

Edited and published by Len & June Moffatt, Box 4456, Downey, CA 90241, U.S.A.

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Do not send money for the next issue. There may not be one--at least for a long time. However, we do plan to publish a one or two-sheet bulletin--JDMB Bulletin No. 2, to be exact--later this year or early next year, whenever we have some news or more additions to the Master Checklist. We probably won't have room for anything else.

Letters of comment on this issue should be written on one side of the sheet only, though (as always) you are welcome to write as many pages as you wish. Reason: We will clip out comments on the various articles and forward them to the contributor thereof, as we won't be having a lettercolumn in JDMBB No. 2. (No. 1 is long since out of print, so please don't ask...)

We repeat--DO NOT SEND MONEY! Recipients of this issue of JDMB will also receive JDMBB No. 2. After that, we may work out a cost-per-copy for publishing the Bulletin, but for the moment we have no bloody idea. So, JDMBB No. 2 will go "gratis" to the currently faithful, and of course through FAPA too.

For more information on this change in a publishing policy, read "...& Everything", our editorial cum newsletter, in this issue.

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SPECIAL NOTICE TO FAPA MEMBERS: Most of you--save for those we can contact in person--will find a postcard addressed to Bill Evans enclosed with your copy of this issue of JDMB. We would appreciate it if you would sign it and mail it off to Bill immediately. Illness, Gestetner trouble, overload of crifanac...all contributed to our missing the February 14 deadline. We believe this is the first time in all of our years in FAPA that we goofed in activity requirement, and we hope it will be the last time. Our dues are paid in advance, and we trust that this issue of JDMB will more than make up for the pages we owed for the February 1976 mailing. Many thanks! - ljm & jmm

# SEEK & SWAP

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# ECOLOGY

& the

# DETECTIVE NOVEL

The Contribution of John D. MacDonald

- by Donald C. Wall

The contemporary detective or mystery novel, like a good deal of other popular literature, often reflects the concerns of the times. It may thus serve as an index to some of the fears, aspirations, lusts, fantasies, revulsions and controversies in the public consciousness. But popular literature need not only reflect and report. It can and often does analyze, educate, suggest solutions and, directly or indirectly, openly or subtly, urge its readers to take action.

Certainly one of the most pressing issues of our time is the environmental crisis. By now, most people are, in varying degrees, aware that we face serious ecological problems. At the very least, the public has been made to realize a number of environmental effects of our actions, for this is the easiest, most visible part of the problem to grasp. Gradually, the public is also beginning to come to an understanding of the causes behind those effects.

The detective-mystery novel might seem to be an unlikely place to find environmental concerns reflected, but one very popular novelist, John D. MacDonald, has contributed a great deal to public knowledge about the nature, extent and causes of our present environmental predicament. He began to touch upon these problems long before most people were at all aware of what was happening. He began with a 1962 novel about land development in Florida, *A FLASH OF GREEN*, and his concern for the environment has shown up in all 15 of the best-selling Travis McGee series (1964-1973).

I mentioned that the easiest part of the environmental issue for most people to comprehend is the consequences of our actions. When most people think of environmental problems, they think of pollution. Cultivating an awareness of pollution is a necessary first step in approaching a fuller understanding of the problem--one must usually start with effects before one knows enough to look for causes--and the McGee series points out a number of abuses of our beleaguered planet.

MacDonald has a good bit to say about air pollution throughout the series. Sometimes it is only a fleeting reference, as when McGee is enjoying the evening aboard his houseboat, "The Busted Flush", and notes the "smell of salt and smell of hydrocarbons". (*THE SCARLET RUSE*, pp. 55-56)

More often, the descriptive passages are fuller and quite vivid. The first paragraph of *ONE FEARFUL YELLOW EYE* alerts our reddening eyes to Chicago's ambient crud: "Around and around we went, like circling through wads of lint in a dirty pocket. We'd been in that high blue yonder where it was a bright cold clear December afternoon, and then we had to go down into that guck..." (p. 7) Later in the book, after McGee has spent some time in Chicago's "guck", he returns to his hotel room. "My full and rightful share of Chicago's pollution had fallen onto me all day...rimming my collar with gray. It was

four in the afternoon, but from my hotel room it looked like midnight." (p. 106) Chicago is not the only city to merit this criticism: "New York, on the first day of March, was afflicted by a condition a girl I once knew called Smodge. This is a combination of rain, snow, soot, dirt and wind. The black sky squatted low over afternoon Manhattan." (A DEADLY SHADE OF GOLD, p. 49)

However, MacDonald is aware that American cities are not unique in creating their own poisonous atmosphere. The situation is global, and in one passage concerning Mexico City, the author has McGee reflect on the city's pollution and its major causes:

So fasten seat belts, and, in the late afternoon, head down and into that misty, poisonous, saffron smutch that fills the mountain bowl of that great city half full. Better than six million of the fifty million Mexicans live on that swampy plateau seven thousand five hundred feet high... Mountains rim the Mexico plateau, enclosing and holding the exhaust fumes of uncounted thousands of trucks and busses... And the exhaust of a bedazzling number of Volkswagens. A big new plant on the Puebla highway stamps them out like production-line tacos. Add the smoke of a few hundred thousand little charcoal cooking fires, and the city is an unending haze, saffron-gold on the sunny days, purple-brown when it is cloudy. (DRESS HER IN INDIGO, pp. 25-26)

In another book, MacDonald goes beyond describing air pollution and identifying its causes to consider the physiological effect it has in decreasing learning ability. After a concise lecture on the structure and functioning of the brain, he has McGee comment:

If you have nice big steep alpha waves, you learn quickly and well. People who smoke a lot have stunted alpha waves. People who live in an area with a high index of air pollution--New York, Los Angeles, Birmingham--have rotten little alpha waves that are so tiny they are hard to find. No one knows yet why this is so. It may be a big fat waste of everybody's money, time and energy sending kids to school in Los Angeles, Chicago and lately Phoenix. (A TAN AND SANDY SILENCE, pp. 183-184)

MacDonald is as aware of and concerned by water pollution as he is air pollution, and again McGee's comments range from passing references, such as "toilet paper danced in my wake in the bourbon-colored water of the boat basin", (THE SCARLET RUSE, p. 106) at Bahia Mar, to much more detailed accounts, such as this passage about Lake Michigan and the other Great Lakes:

