



–e*I*48– (Vol. 9 No. 1) February 2010, is published and © 2010 by Earl Kemp. All rights reserved.
It is produced and distributed bi-monthly through <http://efanzines.com> by Bill Burns in an e-edition only.



“Three Hearts,” by Brad Foster

Contents – *eI48* – February 2010

Cover: “Three Hearts,” by Brad Foster

[...Return to sender, address unknown....38 \[eI letter column\]](#), by Earl Kemp

[Love Sucks](#), by Victor J. Banis

[I’m Writing the New Doctor Who](#), by Michael Moorcock

[Porn Noir, 1968—1974](#), by Jay A. Gertzman

[The Black Lensperson](#), by Jon Stopa

[A Faan For All Seasons](#), by Earl Terry Kemp

[Back cover: “Taking off or Landing.”](#) by Ditmar [Martin James Ditmar Jenssen]

THIS ISSUE OF *eI* is for megafans Richard and Pat Lupoff, because they deserve it.

In the strictly science fiction world, it is also in memory of Knox Burger, Ken Krueger, Mark Owings, Robert Parker and Takumi Shibano.

#

As always, everything in this issue of *eI* beneath my byline is part of my in-progress rough-draft memoirs. As such, I would appreciate any corrections, revisions, extensions, anecdotes, photographs, jpegs, or what have you sent to me at earlkemp@citlink.net and thank you in advance for all your help.

Bill Burns is *jefe* around here. If it wasn't for him, nothing would get done. He inspires activity. He deserves some really great rewards. It is a privilege and a pleasure to have him working with me to make *eI* whatever it is.

Other than Bill Burns, Dave Locke, and Robert Lichtman, these are the people who made this issue of *eI* possible: Victor J. Banis, Jay A. Gertzman, Earl Terry Kemp, Michael Moorcock, and Jon Stopa.

ARTWORK: This issue of *eI* features original artwork by Brad Foster and Ditmar, and recycled artwork by William Rotsler.

If you wish to study a granfalloon, just remove the skin of a toy balloon.
--Kurt Vonnegut, *Cat's Cradle*

...Return to sender, address unknown.... 38

The Official *eI* Letters to the Editor Column

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

We get letters. Some parts of some of them are printable. Your letter of comment is most wanted via email to earlkemp@citlink.net or by snail mail to P.O. Box 6642, Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 and thank you.

Also, please note, I observe DNQs and make arbitrary and capricious deletions from these letters in order to remain on topic.

This is the official Letter Column of *eI*, and following are a few quotes from a few of those letters concerning the last issue of *eI*. All this in an effort to get you to write letters of comment to *eI* so you can look for them when they appear here.

Thursday December 10, 2009:

Mike Banks I've been meaning to write to tell you: I enjoyed the hell out of "Heinlein Happens" (and everything at Alexei's Web site). Read it three times. I've been collecting Heinlein stories for some time. I thought about writing a bio in the late 1990s, but got distracted, but I believe I was the first one to dig up his real first wife, Elinor, back then.

Wednesday December 16, 2009:

Mike Your memoirs ought to be interesting--to say the least. I've read a good deal of what you've written about Greenleaf (I submitted a manuscript in the '70s, a bit on the short side). I'm sure you'll have more to say about the period around "Heinlein Happens," before you went West. Not just on Heinlein, but the *Playboy* crowd and Advent,



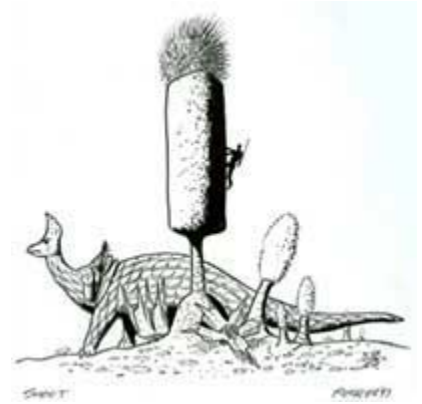
fandom, and so forth.

Sunday December 20, 2009:

Lloyd Penney Once again, I'm not waiting for the pdf version to come along; it's just as easy to save the webpage itself, and loc from there. Here are some comments on *eI47*.

Season's Bleedings to Steve Stiles! Ah, yes, red is such a festive colour. Why am I getting hungry?

Each issue of this fine zine is in memory of someone well known and important to the SF field. It's depressing enough when this happens, but when it is happening continuously, I can't help but feel we are losing our roots, and contemporary SF consumers have no idea where all of this came from, and I doubt they care. All I can do is hope that those roots are recorded and written about for posterity. That's what I care about, I watch little modern SF on television or in movies; I enjoy SF from my personal Golden Age, and I suspect that's what I'll do for the rest of my days. (I've also discussed the number of SF greats dying with Dave Langford, whose *Ansible* contains a list that seems legion at times.)



Congratulations to Terry on this Anthem Series. This is what I'm talking about above, a recording of our books for posterity. These books may not have been the best written, and some may be considered a little cheesy today, but this was yesterday's breakthrough wide-eyed fiction. It may never see further reprints, but it deserves better than cultural obscurity. The same goes for fandom. In my 32 years of fandom, I can see where the level of organization within this anarchy is fading. Fewer travelling jiants, fewer BNFs, less connection between the fan groups of big cities. If it has to go away, we need a recording that showed that it was here, posterity for anyone in the future that might care. I hope they will. Could an imprint like Gnome Press exist today? Perhaps it does; I'm not aware of it.

The bulk of this issue is highlights from Terry's Gnome Press collection. Thank you for this, Terry, there's treasures here I never suspected existed. I didn't know about the issues of *The Science-Fiction World*, and there's books I have heard of, but have never seen before. Such a collection, just another chapter in the series, too. So many of these stories I've read, but so many more I haven't. I see mention of Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone* magazine. I have the whole series except the last issue, which was borrowed by a friend, and never returned.

Thursday December 24, 2009:

Terry Kemp Thank you so much for your kind words regarding my ongoing project. They were by far the nicest comment anyone has sent me. This project has been a labor of love, and is far from done. The next segment, FPCI, will be posted in *eI49* (April). I hope you enjoy it as much.

#

Lloyd Penney Hi, Terry...I would have thought you'd be getting kudos from lots of folks with better memories and collections of this stuff. I can by imagine having even a few of them. I am glad you're saving them, and telling us all about them.

I do not think that science fiction is logically a separate form of fiction. It is simply fiction with an emphasis on technology. The term only has meaning because there is a little society of writers who are for some reason, pleased to think of themselves as separate.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, *The Double Bill Symposium*; 1963-64

Love Sucks

Artwork by Brad Foster

by Victor J. Banis

“Vampires are everywhere,” Jackie Holmes said.

“Yes, that is certainly true. They are the chic shriek these days, aren’t they?” The distinguished man across the restaurant table from Jackie smiled and sipped a bit of wine. At least, Jackie supposed it was wine. The lighting in the restaurant was so dim, it was hard enough just to see his dinner companion, let alone what he was drinking.

The waiter who brought the drinks had smiled in Jackie’s direction when he set them on the table, his lips so red in comparison to his pale complexion that they might have been washed with blood. It was this that had inspired Jackie’s vampire comment.

“The undead.” Vladimir took another sip from his glass. “They fascinate people so. The prospect of immortality, I suppose.”

“But, does anyone really want immortality? At that price, anyway? To live forever as an outcast.”

“I’ve heard vampires described as a higher life-form.”

The waiter returned with their dinners, in time to hear the latter comment. He smiled again, his lips like a slash across his ashen countenance. His eyes glinted even in the restaurant’s dim light.

Jackie’s braised breast of duck in port sauce smelled delicious. Across the table, Vladimir Ezterhazy’s flat iron steak oozed blood on its plate. It looked as if it hadn’t even come near to a flame.

It seemed to suit Vladimir well enough, though. He smiled, knifed off a bit, and lifted it to his mouth, chewing with a contented sigh. “Delicious,” he said.

“And with a little care the cow might even recover,” Jackie said. His duck somehow seemed just slightly less appetizing. He poked at it with his fork, pushing it around on his plate, and took a sip of the excellent Chardonnay that Vladimir had ordered for him. For himself, it had simply been, “my usual.”

Jackie looked around, though it was hard to see much beyond their own candle-lit alcove. Barely candle lit, he amended. He was sure he had never seen a restaurant dining room so dimly lighted. It was lucky for him Vladimir had ordered. He was sure he’d never have been able to read a menu without a flashlight.

“This is an interesting place. Different, certainly. You must come here often.”

“Quite often. You could say it’s my favorite haunt.”

