

Archive II:
Back to Live

An e-zine by Arthur D. Hlavaty
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In 2003 I had been doing zines for a quarter of a century, writing 100 genzines, and many many apazines. I had joined up with the Internet, with trufen, fmzfen, alt.polyamory, and rasff, among others. Then I noticed livejournal, where I could do a blog with all the technical stuff done for me and hang out with a lot of the interesting people from the aforementioned sites. I liked it so much that I did a month of posts about favorite fiction works.

Robert A. Heinlein

Stranger in a Strange Land.

The satire hit me first, then the sex, then the Eastern religion. Yes, I know that it's flawed, but the good stuff remains. Heinlein was a Trickster, whose two desires were to make money and make people think. He certainly succeeded with the latter, as far as I am concerned. (And I bought all his books.)

Robert Shea & Robert Anton Wilson

Illuminatus!

I may still have been sane when I finished *Stranger*, so I was ready for more, and in 1975 there appeared a trilogy about sex, dope, science fiction, alternate metaphysics, conspiracy theory, and libertarianism/anarchism. My tastes have changed, but then I figured that if they'd mentioned pro football, they would have had everything.

The book lived up to it: chaotic, experimental, occasionally simplistic, but full of the three things I most read for: people, ideas, and

laughs. As with *Stranger*, I reread it every year, and I still haven't worn it down to the parts that annoy me and "I know that."

AND ALSO Shea went on to write good, solid historical novels with a beginning, a middle, and an end in that order, but also with fascinating characters and small hints of metaphysical and other weirdness. I particularly liked *Shike* and *All Things Are Lights*. Wilson's novels were more like *Illuminatus!*, centered on initiation. *Schrödinger's Cat* was based on quantum theory, among other things. James Joyce, to whom there are many references in Wilson's other fiction, showed up as a character in *Masks of the Illuminati*, which actually had a tight plot structure, along with the Wilsonian stuff.

Joseph Heller

Catch-22

Anybody who's trying to get you killed is your enemy, even if it's your commanding officer. I read the book in 1962, when it first came out in paperback. Within five years, the government was trying to get me killed, and I was ready for it.

It's a hilarious book about the way things work, in the military and elsewhere. You don't have to fly missions if you're crazy, but if you don't want to fly missions, you're sane. Milo buys eggs on Malta for five cents and sells them on Pianosa for two cents, and makes a profit at both ends. Two generals think the High Command is examining their proposals and making rational decisions, but actually ex-PFC Wintergreen in the mailroom throws out one general's suggestions because his prose is too prolix. Lieutenant Scheisskopf inevitably becomes General Scheisskopf because the army is set up to reward Shitheads. (Heller told *The Realist* that he had based Scheisskopf on an actual officer he had known, who wound up reading *Catch-22* and telling Heller, "Loved the book, Joe, and I thought Scheisskopf was the funniest thing in it. I knew a son of a bitch just like that.")

On the other hand, Jean Shepherd hated the book because it glorifies seeing oneself as the Hub of the Universe, war reduced to "Somebody's trying to kill me." He's right, too. "What if everyone felt like that?" "Then I'd be a damn fool to feel any other way." Perhaps another way of

saying that is that it's the ultimate Libertarian book. Jerome Tuccille said that it usually begins with Ayn Rand, but for me it began with Joseph Heller. (I am far more susceptible to satire than to bombast.)

AND ALSO Heller's second book, *Something Happened*, wasn't a Major Work of 20th Century Lit, but it was a powerful experience, shining the same cold light on civilian life and the business world *Catch-22* had shone on the military. "I am afraid of five people, each of whom, in turn, is afraid of five other people." His next book, *Good as Gold*, was chaotic, but had its moments.

"I'm writing a book about Kissinger."

"How are you going to treat him?"

"Fairly."

"I hate him, too."

The next one, *God Knows*, had many fewer good moments. *Picture This* was unreadably bad, and I gave up.

Robert Silverberg

Star of Gypsies

Probably not his best book, but the one I like best. The Silverberg prose and characterization of the 60s/70s, plus the widescreen vision of Majipoor and the other 80s books. Yakoub is a more active character than Silverberg usually writes about, and he dominates the book, wandering through beautiful scenery, plotting and machinating in as baroque a galactic empire as you're likely to see, being both a Gypsy and a spacefarer.

AND ALSO Lots of stuff. As far I am concerned, no one who has written more sf has written better, and no one who has written better has written more. (Those using different metrics could make the same claim for Poul Anderson or Jack Vance.) *Dying Inside* is the best, Portnoy or Herzog with telepathy. The recent ebooks reprint includes an excellent explanation by John Clute of what's so good about it (along with one of the ugliest covers in sf history). Also *Downward to the Earth*, *The Book of Skulls*, *Tower of Glass*. Silverberg may be even better at the shorter lengths. *Beyond the Safe Zone* reprints a lot of his best short work, including "In Entropy's Jaws," "Trips," and "The Science Fiction Hall of Fame."

John Brunner

Stand on Zanzibar

This one came out in 1968 and was reviewed in *The NY Times Book Review*, then almost unheard of for an sf book, perhaps because it was Big and Experimental. Alas, it was a short review, saying only that the book read like a telephone book.

I read it a bit later, thought that the first thirty pages read like a telephone book, persevered anyway, and eventually decided that it was in many ways the best sf book so far (also wondered how much of it the *Times* reviewer had actually gotten through). I still love it. I imagine it's a bit like Thomas Kuhn's self-referential remark that a revolutionary idea will look obvious to the next generation (the political version is "every conservative worships a dead radical"): By now enough sf writers have used similar approaches that it's old hat. It was set in the far-off early 21st Century, and the structure was loosely based on that of John Dos Passos's *USA*, with quotations from books and media of the projected time, "tracking with close-ups" (individual vignettes), and standard narrative, all intermingled, eventually resolving into two major plot threads— one Novel of Ideas, one somewhat pulpy adventure. Brunner's version of the Heinlein Elder, herein called Chad Mulligan, comments wittily and advances the plot. There are a number of excellent set pieces, including Mulligan's successful encounter with the supercomputer (which is considerably smaller than most of its fictional predecessors, but there is only one in the world); a remarkable paragraph of elegant invective (beginning "you pig-fucking yellow cowards" and then getting nasty); and, near the end, a touching birth scene. The book's main issue—population—is one that most of the world is still resolutely avoiding, and there are some good ideas in *SoZ* that haven't come to pass, such as brand-name marijuana and worldwide revulsion at religious organizations that sanctify breeding.