I could smell a sourness in the wind. I remembered that it blew across a dying lake. For a hundred years, the cities had dumped their wastes and corruptions and acids into it, and now suddenly everyone was aghast that it should have the impertinence to start dying like Lake Erie. The ecology was broken, the renewing forces at last overwhelmed. (ONE FEARFUL YELLOW EYE, p. 12)

At this point, McGee muses on the inadequate efforts being made to halt the process, inadequate because of private industry's and private citizens' economic concern:

Now the politicians were making the brave noises the worried people wanted to hear. Now they were taking half-measures. Scientists said that only with total effort might the process be slowed, halted, reversed. But total effort, of course, would raise havoc with the supposedly God-given right of the thousand lakeshore corporations to keep costs down by running their poisons into the lake. Total effort would boost the tax structure to pay for effective sewage disposal systems. (p. 12)

This leads McGee to think of Miami's "endless garbage barges that are trundled out of Miami into the bright blue Atlantic. People had thought the lake would last forever. When the sea begins to stink, man better have some fresh green planets to colonize, because this one is going to be used up." (p. 13)

This was written in 1966, and if Jacques Cousteau's recent estimate of twenty-five to fifty years of life left for earth's oceans is anywhere near correct, perhaps we should be looking very hard indeed for those "fresh green planets".

At any rate, MacDonald is aware that water pollution, like air pollution is a global problem. Corporate greed or ambition is leaving its mark everywhere, including American Samoa. The Department of the Interior administers this territory, and Wendell Revere, a well-oiled undersecretary whom McGee meets in a bar, tells him about the Japanese tuna fishery and cannery the agency is allowing to pollute Pago Pago's harbor:

Tomorrow, sir, take that cable car and keep a careful eye on the harbor in front of the canneries. You will see clouds of nauseous guck flowing directly into the harbor. Here they are permitted eighty times the pollution permissible state-side. The harbor is the sewer of the tuna business here. (THE TURQUOISE LAMENT, p. 249)

Revere then reminds himself that "I should not become exercised at one of the facts of life, that industry resists controls which cost money, and a set-up like this, an unincorporated territory with a toothless constitution, makes for very low operating costs". (p. 250) After Revere leaves, the Samoan bartender, who had been listening uncomfortably to these harsh truths, sums up the situation: "He is a good man. He thinks it should be better here. It should be. I guess it should be better everywhere than it is." (p. 250)

Perhaps it should, but it is not, and MacDonald is furiously aware that it is not. In the latest two McGee books (1973), MacDonald both described industrial air and water pollution and named the specific companies at fault. Consider this diatribe about the poisoning of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. After a woman expresses the desire to see these places, McGee thinks sourly:

Yes, indeed. I would have truly enjoyed showing her the islands. How the big aluminum plant and the oil refinery of Amerada Hess blacken the stinking skies over St. Croix. Maybe she'd like the San Juan Guayama and Ybucoa areas of Puerto Rico where Commonwealth Oil, Union Carbide, Phillips Petroleum and Sun Oil have created another new industrial wasteland where the toxic wastes have killed the vegetation, where hot oil effluents are discharged into the sea and flow westward along the shoreline in a black roiling stench, killing all sea life.

She might be impressed were I to cruise into Tallabea Bay and describe to her the one and a half billion tons of untreated wastes from Commonwealth-Union Carbide which put a two-foot coat on the bottom of the bay. Or we could take a tour up into the mountains to watch how the trade winds carry the bourbon-colored stink of petrochemical stacks through the passes all the way to Mayaguez, ninety miles from the refineries. While in the hills, we could check and see if Kennecott Copper and American Metal Climax have started to strip-mine the seven square green tropic miles of high land they covet. (THE SCARLET RUSE, pp. 256-257)

In the latest McGee, THE TURQUOISE LAMENT, MacDonald describes the deteriorating, crowded environment of Venice (Florida) and Siesta Key, as seen from the air, and then concentrates on Bradenton, again citing the industrial offender by name:

I could see, in the haze to the north, the tall stacks of the mighty Borden phosphate and fertilizer plant in Bradenton, spewing lethal fluorine and sulphuric-acid components into the vacation sky. In the immediate area it is known bitterly as the place where Elsie the Cow coughed herself to death. I have read where it has been given yet another two years to correct its massive and dangerous pollution. (p. 187)

Now, however, simply identifying the offender is not enough. As if his patience is near an end, MacDonald has McGee conclude the passage with an indictment of the company's directors and a plea for direct citizen involvement:

Big Borden must have directors somewhere. Maybe, like the Penn Central directors, they are going to sit on their respective docile asses until the roof falls in. There are but two choices. Either they know they condone poisoning and don't give a damn, or they don't know they condone poisoning and don't give a damn. Anybody can walk into any brokerage office and be told where to look to find a complete list of the names of the directors and where they live. Drop the fellows a line, huh? (pp.187-188)

The kinds of environmental damage so far pointed out demonstrate that MacDonald is acutely aware of how humanity has been ravaging the earth. This damage has all been done in the name of "progress", a concept of which he is quite skeptical. He notes the effects of progress in altering hitherto scenic, inviting towns for the worse. Take Speculator, New York, in the Adirondacks, for example: "Progress had begun to clomp down its main drag ... sending little clusters of neon. The ski kids were roaming the area, hooting their rut cries at each other, speckling the snow banks with their bright empty beer cans. (THE QUICK RED FOX, p. 66) Or Santa Rosita, California:

Santa Rosita was a stunted version of the Santa Barbara code of existence. Three industries, electronics, plastics and tourists, and squeeze the bejaysus out of all three... The incomparably dull tract houses, glitteringly new, were marching out across the hills, cluttered with identical station wagons, identical children, identical barbecues, identical tastes in flowers and television... There really is a Santa Rosita, full of plastic people, in plastic houses, in areas noduled by the vast basketry of their shopping centers. (pp. 96-97)

This town exists as it does because no one considers questions such as "where have you been and what have you done and is it worth it?" (p. 97) And is it worth it when we compare the old and new Marco Village, Florida? McGee thinks not:

Marco Village saddened me. The bulldozers and draglines had gotten to it since my last visit. The ratty picturesque old dock was gone, as was the ancient general store and a lot of the old weatherbeaten two-story houses... They had endured a half-century of hurricanes, but little marks on a developer's plat had erased them so completely, there was not even a trace of the old foundations. (BRIGHT ORANGE FOR THE SHROUD, p. 60)

MacDonald is concerned that our concept of progress coupled with the earth's ever-expanding population will lead to catastrophe. As McGee is flying from Houston to New York, he observes that "the worst thing about having a hundred and eighty million people is looking down and seeing how much room there is for more". (THE DEEP BLUE GOOD-BY, p. 65) McGee worries about the psychological effects of crowding in stimulating intra-specific aggression (NIGHTMARE IN PINK, p. 21) and about the cheapening value of life as a result of vastly increased population density (BRIGHT ORANGE FOR THE SHROUD, p. 64). This concern about overpopulation culminates in a passage in which McGee has an imaginative apocalyptic vision of how it will all end:

When dawn came, there would be a hundred thousand more souls alive in the world than on the previous day, three quarters of a million more every week. This is the virus theory of mankind. The pretentious virus, never knowing that it is a disease. Imagine the great ship from a far galaxy which inspects a thousand green planets and then comes to ours and, from on high, looks down at all the scabs, the buzzings, the electronic jabberings, the poisoned air and water, the fetid night glow. A little cave-dwelling virus mutated, slew the things which balanced the ecology, and turned the fair planet sick. An overnight disease, racing and explosive compared with geologic time. I think they would be concerned. They would be glad to have caught it in time. By the time of their next inspection, a hundred thousand years hence, this scabrous growth might have infected this whole region of an unimportant galaxy. They would push the button. Too bad. This happens every once in a while. Make a note to reseed it the next time around, after it has cooled down. (A DEADLY SHADE OF GOLD, p. 37)

Whether or not civilization as we know it will end in catastrophe is currently much debated. It seems clear, however, that unless the important, often unstated assumptions which we have accepted and which guide our actions are revealed, re-examined and changed, the quality of life on earth will get much worse before it improves noticeably--if ever. The assumptions Americans take for granted about man's relationship to nature, assumptions which emerging nations seem to be adopting as they seek to emulate our life-style, have had a tremendous impact on the environment.

Some of these assumptions have been usefully pointed out by Scott Paradise in his article "The Vandal Ideology" (THE NATION, Dec. 22, 1969, pp. 730-732). While MacDonald does not state these assumptions in the same terms, he provides a number of pointed examples which illustrate Paradise's insights, examples which get to the heart of our difficulties.

Paradise isolates seven propositions concerning the American ideology of man's relationship to nature, which he purposely states quite baldly, maintaining that they infuse nearly all our public and private social policy.

The first proposition is that "Man is the source of all value". This he terms "anthroposolipsim", the assertion that "man alone has inherent value" and "everything else is valuable only as it benefits man". The second, a corollary of the first, is that "The universe exists only for man's use". Thus, "anything that man cannot use is useless and can be destroyed without compunction". Most people "narrow the meaning of 'value' to that which has calculable economic value".

The passages cited above, which describe what is being done to Bradenton, to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Pago-Pago, etc., all illustrate forcefully man's headless assault on the environment for economic gain.

Part of that assault has been on creatures which share the environment with us. Wildlife, insofar as it is edible or provides recreation, is valuable. Otherwise, it may be dismissed from consideration:

We passed a (sand) bar where about forty pelicans stood in single file in about an inch of water. I pointed it out to her and she said, "Yeah. Birds." Most people are as blind as Vangie. Eyesight is what you use to get around without running into things. But they find no aesthetic value in what they see. (DAIKER THAN AMBER, p. 36)

In another passage, MacDonald has McGee give a mini-lecture on hunting:

I do not like the killers, and the killing bravely and well crap. I do not like the bully boys, the Teddy Roosevelts, the Hemingways, the Ruarks. They are slightly more sophisticated versions of the New Jersey file clerks who swarm into the Adirondacks in the fall, in red cap, beard stubble and taut hero's grin, talking out of the sides of their mouths, exuding fumes of bourbon, come to slay the ferocious white tail deer. It is the search for balls. A man should have one chance to bring something down. He should have his shot at something, a shining running something, and see it come a-tumbling down, all mucus and steaming blood stench and gouted excrement, the eyes going dull during the final muscle spasms. And if he is, in all parts and purposes, a man, he will file that away as a part of his process of growth and life and eventual death. And if he is perpetually, hopelessly a boy, he will lust to do it again, with a bigger beast. (A DEADLY SHAPE OF GOLD, p. 230)

McGee recognizes the need for game control, because "we have so bitched up the various ecologies". (p. 230) But he believes this should be done by professionals, not "the brotherhood of blood sports, the hairy ones, all the way from Macmillan and his forty grouse a day to some snot kid who tries to slay every species of big game in the world..." (p. 231)

In another book, MacDonald inserts a comment on the self-defeating nature of our use of unselective pesticides. He has another character, Tom Pike, reminisce:

"When I was a kid, we'd sit on the screened porch of a summer evening and see clouds of mosquito hawks--dragonflies--darting and swooping, eating their weight. Then the bats would begin when the sun went down. So we've killed off the mosquito hawks with the spray, and we've killed the other bugs the bats ate, and now there's nothing left but billions of mosquitoes and gnats, and we have to keep changing the spray as they get immune." (THE GIRL IN THE PLAIN BROWN WRAPPER, p. 62)

Thus, whether it be white-tailed deer, mosquitoes or mountain ranges in Puerto Rico, man's comfort and wealth serve to justify an all-out assault on nature.

We fail to see our own place in the web of life, defining ourselves as economic animals. Or, as Paradise's third and fourth propositions state it, "Man's primary purpose is to produce and consume," and "Production and consumption must increase endlessly". We measure our progress by the (aptly named) gross national product, which government and business--and the ordinary citizen--believe must grow every year, we care not how.