“What is that wine you’re drinking. It’s an odd color.”

“This?” Vladimir looked at the glass as if he’d not seen it before. “It’s local. Their own, in fact. The owner bottles it from his very own vineyard, for a select few customers.”

“I wonder...might I try it? I may want to order some myself. I like unusual vintages.”



“I’m afraid it’s not possible to order it. As I said, they bottle it for just a few regulars. It’s not for sale.”

Nor, apparently, Jackie thought, for tasting either. He did not repeat his request, however.

He’d met Vladimir a week earlier at a party here in San Francisco. There had been an instant attraction, apparently mutual. But, Jackie couldn’t keep himself from wondering. There were so many things about Vladimir that were mysterious. Practically everything, in fact. They’d seen one another every night since they’d met, yet he knew almost nothing more than he had initially, and what little he did know was more puzzling than illuminating.

And, it had been, quite specifically, every *night*, too. Never in the day. “You have a serious antipathy toward daylight, don’t you?” He asked once, half joking, half serious.

“There comes a time in a man’s life when the bright light of day is not so flattering.”

“You’re not all that old, I shouldn’t say.”

“I think it might surprise you to know how old I really am. No, please don’t try to guess, either way it would only embarrass one or the other of us.”

It wasn’t only daylight, either, that Vladimir avoided. Jackie had returned to Vladimir’s apartment with him that first night, to discover that there were no electric lights.

“I’m afraid I left the bill unpaid,” he had explained, lighting candles here and there about the apartment. “I hope you don’t mind. I don’t myself. I confess, I find candlelight so much more romantic.”

Jackie had been there every night since. Everything they had done, and they had done plenty, had been done by candlelight. It had been romantic, of course, but still...sometimes the left hand did want to know what the right hand was doing. He’d even suggested one night that Vladimir come to his apartment, where the electricity worked just fine, but Vladimir had declined.

“Don’t think I’m ungrateful for the invitation, please. I’m afraid I really am a stick in the mud. I’m just more comfortable here, in my own digs. So to speak. I hope you aren’t offended.”

“No, of course not,” Jackie had insisted. But he couldn’t help being just a bit curious.

Nevertheless, he’d continued to climb the stairs each night to Vladimir’s apartment—buried away as it was in an area of warehouses and commercial buildings. Without, as near as Jackie could tell, any neighbors, at least not in the late night hours, when the businesses nearby were all closed and silent.

Vladimir was very handsome, and a skilled lover. Still, lying in bed, Vladimir in his arms, it almost seemed to Jackie as if they had somehow floated away from the known universe, surfaced in some other world of their own. One far removed from the Castro streets Jackie prowled during the day.

“You never go to any of the usual places,” he’d commented. “In the Castro, I mean.”

“My interests are rather limited.”

“To?”

“Well, handsome young men, of course.” Said with a warm smile.

“By candlelight, obviously.”

“It’s flattering to you, my pet, and kind to me. And, no, I’m just not fond of going out.”

Indeed, this, their dinner date at “a most interesting little place I know, run by some friends of mine,” was their first

get together anywhere outside of Vladimir's "digs" in that industrial neighborhood.

"Is something wrong with your dinner?"

Jackie took another poke at the duck breast. He fancied that it shuddered in response. He wouldn't have been surprised if it had scurried off the plate. It wasn't just that it was undercooked. Really, so far as he could tell in the faint light, it looked very little like breast of duck; but he couldn't say, or wouldn't have wanted to say, what it did look like.

"No, it's fine. I think maybe a bit rare for my tastes."

"But let me send it back." He lifted a hand to signal the waiter.

"No," Jackie said quickly. "Let it be. I think after all I'm just not very hungry."

"For duck breast?" A slyly raised eyebrow. "Or, for anything?"

Jackie actually had to think about that for a moment. "To be honest, I've had a long day. If you won't take offense, I think I'll call it a night."

"No offense. But, I won't let you off the hook tomorrow night."

"What's so special about tomorrow night?"

"You're not aware? You must not pay much attention to your calendar."

"It's...oh, wait. You mean the moon?"

"Exactly. Tomorrow night is the full moon. I want to share it with you."

"Uh, Vlad, I admit, the full moon is very pretty, but...."

"What could be more romantic?"

The waiter came to remove their plates. He seemed not at all surprised to see Jackie's dinner uneaten. His only response was another of those ghastly smiles.

"I think our waiter is smitten," Vladimir said. "You seem to have gotten into his veins."

"There's an expression I don't think I've heard before."

"That? It's an old world figure of speech."

"That's another thing I don't know about you. Where do you come from, anyway?"

"I've been practically everywhere. I'm a gadfly. My family is from Romania, however. What used to be called Transylvania. Why? Does it matter?"

"No. Just curiosity. Natural curiosity, I should say. And I still don't know why you think it's so important that we share the new moon together tomorrow night."

"Can we just leave it as a whim?"

Still, Jackie hesitated.

“It’s that talk of vampires, isn’t it?” Vladimir said with a teasing smile. “And knowing I’m from Transylvania. Will it make things easier for you if I give you my word I’m not a vampire. I promise I won’t bite into your throat and suck your blood.” He made the sign of a cross over his chest. “There, now will you promise to come tomorrow night?”

Put like that, Jackie had to admit his fears sounded altogether foolish. He grinned a little shamefacedly across the table. “Yes, of course. I’m being silly. What time would you like me?”

#

As usual, the apartment was dark when he arrived the following evening. Darker in fact than usual. On this occasion, not even the customary candles served to penetrate the Stygian gloom.

Vladimir greeted him inside the door with a hug and bent his mouth to Jackie’s throat. When Jackie stiffened, Vladimir laughed. “Just teasing, my sweet,” he said. “I told you, I’m not a vampire. As if you really believed in them.”

“Yes, well. There are more things, Horatio....” He surrendered his flight jacket and Vladimir hung it in the closet. “You know, I think you may have overdone the *Dark Shadows* setting. I can barely see my hand in front of my face.”

“In another couple of moments, the moon will have risen over those buildings across the way,” Vladimir said, pointing in the direction of the window. “Everything will be perfectly clear then.”

“Devoutly to be wished,” Jackie said. “In the meantime, if you’ll excuse me, I have need of the euphemism.”

The bathroom window was thickly frosted but a streetlamp from outside provided enough watery light to let Jackie attend to business, if a bit carefully. As he washed his hands, he glanced automatically at the place over the sink where normally one would expect to see a mirror; but he had already noted, on previous visits, that there was no glass there. Or, for that matter, anywhere in the apartment. Not a single mirror, anywhere. Another of Vladimir’s odd fetishes, he’d just supposed on his previous visits.

Now, he frowned into the darkness, his earlier reservations crowding back in upon him. It was not use pretending to himself. Vladimir was definitely strange, beyond eccentric.

All of a sudden, Jackie wished he hadn’t come. Vladimir was pleasant enough company, Jackie had enjoyed their little interludes together, but Vladimir wasn’t the sort of man who invited a meaningful relationship. In any case, Jackie was due back in Los Angeles in a couple of days, so this little affair had pretty much run its course. Jackie decided that he’d go back into the living room and make his regrets, and find some excuse for deciding he’d changed his mind. He squared his shoulders and, opening the bathroom door, stepped back into the living room.

Vladimir had certainly been right about one thing. The moonlight that flooded through the window made the room nearly as light as day. It showed the clothes strewn about on the floor as if the man wearing them had literally ripped them off in a mad frenzy.

He was waiting by the window, fully bathed in the silvery light. The moon lent his shaggy coat the luster of pewter. His long snout, resting on the windowsill in what might almost have been a meditative pose, rose and sniffed noisily at the air as Jackie appeared.

Turning from the window, he padded across the room, tongue lolling, his huge paws making little whispering sounds on the hardwood floor. Feral eyes gleamed at Jackie with a wintry fire.

I still believe that peace and plenty and happiness can be worked out some way. I am a fool.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Jailbird*

I'm Writing the New *Doctor Who**

by Michael Moorcock

This past year or two I've been revisiting what you might call my cultural roots. Because I was distracted almost daily by treatment for a wounded foot and unable to work much, I began re-reading the PG Wodehouse, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and Sexton Blake stories I enjoyed as a kid. From these I went on to movie and TV favourites, some of which proved to be pretty dreadful. Among them were *Hopalong Cassidy*, *The Prisoner* – and [Doctor Who](#).