AND ALSO I trusted Brunner enough to persevere through the apparent telephone book because of my high regard for earlier works, such as *The Whole Man*, which for a long time I considered the Best Second-Best Book of any writer. *The Long Result* is a charming look at the advantages of

assuming that the funny-looking aliens might know something. *Timescoop* is hilarious, though its major sf premise does not bear close examination. *The Stone That Never Came Down* is a Good People Cooperating book (a subgenre I tend to overrate—Brunner and Spider Robinson are the masters of it). After *SoZ*, Brunner wrote several more Big Books. *The Jagged Orbit* (a Dumb Sci-Fi Title pretending that the book is a space adventure) has many of *SoZ*'s strengths. *The Sheep Look Up* has some good parts, but the whole point of the Dos Passos Maneuver is the presentation of diversity, and *Sheep* is All Downer, All the Time. Then *The Shockwave Rider*, prescient about viruses and other computer trends, filled with Interesting Good Guys, and pulling off a triumphant climax, only to anti it with a terminal chapter like a shorter version of John Galt's speech rotated 180 degrees.

I hoped that *Stand on Zanzibar* was only the beginning. Perhaps Philip José Farmer would turn "Riders of the Purple Wage" into something even bigger and better. He didn't, nor did anyone else. Most sf books are now of comparable size to *SoZ*, but as Harlan Ellison said Joyce Cary said, "This is not the vision I had." The collapse at the end of his last major book presaged a similar decline in the author's own life, with crushing health problems, the death of his wife, and *Children of Thunder*, a wretched self-parody with a few tantalizing hints that its author had once been John Brunner. He died at a worldcon, a feat I had almost accomplished at the one where he was GoH. His Good Stuff is all out of print, but I see there's a new small press edition of *The Sheep Look Up*, and I hope that's just the beginning of a revival.

William Gaddis

The Recognitions

I graduated from Swarthmore in 1964, and I was still young and full of intellectual stamina, so in the next year or so, I read a number of Large Impressive Novels, most of which I enjoyed. *The Recognitions* was one of them.

It is a book on the subject of forgery and fraud, with a complex plot, rich in characterization and literary reference. (One character describes suburban life as birth, commutation, and death.) It was widely considered to be a Difficult Book (I did

not particularly find it so, though I'm sure I missed things), and there were a number of reviews expressing incomprehension, some literally weighing rather than evaluating. One Jack Green was so offended by the reaction that he began publishing a zine about it, eventually collected in book form as *Fire the Bastards*. He concluded that some of the Philistines were less benighted than others, including a Midwestern journalist named Clifford Simak (same one), who made an honest effort to understand the book and recognized a few of its good points. Literary opinion has finally caught up, and the book is now a Penguin Classic.

AND ALSO One suspects Gaddis of saying, "You think *that* was difficult..." His next book, *JR*, was written entirely in dialogue, with no speaker cues except for a dash at the beginning of each speaker's remarks (added on editorial insistence). I did not make it through (I was no longer as young and full of intellectual stamina), but I am reliably informed that it rewards perseverance. It preceded the TV show *Dallas* in having an amoral tycoon named JR, but this one was 12 years old. *A Frolic of His Own* does for, or perhaps to, the legal world what *JR* had done for business. That one I survived, finding much amusement, from a Japanese car called the Sosumi to more serious delights. It incorporates a lengthy play written by one of its characters. There has been an unkind suggestion that Gaddis dumped his own unpublished play into the book to make some use of all the work he'd put into it, even though it didn't add much. I would hate to think such a thing, but I personally cannot disprove it.

7. Robert Coover

The Public Burning

[As described lastish]

AND ALSO Coover had previously written another remarkable work, *The Universal Baseball Association, J. Henry Waugh, Prop.*, in which a lonely accountant playing a self-designed statistical-simulation baseball game brings a world into being, complete with the problems of trying to be a three-omni deity. There's some brilliant writing and some evidence that certain literary rules should not be broken, even on purpose by trained professionals,

in the collection *Pricksongs and Descants*. The novella *Whatever Happened to Gloomy Gus of the Chicago Bears* returns to Nixon with an alternate one who devoted that terrible dogged persistence to football and sex instead of politics.

Jorge Luis Borges

Ficciones

As a Discordian, I wish to deny any speculations that Jorge Luis Borges was an emissary of the Secret Masters, sent to tantalize the mehums and awaken the latently gnostic with strange teachings, or that he stole his ideas from Powers and eventually was blinded for it just as Prometheus was struck in the liver. He was just a fantasy writer. Yeah, that's it.

"Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" destabilizes all of literary criticism. There is a brief quote from Cervantes, and a brief quote from Menard that contains exactly the same words, but may mean something different. And of course, Don Quixote is precisely the work to invoke when questioning the authority of authorship. "Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is an invented world that makes inroads into ours. We've all seen that done—Middle-Earth, Hogwarts—but this one is a world made of metaphysics. It was not intuitively obvious before Borges that Bishop Berkeley could be an excellent source for speculative fiction. Here's a fun fact: The first person to translate Borges into English was Anthony Boucher, rendering the magnificent "Garden of Forking Paths" for *Ellery Queen's Detective Magazine*. The Babylonian Lottery and the Library of Babel have become part of the language, and then there's Funes, cursed with the perfect memory; the dreamer who is dreamed; the ultimate version of Judas; the multidimensional "Death and the Compass"; and "The Secret Miracle," which I would love even if it didn't have a protagonist whose name resembles mine. Angela Carter memorably remarked that for Borges, the only thing that happens outside the library is knife fights, but on his turf, he is unmatched. Some feel that these stories are pointless; I consider that feeling a worse handicap than not wanting to know anything about Middle-Earth or the monopole magnet mines in the Asteroid Belt.

AND ALSO Maybe 90% of his great fictions are *Ficciones*, but there are a few others that cannot be omitted: "The Aleph," for its central image and for my favorite line in all of Borges—"The genius was not in the art, but in the reasons the art should be considered good"; "The God's Script"; *The Universal History of Iniquity*. He has also done remarkable nonfiction, such as "A New Refutation of Time" and "Avatars of the Tortoise." [2003]

Ishmael Reed

Mumbo Jumbo

"The history of civilization is the history of the warfare of secret societies." Some of that history is uncovered by a Black detective named Papa La Bas (part Voodoo, part French Decadence). Reed thinks he should have gotten an Edgar (detective version of the Hugo) for it, and I agree, but there's more.

A while back, Nancy Lebovitz came up with the concept of *cognitive fiction*, fiction where rational thinking is part of the pleasure. She suggested traditional whodunit detective fiction and novel-of-ideas speculative fiction. I would add a third kind. C.S. Peirce said that there are three kinds of thinking: deduction, induction, and abduction, the third being the finding of alternative explanations. OK, so deductive is whodunits, inductive is sf, and abductive fiction is Secret History, the explanation of what we think we know as actions of the Illuminati, the aliens, or two teenage girls who fall in love with the president until they learn that he kicks his dog. Isaac Asimov's Foundation books, with their alternative explanations, are both inductive and abductive. *Mumbo Jumbo* is all three.

AND ALSO The other Reed book I love is *Flight to Canada*, which reads like alternate history, but doesn't offer a specific point of divergence, and is apparently based on an African world view in which all time is simultaneous. So some of the slaves fleeing the Confederacy do so by airplane, and the book's best set piece is the live telecast of Lincoln's assassination. Reed, like George Carlin, Florence King, and P.J. O'Rourke, has been getting older and crankier until he is often unreadably nasty. I'm trying to avoid that myself.

