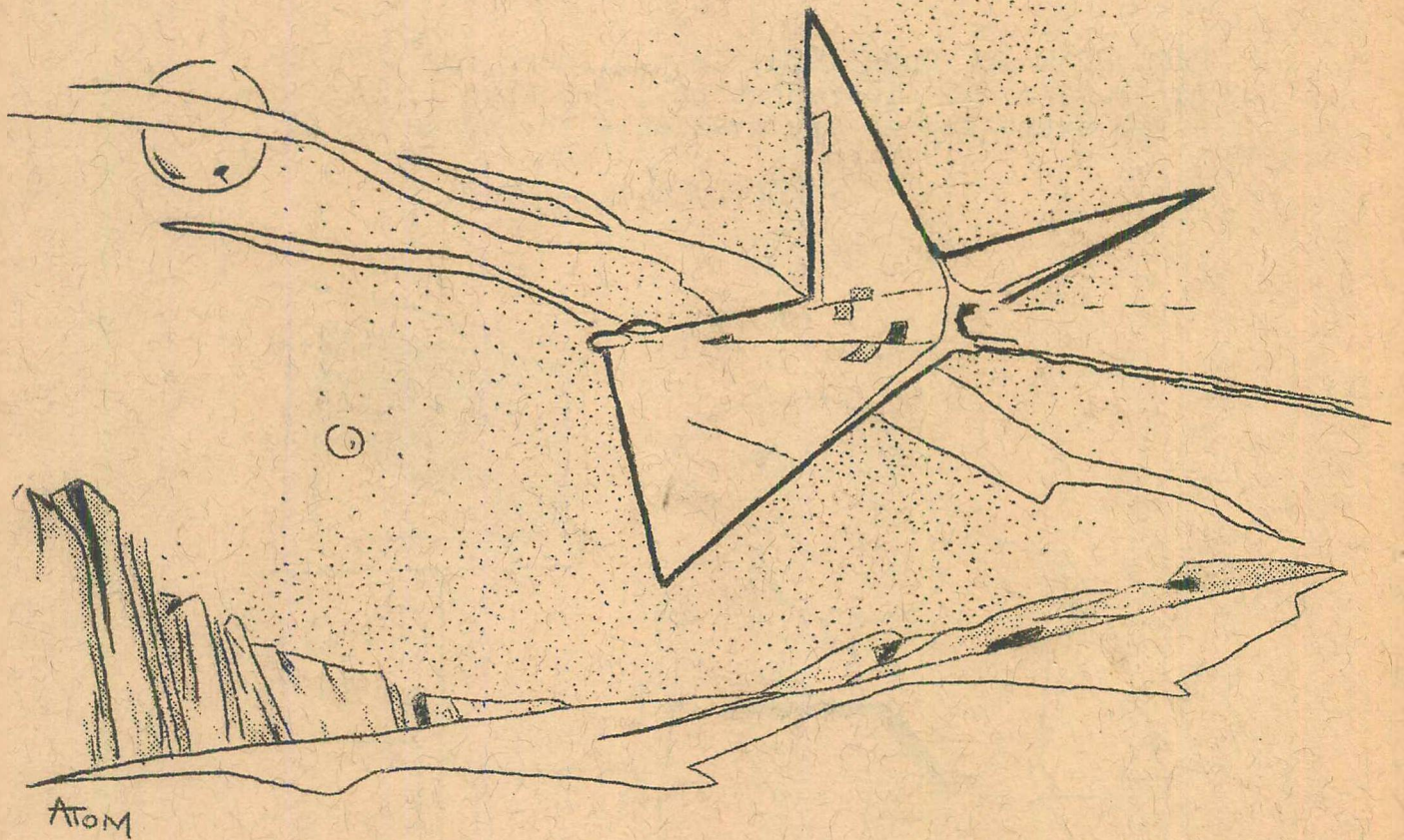


# dark star

NUMBER 2, JUNE 1963





# DARK STAR—

NUMBER 2

THUS I REFUTE.....Carr  
BOOKS.....Carr  
GREY DAY IN MANHATTAN.....Ted White & Terry Carr  
LETTERS.....Bob Tucker & Anthony Boucher

Cover by Arthur Thomson

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terry carr

## THUS I REFUTE

Broderick Grimes read Descartes, Berkeley and Hobbes like some people eat peanuts. He'd started out with a booklet called THE WORLD'S GREATEST THOUGHTS (published at 20¢ in 1928, bought in a used-book store for 15¢ in 1954), had then sent for a one-volume collection of philosophical writings (THE GENIUS OF MAN) which was offered free by a book club, and had gone on from there. He now had an entire wall of his bedroom covered by a jumbled bookcase full of old books whose spines creaked when they were opened. Broderick had read them all, sitting every night in his worn leather chair with the gooseneck lamp curling over his shoulder like a curious bird. Analytical logic was a mania with him, perhaps because he wasn't very interested in the inconsistent world itself.

Broderick was nearing the end of the eighteenth chapter of THE COLLECTED PAPERS OF THOMAS ROWLAND (Burnleigh and Son, London, 1847) when he felt his ears pop. It was exactly the feeling one gets when going down ten flights in an elevator, but of course he was sitting stationary in his bedroom. He looked around, puzzled and distracted, and saw the stranger standing beside him.

"My greetings," said the stranger with a faint smile.

"What the hell?" said Broderick. "How did you get in here?"

The stranger was just over six feet tall, dark-haired with sideburns extending down to his jawline. His eyes were a clear grey even in the dim light of the bedroom, and as Broderick looked more closely he noticed that the man had three nostrils.

"I don't believe you'd understand my method of arrival," the stranger said.

"The hell," said Broderick. "Try me."

The stranger sighed. "I'm from another dimension, and I arrived by means of a dimensional translator. Does that mean anything to you?"

"Not a thing," said Broderick. He marked his place and set his book down on a ledge of the bookcase, next to a small dish with half



a cheese sandwich in it. "Are you a building inspector of something?"

"I'm an inspector, you might say." Again the stranger gave him a taste of his unamused smile. "But I'm inspecting your entire world."

"A census taker? Why the hell don't you knock?"

"Not a census taker," said the stranger. "My name is Yaddeth Omo. I am Ego 27 of the Hasketh Complex, which means only twenty-six people are more important than me."

"You could still knock," Broderick said.

"It's impossible to knock when moving from one dimension to the next. There's nothing to knock against. But you probably heard a disturbance of the air when I materialized here."

"I don't know," said Broderick. "All that happened was that my ears popped."