Michael Moorcock

I have to admit that, while I watched most of his episodes as the Doctor, I disliked William Hartnell, the first occupant of the Tardis, who barked with the authority of his sergeant from *The Army Game*. Patrick Troughton, the second Doctor, brought an absent-minded quirkiness to the character which stayed with him at his best. Jon Pertwee took him back to his more authoritarian mode and then came the glory years of Tom Baker – reasonable complexity, wit and an aptitude for ad libbing which was wonderful to watch but must have been murder for the other actors.

Every Saturday was organised around the Doctor's adventures in Time and Space, with plenty of hiding behind available furniture (you couldn't actually get behind our sofa) and there was even a visit to White City to meet Tom Baker and the Daleks in real life. I remained unimpressed by *2001, A Space Odyssey*, but I'd go to considerable lengths not to miss an episode of *The Brain of Morbius*.

I think I like the character mostly because he remains largely unrationalised and ambiguous. Russell T Davies understood this and made it the Doctor's most attractive quality. All lasting characters, from Richard III on, have at least a duality which makes them appeal to new generations. Like Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot, and Becky Sharp, the Doctor is infinitely interpretable.

About the only real science fiction I've written since the 1960s was *The Dancers at the End of Time* stories, all done in the '70s. They're comedies set in the distant future with a nod to the fin-de-siècle of Oscar Wilde, HG Wells, Ernest Dowson, and *The Yellow Book*. Both comedy and SF depend on compression and exaggeration and are very often entertaining when combined. There's a long tradition of it: even Wodehouse wrote a funny, futuristic story early in his career ("*The Swoop! or How Clarence Saved England*"). In the SF magazines, writers such as Henry Kuttner, Robert Sheckley, and L Sprague de Camp were best loved for their comedy. Douglas Adams, of course, hit the jackpot in the 1970s with *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Davies and his writers realised this when the Doctor made his comeback some five years ago with Christopher Eccleston and then David Tennant in the role. Both actors have a talent for comedy and melodrama. The plots became increasingly complex, playing with ideas of time and space, and I became an addict again.

Eventually, my well-springs replenished and my foot on the way to healing, *Doctor Who* became almost the only escapism I allowed myself. Though I have written little SF recently, I have begun a series of autobiographical novellas and novels in which I examine my taste for romance and fantasy: my characters are thinly disguised versions of writers and others associated with *New Worlds* magazine in the days when we tried to find new approaches to literary novels by using the methods and ideas of science fiction.

This trilogy of books, featuring a version of myself in a somewhat re-invented London, is intended to examine the appeal of fantastic adventure stories of the kind inhabited by my most popular character, the albino sorcerer-prince Elric of Melniboné. Elric is my Sherlock Holmes – a protagonist better remembered than most of my others, but in my case not the burden Conan Doyle felt Holmes to be. I'm very grateful that Elric continues to keep me in my old age, together with other stories I've written set in my "multiverse", a term I invented (or reinvented, since I wasn't originally aware that William James coined it to describe the many worlds our minds inhabit) in 1962, for a near-infinite system of parallel worlds in which subtly different versions of our own universe exist simultaneously. The term caught on well enough to be used for a variety of purposes in popular fiction and theoretical physics and was incorporated into the lexicon of *Doctor Who*. There's nothing unusual in this. Terry Pratchett said generic fiction is

a big pot from which one takes a bit and adds a bit. I'm flattered that some of my ingredients became staples, but it's always a pleasure to use what was once a private vocabulary in another medium.

When I was first offered the chance to write an original *Doctor Who* novel I hesitated. I felt I'd had enough fun and should settle down to the autobiographical stuff I'd mapped out for the next year or two. Then I realised that not only might I enjoy writing an original adventure, I could also take a look at what a character who has become part of our national folklore has come to mean. I could do, in fact, what SF does best for an intelligent, knowing audience. So I told my agent to go ahead and draw up the contract.

Now the vast potential of what I can write is beginning to dawn on me. Far from thinking in terms of fun I've become a little scared. All time and space is open to me. I have to mix comedy and melodrama while telling an epic adventure story featuring a complex protagonist capable of ranging across the entire multiverse. I'm increasingly overawed as I consider what I must live up to. Hardcore fans are already questioning my qualifications. I can only hope I'm equal to the job.



Matt Smith/Doctor Who

- - -

*Reprinted from *The Guardian* with the permission of Michael Moorcock.

A step backward, after making a wrong turn, is a step in the right direction.
--Kurt Vonnegut, *Player Piano*

Porno Noir, 1968-1974

by Jay A. Gertzman

When William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* was published in 1959, the author was accused of being a criminal who had managed to write an evil book. Did he mean by "naked lunch" puke itself? The TLS review of the book prompted an unprecedented number of letters, remarkable considering the journal's long history. When episodes appeared a few years earlier in a University of Chicago periodical, professional moralists howled and the Board of Trustees threatened to cut off the magazine's funding. (Luckily, the President was Robert M. Hutchins, who said a university's objective was to defend unpopular expression). *Time* attacked the author as a killer (he "shot his wife between the eyes"), an ex-con, and a narcotics addict. The book was banned in some communities, and some readers said one might as well read the chapters in any order, as the author suggested, in view of the dog's breakfast of obscenity and indecency he had concocted. The mad scientist Dr. Benway, himself an addict, engineers horribly addicted people; the political parties are similarly addicted to murder, torture, and degradation. Gouging out a victim's eye to "fuck [one's victim] in the brain," voluntary subjection to pain to increase orgasm, pedophilia, child murder, cannibalism, and autoerotic asphyxiation are the most shocking examples. The authorities, represented by Benway, watch as those who have mastered technology, both Divisionists or Liquifactionalists, use it to manipulate the "natural" body.



Jay A. Gertzman

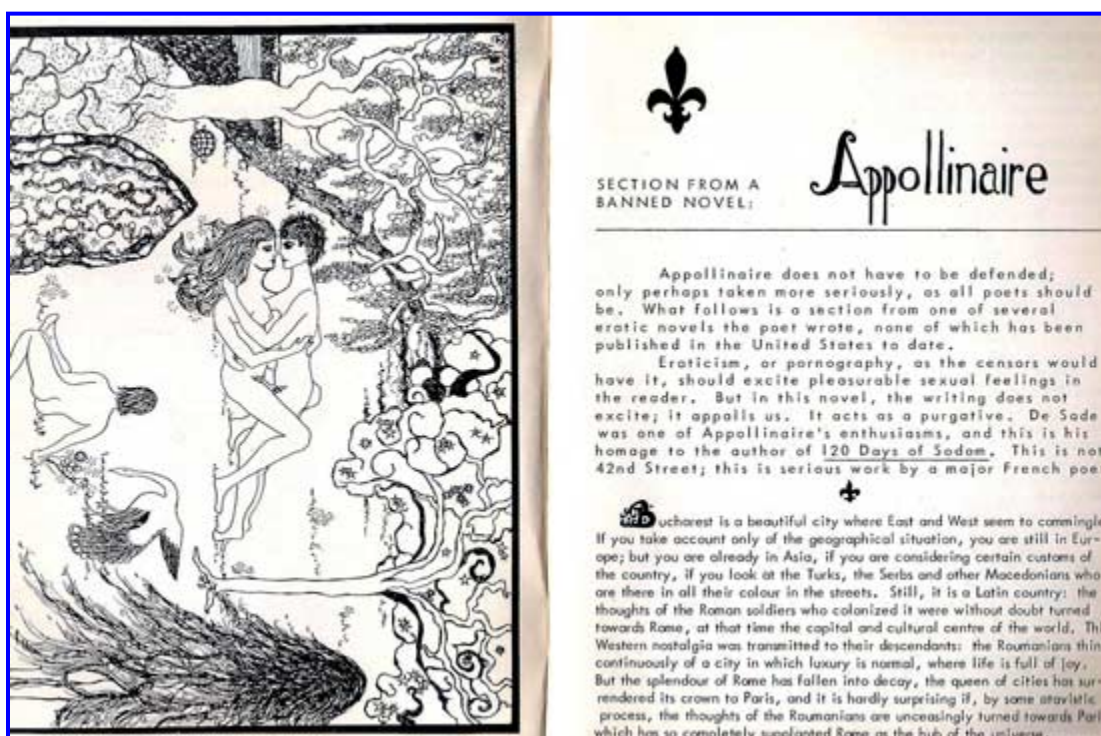
Burroughs reveals the obsessions and addictions that result from the exercise of authority—scientific, political, or academic. *Naked Lunch* was meant to be obscene, because how else could the writer let people know what really is on the end of "that long newspaper spoon" that mediates the real motives of the state to the people? If deportations become extraordinary renditions, interrogation becomes torture, and protecting Americans and Britons from terrorism (never say insurgency) means surges and drone bombers (and thus more terrorism), where is the moral energy to temper the appetites of citizens, to prevent them from "going to the dark side," as Big Time Cheney ("fuck you") has done? When investment bankers like Lloyd Blankfein say they are doing God's work, and Alan Greenspan explains people losing their homes by saying there was a flaw in his ideology, they're depositing us in hell so they can escape it. They are the idols of the blubbering Palins, Becks, Brownbacks, and Robertsons. Burroughs' and the powerful erotic novelist Michael Perkins' time was dominated by the smell of napalm in the morning, a Red Scare, fear of the Bomb, and of "juvenile" delinquency. Meanwhile slum areas like the East Village festered and grew. In that atmosphere, what is to prevent young people from indulging their own addictions, including those the Divine Marquis argued were at the heart of the sex instinct? Erotic asphyxiation, anyone?