Connie Willis

Impossible Things

There is an old debate about whether sf is a short-story or novel medium. (Now of course it's becoming a trilogy medium, but let's not think about that.) Connie Willis is a writer whose short fiction I particularly enjoy, and *Impossible Things* is her best collection. My favorite story in the collection is "Even the Queen." Like Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*, it is a work that would be intolerable if done by a man. We'd hear how it's that nasty First SF, treating embodied life as a problem to be solved, that it shows hatred for the natural flows of life, etc. I love it, including its suggestion that once women had solved that particular problem, they would run things better than men had. "Ado" is an amusing and alarming plausible satire of political correctness, an example of the way the best satire is done by those who understand what they're satirizing and even sympathize with much of it. "Time Out" is a really strange love story. Finally, there are the three marvelous stories that bring fictional form to scientific theories, somewhat in the manner of Pamela Zoline's "The Heat-Death of the Universe": "Schwarzschild Radius," "At the Rialto," and "In the Late Cretaceous." The latter was done for one of those big Byron Preiss picture books, and Willis told a group of us that as it went through the production process, someone in the permissions department decided that it was unkind to paleontologists (which is like saying that *Moby-Dick* has a large animal in it) and had to be changed. There was some correspondence about that until editor Robert Silverberg informed them that they could print the story he purchased or an equivalent number of blank pages. They chose the former.

AND ALSO I don't like Willis's novels, which seem to divide into the grim ones and the sort of wacky/screwball humor that makes me feel as if I'm being unpleasantly tickled in a body part we haven't evolved yet. Her first collection, *Fire Watch*, includes the magnificent "All My Darling Daughters." *Miracle* is a collection of Christmas stories with her usual strangeness and charm, the work of a believing Christian whose favorite Christmas stories include Arthur C. Clarke's "The Star." I enjoy the novella *Bellwether*.

John Sladek

The Reproductive System/Mechasm

The British edition was named *The Reproductive System* because it's about a system that reproduces itself; the name was changed to *Mechasm* when Terry Carr reprinted it as an Ace Special because Ace was afraid people would think it was an anatomy text (despite the Dillons cover, which may be my favorite of their work). A mad scientist devises a system of boxes that build other boxes, and it threatens to take over the world. The heroes massed to protect us include a guy who got his job because he put down "MIT" as his school, the box on the form not being large enough to fit "Miami Institute of Technocracy"; a Japanese hired only because the boss's idiot son believes that all Japanese know deadly martial arts such as *origami* and *kabuki*; and a woman who spent her childhood among the challenged of all sorts because the authorities didn't know what else to do with someone that much smarter than everyone else. It looks scary for a while, but the epigraph to the last chapter is Oscar Wilde's "The good end happily, and the bad end unhappily. That is what Fiction means."

I think Sladek is the most underrated writer in sf history. The obviously similar victim of the Too Funny to Be Great meme is Robert Sheckley, but he's always had a hard core of real sf people who appreciated him. Sladek was treated as one of those weird New Wave guys by the sf types and ignored by mainstream modernist and postmodernist critics whose standards he met more than many of their faves. I am happy to say that Michael Dirda agrees with me.

AND ALSO *The Muller-Fokker Effect* is almost as good as *Mechasm*. *Roderick* and *Roderick at Random* tell the story of a young robot. A prostitute who is kind to him in the first book gets a prosthetic heart in the second; it is of course made of gold. He also wrote short stories and parodies of other writers, such as "Broot Force," which looks at some of the problems of trying to apply Asimov's laws; one robot, instructed to minimize human suffering, tries to kill as many people as quickly and painlessly as possible.

Dean Koontz

Midnight

Obviously, everyone has his or her own standards for this sort of thing, but for my money, *Midnight* is the greatest crap novel ever. From the opening animalistic violence to the concluding Chase Scene, this one has it all. Midnight Cove, California, has been taken over by bestial evil emanating from New Wave Microtronics. What distinguishes *Midnight* from any number of other such books is characterization: The bad guy has a fascinating backstory, told in the middle of the book. The hero role is split four ways, among individuated versions of familiar character types, in this case resembling the court cards in the Tarot: The King, Sam Booker, is an older-but-wiser detective type; the Queen, Tessa Lockland, is a Competent Woman; pubescent Chrissie Foster, the Page, is a reader of adventure fiction, thus offering a bit of intertextuality; and Harry Talbot is the Knight, riding not a steed but a wheelchair, accompanied by a guide animal who can be seen as an animal guide, a dog from the nonfictional Canine Companions for Independence.

AND ALSO Koontz was the last writer to move up from Ace Doubles. (Early in his career, when he was having doubts, he was greatly cheered by a conversation with predecessor Robert Silverberg.) Many of these books are unsurprisingly awful. Autographing some, such as *The Crimson Witch*, Koontz writes, "Early Koontz. Collect, Do Not Read." He eventually wrote a remarkable short sf novel called *The Flesh in the Furnace*. He has indicated plans to reprint it, and if he does so, grab it. After the Doubles stage came the Pseudonyms stage: *Dragonfly*, by "K.R. Dwyer," is an intensively recompiled conspiracy tale of great guile, and the "romantic suspense" novel *The Key to Midnight*, originally attributed to the deliberately epicene name of Leigh Nichols and now reprinted under his own name, has its charms. *Lightning* is a time-travel novel presented as ordinary horror/suspense. It worked artistically and financially. *Strangers*, *Watchers*, and *The Bad Place* are comparable to *Midnight*.

These days Koontz makes enough money to be called "eccentric," rather than some more stigmatizing term. The reader's reaction may largely depend on how many of the book's

nonstandard assumptions are shared. *Dark Rivers of the Heart* (which I was always tempted to call Doc Rivers of the Knicks) beats on The Gummint Is Armed and Dangerous to an extent that bored me. I prefer *Sole Survivor* and *By the Light of the Moon*, but mileage will vary.

Thomas Pynchon

The Crying of Lot 49

The central conspiracy book. The Tristero System became a fundamental metaphor of my life, and I still entitle the lettercol of my zine (when I have one) "From Silent Tristero's Empire." Maybe the one book I am most willing to allow to get away with not ending. Also philately, Strip Botticelli, 17th-Century Revenge Tragedy, Funny Character Names, and much much more. A book that Made Me What I Am Today, but read it anyway.

Oedipa Maas, a somewhat unhappily married woman in California (San Narciso) in the 60s, is left some Stuff by a wealthy former lover, Pierce Inverarity. She meets characters with names like Manny DiPresso and Stanley Koteks, has adventures, and encounters evidence in both postal histories and the darker corners of real life of a secret communications system known as the Tristero. The book concludes without an answer.