MacDonald provides a number of instances which illustrate critically these disastrous articles of faith. For example, as McGee waits for a young woman who works in New York as a designer for "one of those self-important little companies which designs packages for things," he looks around the reception area and finds himself "amid the cased displays of household words. Three cents worth of squeeze bottles, plus two cents worth of homogenized goo, plus primetime television equals 28 million annual sales at 69¢ each. This is the heartbeat of industrial America." (NIGHTMARE IN PINK, p. 5)

Like all of us, McGee is also a consumer, but he is not happy with this necessary role. While he uses credit cards, he finds "these little tickets to perpetual consumption distasteful." (ONE FEARFUL YELLOW EYE, p. 39) At another time, he reflects:

I cannot be an orderly consumer, with 2.3 kids and .7 new cars a year... I am not properly acquisitive. I like "The Busted Flush", the records and paintings, the little accumulations of this and that which stir memories, but I could stand on the shore and watch the whole thing go glug and disappear and feel a mild sardonic regret. (THE QUICK RED FOX, p. 46)

Being an "orderly consumer" leads to both environmental destruction and to personal unhappiness. MacDonald puts one poignant passage into the mouth of Meyer, McGee's economist friend. Meyer has done a survey of old people in the Fort Lauderdale area, people now in financial difficulty as they try to finish out their few remaining years without becoming hopelessly impoverished. "The essence of it is that all too many of them were screwed by consumer advertising. Spend, spend, spend. Live for today." The result is that their anger is directed outward, at society, because they don't know who screwed them. They did what everybody else was doing." (THE SCARLET RUSE, pp. 169-170)

If this kind of consumption must increase endlessly, Paradise's fifth proposition follows logically from this illogical assumption: "Material sources are unlimited." We act on the faith that exploration, science and technology will find new sources of material or invent substitutes. But the fact is that the world cannot provide materials to maintain the current incredibly wasteful American standard of living. What will be the result as "emerging nations", who lust to emulate our life-style, clamor for their share of the planet's wealth?

In a passage which sounds almost like a summary of the Club of Rome report (Meadows' THE LIMITS OF GROWTH), it is again Meyer the economist who paints for us the grim, realistic answer:

"So divide everything into two hundred million equal parts. Everything in this country that is fabricated. Steel mills, speedboats, cross-country power lines,



scalpels, watch bands, fish rods, ski poles, plywood, storage batteries, everything. Break it down into basic raw materials and then compute the power requirements and the fossil fuels needed to make everybody's share in this country. Know what happens if you apply that formula to all the peoples of all the other nations of the world?

"You come up against a bleak fact, Travis. There is not enough material on and in the planet to ever give them what we're used to. The emerging nations are not going to emerge--not into our pattern, at least. Not ever." (THE SCARLET RUSE, p. 114)

Meyer concludes:

"Our myth has been that our standard of living would become available to all the peoples of the world. Myths wear thin. We have a visceral appreciation of the truth. That truth (is that) nobody in the world will ever live as well, materially, as we once did." (p. 115)

In the process of living well materially, we often act on the assumption that (as Paradise's sixth proposition states it) "Man need not adapt himself to the natural environment since he can remake it to suit his own needs."

One of the most common illustrations of this assumption is to be seen in the places we choose to build houses and cities. Sometimes we build where it is geologically unwise as McGee notes while driving around the Los Angeles area. He sees groups of expensive houses perched on costly land, and comments that "in a sane world it would be 50¢ an acre, but there it is, status-symbol land, rocks and brush, ridges and gullies, fires and mud... When San Andreas gives a good belch, they can start again at 50¢ an acre." (A DEADLY SHADE OF GOLD, pp. 213-214)

Often we build whole cities where we find a favorable climate but where conditions will not support great numbers of people. Many cities in the Southwest, for instance, are facing severe water shortages. In the imaginary city of Esmeralda (which could be Phoenix or a number of other metastasizing cities in the region) McGee reads in the local paper that there is "an unlimited supply of pure water from deep wells." (A PURPLE PLACE FOR DYING, p. 38) Later, he learns the truth from a native, Jass Yeomans:

"You know what kind of water we're pumping from those wells, son?"

"What?"

"Fossil water, sweet to the taste, laid down in the times when this was swamp and lakes... We take it and when it's gone, it's gone. Tomorrow all them pumps could give one big gassy belch and suck nothing but stale deep air. And this whole county would die."

"I didn't know that."

"They know it. They don't think about it. It scares the piss out of them to think about it. It's like a man never thinking he has to die. But the end is there. For this county and for any man in it. They herd new folks in here and drill more wells and suck it away faster." (p. 76)

Florida, like the Southwest, has an enticing climate, and MacDonald seems particularly sensitive to our environmental assaults on this area, perhaps because he lives there. While Florida's water supply is much greater than the Southwest's, man's attempt to subdue and remake its environment is having equally disastrous consequences. In one passage, Meyer comments on the effects of a greatly increased population on the Fort Lauderdale area, without considering "the necessary water supply, sewage disposal, schools, roads, police and fire protection. All services are now marginal." (THE SCARLET RUSE, pp. 11-12)

Sometimes the consequences are not disastrous, merely futile. Florida's beaches are, of course, perhaps its prime tourist attraction. MacDonald has a Miami beach hotel owner gaze at the "eroded beach" in front of his hotel and reflect:

"They want to pump umpty-seven billion yards of sand in front of all the hotels, a big beach like in 1919 they had. Bond issues, big assessments, more taxes, just so all the clowns can go parading by on public beach land for maybe two years before a hurricane takes it all back out to sea." (THE SCARLET RUSE, pp. 46-47)

While Florida's beaches are valued by men, its inhospitable Everglades are not, at least in their native state. One of MacDonald's longest environmental disquisitions details the draining of the River of Grass, the death by logging and dryness of cypress stands, the increased fire damage due to dryness, the dwindling wildlife and marine population, and the as yet little-known fact that the mangroves of the Ten Thousand Islands are being killed. (BRIGHT ORANGE FOR THE SHROUD, pp. 57-58-59) This is one of the most striking examples of our remaking the environment to suit our needs--as we currently define them.