As Burroughs' *Exterminator* puts it, "wouldn't you?" I realize the Porno Noir novels I discuss are not primarily social comment. They are explorations of the nature of human sexuality and of consequences of exorcizing the taboos inhibiting it. However, they have a specific grounding in the predatory global wars of their (and our) time.

Addiction to drugs or to power are two faces of the "algebra of need" that the culture of Interzone or Freeland offers. Both cause endless circling around a hellish fixed point. There is an illusion of order, but in reality life is orderly only in its absurdity. Both country's names suggest the US, where "the President is an addict." Burroughs thought he could see the stress of hopeless addiction withdrawal in the eyes and facial features of Richard Nixon. Kissinger must have sensed it when, rotting in the waters of Watergate, Nixon asked his Secretary of State to get down on his knees so they could pray together. Wouldn't you?

Burroughs describes both the violent, sadomasochistic sex and the perversions of social engineering as kinds of Grand Guignol slapstick. "Rock and Roll adolescent hoodlums ... throw acid in Mona Lisa's face, ... throw paralytics out of iron lungs, ... administer injections with bicycle pumps." Benway's assistant is a baboon, "the only woman I really cared about." A food addiction forces an inmate to shit on a plate, eat it, and say, "Mmmm, that's my rich substance." It's a funhouse, a madhouse, as any addict knows when, reduced to helpless laughter, he recognizes who he is.

Michael Perkins' *Evil Companions* (1968), about which I wrote in Earl Kemp's [eI46, October 2009](#), was clearly indebted to *Naked Lunch*. Another source would be *The Debauched Hospodar*, attributed to Apollinaire. A selection from that novel appeared in a magazine Perkins edited while he was writing *Evil Companions*, *Down Here*, issued from the Tompkins Square bookshop in 1966. Apollinaire leaves unexplored no form of sexuality involving pain, mutilation, and approximation to death. Eventually, the protagonist is executed by being beaten to death by military officers. *Evil Companions'* plot is replete with episodes of sexual mutilation and humiliation, rape, torture, necrophilia, castration, and finally the implantation of sex organs. Perkins does not use the concept of addiction, although many characters are addicted, not only to junk but to their feral appetites and urges. The narrator is on an explorative search, not unlike Burroughs's Willie Lee, but Willie is an agent an addict; Perkins' nameless "I" is self-directed and radically free to explore and experience "the hour of the wolf." The key similarity is the shadowy presence of the state and corporate power, revealed in the wars in Vietnam and in the East Village ghetto, and in the crimes perpetrated on the body by the criminal technocrats and their physician-mutilators. Perkins builds a case against the way normal citizens use money, the media, and underclass outsiders to satisfy furtively needs they are afraid to openly express. His narrator kills two of these "marks." The East Village's filthy streets, begging children, alcoholic and indigent working class men, office workers seeking fixes, and underage prostitutes exemplify the average person's disinterest in the social injustices surrounding them.



This magazine was issued from the Tompkins Square bookshop in 1966. It was edited by Michael Perkins and contains poems by him, Roy Bremser, and Jack Micheline, among others. The drawing is by Erin Matson. The "banned novel" excerpted by Apollinaire [sic] is *The Debauched Hospodar*.

Perkins, like Burroughs, uses pornography to make revealing statements about political realities, as did de Sade and Bataille. The resonance comes from the shocking connection between the force of erotic passion and an addictive need for suppressing awareness of the suffering of other people so that one's own lust for security and status is satisfied. Both *Evil Companions'* "squares" and its mad heroine, her nameless lover, and their companions behave like lethal, vicious life forms.

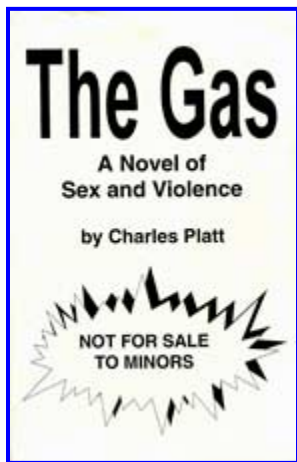
Due to a 1966 court decision, *Naked Lunch*, first published by the Olympia Press in 1959, was allowed circulation. The Grove Press had first published it in America in 1962. But the hard-core carnival of sadomasochist sex and scatology Burroughs depicts could not have been published by other writers, including Perkins, before the Redrup Decision (1967) made it clear that any sexually explicit text could be defended as having literary, political, artistic, or social value. If not foisted upon minors or deceptively advertised, it could be openly distributed. The window for this kind of book existed for about five years. *Miller v California* (1973) established a local standard for obscenity that

made such literature liable to prosecution in the state in which it was sold.

In the early 1970s, a series of paperbacks explored the dark side of human sexuality, most published by the New York Olympia Press and its subsidiary imprint Ophelia. They include Charles Platt's *The Power and the Pain* and *The Gas* (prosecuted when republished in the UK in 1980), Benjamin Grimm's *Nightland Spell*, and James Wittemore's *Shanghai Circus*. These works may have been indebted to *Naked Lunch* and *Evil Companions*. Platt's and Grimm's work are clearly fuck books, "D[irty] B[ook]s" in the parlance of the Olympia editors, with extensive passages of explicit heterosexual intercourse, heavy on S/M. There would have been a loyal prurient readership for them.

But they are more than that. They integrate into their stories such grotesqueness as operations grafting male sex organs onto females and vice versa, the creation of androids programmed for sexual orgies and marathons, aphrodisiac gases, lust-murder, and all sorts of sadomasochistic torture. As in Perkins and Burroughs, there is an instigator of these nightmares, and it is a scientist financed by corporate or state agency, sinister authoritarian powers able to use technology to destroy human dignity and freedom. The result is control of even the most basic and private human rights.

There are other books, especially science fiction, where despair, and the violence and pain underlying it, are described in shuddering detail. The books I discuss, some written by future authors of science fiction, deal in naturalistic style and reportorial detail with the present.



Plain Brown wrapper of Charles Platt's, *The Gas* (Pt Townsend, WA: Loompanics, 1995)

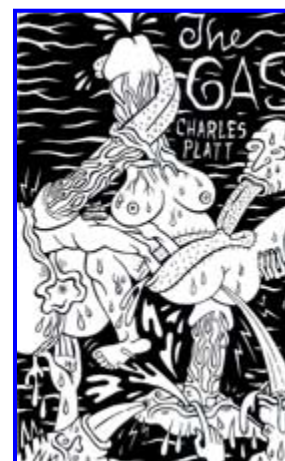
Charles Platt stated that he first wrote *The Gas* for Brian Kirby at Essex House. Platt knew Michael Perkins' work. Michael has told me that he met Platt when they were both living on St Mark's Place. "*The Gas* was . . . a chance to vent my rage against my British heritage, my girlfriend, my former university, my landlady, my mother, and life in general." But when he had finally finished, Kirby himself was finished, fired by his boss, Milton Luros. When the manuscript was reviewed by another of Luros' editors of erotica, he found it "disgusting, abhorrent, repulsive, and unpublishable." Girodias issued it as an Ophelia Press book in 1970. About 1980, *Gas* was published in England, with a similar-themed novel, Samuel Delany's *The Tides of Lust* (1973, later known as *Equinox*), where a sea captain with a body almost as bloated and priapic as the protagonist of *Hogg* runs amok with a slave girl similar except in gender to the under-aged narrator of that novel. Wouldn't you? Three years after its publication, acknowledging the variety of the novel's sexual darkness—"incest, rape, masturbation, urolagnia, sodomy, necrophilia" Michael Perkins called it "Delany's finest erotic novel and the most powerful of all his books."

