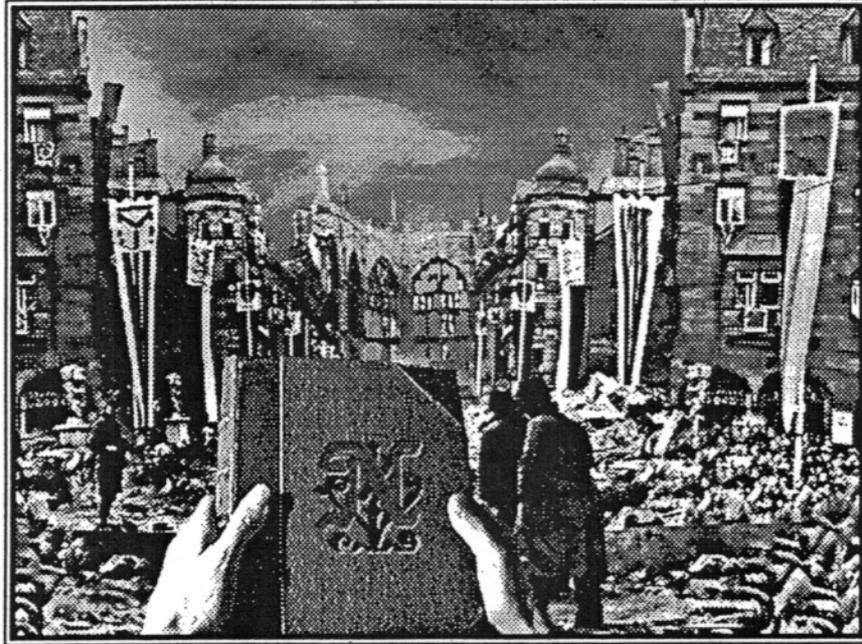
You are presented with the question, "Now that you have seen the truth, do you finish the planet?" Then the professor's head starts saying "yes" and "no" out of opposite sides of his mouth. You click either one or the other to choose your answer...



ENDING ONE (BUILD THE PLANET)

If you choose to build the planet, the professor screams and you are suddenly looking at a view of the home-world from a nearby cruiser. At your command the professor's methods are applied to the planet and you watch it transform from a bleak mass of rock into a tropical paradise.

All seems well until a bunch of cheap tourist traps and hotels spring up on the horizon and a government official leans in to inform you that the ultimate purpose of the whole plan was merely to bring in a few tourist dollars. Ah, well.



ENDING TWO (DON'T BUILD THE PLANET)

If you choose not to build the planet you find yourself staring at the trembling, irate face of the chief government official subjecting you to a bunch of gratuitous verbal abuse. You are eventually released from duty and sent to live among the common people.

In the final scene you are holding the final manual, which the government never found, and staring at a desolate wasteland which was once a vibrant society, now destroyed by its own poisons. A wafting memory of the professor's voice explains the folly of the government's plan: surging ahead with technology and advancement without considering the wisdom necessary to contain it. The sixth manual, the one in your hands, is the Book of Wisdom, that which could not be tangibly described. With wisdom, anything is possible...

ADDENDUM: Multi-player Functionality

The previous document described the workings of Necrobilus as a single-player entity. Following is an addendum describing the proposed web-based multi-player functionality. The basic workings will be identical with the addition of the following features:

Starting a Multi-player Session:

Players will subscribe to the online service allowing them to access the multi-player functionality of Necrobilus. Rather than opening a file, they will open a "session." Each session will have a unique name, if you want somebody else to play with you, give them your session name (possible limit on maximum number of players per session).

Saving/Continuing Multi-Player Sessions:

Sessions will be saved on the server, so you can pick up at the point you dropped off when you restart. Members can jump in and out of different sessions without re-logging on to the system, though you can only be in one session at a time. As long as at least one member is in a session, it will remain open and active.

Within the game itself, sessions will be handled as follows:

Other Players:

You are travelling through a virtual space. None of your fellow players are visible to you, though you are able to "feel" their presence. When another player comes into the same space you are in, you will hear the sound of neural activity; a bizarre rush of synthetic water, coins falling in rapid succession, etc. On the "throughways" you can pass players, but each scenario can have only one player at a time due to limited neural density at the endpoints.

Messaging:

Messaging is possible between other members of your session at any time. Double-click the bottom of the screen and you will be presented with a dialog window. Type the message you want to send and press [ENTER]. The brain is omni-directional, so the broadcast is felt at every point simultaneously, all members of the session will receive your message, including yourself.