Paradise's final (seventh) proposition is that "A major function of the state is to make it easy for individuals and corporations to exploit the environment to increase wealth and power". The idea is implicit in many of the above-cited passages of industrial and municipal despoilation, but it is most clearly dramatized in the non-McGee novel, A FLASH OF GREEN (1962). The novel concerns the efforts of a few enlightened people to save a bay from being re-zoned and filled for a housing development. As Paradise notes, "ideas concerning private property stand central in this proposition". The "Save Our Bay" group loses its fight in the novel: they cannot convince people that the bay belongs to everyone and should be kept intact for all to enjoy. The lure of economic gain proves too strong. The novel illustrates most of the concepts discussed above, but one of its major themes is an attack on the notion of private property. As the book ends, its protagonist, the newspaperman Jimmy Wing, drives to the bay and stands watching the dredges at work. A night watchman appears and orders him off: "This is private property." Wing replies, "I know. And that's the trouble, isn't it?" (p. 335)

Overall, then, MacDonald has managed to insert into his popular thrillers a truly astonishing array of accurate information on the environmental damage we are wreaking. He has included a number of insights into the causes of that damage. And he has consistently brought into the open the misguided values which motivate our cumulatively catastrophic behavior.

Certainly MacDonald's primary purpose in his novels is to tell exciting, entertaining stories. This he does, but he has accomplished far more. He has attempted to alert us to what we are doing, to get us to ask why, and to get us to change while there is still time--if indeed there is. John D. MacDonald, like Wendell Revere, "thinks it should be better here. It should be... It should be better everywhere than it is".

## ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS TO THE JDM MASTER CHECKLIST:

100. BLURRED VIEW (see pp. 24 & 32) Reprinted in Quickie Thrillers "25 Mini-Mysteries", Edited by Arthur Liebman. Pocket Books, Inc. \$1.50 (1975)
101. THE DEEP BLUE GOOD-BY (tm) (see pp. 32,33,35,37,38,39,40) Hardcover reprint. Lippincott, Sept. 1975
102. THE DREADFUL LEMON SKY (tm) (see A&C No. 98) Paperback reprint, Fawcett, Sept. 1975
103. MAN IN A TRAP (short) reprinted in ELLERY QUEEN MYSTERY MAGAZINE, October 1975. (see p. 24 in THE JDM MASTER CHECKLIST)

EARLY JDM:

## FOUR FROM EARLY '49

Four unrelated pulp stories by JDM, published (along with a host of others from his busy fingers) within a 90-day period, provide one more illustration of his developing talent in the late Forties. Some of his output from this period is excellent, some of it merely routine, but all of it is stamped indelibly with the sign "Professional At Work".

"A Coffin A Day" (FBI DETECTIVE, 2/49) is a rather implausible reprise of JDM's redemption-of-a-bum theme. Ex-FBI agent Mitch Lang turns into an instant drunk after being run out on by Bonny, a Bad Woman with whom he'd fallen hopelessly in love. The "web" of subversives Bonny belonged to kills her off for knowing too much and pins the murder on Lang. Celia Amert, a rich girl eager for kicks who's also part of the "web", pretends to befriend Lang and hide him from the police, but it's all part of a plan to have him "shot resisting arrest". There's little action and even less interest in this item, in which each of the villains seems to come from a different foreign country and the ideological sympathies of the "websters" are never mentioned.

An infinitely better JDM tale in the same magazine is "Loot for the Unlucky Lady" (FBI DETECTIVE 4/49), about a young woman who has clearly never heard of the liberation movement. At a single phone call from the crook she's in love with, she abandons her job and every trace of her regular life and starts spending 16 hours a day walking up and down Times Square, waiting for him to stroll by and slip her a package. When he finally does so, it turns out to contain the loot from a gambling casino holdup, which is sought by the gamblers and the cops alike. The girl flies off for a Florida rendezvous with her lover, shadowed by a proto-McGee figure, private eye Steve Harmon, whom the gamblers have hired to retrieve the loot. Vivid writing, sharp crosscutting between the viewpoints, and a constant edge of excitement add up to the superior specimen of pulp storytelling.

If the masochistic female lead in "Loot for the Unlucky Lady" reminds you of some of Cornell Woolrich's characters, the male lead in JDM's "You Remember Jeanie" (CRACK DETECTIVE STORIES, 5/49) is even more reminiscent of a Woolrich loser--up to a point. Policeman Frank Bard hits the skids after his girlfriend is killed by a drunk in Allison's, a seedy waterfront bar. He becomes a sodden dockside bum, constantly lurching into Allison's and ordering cheap whiskey for himself and Jeanie, who he says is standing beside him, and whom he talks to as if she were alive. He keeps a tube of her lipstick and some strands of her hair in his pocket and fondles them each night before curling up to sleep in a packing case in an alley. For Woolrich, this would have been the last scene of a story, but for JDM it's only the beginning. It turns out that Bard is putting on an elaborate act to make Jeanie's killer betray himself. But at the last moment of the story--Woolrich rides again!--Bard thinks he feels a soft ghostly touch on his arm...

"You'll Never Escape" (DIME DETECTIVE, 5/49) is a vividly-written short-short about a vicious escaped convict who pistolwhips an itinerant laborer to death and uses the man's wife, children and ancient car to get past a police roadblock. The bitter-bit surprise ending is no great shakes, but the descriptive skill that fills this little tale could almost pass as a preview of the McGee novels fifteen to twenty-five years in the future.

Which, of course, is part of what I meant about "Professional at Work".

- Francis M. Nevins, Jr.

# ... & EVERYTHING

- by Len Moffatt

Last year was a good year and a bad year for John D. MacDonald. Good because he could celebrate 25 years (and 53,000,000 copies of his books) with Fawcett, and have THE DREADFUL LEMON SKY hit best-seller lists all over the country; bad because his mother, Mrs. Marguerite Dann MacDonald died at the age of 82 at her home in Utica, N.Y.

The latter news is from a clipping from the Observer-Dispatch, dated August 31, 1975, sent to us by Pat Erhardt. It tells us that John's mother was born in New Haven, Connecticut, and that she was the widow of Eugene A. MacDonald, a former vice-president and treasurer of the Savage Arms Corporation. He died in 1961.

.....