The gas in question has been accidentally released from a government laboratory. Its intent is to incapacitate an enemy by increasing hormonal levels, releasing all inhibitions, and paralyzing the reason. How inciting "animal behavior, territorial, dominant, and brutal" is supposed to make British military's job easier is not clear. Perhaps it's a comment on the oxymoron "military intelligence." All southern Britain is a madhouse. The tea-and-crumpet brigade of middleaged ladies fellate their boarders. Policemen feel the need to strip search nubile females. A man shows his sister his bedroom, straps her to the bed, and uses an oscillating machine to "complete the circuit" between he and she. Priests (High Church, yet) with mouthfuls of nails and hammers look for people to crucify. A Cambridge rowing team, eight to a skull, divides into two groups to bugger each other. Boys of thirteen screw ten-year-old girls on swings. *The Gas* is most similar to *Naked Lunch* in what Platt characterizes as its "slapstick sadomasochism."

The closing scenes, however, are horror porn at its most devastating. The protagonist is about to be sacrificed by a group of teenyboppers who have already dispatched and dismembered a score of males at the altar of a Gothic cathedral. "Male genitals were littered around, mixed with an assortment of arms and legs. A severed head stood atop the pulpit." Narrowly escaping with his wife and pre-teen son and daughter, he drives to Scotland, where the gas has not penetrated. The family congratulates each other for having escaped; the car fills with contentment and love. One of the girls asks Daddy if she can perform oral sex on him. For speaking out of turn, he grabs her nipples, and kisses her on the mouth. His wife scolds her son for not saying please after exclaiming, "I really want to fuck you." He plans to discipline his daughter further, by forcing her to perform oral sex on him. His wife might object. He imagines tying her naked to a tree and applying nettles to her body. That's who he is. Aggressive possession and

blood lust need not be incited by chemical weapons. The return to uninhibited aggression, once enjoyed, cannot be reversed. It seems to be integral to the uninhibited happy family, thanks to British military intelligence. The irony is heavy handed and grim.

Platt's *The Power and the Pain* (1971) puts a similarly aggressive young adult male through an exquisitely painful initiation. Quinn is a rock and roll celeb accustomed to grabbing any female who turns him on, which is most women under fifty, be they princesses or hotel maids. One morning, fighting his way through the struggles and underclothes of the woman who had come to make up his room, he discovers a surgically transplanted penis above her vagina. He and his crew trace the perpetrator through a Feldstein, an East Village underwear wholesaler, to a Dr. Steinberg of Geneva, where he runs an upscale resort. Steinberg is a physiologist who has perfected the means of prolonging sexual pleasure in his clients. The head of the whole operation is one Hugh Howards, who has lured Quinn with the bait of the penis-and-vagina woman. He hates the rock star, who to him represents moral and cultural degradation, and the false use of the concept of freedom to sanction licentiousness. He is clearly based on the now-disgraced head of Citizens for Decent Literature and author of *Perversion for Profit*, Charles Keating, to whom the novel is facetiously dedicated. Perhaps the allusion to Howard Hughes reflects his connections to people in high positions. Howards' facility is a pleasure palace for "many leading American figures in industry and the Armed Forces." Not to mention heads of states and oil executives.



Front cover of *The Gas*

But in its lower levels, scientists experiment with the sex organs and brains of those ill and mentally ill people who have fallen through the cracks in the social system. Women victims have nipple-less breasts, or transparent skin so the inner organs can be seen rippling and throbbing, or public hair covering the entire torso, or multiple breasts the size of balloons. One man has been given a snake-like tongue to explore deep within a women's uterus, or two sets of genitals. To these monstrosities, Quinn, similarly to the protagonist in *Gas*, is delivered. He escapes from this scene, which Platt writes "buggers (!) the imagination," much sobered regarding his own sexual aggression.

The Power and the Pain, like *The Gas*, is largely a hard-core fuck book. The sadomasochistic experimental operations on the human sex organs make a point about how enslavement to technology enslave people to sensations for which, like other addicts, they are dependent on the agent with god-like expertise (a Benway) to provide. The victim does not any longer possess even his own body, which is violated by a distant authority as violently as a rapist could. That state of being may or may not bother a victim, deep in the algebra of need. Platt, Grimm, or other Olympia Press DB writers do not have Burroughs' or Perkins' poetic force and revealingly fragmented narrative gifts. But, beyond the hard-core sell, they know what they are doing, and doing with whatever integrity that the Olympia format allows them.

Nightland Spell (1969) by "Benjamin Grimm" (Spencer Lambert) is written in the 2nd person. "You" is the reader (addressed as such by the narrator) as well as the protagonist. The book takes place in a hallucinatory landscape in which a castle is situated. In it, and in the woods surrounding it, "you now feel utterly submerged in a sea of strangeness, the darkest, least-conscious fantasies of your secret mind multiplying and blossoming before you in real flesh and blood to an extent unconceived of even by your imagination." The "you" is sometimes male and sometimes female. Both not only participate in orgies but are pursued by hostile policemen for reasons not made clear by the cops. Sex with underage boys and girls, group sex, and flagellation are followed by hallucinatory shame and self-loathing. At the end the narrator reveals himself to be a sinister authority who has chosen to torment and shame the protagonist, and to drive him/her mad. It's a motiveless malignity, fired by the desire "to turn the universe against you—i.e., the reader," and to do so by shaming us with one of the most basic of our survival instincts, warped into a form of enslavement. Michael Perkins, following Bataille, writes of the "terror at the heart of sexuality," which, if fought through, can function as an initiation. But in *Nightland Spell*, the unnamed narrator uses it to paralyze the will.



Benjamin Grimm, *Nightland Spell* (NY: Olympia, 1969.) Front cover.

A final Olympia Press porno noir novel is Robert Moore's *Madam Sex* (1971), about one brother searching for the

other in the Southwest and finding a copper mining area where he meets a beautiful, wealthy woman who becomes his wife. She has given an ex-Nazi doctor who is an expert in transplants a laboratory in which to practice. She has done this to keep her impotent brother supplied with penises, which only last one year or so due to the problems with the transplanted organs' atrophy. The organs have been removed from various victims, which include the protagonist's brother, who are then lobotomized and made to work naked in the family mine. The wife arranges this because she loves her brother, love being equated with incest. She not only arranges the castration of the protagonist; she humiliates him with beatings, sexual slavery, forced transvestitism, and sexual teasing. His arousal can have absolutely no outlet. Both she and her brother think of him as socially and intellectually inferior, and as an object worth only exploitation. This motif of class snobbery is similarly used in *The Power and the Pain*, and, in a more political context, in *Evil Companions* and *Hogg*. With the aid of the Nazi doctor's assistant, and Moore's pulp-inspired plotting, our sissified hero is able to get his equipment back. He shoots his wife, and is able, just before she dies, to tell her he has regained his manhood by taking back his pecker from her beloved but now-mutilated brother. Wouldn't you?

Edward Whittemore was a reclusive American writer, graduate of Yale and of the Marine Corps, and of the CIA. His *Quinn's Shanghai Circus* (1974) contains one sequence which is as horrific and suggestive than anything in either Grimm's or Platt's books. It's the 1930s. A circus owner contemplates his career, his love of his business which has forced him to neglect his wife, and the imminent destruction of his city at the hands of the invading Japanese army. A circus suggests a release from reality in which the spectators trust the impresario to take them safely through a world where inhibitions are temporarily relaxed. Spectators encounter slapstick clowns, death-defying high wire acts, dangerous animals, and sideshow grotesqueries. Wittemore writes of the night when the curtain is rung down for good. The owner has concocted an anarchistic horror show where the spectators will be taken over the edge of pretended danger and then dropped in the lap of obscene death. A high diver's cord has been tampered with and he splits his skull open. A wirewalker is impaled upon his balance pole. A trapeze artist clamps down on her mouthpiece and it expands, severing her jaw from her head. Then animals are released from their cages, not having been fed in weeks. A tiger leaps into the crowd and "chews its way through. . . a head hanging from its maw. A horse bites into an abscessed leg, baboons root in bodies for "tasty cancers," and a jackal "performs the sexual act in a paralyzed victim's mouth." Satiated beasts finally go to sleep, the clothing of dead spectators hanging from their haunches, their bed a debris consisting of human tissue, earrings, shoes, and gold teeth. Performing dogs continue to dance on their hind legs and trained horses prance around the ring. The circus owner has found a way of breaking down the barrier between spectator and the drama itself. Illusion and spectatorship are replaced by the reality of "nature, red in tooth and claw."

