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0007493.0 28 March 2000 (28.03.2000) GB(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **TAO GROUP LIMITED** [GB/GB]; 62/63 Suttons Business Park, Earley, Reading RG6 1AZ (GB).

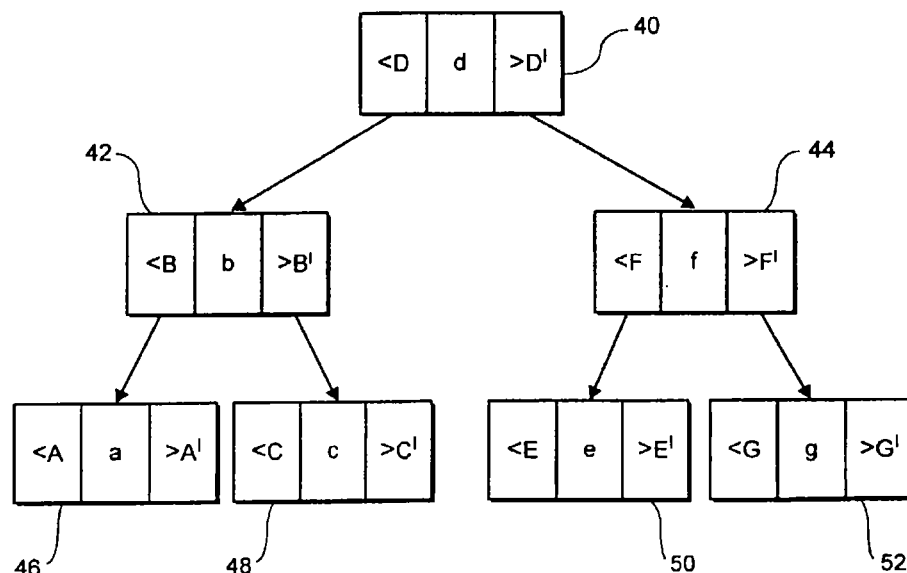
(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **HAYWARD, Andrew** [GB/GB]; Chapel Cottage, Rectory Road, Streatley, Berkshire RG8 9QH (GB).(74) Agents: **MAGGS, Michael, Norman** et al.; Kilburn & Strode, 20 Red Lion Street, London WC1R 4PJ (US).(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).**Published:**

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(54) Title: GARBAGE COLLECTION



(57) **Abstract:** A garbage collector, making use of interior pointers, maintains a tree structure comprising a plurality of linked nodes (40-52), each node being representative of a memory allocation (a...g). For each known in-use interior pointer (P) the tree is searched to determine the memory allocation (c) to which the pointer points. That memory allocation (c) is noted as being unavailable for garbage collection release. Once all available in-use pointers have been searched for, the system releases those memory allocations which have not been noted as unavailable for release. Preferably, the tree is an AVL tree. The method is applicable to any memory allocation scheme, with no constraints on the size of memory allocations nor their positions in memory. The invention further extends to a method for garbage collection and to an operating system including a garbage collector.