This year will be a busy one for John. In a letter dated January 4, 1976, he says: "We go to New Zealand in February and return in late March, mostly to get acquainted with two of the five grandchildren we have never seen. In July, I go to Chicago and address a luncheon meeting of the American Library Association. In November, we will be in England for ten days, guests of Pan Books, in a promotion trip keyed to their publication of the paperback of THE TURQUOISE LAMENT.

"I hope to turn almost all of the CONDOMINIUM novel over to Lippincott before leaving for New Zealand. I have portions of an untitled McGee assembled, but cannot give date of completion. It should be published this year, though. I seem to be working slowly, but it is due more to interruptions than to any lack of zeal or interest on my part. Having LEMON on the NY Times list for 23 weeks compounded the interruptions. Invitations to do this and that. Requests for items to auction off. Requests for interviews. An ego-balm of course, and flattering, but also exasperating because I have the helpless feeling there is no good way to turn it off except to hide somewhere.

"There have been, as expected, many many offers for McGee for the big and little screen, but each one flawed in some way which made it impossible to accept. Negotiations continue when new offers come in. We optioned THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH & EVERYTHING to a French producer, with all good expectations that it will be made."

John will be sixty years ~~old~~ young on July 24 of this year. May his zeal and interest continue for at least another sixty.

.....

June and I had the pleasure of attending the Sixth Annual Anthony Boucher Memorial Mystery Convention in Chicago last July. We can report (making one fine good ol' Joe Rand) that Bouchercon VI was a great success. Highest in attendance to date, with all the attendees actually attending every session, including the banquet where spoke Robert L. Fish. There wasn't one dull program item in the lot, which covered crime in ye olden days, book reviewing, college courses in crime fiction, Sherlock Holmes, collecting, writing, lawyer-detectives (with accent on Perry Mason), movies (Study in Terror and a couple of films based on Cornell Woolrich novels), and a panel on "The MacDonalds" in which June and I participated for some reason.

Speakers and panelists included Robert L. Fish, Ely Liebow, Randolph Cox, Donald Yates, Al Hubin, Alice Cromie, Dan Marlowe, Francis M. Nevins, Robert Eckles and others. Bouchercon VI was well-planned and ably produced and directed by Bob Hahn and John Nieminski of Chicago's HUGO'S COMPANIONS, a scion society of The BakerStreet Irregulars.

They were aided and abetted by their committee, which included Harold Knott, Ely M. Liebow, Donald K. Pollock, Herbert P. Tinning and Helen Williams, and, I think, by the local chapter of the MWA.

We thank them--one and all--for a most enjoyable Bouchercon, and for publishing a chapbook of letters exchanged between Tony Boucher and Vincent Starrett. (Copies of SINCERELY, TONY; FAITHFULLY, VINCENT may still be available for \$2 each from Robert W. Hahn, 509 S. Ahrens, Lombard, Illinois, 60148, U.S.A.)

It was more or less decided at Bouchercon VI that it would be nice if the Bouchercons could continue to rotate around the country. The first three were here in the Los Angeles area. The fourth was in Boston, the fifth in Oakland, California, and, of course, the sixth in Chicago. The seventh will be in the Los Angeles area again; see ad in this issue. It is hoped that the eighth will be in the east (perhaps New York) in '77, and back to the midwest in '78.

Bouchercons are for the mutual benefit of readers, collectors, writers, editors, publishers, anyone and everyone interested in detective/mystery/suspense crime fiction. We urge all of our readers to attend them when they are in their area--or even to travel far to attend--as they are always well worth the trip. (And last year it gave us the chance to tour a bit in the interesting city of Chicago, something we'd never done before.)

We especially urge all of you to join, support, help advertise and attend Bouchercon VII, as June and I are chairing it. It will be October 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 1976, at the Americana Hotel in Culver City, California. You can join now at the cheap rate by sending your four-buck membership fee to us. The fee will go to \$6 come August 1st. We have a lively committee (Larry & Noreen Shaw, Bruce Pelz, Craig Miller, Milt Stevens) and our Guest of Honor will be John Ball. It will be difficult to top Chicago's performance, but we'll do our best. Come and enjoy!

Chairing Bouchercon VII as well as chairing the committee that is bidding for the World Science Fiction Convention to be in Los Angeles in 1978 (we'll find out if we win that bid in September of this year in Kansas City), are only two of the hobby activities that will keep June and me busy this year and for the next couple-three years...

That's why we have had to curtail some of our publishing activities (plus trouble with our Gestetner mimeograph--we may have to borrow the use of Ed Cox's machine for this issue), and why JDMB is returning to FAPA to get us page credit and save our membership. Foo knows when we'll have time to publish another issue of our regular FAPazine, MOONSHINE... maybe by '79... When we told John that we would be distributing the issue of JDMB initially through FAPA, he said "I am delighted to know that JDMB will save a membership in the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. I have long suspected that the whole bit is Fantasy, and now I am reassured."

That's right, John. We write the whole magazine ourselves, including all the articles and letters. And if you think it is easy thinking up names like Francis M. Nevins and Jean Linard and Harry Warner, Jr., well, anyway, they're almost as believable as Travis McGee and Junior Allen...not to mention Noggs Berga...

June and I are still involved in local s-f club activities and probably will be for some time to come. We love everything we do, but we really must find more time for resting and catching up on our reading. So, after '78, we expect to arrange a more leisurely schedule with more time for reading, writing and publishing. It sez here.

Keep in touch, keep smiling, and wait for the JDMB Bulletin.

# BOUCHERCON 7

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# Please Write For Details

The Readers Write

((The Editors Reply - ljm & jmm))

ROBERT BLOCH, Los Angeles: JDMB, while it may be infrequent and even infrequent in the future, is always well worth waiting for! And in this issue ((No. 20)) I think you've got one of the very finest pieces of writing Dean Grennell has ever done. He has surpassed his own work of 25 years ago - and that's a rarity, amongst fans or pros. Rest of issue is up to the same standard.