Reading these books can be like watching a horror movie: you have to avert your eyes from the full impact of the scene. They are too alienating to be considered literature, and would not have been published at all except by a subversive paperback outfit specializing in literate pornography. Burroughs probably wanted his readers to be puzzled and outraged by *Naked Lunch*. Ironically, it was its literary and social value, as attested to by Alan Ginsberg and Norman Mailer, that got the book commodified, that is, published legally. But there was one novel featuring horrific abuse and sexual violence that was actually unpublishable; the only piece of hard-core pornography that Maurice Girodias rejected. The helplessness of its victims of constant erotic violence—a hallmark of the books already discussed—was too pervasive. This was Samuel Delany's *Hogg* (written 1968-69; first published in 1995).

The narrator is a 12- or 13-year-old boy known only as "cocksucker." That apparently is what he does, compulsively; it is how he services people and why they befriend him. He is, otherwise, a kind of blank slate: unwashed, unschooled, passively observant. Yet he is capable of poetic prose such as "the sun was still close enough to the horizon to drip gold over the sound" and "Long shreds of morning pulled from the bruised sky." The fact that he is as loyal as he is subservient goes unnoticed, except by the eponymous Hogg. He stinks, as you might expect. His gut is tremendous, he is fascinated by his own feces and belly gas, he enjoys scaring and revolting people in public places, especially diners and bars, and his sexual satisfaction comes from rape and mayhem. "I'm shit, cocksucker, won't ever be nothin' but shit, I'm shit all through and proud to be shit. You like that, don't you boy?" He drives a truck, and, with his gang of sociopaths who like him enjoy sexual humiliation and sadism, he is a rapist for hire. The boy and he hit it off immediately, because their almost constant desire for oral sex complements each other perfectly.

Hogg of course is afraid of the police and the criminal justice system. Significantly, however, he is in part protected, and given a substantial income, by a shadowy but politically connected figure named Mr. Jonas. Jonas lives in a mansion (the house chimes play "Three Blind Mice") and sends Hogg and his crew on jobs for clients who want a woman whom they think has wronged them to suffer pure terror, rape, mutilation, and injury to the point of death.

The descriptions of the attacks on these victims are lengthy, scatological, and horrifyingly explicit. It was probably these passages that revolted Girodias. Wouldn't they you?

Passages most relevant to the work of Burroughs, Perkins, and the Olympia Press writers are as follows: cutting a hole in a woman's skin in which to insert a penis; slicing a stomach open to excite further blood lust; gang rape of a wheelchair bound 14 year old before her mother; the insertion of objects into sex organs as a form of torture; inciting for further stimulation the cries and groans of a woman being asphyxiated and going in shock. "If I was a bitch. . . I'd put a bullet in everything I even *suspected* has a pecker swingin' between its legs. . . Men *hate* bitches, man. All men *hate* all bitches."

Hogg himself is the incarnation in one very intelligent human of the refinement of sexual domination for the sake of orgasmic release. Animals, however predatory, do not have the imagination to indulge in such behavior. Any rationale for the sadism interferes with and blunts the sensation. "I got a real sense of duty. You got to have one when you do the kind of work I do." Hogg is a later-day de Sade. Thus, he cold-bloodedly kills a man who shows up to watch the torture he contracted for. The man insisted on explaining his reasons for ordering it. To Hogg, justification implies doubt, conscience, and shows enslavement to values and justice. Such a person cannot be trusted. Only people such as Hogg and his crew are pure in perpetrating rape, bloodletting, domination, and humiliation for its own sake. The boy who services them with oral sex while they are raping is especially valuable to Hogg. Hogg's brother, nicknamed Dirty Pip, is a coprophiliac who bet his pals he could eat dead rats, Tampax, and soiled toilet paper. Pip, a carnival Geek, is much loved by his brother.



Front cover of
Delany's *Hogg*
(Normal, FL: FC2,
1996).

His loyalty to accomplices is shown in all its perverse purity in what he does for Denny, a teenage member of his crew who exposes himself and compulsively masturbates in public. Denny, crazed by an infection caused by his clumsy insertion of a decorative metallic object into his penis, goes on a killing spree that claims the life of over 30 people, including a baby whose throat he slits. On each crime scene he scrawls in blood the words "All right." Hogg had used this phrase after Denny's initial killings, of a biker and a bar owner, because his actions had made him laugh. Hogg is successful in engineering Denny's escape. They are, horribly enough, doppelgangers. Hogg is his god. This equation is part of the vision of Delany's novel, which disdains at every opportunity concepts of law, justice, pity, or sense of community, as propagated by our and other nations which negate those values then (Vietnam; Chicago) and now (Iraq; New Orleans; the mortgage crisis). Wouldn't you?

Hogg offends all five of a civil person's senses with every episode, although not one's belief in loyalty and pursuit of something true about human behavior. The truth is repugnant, but it is part of the exploration of erotic consciousness, if one wants to acknowledge what that consciousness is, without swallowing what's on the end of the newspaper and the priestly spoon. Hogg says:

"Every faggot or panty-sucker, or whip jockey, or SM freak, or baby-fucker, or even a motherfucker like me . . . we know, man, that there is what we want, what should be, and there is what is: and don't none of them got anything to do with each other unless—

"The Bartender was shaking his head.

"—unless we make it," Hogg went on anyway. "And the only way you can get from one to the other is to know that, don't you see?"

Hogg is dedicated, not surprisingly, to Michael Perkins. They knew each other well in the East Village. Delany's Preface to the 1992 Rhinoceros edition of *Evil Companions* recounts the events surrounding that novel's completion and publication in 1968, including Perkins' wife's suicide earlier that year and a stab wound Perkins suffered while breaking up an attack by a Puerto Rican youth gang. The Preface is also a fine appreciation of the novel, just as Perkins' essays on Delaney's "The Motion of Light on Water" (in *The Good Parts*) and "The Tides of Lust" (in *The Secret Record*) are sympathetic treatments of those books. Delany was well situated to recognize the effects of East Village poverty and the hostility of the police to the avant-guard artistic community there. He was aware of the attitudes toward Vietnam on the part of that community. And his review makes provocative comments on how

Perkins works these local and international contexts into the fabric of his novel.

Hogg was completed shortly after *Evil Companions* was published, and was influenced by it. Both protagonists commit murder and rape without guilt; both have violent pasts; both seek sadomasochistic experiences. Both narrators are nameless, and both are under the spell of sex- and power-obsessed gurus of a sort, whom they love. Both novels' plots hinge on criminals serving an elite. In *Evil Companions* it is physicians and interns carrying out implantation of sexual organs and experimentation with human hormones. In *Hogg* it is the rich and powerful Mr. Jonas and his use of Hogg's crew to inflict submission through terror. Both, therefore, contain instances of the power of the capitalist state. It is reinforced by use of a technology that makes freedom of speech and privacy obsolete. Finally, both writers describe characters and incidents so ugly, and behavior so violent, destructive, and predatory, that the novels cannot be commodified or designated as art by critics and academics. Of both it is true that "pornography is the most political form of fiction," an observation by J.G. Ballard used as an epigraph for the Introduction to the 1995 edition of *Hogg*.

NOTE: I would like to thank Chris Eckhoff, Brooklyn, NY, world-class paperback bookseller, for pointing out to me the existence of many of the novels I have described. I also want to thank Laura Bailey, New York City, for allowing me access to her unparalleled pop culture collection.

What is flirtatiousness but an argument that life must go on and on and on?
--Kurt Vonnegut, *Jailbird*

The Black Lensperson

by Jon Stopa

I was sitting in a dark corner booth of the Boskone Bar, soaking my sorrows in booze, when a gaggle of loud, drunken Galactic Lensmen shoved their way up to the bar, displacing a bunch of locals whom sensibly had moved out of their way.



Jon Stopa

The glittery, multicolored light from their lenses lit up their end of the bar, like Christmas tree lights. My black obsidian-like lens seemed so inferior I shoved it up my sleeve in embarrassment.

Disgusted, I turned away, not without noticing that there was a female among them. Was she one of the many whores of our planet who played with the Galactic Lensman for money? I felt my face heat with rage. Had she no pride?

Unconsciously, I brushed off some of the dirt that covered my black leathers, at the same time pulling back in the booth, not wanting to draw attention to myself. Why did these clods come to our planet to play around with our women? For some reason they did not allow women into their Corp so they had to release their masculine impulses on planets like mine, shanghaiing our men for troops, then drinking and whoring before attacking peaceable people who did not want to be part of their war-mad empire.

Their sexual appetites had led to my conception, for that I should be thankful; yet I remembered the tribulations I endured as a half-breed while growing up. Among other things, I took advantage of hair fashions that tended to conceal my large, lumpy skull. It had to be big to hold my half-breed Lensman mind. . . What is the advantage of having a big head so that it can hold a powerful mind, if it makes you look like a freak? The powerful, stocky body needed to hold up that skull eventually let me beat up the bullies.