AND ALSO Pynchon's first novel, *V.*, was likewise fun. My college friends and I started calling ourselves The Whole Sick Crew. *Gravity's Rainbow* is Huge and Difficult, but worth it.

Anthony Burgess

Earthly Powers

The crowning achievement of one of the great literary careers of the 20th Century. A huge novel, narrated by Kenneth Toomey, a venerable gay novelist who isn't really or "really" Somerset Maugham, about his relationship with a cardinal who becomes a pope a bit more like John XXIII. Richly peopled, full of history, a meditation on religion by someone who was in many ways a devout Catholic except for the part about God. There are the usual Burgess word games here, kept under control as usual, and the Burgess verbal tics

(apotropaic, adventitious, a character named Mahalingam), which one welcomes as old friends.

AND ALSO In some ways my favorite Burgess book is the one closest to traditional sf: *The Wanting Seed*. Its image of the alternating Pelagian and Augustinian phases has remained with me. A *Clockwork Orange* is remarkable linguistic inventiveness in the service of dubious philosophy. *The Doctor Is Sick* is an enjoyable romp. In 1968 the Sheridan Square Bookstore of blessed memory defied the gods of copyright by smuggling in quantities of a British Penguin paperback called *Inside Mr. Enderby*. I purchased one and enjoyed it. The following year, a sequel was pasted onto it for American publication, the whole entitled *Enderby*. I enjoyed it less. Two further sequels did not take from me the charming image of the poet in the privy, with his verse and his borborygmus, that made the first book such fun. Burgess explained M/F years after its publication in a nonfiction book called *This Man and Music*. I still don't understand it, but I love it; it's his Structuralist novel. I wish I understood music enough to appreciate *Napoleon Symphony*. His copious nonfiction has a great range of quality. I particularly enjoyed his autobiographical works, *Little Wilson and Big God* and *You've Had Your Time*.

I somehow got the impression that Anthony Burgess had gone into a slump after *Earthly Powers* (he'd been in one before), and I didn't read his later books as they came out. I recently decided to test the hypothesis, and it was wrong. *Any Old Iron* had the kind of excellent characterization and Joycean wordplay I had come to expect, but its central theme did not get to me, perhaps because one major element of it is that famous Matter that I have never been able to take quite seriously because its protagonist shares my name. (My childhood dog was named Merlin.) *The Pianoplayers*, on the other hand, is delightful, a paean to musical and other skills narrated by a retired courtesan with much of her creator's biography (father comes home from WWI to find offspring the only flu survivor in the house). The funniest part is the scene where the father is fired for the musical accompaniment he gives a silent film of the life of Jesus.

Muriel Spark

Loitering with Intent

Narrator Fleur Talbot is working on her first novel when she is hired as the secretary to Sir Quentin Oliver, leader of the Autobiographical Association, an organization that encourages people to write their memoirs. Typing these up, Fleur gets bored and decides to make some of the characters more interesting, which the authors like. Then Sir Quentin decides that Fleur had based her protagonist on him and threatens to sue her. She had created the character before meeting Sir Quentin, but in fact he begins to act more and more like his fictional counterpart. It is like the famous Escher picture of the hands drawing each other, except with more participants.

AND ALSO Spark has written many novels, usually short and not quite explicable. The one everyone knows is *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, a masterpiece of construction. *Memento Mori* is about old people getting phone calls telling them they are about to die. The source of these calls is not revealed. I like the theory that the author done it. *The Comforters*, *The Bachelors*, and *The Girls of Slender Means* are fascinating; *The Driver's Seat* downright creepy. *The Abbess of Crewe* (which sounds like something from a limerick) is Watergate in a convent. It works.

Richard Condon

The Manchurian Candidate

The original. A TV news producer in a Dan Jenkins novel is praised with the words, "This guy practically invented Vietnam, television-wise." Condon practically invented paranoia, fiction-wise. In some ways it wasn't new—a central plot element comes from *President Fu Manchu*—and in some ways it created the world of Pynchon, Wilson, and Stephenson, in which it would seem old. ("Shakespeare's full of clichés.") It is about Tail Gunner Joe McCarthy, with a protagonist who knows he has a list of n communists in his hand, but keeps giving new values for n . (Ms. Coulter would no doubt explain that this was some sort of trick on his part to lull the liberals and other communists into a false sense of security.) It's more. For instance, anybody can meet cute; Bennet

Marco and Eugénie Rose Cheyney meet eloquent. The book is a genuine tragedy, in a way *Death of a Salesman* doesn't even approach. In fact, it's two tragedies—of Raymond Shaw and his mother—with protagonists destroyed by both their strengths and their weaknesses, drawn by hubris to break the rules and wind up killing what they love the most. Tragedy is a frequent element in his fiction.

Louis Menand, who did not love the book, said,

Counterintuitive as it sounds, the secret to making a successful thriller, as Michael Crichton and Tom Clancy have demonstrated, is to slow down the action occasionally with disquisitions on Stuff It Is Interesting to Know—how airplanes are made, how nuclear submarines work, how to build an atomic bomb. Ideally, this information is also topical, food for the national appetite of the day. In *The Manchurian Candidate*, the topic is brainwashing.

AND ALSO *Some Angry Angel* is a bit like Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts*, but has strengths of its own. *Any God Will Do* is a powerful tale of obsession (an emotion Condon is always good at portraying). *Mile High* is in some ways his very best book, a gripping personal tale combined with a secret history even more baroque than that of *The Manchurian Candidate*. *The Vertical Smile* introduces Condon's fertile Nixon obsession: Here it's Duncan "Funky Dunk" Mulligan, a Nixoid rubber freak who appeals to all that is lowest in every American voter. (Later Condon would write *Death of a Politician*, in which an even closer Nixon surrogate is rubbed out after having himself flagellated.) Like *The Manchurian Candidate*, the excellent *Winter Kills* and *Prizzi's Honor* were faithfully translated into movies. *Emperor of America* projected a historical tale 200 years forward. Old Age the Great Caricaturist got his last few books: endless Prizzi sequels and screams of rage at those in power.

Philip K. Dick

The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch

In some ways the standard PKD novel, with the standard elements (50s suburbs and conformity, drugs, shifting realities) and Leo Bulero, an avatar of Dick's best repeating character, the kindly middle-aged middle manager (based on a record-shop owner he worked for). The plot is resolved in a place where one never looks for plot resolution.