JON L. BREEN, Fountain Valley, CA: The other color-oriented writer Dean Grennell was trying to think of is Frances Crane, who wrote such novels as *THE TURQUOISE SHOP*, *THE APPLGREEN CAT*, *THE SHOCKING PINK HAT* and *THE FLYING RED HORSE* about Pat and Jean Abbott. Also, the Ellery Queen Jr. novels had titles like *THE WHITE ELEPHANT MYSTERY*, *THE RED CHIPMUNK MYSTERY*, *THE BLUE HERRING MYSTERY*, etc. ((Coincidentally, John recently discovered the existence of the Frances Crane color titles. There were 26 of them published between 1941 and 1965. John says: "I was totally unaware of this. However, had her name been Frances MacDonald, I suspect I would have been aware, and would not have gone into color titles in 1964." Oddly enough, Ross Macdonald's upcoming book is titled *THE BLUE HAMMER*. All of the true friends of T. McGee aren't likely to confuse it with John D. MacDonald's work, but what about the readers who are still tending to confuse the MacDonalds (despite such obvious differences as style and characterization, ignoring the different first names) and expect to get a McGee novel because there's a color in the title, even if it would be a re-used color...? - ljm)) ((What they'd get would be disappointed, that's what. - jmm))

JACK CUTHBERT, Greensburg, PA: What do you know of Jack Higgins? I note two of his earlier books, *MIDNIGHT NEVER COMES* (1966) and *DARK SIDE OF THE STREET* (1967), are copyrighted under the name of Martin Fallon, but from 1970 under Jack Higgins. What grabs me, however, is that the main character in *A PRAYER FOR THE DYING* (1973) is--guess who--Martin Fallon. So who is on First--or is it "what"? ((Sounds like the author is playing games with his names. Possibly one of them is his real name, though neither would have to be. We aren't familiar with this author, but perhaps one of our readers can help with an answer. - ljm))

REIJO LAAKSONEN, Helsinki, Finland: Travis McGee is surely one of the very best crime series. In comparison, Ross Macdonald's Archer books are good individually, but as a series they somehow lack coherence. I like them, but would like them more if the protagonists were different characters. On the other hand, it seems to me that quite a few of John D. MacDonald's readers are mainly McGee fans. Which is a pity, for as good as the McGee books are, they are any better than MacDonald's other novels.

Every fan apparently wishes that somebody would publish new collections of MacDonald's shorter works (especially early ones). I have long nurtured the same idea. Also, a collection of John D's science fiction and fantasy stories would be a treasure.

((Fred Patten, a friend of ours, has suggested that June and I edit a collection of John's shorter works in the science fiction and fantasy field. It might be fun to do--and a lot of work, not the least of which would be getting a publisher interested, and getting the rights to reprint the older items which were copyrighted by the magazine publishers. See page 27 of JDMB No. 20 for what John has been doing in re the problem. - ljm))

DAVE LOCKE, Duarte, CA: JDMB #20 was received and enjoyed. Hopefully fate will contrive to give you a shot in the editorial arm, so that you will find the wherewithal to continue your publishing efforts. "We both need more time for reading and resting." Do I hear the sound of old and tired fens? I know you like to drink your scotch unembellished by the presence of other fluids, but the next time you're over here I think I'll slip a couple of fingers of Geritol into the Chivas.

Dean's article was quite interesting and good, but I wish he had avoided apologizing each time his words strayed from the main theme of the article. I've always felt that there are, residing within Dean's cerebral equipment, a billion tiny dominoes set upright like soldiers at attention, and that they weave up-and-down, left-and-right, crisscrossing themselves throughout a variety of trails. Once the lead domino has been tweaked over there is no stopping their movement, and sometimes three or four trails of them will be toppling at once. The movement and the patterns are fascinating, and would be much less so were they to follow a straight line. When Dean sits down at a typewriter, I raise a full glass in appreciation of the tangents which pour forth. And may he never apologize for them again. ((So THAT's the Domino Theory! - jmm))

I find it embarrassing to admit that I do not remember the McGee novels for the quality of the female characters which are presented therein. What's worse, I seldom remember anything about a McGee novel within a few weeks after reading one, but this is a problem which I have regarding any series character. Events get mixed up across the face of my frontal lobes, and I can't track the story lines back to particular titles. Sometimes even the plots seem to mesh together, and if I were asked to outline the plots I'd probably wind up with only six or seven although some parts of the 15 books I've read would be distributed within those half-dozen. It isn't my intention to say that the stories are all that similar to each other, but I find it hard to sort out the events in Travis' life into compartmentalized episodes.

MacDonald's letter concerning the "aging" of Travis McGee presents a philosophy which is quite different from my own, and it would be an understatement to say that I'm glad I do not share his beliefs concerning "friendship". There appears to be a touch of sorrow in his words as he states his belief that a person loses his sense of identity as his circle of friends dwindles through death, and that as one grows older he can replace friends only with acquaintances.

John prefaces his statements by saying that he is going to be "imprecise", which leads me to believe that he sees a flaw in his world-view or at least recognizes the presence of one. The crucial paragraph stating his philosophy says: "Knowing a person means knowing them through a chunk of their history, seeing the growth and change. We can not explain ourselves to one another. We are what we are at that point in time when we make a new friend. So the sense of identity is missing. There are fewer voices in our background noise. They are supportive voices which are missing, because they were telling us who we are, and we were living up to those superimposed conceptions."

Under John's philosophy, friendship can occur presumably only after a lengthy tenure of acquaintanceship. This may be true for some individuals, but I have to reject it. Dyed-in-the-wool, we've-been-through-it-all-together, remember-the-agony-and-the-glory-and-the-good-old-times type of friends--they're special, yes. But one must cast his mind back to the beginning of that relationship, and realize that it was created without the degree of involvement which only the passing of time can bring. Friendships can be strengthened by time; friends build on the foundation of their mutual regard and structure that they erect will never be completed with all the "finishing touches". But the foundation itself was created over a relatively brief span of time; it is an exciting prospect to gain a new "friend" and to grow to know one another and to explore the relationship in its various interfaces, but I do not feel it necessary that all this exploration be completed before the friendship is acknowledged. In rare instances I have discovered friendship during an encounter so brief that it could be measured in terms of minutes, and I do not feel the relationship was cheapened by getting off to such a fast start. If one is not "hard to know", and moves around (or even stands still, because there is no such thing in this country as what John refers to as a "relatively stable community"--if you don't move to new areas, people from new areas will move toward you), one is bound to occasionally discover that special "sympatico" feeling which needs only a sense of openness and warmth and a willingness to reach out if that feeling is to develop into something more. ((Tsk! Dave! John said "relative", and "relative" is a relative term, you know. - jmm))

We all value our privacy. We all cherish old friendships. But are we all so entrenched that we want only to pull our status in around ourselves, and do nothing but tremble as time takes chunks of it away from us? I hope not. To be isolated is to live



in the past, to cherish only that part of the past which is still with us, and to dread the future for the changes it will bring. I don't consider friendships as something to be "replaced". New friendships have a value in their own right, and they create their own place. One may shed a tear or hoist a drink in remembrance of a friend now gone, but if he cannot be thankful for the blessing of new friendships (too many of which can never occur in a lifetime), then he will dwell too long.