My eye strayed to the derriere of the woman at the bar, suddenly realizing that she had the stocky Lensman's physique. A *female* Galactic Lensman? I had heard that there were some of them in the galaxy, but I hadn't believed the rumors! Then I saw her huge head.

Too late I slammed up my strongest mental shield. The woman had become aware of me. She swung away from the bar and stared at me, her eyes burning sparks in her huge skull.

"Who are you?" her mental demand smashed down my feeble efforts.

"Kurt Kinnison," I answered, unable to resist.

She laughed. "So you are one of those black Lenspersons! What a pussy!" She nudged the real Lensman sitting next to her. He turned and joined her laughter, which circled the bar.

I burned with embarrassment. I knew that I wasn't a real Lensman. I only had the feeble training given by one of Those Who Speak For Boskone, and I couldn't stand up to these bullies. I had always somehow looked up to Galactic Lensmen. It was disillusioning to see how crude and mean spirited they were in the flesh. It wasn't my fault that some unknown Lensman had impregnated my mother, or that she was a whore. I flinched at the thought, but I knew they were laughing at my situation.

The drunken Lensmen eventually left singing bawdy songs, leaving a ringing silence. I became aware that the female Lensman had remained. She had seemed to have softened. Quietly she walked over to me. "You call yourself Kinnison," she said, "By what right do you use that name?"

"My mother said that was my father's name," I stammered. I could feel her searching my mind. Nothing I could do

stopped her. She was too powerful.

She stared at me. “You have the correct DNA. The old man was rumored to have a wild streak—I would never have dared search his mind to check on his wild oats.”

“Why are you asking me this?”

The female Lensman sighed. “You must understand where I’m coming from. The Arisians bioengineered me, my three sisters and my brother Kim, to have minds powerful enough to destroy the evil Boskonian Empire. Further, we’ll live for many centuries to safeguard the twin galaxies. That’s okay—but that leaves us Children of the Lens with four women and only one man—a brother, at that. The Arisians probably had no idea what a problem that is for humans—I don’t hold that against them—they did the best they could.”

I sucked in air as I realized that she had slid into my booth, and laid a hand onto my thigh. She leaned over and blew air gently into my ear. I was trembling, aware that she seemed really horny. “What do you want?” I asked.

She laughed. “Your pristine body. I’ve checked your DNA. You’ll probably live nearly as long as we do. I’ll have you all to myself!”

“But don’t I have any say in this?”

“None! Of course, I’ll have to keep you secret from the other guys, sweetie.” She laughed again, sliding her tongue into my ear.

Belief is nearly the whole of the Universe, whether based on truth or not.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Bluebeard*

Richard (and Pat) Lupoff:

A Faan for All Seasons

by Earl Terry Kemp

It begins.

“And the third member, Mr. Dick Lupoff, the Burroughs editor of Canaveral Press. He is a man to envy because at the present time he has been reading all of the unpublished Burroughs material which was hidden away for so long.”



Dick and Pat Lupoff:
Costumed Crusaders

The year is 1963. The place, Washington, DC. Allan Howard has just been introduced by George Scithers, who at that moment was presiding over the Discon (the 1963 World Science Fiction Convention held in Washington, DC). Howard is the moderator on a panel given that Monday morning over Labor Day weekend. The topic has been loosely described by Scithers as “along the lines of Jungles and Edgar Rice Burroughs.”

L. Sprague de Camp is first up, “the distinguished science fiction author who in addition to being an authority on Conan, also knows more than a little bit about Edgar Rice Burroughs and his work.”

(Applause.)

Next, Sam Moskowitz, “the science fiction historian whose article on Burroughs in his book, *Explorers of the Infinite*, has been recognized as probably being THE article which established Burroughs in his proper perspective in fantastic literature.”

(Applause.)

But this panel is not about Moskowitz or de Camp, it is all Lupoff. Lupoff at his finest moment.

He has just won a Hugo at this convention for his then defunct fanzine, *Xero*. And justly so. Read *The Best of XERO*, by Pat and Dick Lupoff, published by Tachyon Publications in 2004.

Don't be misled or wander off now. This isn't about *Xero*. It's about *The Proceedings: Discon 1963*, edited by Dick Eney, Advent:Publishers, 1965.

This whole bit is a plug for all the great Advent publications. Many are still available directly from the publisher. Many are, even at this late date, still first editions. Write to George Price, Advent:Publishers, Inc., POB A3228, Chicago, IL 60690

Buy his books now!

If you've read this far, you want to read these books. They contain the keys to the kingdom.

They contain, answers to questions not asked.

They contain mysteries unanswered.

So far...

Discon is not available. This is an elusive gem. Find it. Good luck. You'll need it.

#

Now, to the issue at hand...the mystery.

“Now, I think we will start off with Dick Lupoff. You claimed to have read more Burroughs in a shorter time than anyone else. This should give you, if nothing else, a unique perspective on Burroughs, who has endured more than fifty years. What chance do you think any of his stuff has of becoming classic material?” asks Allan Howard.



Discon: The Panel

“Well,” says Dick, “I think that depends on your definition of classic. I would say, from the viewpoint of permanent endurance, his earliest works are past fifty years now and they are still readable—not as antiques, not as curiosities, but as straight stories that can be read with validity and enjoyment by a 1963 reader. Take Mickey Spillane, for instance, who is one of the few people who outsold Burroughs. I think his stuff may be eminently readable when it first comes out, but I don’t know whether it will pass the test of time; I suspect it will not. When it comes to passing the test of time I will say this about Burroughs; with something like sixty books published to date (it will be closer to seventy-five before we are through), probably at least a quarter to a third of his works will survive for an indefinite period.”



Dick defending his position against all.

Did you see it?

The beginning of this minor mystery.

What happened to Canaveral Press? What happened to all those Burroughs books they never published? Why hadn't they?

There's more.

The stage shifts to Moskowitz and de Camp. They didn't know one of those esoteric moments in specialty publishing had just arrived. They didn't see it.

De Camp scoffs at Burroughs and his lack of realism in his Mars stories. Dick defends the Master. “Burroughs' Mars is not a technologically advancing civilization. These are people living in ruins and using leftovers.”

Not willing to give in, de Camp defends his untenable position at a short length.

Then Howard asks Dick the leading question, opening the door to the mystery. “How is he selling?”

“Pretty well. He might be selling better. Frankly, I think the one thing that most hurt the eleven Canaveral books that appeared last year was the fact that their jackets were not designed for selling. Somebody took one of these hero drawings and slapped it down on a piece of paper and said, “Now, where is there a hole big enough to stick a title

into? And where is there another one big enough to stick a byline into?" And it moved a pretty large volume of books, even looking the way they did. The ones that are coming out this fall all have jackets which were designed by Bhub Stewart of fandom and they range from promising commercial up to some which are really very, very good. They make the books look better...and the first thing you have got to do in a bookstore is to tap the prospective reader passing by and make him look at your book."

Here it comes. Watch closely.

"We were, for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the subject, leading up to a talk about the unpublished Burroughs manuscripts," says Howard.

This is where it gets interesting, or more so.

"Yes," says Dick, "in the winter of 1962-63, Mr. Cyril Ralph Rothmund, who was the general manager of ERB, Inc. for many years, retired. The new manager of ERB, Inc. is the Burroughs family, and in taking inventory they discovered, lo and behold, that this crazy rumor about unpublished Burroughs manuscripts was true. There are hundreds of thousands of words that weren't published; they range from outlines of unwritten stories through new articles, several novelettes, and several novels. I have read about three or four of his short stories, four or five novelettes, and two unpublished novels; I'll give you a quick run-down on some of these."

If you're not dripping right now with glowing green envy, stop reading. Or maybe a younger generation needs a different comparison. Just imagine, I know you can, that you are the reader of a similar pile of unpublished Heinlein manuscripts.

Now stop drooling, you're interrupting the mystery.

"There is a Carson of Venus novelette which will be published in the spring. There is a Pellucidar novelette which will be in *Amazing Stories* for November and which, when combined with three preceding Pellucidar novelettes, makes a novel—seventh of the series—which we will have on the stands, also in November.

"There is a story called 'Night of Terror' which is one of the weirdest stories I have ever read. It is as if the man took a precise situation, with cliché patterns in it and cliché development of the plot and said, in the fashion of classical dance, 'I will perform this and see how well I can do it.' It is a story of how a couple of young lovers walking in the woods on a balmy spring day are caught in a thunderstorm and they seek refuge in an apparently deserted house and find a Mysterious Corpse and there are Faces staring in the windows, and it is the whole works—the old haunted-house-with-a-lightening-storm type of story. I was reminiscing; it's probably about the 238th time somebody's written that, but maybe that represents critical mass.