AND ALSO The first Dick book I read was *Eye in the Sky*, in a one-novel Ace double in my teens. I suspect it influenced me in ways that were not obvious for months or even years. I read *Time out of Joint* in San Francisco in 1967 when I had begun altering my consciousness chemically as well as literarily, and I had a pretty good idea of how it was influencing me: How much out there is fake? I have a lower opinion of *The Man in the High Castle* than most, perhaps because I was already familiar with the concept of alternate history, and, having met Leo Bulero, I was less impressed by his brother Tagomi (which is of course unfair). I have a memory of liking *The Zap Gun* in the 60s when I read it; maybe it's the drugs. I think *Ubik* is actually his best book, although he failed to resolve it or else he created a field of play from which we can take what we like and leave the rest, I forget which. *Our Friends from Frolix 8* is a piece of shit. *A Maze of Death* is an idiosyncratic favorite, particularly the invented religion, with the Mentufacturer and a personified entropy called the Form Destroyer. *VALIS* is morbidly fascinating. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is overrated, as are all his looks at the Machine vs. the Human; *The Divine Invasion* is underrated. "The Pre-Persons" is loathsome; perhaps the best that can be said of it is what had been said of some of the more vicious anti-semitic rants in *The Cantos*: that an inner demon pushed his hatreds to the point where they could not be taken seriously. Dick's novels typically had a proper ending 3/4 of the way through, followed by the beginning of a new story. (Michael Bishop lovingly pastiched this in *The Secret Ascension*.) Dick's last novel, *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, was his first to have a sympathetic female character at its center. It followed that pattern of Dick's fiction and applied it to the narrative of his life.

Peter Straub

The Blue Rose

The Blue Rose comprises three novels, *Koko*, *Mystery*, and *The Throat*, as well as a submnall of the stories in Straub's two collections, *Houses without Doors* and *Magic Terror*. You don't have to read them all; you don't have to read them in order. Each is self-subsistent; each enriches the others. I did them in the wrong order. I started with *Mystery*, which is the two things you might expect from that title: a mystery and a study of mystery. It is in fact both kinds of mystery: a classic Holmesian novel of ratiocination and a Hammett/Chandler Poisonville tale. It does all of these things well. It reflects in turn upon the earlier *Koko*, a horror story with its roots in Vietnam. (Straub never served there, but the book carries an *imprimatur* from Joe Haldeman.) *The Throat* subsumes both of these, in true mystery fashion supplanting *The Explanation That Satisfied with The Explanation That Was True* (more than once). But wait, there's more: "Blue Rose," "The Juniper Tree," and "Bunny Is Good Bread" offer further insights into how the characters got there. The last is particularly horrific.

AND ALSO *Ghost Story* is rich in horrors (and literary references). *Shadowland* is a chilling tale of initiation. *Mister X* is Straub's first visit to the squamous lands of Lovecraft, and a fascinating one it is, too. "The Buffalo Hunter" is a story about cowboys and baby bottles; I love it. "Mr. Clubb and Mr. Cuff" is a novella of revenge and redemption that enters Hawthorne/Melville territory and belongs there. I believe that two contemporary writers of the fantastic who most repay the kind of critical attention given Joyce and Pound and that lot are Gene Wolfe and Peter Straub. The first part of that statement is faith-based; if I am mistaken, then many people whose opinions I respect are too. I have no doubts about Straub's place.

Hermann Hesse

Magister Ludi/The Glass Bead Game

It's a science fiction book. There is a *novum*, a new thing, in the form of the Game, and we are told much about the impact this has on society, institutions, and individuals. OK, so it's more *Galaxy* than *Astounding*, but it's science fiction.

The game itself, and the sfnal effort to describe the indescribable in telling us about it, are remarkable. Joseph Knecht is a fascinating character. You can see the book as a romantic call to flee from mere abstractions into life itself, or you can see it as a cynical warning to stick with a good abstract gig if you've got one because life itself will kill you. I've looked at it from both sides now, as the song says, and it works either way. One small fun fact: Like John Brunner's *The Whole Man* (another favorite of mine that I read at about the same time), this one started as a frame tale.

AND ALSO Hesse, like soap operas and country music, is unfairly judged by his supposed audience. I first learned of him from Colin Wilson, and one of the few misses in Dwight Macdonald's demolition of Wilson is his bafflement at someone taking that much time over a minor, (then) obscure Swiss writer. The early stuff is romantic; as the title indicates, *Beneath the Wheel* is almost pure "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" *Demian* and *Steppenwolf* have some literary merit to go with the self-dramatization (*Area Teen Is the Only Existentialist in the World*). *Journey to the East* is almost as good as *The Glass Bead Game*.

Pohl & Kornbluth

The Space Merchants

The classic 50s-Galaxy-suburban-social commentary novel, considered by Kingsley Amis, in his groundbreaking *New Maps of Hell*, what sf is for. Mitch Courtenay is, typically enough for the subgenre, an adman. There are all sorts of imagined advertising intrusions, though I don't believe anyone came up with the networks running countershows in the corners of the shows you're willing to watch. The book was ahead of the curve in one respect: The bad guys are businesspersons despoiling the environment. Functional characterization, standard plot, ad fu, no beasts no breasts.

AND ALSO They wrote four more novels together, which seemed like variations on a theme, but they collaborated on excellent short stories, notably "A Gentle Dying," "The Quaker Cannon," and "The World of Myrion Flowers," one of the better treatments of race in 50s sf.

Pohl alone wrote more *Galaxy* fiction, usually well done, such as *Wolfbane* and *Slave Ship*. *Midas World* is an interesting fix-up of "The Midas Plague" and "The Man Who Ate the World." He had a midlife improvement and wrote *Starburst*, *Man Plus*, and *Gateway*, among others. There are many excellent short stories: "The Tunnel under the World" is an even more slashing satire of the ad world than *The Space Merchants*: "You know who buys Ajax Freezers? Commies buy Ajax Freezers! You know who buys Triplecold Freezers? Fairies buy Triplecold Freezers!" "The Schematic Man" is an early look at computer consciousness. "Reunion at the Mile-High" is an amusing tribute to Isaac Asimov, with a fascinating alternate WWII. "Day Million" is a justly famed tour de force.

Kornbluth's novels are dated, but his stories (collected by NESFA in *His Share of Glory*) contain wonders. "MS. Found in a Chinese Fortune Cookie" is great conspiracy stuff, and maybe the first story ever to mention LSD. It inspired my first zine title, *The Diagonal Relationship*. "Mindworm" and "The Altar at Midnight" are idea stories with people in them. "The Little Black Bag" is loved despite its unfashionable thesis that individual human differences are influenced by genetics.

William Goldman

Boys & Girls Together

The first paperback edition, a Bantam, appeared in the summer of 1965, with a cover drawing of a man and woman embracing. It would be tame now, but it inflamed the imagination, probably more the censorious imagination than the horny one. Some referred to the book as *Boys and Boys Together*, which was a reasonable summary of some of its characters, though not of any action scenes. The book appeared so long ago that two assumptions about that aspect were considered reasonable by many: "The book is no good" and "The author must be one." Both were incorrect.

The book, like Joseph Heller's *Something Happened*, was such an intense experience that I have never wanted to reread it, though I love the parts I retain: The intercutting of Aaron Firestone's humiliation with his fantasies of revenge, which we can tell he will never get. A scene leading to the dramatic declaration, "I am a virgin," followed by

a new chapter in which the omniscient, abstracted narrator, speaking directly for the first and only time in the book, begins, "She wasn't, of course." The Christ figure dies, and no one is saved, or even mildly changed. A powerful book.