Yaddeth Omo's thin eyebrows raised. "Ah, yes. The abrupt displacement of air in the room caused the air pressure to raise, and your inner ear adjusted accordingly. Very simple."

Broderick thought about that for a second, and then frowned. "Are you claiming that you just appeared here? Teleported or something?"

"I came from another dimension," said Yaddeth Omo. "I'm going to survey this world prior to our conquest."

"Another dimension," Broderick said skeptically. "You'd need more than three nostrils to convince me of that."

"I don't doubt that it's beyond your understanding," said the stranger, turning away. "However, my business isn't with you. Which way is the door?"

"Don't try to insult me in my own home," Broderick said tartly. "I might say you're not smart enough to find your way out by yourself."

Yaddeth Omo turned back. "That would be untrue. I'm Ego 27, one of the most able and important men in the Complex. Only twenty-six are higher, and when the news of the success of my dimensional project is known..."

"Then this is the first time?"

"In a way, yes. It's the first translation we've made of a human being. But we've picked up small objects from your world for years, and sent others to you."

"What kind of objects?" Broderick had sat back in his chair, and now he picked up the half-eaten cheese sandwich and took another bite. He chewed contemplatively, watching his visitor calmly.

"Small ones," said Yaddeth Omo. "Paper clips...erasers...socks."



You may have noticed some of them missing yourself. And we've sent similar things from our world. Coathangers, for instance."

"I gather your world is very similar to ours."

"Of course. Our dimensions are adjacent, so the differences are subtle. Except, of course, for the difference in intelligence."

"There's a difference in that?"

Yaddeth Omo sniffed slightly, all three nostrils flaring for a moment. "I should think you'd have noticed that already."

"No," said Broderick. "All I've noticed is the difference in manners. Autres dimensions, autres mores, I suppose."

Yaddeth Omo frowned. "You still have separate languages?"

Broderick nodded. "Certainly. That was French; it means you're damned rude."

"Perhaps -- by your standards. It's not important, though. I didn't come as an ambassador."

"I gather you came as some sort of advance scout for war," Broderick said. He finished his sandwich and wiped his lips with a paper napkin.

"It will hardly be a war," Yaddeth Omo said. "It will be over in a day. We're consolidated, organized for the greatest efficiency, and of course there's the basic factor of the intelligence differential."

"In other words, you'll be able to destroy us once you've reconnoitred our world," Broderick said. "And you'll be able to do that if only I'll explain where the door is."

Yaddeth Omo turned away and strode to the doorway leading from the bedroom to the hall. "I can find it for myself," he said. "You needn't think you can stop me that easily."

"Go ahead," Broderick said. "I don't believe a word you've said anyway."

The stranger stopped and turned. He regarded Broderick sternly for a moment, and then came back into the room.

"You have no right to doubt my word."

Broderick waved a hand. "Certainly I have. I don't believe for a moment that you came from another dimension. I don't believe in other dimensions. I must have left the door unlocked and you walked in by mistake. I don't know why you're such a nut, but with a nose like that I suppose you had to grow up a little odd."

"I'm Yaddeth Omo, Ego 27 of the Hasketh Complex!" the stranger snapped.

"And I don't believe you."



The tall man glared at him. "In my world, questioning another's position in the order is the most serious of offenses!"

"Your self-image is important to you, isn't it?" Broderick said.

"Of course it is!" Yaddeth Omo's nostrils flared widely now, and they stayed that way. "One's position in the order is determined by what others think of him. In my world --"

"I don't believe in your world," Broderick said coldly. He abruptly leaned forward, elbows on knees. "Have you heard of Bishop Berkeley?"

"No."

"I thought not, so I'll tell you about him. He made a point that's appropriate here. He said that reality is only what we perceive. For instance, if a tree were to fall in a forest where there was no one around to hear it, would it make a crash when it hit? No -- it's meaningless to say that it would. Do you understand?"

"No."

"All right. How do any of us know anything? By seeing, by touching, by hearing or tasting or smelling. Our senses are our contact with reality. Right? If anything is to be real for us we must have sensual contact with it. It has to hit us, or shine in our eyes, or smell good to us, or something. If not, it has no effect on us and it's therefore unreal by any sensible definition. Reality is what we perceive and nothing more."

Yaddeth Omo was glaring at him, but it was a slightly puzzled glare. "That's not right," he said.

"Of course it is," Broderick said, staring him down. "if we can't sense it, it doesn't exist. Period."

The stranger's frown wavered, and he shifted from one foot to the other. "This is very interesting, but --"

"So if you say you're from another dimension, I say that isn't true. I've never seen your dimension, never tasted it, never heard it, touched it or even smelled it. Is it possible for me to do any of these things?"

"Of course not!"

"Then this other dimension can't exist. And since it doesn't, you can't have come from there."

"But I did!" Yaddeth Omo's eyes were shadowed with uncertainty now. "You mustn't question what I --"

"Oh, maybe you think you did," Broderick said. "After all, you can touch your world. You can hear it, and see it. All you have to do is go back to it. But it's not real for me, or for any of us here. And that's why you can't exist in this world."



"But you see me!"

Broderick smiled. "Perhaps I'm only imagining you. For my own entertainment, let's say. For someone to argue with. Then if I want to, I can...snuff you out!"

There were drops of perspiration on Yaddeth Omo's high forehead now. "You can't!"

"Oh, I'm quite sure I can -- just like that." Broderick snapped his fingers, still smiling as he met the stranger's frightened gaze. "After all, I'm the only one in this world who's seen you, and if I decide you don't exist... Are ~~you~~ you so sure of yourself? Would you like me to show you?"

Yaddeth Omo licked his lips.

It's a simple test -- very pragmatic. I'll snap my fingers, you'll cease to exist, and that will prove it. Shall I?"

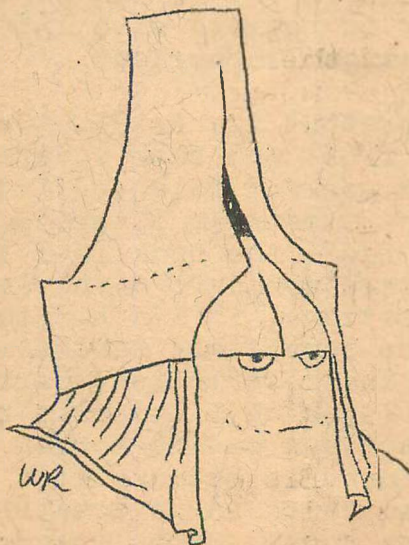
"Don't!" said Yaddeth Omo, backing away.

"Yes, I will," said Broderick. "If you're afraid, you'd better leave now. Go back to your own world, if it exists for you. If you stay here, you'll disappear completely." He held up his hand, finger against thumb.