"There are two novel manuscripts, one very important. The other is *Tarzan and the Madman*. It is pretty good Tarzan, though frankly it is the twenty-sixth one I have read and they get a little bit wearing. The other, *I Am a Barbarian*, completely astonished me. It is a slightly novelized biography of the Emperor Caligula. Frankly, I kept looking back at the title page to see if it really said "E.R. Burroughs" on the front, because it is nothing like Burroughs. Burroughs did everything else in his pulp manner, having his own homely style—which is not in itself objectionable; it's a certain kind of writing, which he did quite well. This novel has a very slick style; so slick that when compared to it *Tarzan and the Lion Man*, which as I say is slicker than the rest, just slips back among the other stories."

I bet you think you're so smart, you've already guessed which was the important manuscript.

Do you know why? Do you have any questions?

"A very strange thing," Dick continues, "about this book (it is about a 300-page novel, I guess; standard size), about seventy per cent of the way through the book I completed the reading of one chapter and started the next and all through the thing I kept saying to the shade of ERB: 'Come on, Edgar! Keep it up, boy! Keep it up! Don't slip back into that pulpy stuff!' I don't remember the chapter number. (That may make an interesting puzzle for readers when this book comes out in the spring.)* The first page of one of the chapters, about midway or a little further through the book, suddenly slips back into the old pulp style, and I just sat there saying to myself, 'Oh well, it was a good try

at it...' But after one page like this then it goes back to the slick style and the whole rest of the book is slick again."

Dick can write advertising copy anytime for me. Goshowow, now I really want to read this book.

Are you keeping track of the questions?

(1) How many manuscripts?

Next is the terrible one that nobody on the panel, or in the audience asked.

(2) How certain is the provenance of the manuscripts? In particular, if *I Am a Barbarian* is so different, was it certifiably written by Burroughs?

Which leads to the heart of the mystery. And Lupoff comes closest now, revealing his own concerns, his own questions.

"At any rate this is such a marvelous book that I was speaking to Hulbert Burroughs on the phone a few days after this and I said, 'Have you read that manuscript yet?'"

"He said, 'No, what about it?'"

"I said, 'This is so marvelous I want to know why it wasn't published; would you please check your father's records?' (Burroughs did keep very meticulous records on such matters.)

"Why wasn't this published? Well, Hulbert Burroughs did check on this and the information is as follows: The story was begun in the spring of 1941. It was completed in November of that year and sent off to the Paul Corporation with a cover note: "Please consider this for *Redbook*; if it doesn't make it please consider it for *Bluebook*." You will recall that in December 1941, when the war hit us, Burroughs was in the Pacific, and he stayed there for the whole rest of the war, until he had a severe heart attack—probably in 1945. Apparently, early in 1942, the manuscript came back with a note from the editor of the Paul Corporation saying in essence: this is too gloomy and bloody and downbeat for us to publish now in view of the world situation. Can't you give us something a little more upbeat?"

So the provenance seems certain, or at least the Family Burroughs has documented the claim.

Before going back to the mystery at hand, let's have Lupoff finish the story. It's great reading, and it isn't fiction.

"At any rate, apparently because of his activities during the war, Burroughs never got around to submitting that manuscript to anybody else. And I want to point out that this rejection slip didn't say it is a bad book; it just said, in the classic line, this does not meet *our* needs at the present time. Apparently Burroughs never submitted it again to anyone, because in 1945 he became quite ill and although he did live another five years he never fully regained his former level of activity.

"At any rate, there lay the book in dust for all these years. So we have it now and we are bringing it out in the spring, and I think that readers will find it completely unlike any other Burroughs they have ever read. I am convinced that it will rate among his very finest books. I would not want to make a preposterous statement, but I would at least like to suggest that in coming years it may come to be considered his one best book."

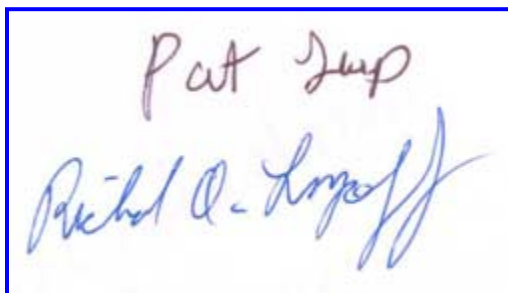
The panel continues at some length after this moment. Throughout, Lupoff is the one person offering facts to back opinions, outfacing de Camp.

One more gem in passing and then back to the mystery.

Lupoff does cite a source for some of the Burroughs' Martian material, *Lieutenant Gulliver Jones*, by Edwin Lester Arnold, which appeared between 1905 and 1909. With another delightful anecdote, Lupoff convinces. He delivers a short synopsis. It doesn't take much to see the parallels.

So one dusty book, forgotten for nearly twenty years. Written by? Burroughs? The story Lupoff tells also convinces. It must be true. The last Burroughs, ever, was the best, a cut above.

And yet?



Pat Lup
Dick (and Pat) Lupoff

See...Dick (and Pat)
will sign your books!



Canaveral Press never did publish it.

I Am a Barbarian was published by the Family Burroughs, as another Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., publication September 1967.

That's the elusive thread, the whole strange tale ends on another mystery.

As a detective, there are clues. One book, long forgotten, brought out of the shadows during a corporate shakeup. Very timely. Certainly must have helped the financial picture.

It wouldn't take much more detective work to determine that it was one of the most profitable ventures for the Family Burroughs.

One outside publisher, with a brilliant editor, vouches for the novel. It passes the test. This is a diamond of the first water. Any one would jump at the chance to publish it. Money, money, money.

Why didn't Canaveral publish it? Why the gap of nearly four years between discovery and publication?

One story, the beginning, begs another, the right conclusion. The best thing about this last book is the fabulous journey it took into the light.

What were those exact circumstances? Editing this book, being involved with the publication, would all have been feathers-in-a-cap for all involved.

So, no feathers.

I'd feel cheated.

Something intangible, yet totally rare and wonderful, jerked from my fingertips. Teased by the once in a lifetime opportunity.

Cheated!

I remember many years later, in the mid-'80s when ERB, Inc. was still selling dust jackets, and yes, *I Am a Barbarian*, available directly from the house. The ad ran in *Locus*. The prices were remarkable. So much lower than

any dealer, for all those first editions, mint dust jackets, untouched copies.

Why...it's just like Advent:Publishers, Inc. first editions still available directly from the original publisher.

I blush to see the ridiculous prices asked for these books by dealers, from the well-known dealers, who really ought to know better, to the innocent, who are incredibly greedy. There have been so many times I've been tempted to point out that these items are still available, at prices half those asked.

But I don't make that point. Caveat emptor, I guess.

Well, if you've read this far, you have no one to blame but yourself. You were warned. This piece has all been about selling Advent books.

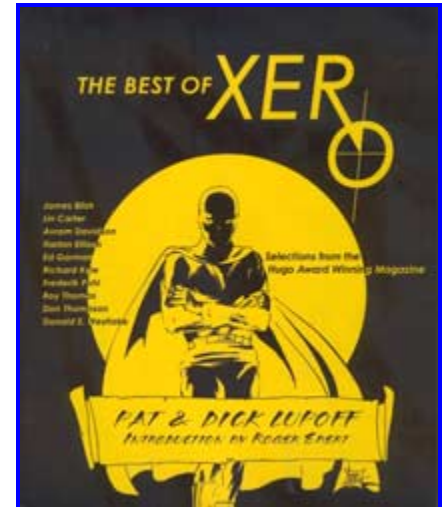
Go buy some. Thumb your nose at the greedy.

This piece has also been about something as interesting, and historical, something minor...yes. Yet, this silken thread. The story behind the story. Is intriguing.

Mostly, this piece has been about Dick Lupoff, writer, speaker, fan, and all-around mensch. He really has done it all, climbed the ladder from fandom, clawed his way through the conventions, wrote his way into celebrity, and did it all with a certain panache that few have.

Dick would be the first to say that he didn't do it alone. Pat, his lovely wife, has always been at his side. This can clearly be seen in the pages of *Xero* (another plug).

(Applause!)



Last plug. Buy this book!
(Applause!)

Mere opinions, in fact, were as likely to govern people's actions as hard evidence, and were subject to sudden reversals as hard evidence could never be.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Galapagos*



“Taking off or Landing,” by Ditmar [Martin James Ditmar Jensen]