AND ALSO The lit establishment treated the book as if it could be judged by its cover, and Goldman may never have tried anything that serious again. He had earlier written a book of which all I remember is the title (but it is a memorable one): *Your Turn to Curtsy, My Turn to Bow*. He followed it with a couple of domestic-agony novels I did not enjoy, and a novelization of the movie *No Way to Treat a Lady*, with that marvelous woman-and-cop scene showing how identity is established by dialogue.

The other notable novel Goldman has written is *The Princess Bride*. That is a cult book, a term I use in a value-free sense, as many of my favorite books are cult books. I do not, as it happens, belong to the *Princess Bride* cult, but many highly perceptive readers do. It purports to be the "good parts" of a windy old Graustarkian romance that Goldman read in his formative years, counterpointed against the mundane and sometimes oppressive realities of Goldman's current life. I am not much for Graustarkian romances, but those who appreciate them say that Goldman does it delightfully. It is perhaps the light side of *Boys and Girls Together*, the monstrous disproportion between our dreams and our realities seen as a source of gentle humor, rather than of tragedy.

He has been extremely successful as a screenwriter; in fact, one of the lines now remembered as an essential part of the Watergate story, "Follow the money," was dreamed up by Goldman for the movie of *All the President's Men*. He has written two excellent nonfiction books about the movie biz, *Adventures in the Screen Trade* and *Which Lie Did I Tell?*

Randall Garrett

Too Many Magicians

[Described lastish]

AND ALSO There are about ten stories set in the Angevin Empire, some quite pleasant. Baen has

collected the novel and the stories into an omnibus called *Lord Darcy*. I am told that the impositions of the contemporary one expects from such Baen projects are here limited to curtailment of repetitions of the Richard the Lion-Hearted story. Robert Silverberg put together a collection of *The Best of Randall Garrett*, which is out of print, as are the two volumes of poems, pastiches, and other funny writing published as *Takeoff* and *Takeoff Two*. All three have their moments.

James Joyce

Ulysses

In a greenroom conversation, Lois McMaster Bujold said that she was never able to believe that science fiction was junk for idiots because "My father, the smartest man in the world, read it." My father gave me a gift beyond that: He had Ace Doubles and original Ballantines and *Galaxy* on his shelves, but he also was conversant with great literature in a number of languages. (He taught a course in it at the Bronx High School of Science, where he was in the Math Dept.) He particularly loved James Joyce, and he even tackled *Finnegans Wake*. I remember him buying Campbell and Robinson's *Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* and using interlibrary loan for the other two studies then in print. (This was a while ago.) So when Orson Scott Card and others try to divide World Lit into SF & Other Stuff You Read For Fun vs. James Joyce & Other Stuff THEY Make You Read, I know better.

I love *Ulysses*. It has characters interacting and mythological parallels and pastiches of the entire history of Eng Lit and a bit of lewdness and a lot of writing that makes me say, "Wow!" I first read it between my junior and senior years in high school and of course missed huge gobs of it. (I may not even have deciphered "See you in tea") I still enjoyed lots of it. I have since read much about it, and I did a full reread in the 80s, still of course missing some, and loved it. I am happy to have it as part of my mental furniture.

AND ALSO I have not yet taken a proper shot at *Finnegans Wake*, but I hope to, someday. My junior year I had read *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which I liked better on a rereading when I realized how much the author distanced himself from the

protagonist. *Dubliners* is good insofar as one enjoys a "style of scrupulous meanness."

Anthony Powell

A Dance to the Music of Time

Twelve-volume *roman fleuve* taking a group of British public-school youths from the 20s to the 60s. There is some disagreement over the way the characters encounter one another far more than would be expected by mere probability; I say it's a feature. The series is rich in historical detail and sweep, and particularly in characters. The most notable one is the odious Widmerpool, who appears to have nothing going for him except will to power, and who keeps failing upwards despite the distaste of all around him. The title of one volume, *Books Do Furnish a Room*, is hilarious in context and is the name of a marvelous used bookstore in Durham, NC, which I used to enjoy visiting when I lived there, and to which Kevin sold some of our surplus books on his recent visit. My one complaint about the books is that the pacing is off at the end and the last one, *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, has to do too much catching up.

AND ALSO After the *Dance* was over, Powell told the story again as memoir, in four short volumes later collected as *To Keep the Ball Rolling*. It was quite enjoyable in itself, as well as for Compare & Contrast. The other comparable effort in 20th-Century BritLit was C.P. Snow's *Strangers and Brothers*. A.N. Wilson, who tried to do the same thing but gave up after three excellent books and two further ones, displayed justice without mercy in describing Snow's effort as *A Dance to the Music of Time* narrated by Widmerpool.

Ed McBain

Hail to the Chief

There had been a couple of dozen books in McBain's 87th Precinct series by 1973, when this one was published. Readers were familiar with the continuing cast of police officers, with the City (unnamed, so it isn't *really* New York; George M. Dove mapped it for *The Boys from Grover Avenue*, his book-length study of the series, and found that it resembles Manhattan rotated 90 degrees), and

the general law-and-order approach. Like most of the books, it has a number of intercutting plot lines, but the main one deals with a new character, a teenage gang leader who is bringing the city close to war because his efforts to spy on another gang have been found out and further plans to disguise that have only made things worse. He orders death left and right, but is horrified when he learns that a gang member's girlfriend has had an abortion. He is paranoid, bigoted, and vicious, but he is firmly convinced that he is the one Right Man in a corrupt world, and he endlessly justifies his violent nonsense. His name is Randall M. Nesbit.

In other words, he was Richard Milhouse Nixon, and McBain did a marvelous job of creating the parallels.

AND ALSO The 87th Precinct series is still going, and McBain has frequently done interesting things with it. It began inauspiciously; the climactic scene in the first book, *Cop Hater* (1956), is set up when the bad guy locates a deaf mute by looking her up in the phone book. (In the 50s there were no telephone services for deaf people.) Still, Steve Carella, the central character introduced in that book, has been a solid protagonist, and the would-be victim, later his wife, is charming. *He Who Hesitates* (1965) uses the officers of the 87th as minor background figures in the presentation of a fascinating case history. In *Bread* McBain introduces the remarkable Fat Ollie Weeks: gross, bigoted, malodorous, totally unlikable, and the possessor of a near-perfect Cop Instinct. *Ice* may have been the quintessential 87th Precinct book: intertwined plots, imagery, characterization—everything works. As more women have been added to police forces in consensus reality, the 87th has done likewise, and it's been good for the series. The continuing stories are worth following, as is the as-yet-uncaught serial villain known as the Deaf Man. After a period of depression and crankiness in the 90s, McBain is on a streak: *Money Money Money* sparkled, and *Fat Ollie's Book*, in which the egregious Weeks writes a novel and encounters a civilizing influence, is even better.