"Stop!" It was a piercing scream.

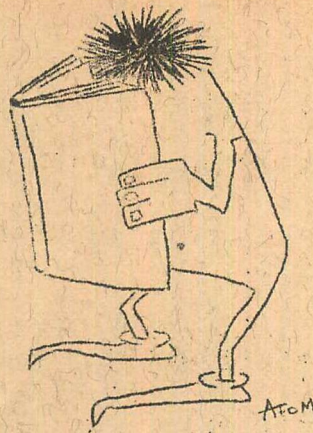
Broderick snapped his fingers.

Yaddeth Omo disappeared, and a split second later Broderick's ears popped. He smiled, and went into the kitchen to fix himself another cheese sandwich. He still wanted to finish chapter eighteen of his book tonight.





# BOOKS



It's been much too long since the last issue of DARK STAR...a year, to be exact. I want to at least list each book I've read during the year, for my own future compulsive reference if nothing else, so I'll have to pass rather lightly over most of them.

## SCIENCE FANTASY

GUARDIANS OF TIME by Poul Anderson. Ballantine 422K, 35¢. 140 pgs.  
THREE HEARTS AND THREE LIONS by Poul Anderson. Avon G-1127, 50¢.  
160 pages.

The first is a collection of four novelets about the Time Patrol, all of them excellent. I've always been a nut for time travel stories when they're well worked out, and these stories have all the ingenuity and color that I could ask. A fine book.

THREE HEARTS AND THREE LIONS is even better. I loved this story when it first appeared in F&SF years ago, and in this expanded version it ranks as probably the most-fun fantasy I've ever read. Poul's abilities as a writer sometimes seem boundless: certainly in this book he hasn't contented himself simply with writing a rousing sword-and-sorcery tale (though it is that). Throughout the book he's playing with one thing or another, whether it's a quick offhand allusion to Gilbert & Sullivan on Martinus Trismegistus' shingle ("Spells, Charms, Prophecies, Healing, Love Potions, Blessings, Curses, Ever-Filled Purses") or a deftly handled tour de force like the complete fantasy-and-detection story of the werewolf of Lourville (chapters 13 and 14). The book is replete with little surprises like these, and I found it a delight throughout.

THE LONG TOMORROW by Leigh Brackett. Ace F-135, 40¢. 223 pages.

The reviews quoted on the front and back covers call this book "awfully close to being a great work of science-fiction" and "science-fiction to compare with serious mainstream literature," but I think they overrate it. In point of fact, the book is a juvenile novel, and as such it's quite good; as a serious adult novel, even within the limits of the s-f field's aspirations, it's a bit too superficial in characterization and theme to be completely successful.

There's some fine writing and description, particularly in the earlier sections of the book. Later on I found it rather tedious, and Len Colter's adolescent reactions became harder and harder to identify with. I call this a juvenile because it's the story of a teenager coming to manhood, dealt with in no greater depth than a teenager could understand. It's a book worth reading, but it's not Brackett's best by a damnsight, and I can only conclude that it drew the kind of reviews it got not because of its quality, but simply



because its intentions are more serious than anything Brackett's written in the field before. But a superficial and only partially successful serious story still doesn't deserve the praise that some of Brackett's near-perfect romantic space operas were worth.

THE DEVIL IN VELVET by John Dickson Carr. Bantam F2052, 50¢. 312 pages.

This novel of a man cast back through sorcery to the seventeenth century has received (and merited) some very high praise. It's an amalgum of three genres: the historical novel, the fantasy novel, and the novel of detection. Frankly, I found the fantasy aspects of it poorly thought out and confusing, but the mystery aspect is good and the picture of seventeenth century London is superb.

JOYLEG by Ward Moore and Avram Davidson. Pyramid F-805, 40¢. 160 pages.

OR ALL THE SEAS WITH OYSTERS by Avram Davidson. Berkley F639, 50¢. 176 pages.

JOYLEG is an enjoyable novel, particularly in the first half, before and during the discovery of Master Joyleg himself. Thereafter, I'm afraid, the authors took off on a pretty corny path of satirizing current world powers and their politics, and the results aren't too good. However, Joyleg himself, and his revelations about the glorious (or not so) founders of our country, are both droll and to the point. The book isn't a world-beater, but it's fun for the most part.

OR ALL THE SEAS WITH OYSTERS is as fine a collection of fantasy stories as I've read since FANCIES AND GOODNIGHTS, bighod. There's only one story in the book which I consider a clinker (that's NOW LET US SLEEP, which I maintain is an overly-sentimental bit of nonsense--much to the vehement protestations of the author's wife and others). The others, though (there are 18, not 16 as listed on the contents page), run from clever Unknown-type stories like I DO NOT HEAR YOU, SIR and THE MONTAVARDE CAMERA to a few which I'll read again and again (and already have, for that matter): OR ALL THE SEAS WITH OYSTERS, OR THE GRASSES GROW, THE GOLEM, HELP! I AM DR. MORRIS GOLDPEPPER, etc. etc. etc. The book should be in hard covers: my copy's already shot to hell from rereadings and frequent loanings.

THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND by William Hope Hodgson. Ace D-553, 35¢. 159 pages.

I don't go in much for gothick horror, and particularly not for cosmic gothick horror, but Hodgson is still one of my favorite writers. The plain fact is that the man could bighod write. I don't think this book is his most effective story (I prefer his completely chilling novelet THE DERELICT), but it's a good one.

BYPASS TO OTHERNESS by Henry Kuttner. Ballantine 497K, 35¢. 144 pgs.

Every time I read Kuttner these days I rediscover how goddam good he was, and what a loss his death was to us. Every story in this collection is well worth reading, and there's at least one which stacks up against anything written in the field: CALL HIM DEMON. I read this many years ago, shortly after I first began reading s-f, and I liked it then; in rereading it recently I was astounded by the quality of the writing in it. It's completely slick-quality writing, and I doubt Kuttner got more than a penny a word for it when he sold the story to Thrilling Wonder in 1947. Ye gods!

TWISTS IN TIME by Murray Leinster. Avon T-389, 35¢. 160 pages.

Another collection of time-travel stories, distinguished this



time not only by quality but also by variety and seemingly endless ingenuity. In the course of his long career Leinster has done more things with time than I would have thought possible, from the clever japes of THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL DEMONSTRATOR and DEAR CHARLES to the moving THE OTHER NOW. There's also some first-class adventure, notably DEAD CITY.