Examples:

As an example, in the PIANO SCENARIO, one player will be inside, other players will approach from the maze and be unable to enter: "NEURAL ACTIVITY TOO HECTIC TO PERMIT ENTRY, POSSIBLY ANOTHER AGENT IS WORKING INSIDE." A message is sent: "Who's in the piano room?" Reply: "Me, Bill. I'm standing in front of a huge piano, with music on the walls. There are heads everywhere." The dialog continues: "Try pressing some of the music on the walls. Have you walked all around? There's something behind the giant DNA. I was in there once but I couldn't figure anything out. Play the piano, the heads sing." "I played the music on the wall and I found a manual! You guys have GOT to try this!"

As Bill leaves the scenario, the players sitting just on the outside hear a sound of a passing presence. Knowing that the area is now clear, they enter. If Bill had moved anything within the scenario, or added or dropped anything, the changes will now be reflected on everybody's screen.

Rationale:

The endearing factor is that you don't know who or how many people are with you without messaging them. You hear neural activity around you but you can't see anyone.

Future Expansion:

The sequel is already in the planning stages. At the conclusion of Necrobis, provided the living planet is created, you will be able to journey forth, with the members of your session, into the environment of the living planet. Whereas the internal areas of the brain weren't a physical area so you couldn't see anyone, the planet environment is real and you will be able to interact graphically with the other members of your session.

As the living planet evolves, it will be released as a series of CD-ROMs, each of which will contain a scenario that can be explored and clues gathered. Eventually, as the popularity catches on, there will be thousands of members working together to kill the living planet, as it has gone mad. Through the software we will be able to mimick the hugeness of the task involved and the relative insignificance of a single person. The player will be struck with the size of the planet and importance of cooperation to finish the job.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT NECROBIUS AND ITS CREATORS

WHO ARE THESE GUYS?

Dann, Jeff and Justin Auld are three brothers with an old-fashioned eye for quality. Between them, musical, programming and artistic talents, all the pieces necessary to create quality CD-ROM discs, are represented. Necrobilus is the first collaborative product by the three in an attempt to feel out the market and the sensibilities of the modern software user. A number of other products are in the planning stages, including a sequel to Necrobilus.

THE THINKING BEHIND THE PRODUCT

Necrobilus is a strategy/adventure game conceived and developed by Dann Auld. It achieves the distinction of pushing the envelope of interactivity while exploring a non-linear approach to playing. Looking at the software available at the time, there was a great deal of impressive graphics, but not a lot of "ha-ha" value to entertain you as you play. Necrobilus is extremely challenging while at the same time being satirical and entertaining. It's almost as if the game itself has a personality. Dann and his brothers are all artists, and as such appreciate the feel of hand-drawn art. Most computer graphics are too crisp and have too many harsh edges; things you almost never see in nature. Great care went into the creation of aesthetically balanced 3D artwork with a softer, hand-made feel, and genuinely challenging puzzles that rely on your subconscious mind to do some of the work.

ENCAPSULATED OVERVIEW

You are navigating through an invented 3D space, traversing a world that plays by its own rules. In essence, you are traveling through another person's consciousness. You have access to everything the Professor ever saw, heard, felt, etc. during his entire life; viewing his first person memories in the third person. Armed with the knowledge that the planet must be saved and the method for doing so is buried somewhere in the professor's gray matter, you enter. As you are exposed to more and more of Necrobilus' life memories, you begin to see a different version of the story, where he was mistreated by the government, his work stolen and corrupted by the blank face of bureaucracy.

The irony of the game comes when you become bombarded with two different forces of influence. One from the Government, who tells you the information is invaluable to save many lives, and the other from Necrobilus, who begs you not to share this most valuable (and dangerous) information, his very thoughts. The choice is left entirely up to you...

THE STORY OF NECROBIUS

(Long Version)

A distant world lies in the grips of chaos. Social violence and unrest worsen daily as the population reacts to a rapidly decaying environment. Unable to rectify the situation on their own, government officials make a desperate plea to the public for assistance. Their cries are not ignored. As the office of the head committee is about to withdraw for the day, they are astonished by the silent appearance of a stoic, elderly gentleman. With no outside provocation he begins to speak profoundly of how, in a single fortnight, the dilemma of the besieged planet could be solved. When asked to explain his claim further, the man merely makes the slightest of bows and leaves. Undercover agents are sent in pursuit and track the gentleman to his underground lab in the heart of the city. There the professor lucidly explains his recent experiments, and astonishing success, in the transformation of inorganic matter into organic beings. Talking rocks and clusters of ambulatory soil distract the officials often during the discourse, at the end of which it is summarized that in just five steps, the entire planet could be transformed into a vast, sentient being. Once completed, the planet would become an autonomous and self-sufficient entity, leaving the human population to deal solely with their own internal strife. Dumbfounded and in disbelief, the agents leave, but take with them enough evidence that the high command is convinced to act immediately on the plan.