Like Chester Himes, McBain is a would-be Serious Mainstream Writer who will be remembered for his police books. His mainstream books were written under his legal name, Evan Hunter. *The Blackboard Jungle* was made into a movie that became famous because "Rock around

the Clock" was played over the opening credits. The book also attained some notoriety because it included a one-paragraph description of a woman with her shirt torn (this was the 50s). Neither book nor movie had much else to recommend it. *The Paper Dragon* is an enjoyable bit of recursive fiction. The one Hunter book I totally enjoyed was the hilarious *Every Little Crook and Nanny*. Sometime in the 70s, a *NY Times* reviewer (John Leonard?) made the startling statement that McBain is a better writer than Hunter. I believe that is now a commonplace.

Fiddlers, by the late Ed McBain, concludes his long and often wondrous 87th Precinct series. It ends with an opening door.

Theodore Sturgeon

More than Human

The idiot lived in a black and gray world, punctuated by the white lightning of hunger and the flickering of fear.

That was not your usual sf opening in 1953. Before Sturgeon, it was pretty much assumed that sf was to be written in the plain style of Asimov and Heinlein, if one could manage it. Sturgeon wrote look-at-me prose, and made the sf audience like it. He was also more people-centered. There is a technological *novum* in this book, but what is important is a new way for people to relate to each other, and fascinatingly strange people doing it. It's 60s-hippie-inspirational sf (though written earlier), which I'm really not saying as if there were something wrong with it. It hasn't worked yet; it may never; but it's still worth doing a bit of dreaming about.

AND ALSO Sturgeon never did write the great sf novel. *More than Human* is a fix-up. *The Dreaming Jewels* has its moments, but I agree with the man who called it *The Drooling Jeans* (Sturgeon himself). *Venus Plus X* alternates two themes—vignettes of 50s sex that are all too relevant today and a unisex utopia. The latter, as James Blish pointed out when the book was published, is the sort of thing that gives utopias a bad name: "And here is the crèche, where the happy agrarian/proletarian children learn the Truth, instead of the lies that used to be taught..." The posthumous *Godbody* is, in large

part, a tour de force including five narrators with five different voices. It fails to end well. Some say someone else wrote the last chapter after Sturgeon died; others, that he wrote the book we got and knew the last chapter wouldn't do.

On the other hand, the perennial complaint that Sturgeon didn't write enough runs into the fact that North Atlantic Press is compiling at least ten large volumes of Sturgeon's shorter stories, many of which are excellent. Sturgeon was one of those writers who excelled in the short lengths. Examples: "The World Well Lost" looks condescending now, but it was scary to many (at the "he must be one" level) when it was published. "The Oracle and the Nail" is a delightful look at the innards of government and where computer sentience might come from. "When You Care, When You Love" was famously supposed to begin a novel, but I'm grateful for what we've got. "And Now the News" (from an idea by Robert Heinlein) is about how wonderful it is to be fully involved in the world. And there's lots more.

James Ellroy

American Tabloid

After a series of four remarkable *noir* books set in LA, Ellroy branched out into viewing national politics as the same sort of mean streets, and it worked. Hypothesizing about Howard Hughes, Joseph Kennedy, and others of the unbelicably dead, Ellroy wove an alarmingly plausible chain of speculations. The characters were fascinating; just as Robert Coover created a Richard Nixon more interesting than the one the Demiurge did, so Ellroy gave us an eloquent, sexless ("He only fucked power") J. Edgar Hoover, a spider at the center of several webs. Hoover's graceful and circumlocutory prose interweaves with choppy, often present-tense and sentence-fragment description and demotic dialogue rich in humor and obscenity (male power relations as who-buggers-whom). The admittedly fictional characters are richly drawn, notably Pete Bondurant (from previous volumes), who winds up in the quintessential JFK-administration role of enabling blacks to register to vote in the South while helping the CIA smuggle in heroin to distribute to the black neighborhoods.

AND ALSO Before *American Tabloid*, Ellroy kept improving with *The Black Dahlia*, *The Big Nowhere*, *L.A. Confidential*, and *White Jazz*. *The Cold Six Thousand* keeps up the good work.

Joseph Wambaugh

The Choirboys

Wambaugh's first two cop novels, written while he was still on the force, were just OK—perhaps a bit too much "the ACLU doesn't understand us." The blurbs for *The Choirboys* said, "Lieutenant Joseph Wambaugh wrote two books. Only ex-Lieutenant Joseph Wambaugh could have written *The Choirboys*." Maybe that explained it. It's a Guys Behaving Badly novel like *Semi-Tough* or Dean Koontz's *Hanging On*, with lots of Guy Humor. (That's OK with me. I inherited at least two senses of humor from my parents, literary/wordplay from my mother and Guy/lower-class from my father.) It's also a book full of pain. Being a cop is a nasty business, and Wambaugh doesn't stint on that or its effects. Still, the overwhelming impression for me was Godawful Funny, as for instance the scene where a couple of cops are on men's-room-peephole duty (a bit of barbarism that was already on its way out in 1975, when the book appeared). They never see anything unlawful, and they have a close-up view of the urinals, so they bet on whether the next guy will be an Anteater or a Helmet. (Nowadays, I suppose they're all, or almost all, Helmets.)

AND ALSO *The Choirboys* began a streak. *The Black Marble*, *The Glitter Dome*, and *The Delta Star* were all comparable. By *The Secret of Harry Bright*, the grim part was predominating, and I quit there. Wambaugh also wrote nonfiction, such as *The Onion Field*, which contains my single favorite Wambaugh line: "I know the captain is behind us. I have felt him there many times." His latest, the nonfiction *Fire Lover*, has some of the old Wambaugh magic.

[2010] He's definitely back. The Hollywood series is much like his old stuff.

Thomas M. Disch

Camp Concentration

A quintessential late-60s book, set in the Fascism to Come (which didn't, though it has started to seem likelier in the last couple of years), with a pacifist poet hero and evil experiments on the good guys. One touch that was Disch's own was the set of resemblances and references to Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus. Character, speculation, and at the end a reversal that at first seems like Richard-Cory-put-a-bullet-through-his-head-ha-ha-gotcha, but turns out to have been subtly prepared for, and a *novum* that sounds evil to some, and delightful to others (I am one of the latter.)

AND ALSO *Echo round His Bones* and *White Fang Goes Dingo* were amusing creations. *The Genocides* was the sort of anti-sf sometimes called the British Disaster Novel, in which something big and mean wipes out most of humanity while the rest squabble pointlessly. (Nancy Lebovitz calls it the Sick Powerlessness Fantasy, as opposed to the Sick Power Fantasy that is American sf at its worst.) Actually, I do not recall whether it satisfies one of the main criteria of the BDN—endless minute description of mundane scenery—and you would have to pay me a whole lot to make me look back and check. 334 is a fix-up of excellent tales set in a late-20C New York that didn't quite come true. More recently, he has written the Supernatural Minnesota series: horror novels with the names of professions: *The Businessman* is hilarious, *The M.D.* is chilling, and *The Priest* is surprisingly forgiving.