ROGUE STAR, the story which leads off the book, makes its first appearance in print here. It's the least successful story in the collection, actually, but by damn there's some lovely sense of wonder in its literally cosmic picture of the expansion-contraction cycles of the universe.

#### MYSTERY-DETECTIVE

DEATH COMES AS THE END by Agatha Christie. Pocket Books C-335, 35¢. 177 pages.

DEATH ON THE NILE by Agatha Christie. Avon T-149a, 35¢. 262 pages.

ORDEAL BY INNOCENCE by Agatha Christie. Dodd, Mead, 1949, \$2.95. 247 pages.

The first two are set in Egypt, but about 4,000 years apart: DEATH ON THE NILE is set in this century, DEATH COMES AS THE END during the XIIth Dynasty around 2,000 B.C. DOTN is my favorite Christie book so far: a clever, carefully worked out job which fooled me all the way. DCATE gives an excellent picture of ancient Egyptian manor life (as it were): colorful and authentic. The detection element isn't quite as good, but it's good enough.

ORDEAL BY INNOCENCE is a very disappointing book. There are some fairly interesting characters and complications to the problem, but when I found out who the killer was I discovered I didn't care one way or the other about that character. Foosh.

THE LIST OF ADRIAN MESSENGER by Philip MacDonald. Doubleday, 1959. 224 pages.

The paperback edition of this book has blurbs hailing it as the greatest suspense novel written, which is, ah, an overstatement. Actually, it's a reasonably interesting book, but quite undistinguished. I hear the movie made from it is terrible.

THE FERGUSON AFFAIR by Ross Macdonald. Bantam J2533, 40¢. 188 pgs.

When I started this one it seemed pretty lacklustre too, but it got better and better as it went along. Macdonald isn't a bad writer: he has some very good turns of phrase and even some authentic character insights here. As for the mystery, there are three surprises in the ending: I caught one of them 2/3 of the way through the book, another two pages before Macdonald sprang it on us, and he got me with the last one. Macdonald just doesn't let you get away with figuring out this one. A good book.

THE DAUGHTER OF TIME by Josephine Tey. Berkley BG591, 50¢. 172 pgs.

After all I've heard and read (especially in ONPA) about this book, I figured it would be just my cup of tea. I was very disappointed, though: I found the action static and hard going, and I wasn't terribly convinced by Miss Tey's case for Richard. I kept demurring every time her hero Grant placed his interpretation on a piece of evidence ("Yeah, maybe, but..."), and I thought it a bit childish of Grant, after pointing out that Sir Thomas More hadn't written the history of Richard III in question, to continue thereafter to refer to him sarcastically as "the sainted More".

Well, it's nice to know there's another side to the case, anyway.



HEAT WAVE by "Caesar Smith". Ballantine 293K, 35¢. 191 pages.

"Caesar Smith" is a penname for Elleston Trevor, an excellent English writer of suspense and adventure novels. (Trevor is also "Simon Rattray," by the way.) In this novel he manages the very difficult and delicate feat of writing a love story about a man who's just murdered his wife with a butcher knife. I know that sounds ridiculous, but Trevor's done it with insight and unerring taste. And he writes better than anyone else I've yet read in the field.

I hear Ballantine plans to reissue the book this year, and I strongly recommend that anyone read it.

MURDER MURDER MURDER edited by Helen McCloy and Brett Halliday. Hillman 193, 35¢. 159 pages.

An anthology by and on behalf of the Mystery Writers of America: as I understand it, the authors donate the reprint rights to their stories for nothing, proceeds from the book to go to MWA.

It's not a bad collection, but not outstanding either. I was most interested in Lillian de la Torre's play, GOOD-BYE, MISS LIZZIE BORDEN, in which Lizzie's sister Emma is portrayed as the murderess. The only trouble is that Emma's method of escaping detection would have worked as well for Lizzie, so the play throws no light on the mystery of the case. Interesting, though.

#### GENERAL FICTION

ANOTHER COUNTRY by James Baldwin. Dell 0200, 75¢. 366 pages.

A Fine Book. Baldwin has some minor faults as a writer, but I won't go into them. In the first place, nobody seems to agree with me that his characterizations sometimes tend toward too much symbolism, and in the second, they're completely overshadowed by the tremendous power and depth he has at his command. This is a book about love, hate, insecurity, racial discrimination...choose your own theme. It's moving, it's real, and it's an important book. I'm convinced that I feel a strong influence in Baldwin from Thomas Wolfe, by the way, but Wolfe never wrote this well, as far as I know. Read it...and remember Ida's warning to her white lover Vivaldo: "Honey, you ain't had much trouble in your life so far, but it'll come for you. Just remember, white boy, sometime you gotta pay your dues."

CATCH-22 by Joseph Heller. Dell, 75¢. c. 500 pages. (My copy's currently on loan.)

A fantastic book...hilarious, fierce, painful, enormously complicated in technique and enormously powerful in its effect. It tells much more than just of the insanity of war: it describes the insanity of our world.

Sometimes, when I run head-on into some of the attitudes held by most people in this country, I'm stopped dead in my tracks with a feeling of, "My God, the whole goddam world is on a 45-degree angle from reality!" And then I think of Yossarian, and Doc Daneeka, and Milo Minderbinder and all the rest of the people in CATCH-22 who see and react to the world in ways which are utterly ridiculous...but maybe more sensible, at that, than our own ways.

THE KING MUST DIE by Mary Renault. Pocket Books GC-78, 50¢. 374 pgs.

This is another book which has been spoken well of in OMPA and elsewhere in fandom, but in this case I wasn't the least bit disappointed. It's a rousing, colorful and authentic recreation of life



in ancient Greece and Crete. (Well, it's almost completely authentic: she does have one reference to contemporary events in Egypt which is about a century off, though.)

The only thing which bothered me about this was the occasional flash of recognition I had of just how little evidence Miss Renault had on which to build this complex picture of the ancient world. I've read about Crete, for instance, and I know she's based her picture of the Cretan religion on about half a dozen artifacts and a whole lot of scholarly speculation, both ancient and modern. At times I had to deliberately forget this in order to make her scene, as it were.

But that's quibbling: I loved the book, and am saving the sequel for a grey, colorless day.

CAPTAIN NEWMAN, M.D. by Leo Rosten. Crest R604, 60¢. 272 pages.

In some ways this is similar to CATCH-22 in its picture of the horrors of war through humor. A detailed comparison, though, would be unfair to NEWMAN: in the first place, this book's purposes aren't as big as those of CATCH-22; in the second, it's unfair to compare any book to Heller's.