The next day, Professor Necrobios is instated at the head of the central intelligence research facility. In the interest of maintaining the strictest security, he acquiesces to the planting of a small medical remote in his spinal column. The device provides both a unique identification for the security scanners and forewarning of potentially dangerous health conditions. As his remote is programmed to the highest priority, the professor is granted full access and privileges within the various governmental departments. All facilities and personnel are placed at his disposal. The enthusiasm of his fellow researchers provides a final blanket of reassurance, and Necrobios settles into the project quickly.

In the following weeks, the collective face of the government officials, initially curious and helpful, turns increasingly cold and aloof. As the professor reveals more of the details of his plan, he feels less and less control of the situation. Progress begins to slow in the light of constant questioning and re-questioning by government scientists. Fearful that the unnecessary distraction could jeopardize the plan altogether, the doctor makes a formal request to complete the work on his own. He is immediately placed under a military guard and escorted back to the lab. Apprehension and suspicion now drive the professor to formulate a plan to plant bugs deep within the bureaucratic infrastructure. He acts that very night and is relieved to find his security clearance still fully valid in all departments -- the days incident apparently just a warning.

The following morning, back at his secret lab, the professor sits stupefied as he listens to his own work transformed into a nightmare by the vulgar corruption of the ruling powers. Looking out of government eyes, the professor suddenly sees clearly the horror his plan has been twisted into, and also the dilemma he faces. For the sake of the remaining human race and whatever glimmer of hope still exists therein, he knows the

project must be stopped. The plan is too far along for him to simply leave; government forces would pursue him relentlessly. Burying or hiding the plans would also provide only a temporary deterrence. It is with grim resolution that the professor realizes finally that the only way to end the nightmare is to destroy himself and all record of his work. Only by eliminating all possibility of continuing can the plot be foiled. For the sake of all living things the professor must die. He manages enough security clearance to erase all records of his work stored in the government network. Returning to his lab and collecting all physical evidence, he activates a program that ignites the entire office simultaneously.

Back at headquarters, alarms triggered by the medical remote in the professor's spine send the agents into high gear. Steel cutters quickly provide access to the smouldering inner sanctum. Reconnaissance crews act feverishly to collect anything that can be salvaged. The physical records, mostly paper due to the old-fashioned habits of the professor, are beyond hope, but an interesting plan develops when it is learned that the doctor's brain has been rescued virtually unharmed. Hurrying back to headquarters, government scientists immerse the brain in jelled electrolytes and manage to revive it. Electrodes are connected and life-sustaining functions mimicked. Within minutes the process is complete and television monitors are relaying a chaos of images and sensory data from the reanimate neurons. In a thorough search of their agent data for the required qualifications your name appears at the top of the list.

Sitting in the briefing room at 3:00am, your mission, and its sensitive nature, are explained by a committee of top scientists. You are to enter the brain as a disembodied "pulse prove" which will allow you to traverse the neurons as easily as the Professor's own thoughts. What you are searching for are any recollections of the "Living Planet" work. Your job is only to search, a government computer, which will monitor your frequency constantly in a one-way link, will collect and sort all data encountered. You are dismissed before being able to ask questions.

During the next few days of preparation the specifics of your mission are treated as a taboo subject of conversation. Your requests for information on the network are ignored or returned with classifications exceeding your privileges. Disturbed by the secrecy and red tape, your turn to the underground of informants. A discomfoting picture begins to form of corruption among the highest levels of the ruling elite. The professor's suicide remains a mystery, but the data seems to suggest that he may still exist as an entity within his reanimated brain and could represent a dangerous antagonistic force during your explorations.

You are scarcely prepared for the mission when the go order is issued. As you are dabbled with electrolytic fluids and electrodes attached, your mind races through the endless rumors and snips of information you've uncovered. What is the ultimate purpose of this project? You try to picture Necrobis as he burned in his voluntary pyre. Preparations finish. For the first time you notice a digital readout in the lower left corner of your vision. Several figures in dark glasses look on from another room as the numbers begin to count down. The blinding speed of your thoughts forces the rest of the world into slow motion. 10...9...8...7...