Paul Di Filippo

Ciphers

A big conspiracy book including computers, spies, sex, drugs, snakes, Dahomey, ancient plots, wily Orientals, thousands of rock & roll references, and much much more. The author has elucidated, or not, as the case may be, in a NYRSF article.

It is very much playing on the same fields as the other great conspiracy/secret history books, such as *Gravity's Rainbow*, *Illuminatus!*, Matt Ruff's *Sewer, Gas, & Electric*, and Neil Stephenson's *The Cryptonomicon*. William H. Patterson jr. and Andrew Thornton, in *The Martian Named Smith* (a necessary swing of the pendulum after years of stupid negativity about *Stranger in a Strange Land*), say that their book is an *anatomy*, a category defined by Northrop Frye as made up of large

books in which the central plot is subsidiary to digressions, copias, lists, set pieces, parodies, and other sideshows, creating a whole larger than the sum of its parts. All the books in this paragraph, as well as *Ulysses*, *Stand on Zanzibar*, John Barth's *Letters* (and other books of his to a lesser extent), *The Recognitions*, and *The Public Burning* fall into this category.

AND ALSO Di Filippo has written many good shorter works. Three alternate 19th centuries are combined in *The Steampunk Trilogy*: In "Victoria" the eponymous queen is replaced by an ingeniously trained newt; "Hottentots" is a hilarious parody of 19th-century science, if a bit unfair to Louis Agassiz (see Guy Davenport's article on him for a corrective); "Walt and Emily" is an alternate love story. *Ribofunk* is a series of tales from a biologically altered universe (the author is a shaper, not a mech). *Lost Pages* is recursive sf, including "Alice, Alfie, Ted, and the Aliens" and "Campbell's World," about the editor of *Astounding*. *Fractal Paisleys*, *Strange Trades*, and *Babylon Sisters* are less focused, but also full of goodies.

Well, you shoulda known I wouldn't manage to keep it to 31. I left out the ones I'd done reviews of (Brown, Russell, Sheckley) and the One-Hit Wonders (even great ones like Ralph Ellison and Nigel Dennis.) Here's a Dozois-sized Honorable Mentions list.

Brian W. Aldiss, short stories

Chester Anderson, *The Butterfly Kid*

Isaac Asimov, *Foundation*

Louis Auchincloss, stories

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

J.G. Ballard, *The Atrocity Exhibition*

John Barth, *Letters...* and just about everything else

Barrington J. Bayley, *The Pillars of Eternity* and others

Saul Bellow, *Herzog*

Alfred Bester, *Starlight*

James Blish, *Cities in Flight*

Marion Zimmer Bradbury, Darkover especially *The World Wreckers*

Damien Broderick, *Transcension*

Fredric Brown, NESFA collections

Octavia Butler, *Mind of My Mind*

George Chesbro, *Shadow of a Broken Man* et seq.

G.K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*

Arthur C. Clarke, *Childhood's End*
 Samuel R. Delany, *Stars in My Pockets like Grains of Sand* and more
 Nigel Dennis, *Cards of Identity*
 Patrick Dennis, *Auntie Mame*
 E.L. Doctorow, *The Book of Daniel* and *Ragtime*
 Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*
 Diane Duane, *The Wounded Sky*
 John Gregory Dunne, *The Red, White, and Blue*
 Greg Egan, *Permutation City* and much more
 George Alec Effinger, *What Entropy Means to Me*
 Harlan Ellison, stories
 Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
 Philip Jose Farmer, *The Unreasoning Mask*
 Jasper Fforde, *Eyre Affair*
 John M. Ford, *The Scholars of Night*
 Gerald Green, *Faking It*
 Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*
 Joe Haldeman, *None So Blind*
 Mark Harris, The Henry Wiggen novels
 Harry Harrison, *Bill, the Galactic Hero*
 Chester Himes, the Coffin Ed Johnson & Grave Digger Jones books
 Dan Jenkins, *Semi-Tough*
 Nikos Kazantzakis, *The Greek Passion*
 John Kessel, *Good News from Outer Space*
 R.A. Lafferty, *Fourth Mansions*
 Emma Lathen, the John Putnam Thatcher mysteries
 Keith Laumer, *The Long Twilight* and *Night of Delusions*
 Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*
 Fritz Leiber, *The Silver Eggheads*
 C.S. Lewis, Space trilogy
 Brad Linaweaver, *Moon of Ice*
 David Lodge, *Small World*
 Ross Macdonald, *The Chill*
 Ken MacLeod, *The Sky Road*
 Bernard Malamud, *The Natural*
 Barry N. Malzberg, *Herovit's World*
 Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*
 Frank McAuliffe, *The Commissions of Augustus Mandrell*
 James Michener, *Hawaii*
 Wright Morris, *The Huge Season*
 Iris Murdoch, *A Severed Head*
 Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire* and *Lolita*
 Patrick O'Leary, *Door Number Three*
 Andrew J. Offutt, *Evil Is Live Spelled Backwards* and *Holly Would*
 Jack Olsen, *Alphabet Jackson*
 Alexei Panshin, The Anthony Villiers novels

Robert B. Parker, the Spenser novels
 Mario Puzo, *The Godfather*
 Mack Reynolds, *The Earth War*
 Harold Robbins, *The Carpetbaggers*
 Tom Robbins, *Another Roadside Attraction*
 Philip Roth, *The Great American Novel*
 Rudy Rucker, *Software* etc.
 Matt Ruff, *Sewer, Gas & Electric*
 Eric Frank Russell, the NESFA collections
 Tom Sharpe, anything – it's all sick
 Bob Shaw, *The Palace of Eternity*
 Robert Sheckley, the NESFA and Pulphouse collections
 Max Shulman, *Rally 'round the Flag, Boys*
 Clifford Simak, *A Choice of Gods*
 Dan Simmons, *Carrion Comfort*
 Cordwainer Smith, *The Rediscovery of Man*
 S.P. Somtow, *The Aquiliad*
 Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*
 William Tenn, NESFA collection
 William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*
 Michael M. Thomas, *Someone Else's Money*
 Ross Thomas, *The Fools in Town Are on Our Side*
 J.R.R. Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings*
 John Varley, stories
 Gore Vidal, *Washington, DC*
 Kurt Vonnegut, *Breakfast of Champions*
 Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men*
 Evelyn Waugh, lotsa stuff
 Nathanael West, *Miss Lonelyhearts* and *A Cool Million*
 Donald E. Westlake, *Dancing Aztecs* and much more
 Colson Whitehead, *The Intuitionist*
 Charles Williams, *All Hallows' Eve*
 Calder Willingham, *Eternal Fire*
 Angus Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*
 Roger Zelazny, *A Night in the Lonesome October* and I'm sure I left some out

I am still **supergee** on livejournal, although it has greatly lost favor in recent years because of our fear of Russian-owned things, such as President Trump. I post the same items under the same name on Dreamwidth. I invite all to read me on one or both.

Excelsior,

Arthur