This isn't a novel, strictly speaking. There's no plot whatsoever, only one incident after another, and most of these are plotless too. It reads like a nonfiction memoir, but of course it's completely fiction. I don't think there's a name for this form, if it is a bona fide form.

Well, some of the book is very funny. There are some good insights, some good characters, and some good attitudes shown. I got a bit bugged by Newman's apparent infallibility (he's a psychiatrist in a wartime hospital ward), but Carol (who's more up on this stuff than I) tells me that since the purpose of psychiatric treatment in wartime is essentially just to patch up a guy temporarily so he can get back on the firing line, Newman's apparent successes are reasonably believable as long as you remember they aren't nohow permanent.

GOODBYE, COLUMBUS by Philip Roth. Bantam S2600, 75¢. 216 pages.

Roth seems to be the darling of the literary critics these days, but I think he's a bit overrated. Admittedly, I haven't read his subsequent novel LETTING GO, but in this collection at least he seems a bit superficial. It's hard to believe, for instance, that the characters in the title story are in their twenties: their actions are distinctly adolescent.

All this isn't to say that the collection is a bad one. On the contrary, it's very good. In particular, the title story (despite its shortcomings), DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, and ELI, THE FANATIC are excellent. Roth's style is a thing of beauty; there are obvious overtones of both Salinger and Sholem Aleichem, but Roth is nobody's carboncopy. His eye for detail is unerring, and he can plot circles around Salinger. He's a writer of immense promise, but at least until I've read LETTING GO I'll have reservations about him.

RITUAL IN THE DARK, by Colin Wilson. Popular Library, 60¢, I think. c. 275 pages. (This one's on loan, too.)

The reviewers -- those quoted in the blurbs, anyway -- dealt with this as a detective novel which was worthy of consideration as straight literature. I think that's wrong: it's a serious mainstream novel which uses some of the techniques of detective fiction. The core of the story is not the mystery, but its themes of love, sex, and morality. I found the book quite good, though overly long and



too talky. Also, I don't agree with a lot of Wilson's conclusions, but that's an argument with the author, not with the book as a work of art. On its own terms, it's well worth reading.

Wilson's latest book, I hear, is a sequel titled THE SEX DIARY OF GERARD SORME, and I want to read it.

#### HUMOR

HOW TO GET FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER by Will Cuppy. Dell F183, 50¢. 251 pages.

An interesting or just plain ridiculous fact for every day of the year. This one isn't up to Cuppy's THE DECLINE AND FALL OF PRACTICALLY EVERYBODY, but then, what is?

LIFE AMONG THE SAVAGES by Shirley Jackson. Ballantine 337K, 35¢. 143 pages.

This is of the PLEASE DON'T EAT THE DAISIES cute-things-my-kids-did school, but it isn't maudlin and it is funny. It's absolutely croggling to me that the author of THE SUNDIAL, THE LOTTERY, THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE, THE DEMON LOVER, etc. etc. could write such a homey middleclass book, but write it she did, and it's excellent. (She's written another, RAISING DEMONS, which I haven't read yet.)

Incidentally, throughout the book the author refers to her husband as "my husband" -- we never learn his name or much of anything about him. Strange...

WHERE DID YOU GO? OUT. WHAT DID YOU DO? NOTHING. by Robert Paul Smith. W. W. Norton, 1957, \$2.95. 124 pages.

A humorous reminiscence of how things were when the author was a kid, and how kids have gone to hell since. There's some wonderful stuff here, but I think Smith overstates his case: my childhood was twenty years after his, and I did a lot of the things he claims kids have forgotten about since his day.

#### LIT'RY REMINISCENCE, ETC.

CALL IT EXPERIENCE by Erskine Caldwell. Signet Ks344, 35¢. 189 pgs.

Caldwell says in the introduction that he wrote this to set down the things in his life which influenced his writing, but he hasn't done so. There's some material on his life as a kid and teenager, but it's superficial, and once Caldwell gets to the point where he was writing the rest of the book is concerned not with himself, but with his writing: And Then I Wrote... There's some interesting material on how he got started as a writer, and a good section on collecting royalties in Russia, but on the whole the book is superficial as hell.

THE IMPROPER BOHEMIANS by Allen Churchill. Ace K-106, 50¢. 250 pgs.

A fine, anecdotal history of Greenwich Village and the wandering Villagers from the early part of this century to the Depression. It seems to capture the feel of the Village in its heyday admirably well; I enjoyed the book tremendously.

THE PRESS by A. J. Liebling. Ballantine S530, 75¢. 284 pages.

A collection of Liebling's THE WAYWARD PRESS columns from The New Yorker. There's some fine stuff here, but the book should have been more carefully edited: there's too much repetition from one column to another.







ted white & terry carr

## GREY DAY IN MANHATTAN

For Arthur Wainwright II it was the beginning of another of Manhattan's perennial grey days.

"There isn't any real winter in the city," his father had said once. "It just loses color and turns grey."

With the advent of October, the sun had left the sky to leaden clouds, and the bleak towers of the city seemed as dull and intangible as the grey sky which camouflaged them. The sounds of traffic and re-rustling packages carried feebly in the thin air, like unheeded memories.

Arthur Wainwright II's soul was grey too, this morning, as he cut across town on 47th St., from Madison Ave. to Lexington Ave., his brown topcoat and dull homburg settled closely around his ears. He had just been fired--after eight years of work which had been, he told himself, steady, sturdy, and trustworthy, though perhaps not terribly imaginative.

When he reached Lexington he paused, undecided. He felt vaguely out of place here on the morning street-corner. Ten O'Clock New York was a city he had seldom seen: at this time of day he was never outside the office. Delivery trucks honked in their parking places, the men at newsstands rearranged their displays, and even the pedestrians walked more briskly at this hour. This was not his world.

He decided with great firmness that he should not take a cab home. It would be a luxury now. But where was the subway? It was supposed to run under Lexington.



As if to underscore his thoughts, a deep rumbling passed beneath his feet signalling the passage of a train. He stared downward, at the sidewalk on which he was standing, and discovered the strip.

Almost directly beneath his feet, a metal strip perhaps three-quarters of a foot wide ran across the sidewalk, dipped down into the dark gutter, cut across the street, and ascended again to the sidewalk opposite. There it vanished into the side of the building, actually disappearing under it. Arthur stared at it for a few moments, mildly perplexed, and then turned to trace its course in the opposite direction. There was little to see, however: the strip slid enigmatically under the building next to him and was gone.

His gaze returned to the portion of the strip under his feet. It was polished a burnished bronze where feet had walked on it; but against the building and in the gutter it was a dirty greenish-grey, compounded by a patina of spittle, cigarette butts, chewing gum, and the everpresent grey dust which constantly settled out of New York's air upon every exposed surface.

Arthur wrinkled his nose, and lifted his eyebrows in a facial shrug of dismissal. He turned and made his way along Lexington Ave., downtown.

When he reached 46th St., he glanced to his right before crossing. The metal strip was there again.

It seemed to ooze from under the edge of the building, near the corner close to Arthur, and then to sneak across the sidewalk to tumble gratefully into the gutter. There it paused for a moment beneath the accumulated litter to gather strength for its plunge across the morning-trafficked street, and then once more it was at the other side, up across the sidewalk, and safely into hiding again beneath another building.

Arthur contemplated the strip for some time, while fellow-pedestrians sidestepped him or jostled by roughly. It was a strange strip, really, to find here in the middle of a city. It reminded him a little of expansion strips he'd seen on bridges. And yet here it was, worming its way down the city, cutting across side-streets, and burrowing under buildings. A curious phenomenon, and he wondered why he'd never noticed it before. Perhaps it was the dislocation that he felt this morning, with the grey air settling around his ears, that made him see it now for the first time.

When Arthur found the strip again at 45th St., he greeted it as an old friend. It was reassuring to find a constant running through this unfamiliar, piecemeal city, a spot of gleaming color among the cold towers. He smiled with amusement at himself as he crossed the street beside it.

"Cross me, mister?" His mind supplied the thin childlike voice, and he chuckled. Like a dutiful adult, he had helped this innocent strip cross a charging street. It was a morning for impracticalities.

Grand Central Station intervened, and 44th St. ended on the other side of the avenue, leaving Arthur feeling fretful that he might have lost the strip. But at 43rd St., there it was again, cutting quickly



across the street to lose itself once more in the crowds of buildings.

Arthur rounded the corner at 42nd St. expectantly, wondering just how the metal strip would handle so wide and important a cross-town street, but there was no answer to his question.

The strip was not there.

He looked quickly up and down the street, but there was nothing. What could have happened to it? Arthur felt suddenly shaken; the clouds seemed to pull down around him and the air itself turned dark, like a murky underwater in which he stood alone. He scurried into the store on the corner.

It was a drugstore, depressingly tawdry with its racks of pawed and limp paper-covered books, sleezy one-wear nylons, wilting cardboard displays for overpriced cosmetics, and a prescription counter which chalked most of its sales to covertly stocked contraceptives.

A young woman, her dirty blonde hair falling in stray wisps from a cluster of bobby-pins, leaned over the cosmetic counter and eyed him dolefully.

"Kin I help ya?" she inquired in nasal tones.

"Oh...yes," Arthur said, starting from his distraction. "Could you tell me what's underneath this store?"

"Hah?"

"I mean, do you know whether there's a basement, or...?"

"I dunno. I just work here. Why dun ya ask the managa, Mister Frisby?" She pointed a firey red fingernail across the store, toward a stocky man in his mid-fifties and a once-clean white pharmacist's smock.

Arthur obediently trotted over to the older man, and fingering his homburg nervously said, "Pardon me, sir?"

The pharmacist looked up at Arthur. "Yeah?"

"I--well, I just wanted to inquire about something. That is, do you have a basement?"

"Whadaya wanta know?"

"Well, I..." Arthur paused. What did he want to know?

"There ain't nothin' down there but trains," the other man said. "Any damn fool kin see that. There's all the trains from the Grand Central Station, and there's the Lex subway. Whadaya think we got-- a wine cellar?" He guffawed at his witticism, and then stared directly into Arthur's eyes.

Arthur blinked, and hurriedly turned away.

"Thank you," he called as he made a quick exit.



Obviously the metal strip went underground at this point, and it would be no use searching for it with all those trains running around down there.

He paused for a moment, once safely out of the drugstore, and then turned resolutely back uptown, retracing his steps.

Everything was so strange this morning. He even seemed different himself: so determined, so tenacious in his pursuit of the metal strip. But in this sudden grey city that metal strip was a road to something. Everything else seemed...unreal, out of phase from the steely grey reality, and essentially beside the point. Manhattan was a world built on an island, and he could no longer find the island. It was covered, camouflaged, by cement, from one end to the other. A hard, impenetrable disguise, arching over great man-made caverns, a shell from which the life that created it had crawled, long ago. The improbable thought flashed through his mind of an elaborate and empty sea-shell tossed up upon a New England beach where he had once spent a childhood summer.

Men crawled through the construct of Manhattan as ants through the many chambers of a shell, and yet remained unaware of the falsity of this monolithic grey facade. There was only one clue, one key: the metal strip which cleft the shell and penetrated it.

When he reached 43rd St. again, it was there. He'd been half-afraid it wouldn't be, but it was. He hurried on, reasserting contact with the glistening metal strip at each street as he came to it. 45th, 46th, 47th, and then...an area unknown.

He had no idea how far the strange strip would continue like this, and Arthur had dreadful visions of walking, on foot, through Harlem, if he could walk even that far, in his quest. Would he have to go so far? The strip showed no signs of tiring; its energy was as boundless as a young boy's; it drew upon a deeper source of sustenance than men knew. The implacable grey of buildings and pedestrians, faces turned away, flowed past him like chalky water.

At 50th St., he stopped dead. It was gone.

Once again it had betrayed him. It had ducked underground, scorned the brittle facade upon which Arthur stood, perhaps to shoot off in a wide tangent, lost to him forever unless he could again find it by scouring every block in the city. It was gone, and with it the secret of the city.

He shook his head. He could not search the entire island. That was impossible.

"You all right, buddy?" a voice said gruffly at his ear. Arthur jumped, and when he turned he saw a greying policeman who stared disinterestedly at him. For a moment Arthur wondered if the man might be blind--his eyes were so colorless, like a robot's--so lifeless. But that was ridiculous, even in Ten-Thirty New York.

"Why, yes, Officer...I'm fine," Arthur stammered. Then an idea occurred to him. This policeman walked the beat, and that meant that he knew the entire area for blocks around.



"Officer," he asked as the man began to turn away, "could you tell me--what happened to the little metal strip?"

"Metal strip?" the cop asked.

"Yes, you know. It runs right along here, all the way up from 43rd St., I mean, it crossed 49th St., but it's disappeared."

"Huh? Oh, you mean the expansion strip. The whole area's full of them. But they just run from about 43rd to 49th Streets," the officer replied. "That's because they're running all these trains under here for Grand Central. All the tracks and yards are underground, and they just built the streets and buildings right over the tracks. It's like one big bridge, you know? Gotta have those expansion strips because of the heat and the cold. But they only run between 43rd and 49th, and between Lex and Madison Avenues, where there's all the tracks. They don't go nowhere else."

"Oh. I see," Arthur said, slowly.

It wasn't right. He knew that. It wasn't right that his gleaming, burnished metal strip should be just an expansion strip. like hordes of others. That would mean it was just another part of the island's facade.

He slowly turned his back on the policeman and began trudging back the way he'd come.

Suddenly he had a stroke of inspiration.

Somewhere between 49th and 50th Streets the tracks stopped and buildings began to perch upon solid ground again. If he found that point, couldn't he find the strip again, in one of the basements?

These buildings were expensive dwellings, hotels, and offices. Marble and echoing halls, directories with lists of names to throw him off the track. Look, they would say, this list tells you everything that's here, all the names, with capitals in red. His task wouldn't be easy.

Arthur glanced at the base of the building he was passing. Like those at the other buildings in this area, its walls did not come flush with the sidewalk, but ended inches shy of it. The sidewalk continued under the building, and then curved up to meet the overhang of the walls. He studied it closely for a moment, then approached a bored-looking doorman.

"I beg your pardon," Arthur said. "Could you tell me, please, why the bottom of this building looks like that?" He pointed.

The doorman glanced quickly down at the juncture between the building and the sidewalk, and then returned his attention to Arthur.

"I dunno, Mac. What's wrong with it?" He eyed Arthur again, and then moved closer to the closed glass doors.

"Well, it's different. I mean, the bottom of the building doesn't come down just square with the sidewalk," Arthur said timidly.



The doorman pulled open one of the doors into the lobby of the building, and shouted, "Hey, Shep! Come out here a minute!"

Arthur began to edge away, but before he had an opportunity to disappear, a stocky man with grizzled hair and workclothes had joined the doorman. The doorman pointed at the strange joint between the building and sidewalk, said something, and pointed at Arthur. Arthur quailed. Had he noticed something that was supposed to be a secret?

The other man pulled on his ragged moustache, and then spoke. "That's just the shock cushioning. This whole building is built over the railroad tracks, and there's a lot of rubble and shock down there which they don't want in the buildings. So the buildings rest on fancy shock absorbers, see."

The stocky man watched him for a moment, then frowned and started to go back inside.

Arthur said quickly, "Is that how you can tell if a building is built over the tracks?"

"Yeah," the man said without pausing, and then the door shut behind him. Arthur turned and made his way up Lexington once more.

Somewhere in this block the trains stopped running underneath. It would be impossible to follow the metal strip among all those tracks and rushing trains, but once it came out into a relatively calm basement, Arthur might find it.

He scanned the building bottoms as he walked back towards 50th St. Somewhere...

Here! This building sat solidly upon the sidewalk, without pretense. Arthur quickly passed through the revolving doors into a richly brown lobby lit from incandescent chandeliers held high in tawdry one-time splendor.

To his right was a bank of two elevators, their doors both closed by mock-golden portals. The old indicator hands pointed to higher floors. No one stood in the lobby.

Arthur drew in his courage, and pulled himself upright. Then, his breath slowly departing again, he peeked about for a way to descend into the basement. To his left was a door marked "Stairs, Emergencies Only". He opened it and went through.

He was standing on a landing. Inconspicuous behind the upbound stairs he found a dirtier set of steps leading down. He took them.

The basement was not at all as he had imagined it. Instead of being one immense floor, it was a maze of passageways and rooms. As he began tiptoeing through them, he became more and more perplexed, for here there were countless cubbyholes, storage rooms, workrooms, and even one inexplicable room with an old cot and a dresser and mirror on it. He did not dare speculate over that room's use.

A large part of the basement was taken up by machinery. There were the elevator shafts and equipment, and then the elaborate boiler



room, filled with great pipes and throbbing motors, and emitting a great blast of humid heat when he opened the door to it. People weren't supposed to look in here; there was a deep, angry rumbling which was hidden from those above. Arthur shut the door and retreated.

He had covered perhaps a third of the basement in this piecemeal fashion when he heard footsteps approaching him along the corridor.

Arthur was thunderstruck. He had no business here, he knew. None at all. If someone found him here, searching through the dim rooms where they ran everything...

He yanked open the first door at hand, and stepped in.

As he quickly closed the door the darkness fell over him and he realized he hadn't seen a light switch.

He fumbled in his pockets for a pack of matches. Outside the door he could hear two voices mumbling. He would have to wait here until the men moved on, and the dark distressed him.

Quickly, he tore a match loose and struck it. Nothing happened. Almost panicked, he struck it again. It lit, and when he held it aloft, it cast light for a radius of about six inches from his hand.

He looked wildly for a light switch, and then for a bulb hanging from the ceiling with a chain-pull, but in his haste he moved his hand too fast, making the match flicker and nearly die, and then it was burning his fingers and he dropped it. "Oh, God!" he whispered.

When he lit the next match, he held it high over his head and, eyes searching the ceiling, stepped forward into the room.

He had just sighted the light and reached eagerly for the cord hanging from it, when his toe caught on something, and he tripped, falling forward.

As he pitched off his feet, Arthur's hand reached desperately for the light-cord, and grasped it, only to have it break in his hand as he fell.

The light switched blindingly on, and with it he heard a terrible ripping, buzzing, tearing noise.

Dirt and dust choked his nose and mouth, rising in clouds from where he'd fallen, and he coughed. His eyes stung, and he rubbed at them.

He could hear nothing but the sound which filled the room. He turned, squinting, to see what it was.

Coming into the room from every direction were metal strips.

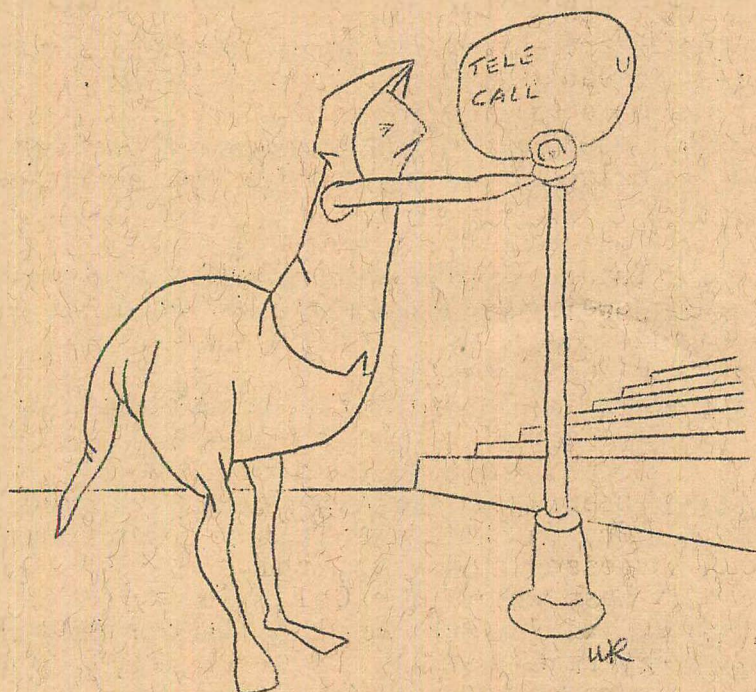
They crawled from beneath every wall...tens, dozens of them. And they joined at the very spot where he had tripped.



Now, with the sound of a hundred grinding saws, highly amplified, like the roar of the world, each of them was slipping apart, opening up, splitting in two down their centers, exposing great interlocking teeth which were releasing their grip on each other in rapid succession while Arthur stared.

"Zippers," Arthur thought to himself with a strange numbness. He stared for an awful moment into the black abyss opening before him, and felt his body shaking. For a moment he thought he was laughing.

It was that grey day in October when the island of Manhattan fell apart.







## letters

BOB TUCKER, Box 478, Heyworth, Illinois

DARK STAR #1 rather stirred me up; not in any antagonistic manner, I assure you, but quite the opposite. You touched on a few subjects which are dear to my heart.

First, Egyptian history and artifacts -- or rather, archeology in general with an especial interest in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and to a lesser degree Palestine. You know my weakness for Gilgamesh and the countries he roamed. But here, now, the necklace purchased for Carol and the four thousand year span between then and now. That paragraph actually revived my sense of wonder for a little while and I wonder if you've thought of doing anything with it? Have you given any thought to a story about the necklace; something other than the trite twists the old Hollywood movies did with such things? Banish all thoughts of the necklace resurrecting an Egyptian princess, or changing Carol into a cold-blooded monster, or calling up mummys, or even sending her back in time to an Egyptian city. Banish all these cruddy thoughts and then see if you can dream up a good story.

After all, as you pointed out, the necklace is now changing color (perhaps due to the warmth of her body) so what happens to it and/or her when the full heat of summer reaches a temperature similar to Egypt four thousand years ago? The next step, possibly, would be to ask "Is it really an Egyptian necklace?" or only a necklace fashioned in the Egyptian manner to allay suspicion. What if it is six, eight or ten thousand years old, made before Egypt was conceived in some sand pile? (I bought it as an Egyptian necklace, and bigod if it turns out to be from some nameless, fatherless prehistoric civilization I'm gonna get my money back. tgc) What if each individual piece is a part of a whole machine, and when it reaches operating temperature someone walks up to her on the street and demands his machine back, or displays a similar motor, or what if the necklace suddenly begins transmitting what seem to be irrational messages?

Take it one more step. The piece waited four thousand years to be found and worn -- but what will future archeologists make of it if it is discovered along with modern jewelry, a wedding ring or a brooch or whatever? What will they say and do and write of it several thousand years hence when it is mixed with other artifacts?

Next, Ken Cheslin's remark wishing that Britain had won the war for Independence. I would see it differently, and again room for another novel. The easterly regions of North America would be a part of the Commonwealth but I suspect the western parts would belong to someone else...Spain, maybe, or Russia. Or, by now, the West would belong to Japan. But regardless of who possessed the West, think of the frightening possibilities in the East where the Colonies would be in a similar position to South Africa. Would "New England" be in the throes of a racial conflict with the very real possibility of a Negro revolution shaping up? If for no other reason than the differences of climate, I don't believe the American Negro would long take what the South African Negro is taking.

Next, your remarks under DOLPHIN. I, for one, will look forward to your doing a novel about fandom, if you do it. Twice in past years I've started one and twice bogged down, to put it aside. My trouble was that I wanted to do a slick magazine piece and my agent has told me



again and again that slick magazines simply aren't interested in fantasy or future or science fiction or anything remotely connected. If I ever do it, it will have to be done as a novel, but the manner in which I want to do it will freeze out the science fiction or adventure market such as Wollheim typifies. But a word of caution: if you do a fandom novel don't, for heaven's sake, use readily identifiable fans. I had already reached this conclusion, for the surest way to bring myself a lawsuit is to follow my habit and put known fans in a novel about fandom. As sure as hell, some SaM or Wetzel will pop up and tag you. And, while they cannot take you for \$75,000 right now, they can take away every dollar you make from the book from now unto eternity.

I have largely abandoned my habit of using fan names because I learned that someone who was a friend when a book is published will not necessarily be a friend ten years later. There is stuff in CHINESE DOLL that could make me sweat today, and you quoted part of it. You and I both know sticky-fingered fans -- how long do you think they will sit idly by when they suddenly discover they are in a book, and you, the author, have a few thousand dollars they could use?

+(I'd like to do something on the necklace, but haven't been able to come up with a decent idea yet. Your suggestions of mysterious machines and transmitters don't seem to go well with the fact that the necklace is made of faience. I'll keep mulling on it, though.

+(Thanks for your warning re use of fans' names, which makes much sense. Actually, I've been steering clear of that anyway, not wanting to get trapped in any in-group-joke habit for my for-sale stuff. Mike Deckinger asked me at a con if I was going to use fans' names in my stories and I told him no, but for the hell of it I named a minor character in my next story Deckinger. (That was HOP-FRIEND.) Ted White has no such objection to using fans' names, and you may be a bit amused to read I, EXECUTIONER in one of this year's ifs. tgc)+

ANTHONY BOUCHER, 2643 Dana St., Berkeley 4, California

I enjoyed DARK \* 1, and I'm glad to see you taking an interest in crime -- which seems to be a trend among s f people. In recent crime mags I've read stories by Judith Merrill, Murray Leinster, Djinn Faine, Arthur Porges...

(And add to your list of fannish murder fiction Mack Reynolds' THE CASE OF THE LITTLE GREEN MEN, hcenix, 1951.)

+(I knew about the Reynolds book, because I was corresponding with the author at the time he wrote it. I was a wee tad then, full of determination matched only by my naiveté, and I'm afraid my professional aspirations must have been rather boorish. Mack told me he'd used me as a character in the book, and when it came out I eagerly snatched it up. A character named Bob Carr turns up at a convention, all right, but he's just been murdered. Not even a walk-on part...

+(Your comments on the differences between the mystery and detective designations, which I had just backwards in the last issue, were appreciated but not printed for lack of space and because I think Bill Donaho covered the same points in his OMPazine last year. tgc)+