I feel a bit sad for John's views in this regard. I feel even sadder for the person he described who "consciously cultivate 'new friends' to fill the gap when old friends died." That's sort of like saying: "I'm not going to make any new friends today, because none of the old ones have died lately."

Of course, you do not cultivate new friends. Friendships happen. You can cultivate a friendship by regulating exposure (exposure of what? Exposure of yourself.), and you can seek out new friendships as a byproduct of encountering more people than you would normally meet if you locked yourself in a closet, but you can't walk down to the corner grocery and pick a new friend off of the vegetable counter. ((No, vegetables don't make very good friends. They--well, they vegetate too much. - jmm))

I suspect that John and I would have different definitions of "acquaintances" and "friends". To me, an acquaintance is someone you know. A friend is someone you'd lend money to... (My definition is a bit more serious than it sounds. I really stated a ramification rather than a definition, and even the ramification is probably not absolute--I might even lend money to someone who isn't a friend, although the odds are considerably less likely--but the intent of my feelings was presented even if not in black-and-white terms. And, who could take a quality such as friendship and pin it down on a piece of paper? I haven't seen it done yet, although some people have come close.)

I didn't read the convention report, as no doubt you're sad to hear. I had a slight curiosity as to how a report on a mystery convention might differ from one on a science fiction convention (and I don't read reports on those, either...) but, as I said, it was only a slight curiosity.

My interest in the Great Plymouth Gin Mystery is only academic, as I never drink gin. NEVER drink gin. The smell of gin is enough to make me turn pale. Pale Grey for Guilt, actually, as my aversion to the substance stems from the New Year's Eve party some fifteen years ago where I got totally bombed out of my mind on the stuff--and could taste the noxiousness of it for days afterwards. I would rather jump through a burning ring of fire than sniff the cork from a gin bottle. But, to quit pussyfooting around on the subject, as far as gin is concerned I could take it or leave it. And if I took it, I'd leave it for someone else. ((Funny--I OD'd on candy corn a good deal longer than fifteen years ago, and feel much the same way about it now as you do about gin. - jmm))

((We trust we'll see you at Bouchercon VII so you can write your own report. - ljm))

JOHN D. MacDONALD, Sarasota, FL: Enjoyed #20. Dean's essay wonderfully amusing. Have to quarrel (mildly) with the assumption McGee took some kind of sadistic delight in slaying the mosquito. Once upon the neck the choices are (1) Let it keep biting. (2) Kill it and leave it on neck. (Untidy) (3) Take dead body off neck and leave it pasted to fingers. (Messy) (4) Try to shake smeared body off fingers. (Impossible) (5) Roll into ball and let go. (It works)

ROBERT T. McKearnan, Chicago, IL: Dear June & Len: I am using first names as our mutual love of John D. MacDonald makes us kindred spirits.

I would love to read everything he has ever written. I have read everything currently in print two or three times except "Lemon Sky" which I am just starting.

My question is why can't we addicts be somehow saved the eternal torment of knowing there is material he has written somewhere that we can't obtain? It would be worth a very large sum to me and I am sure hundreds of true devotees to own a complete or near-complete set of his stories. If 100 of us were willing to pay \$1,000.00 each, it would seem to me that for \$100,000.00 somebody must be able to perform this admittedly gargantuan task.

Can you suggest a way for me and my soulmates to obtain the peace of mind that can be gained only by the knowledge that nothing by JDM exists beyond our greedy insatiable appetite for total involvement?

((It might be easier to find 1,000 persons with \$100.00 each in these tight times.  
- ljm))

FRANCIS M. (MIKE) NEVINS, St. Louis, MO: I'd be happy to do a NIGHTWEBS-type job on JDM's pulp stories as Richard Stoker suggested. Of course, as you pointed out, one problem is that JDM's publisher would have to buy the idea. There's another problem too, one that JDM hinted at when he mentioned renewing the copyright on his 28-year-old stories. The problem is that a writer who sells all rights to a story to the magazine that first runs it doesn't automatically get those rights back by taking out a renewal copyright 28 years later. His estate can get back rights that way if the author dies during the first 28 years, but if the author lives into the renewal period he may be stuck. It all depends on exactly what agreement he originally had with the magazine. It's quite possible that before a NIGHTWEBS-type JDM collection could be published, permission fees would have to be paid to whoever now holds the rights to the pulps where the stories first appeared. In fact, JDM might have to pay some of the greedier ones more than they paid him in the first place!

Yes, I know, the law is an ass. A lawyer is the last person in the world who needs to be convinced of that proposition.

((A writer, as well as a lawyer, Mike's latest book (his first mystery novel) is PUBLISH AND PERISH, from Putnam. He also appears in EQMM and other publications, and is one of the most loyal supporters of the Bouchercons. See you in October, Mike! - ljm))

BRUCE POWE, Toronto, Canada: Here's a bit of JDM trivia for you. As an author myself-- not in the league of JDM, but one of his lifelong addicts --I couldn't resist including him in my latest novel.

Entitled "THE LAST DAYS OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE" (St. Martin's Press, Inc., 175 5th Avenue, New York), it is a sort of futuristic comedy about an invasion of a decadent America by the starving hordes of the next century.

As part of the effete, decadent scene in the future, I have introduced an academician named Professor Harry Kornwire. Working with a computer, his lifework is to prove that John D. MacDonald and Ross Macdonald were one and the same person. He is attempting to verify this by interspersing alternate sentences from their books to become one vast Tolstoyan epic of our times. Later on in the story Travis McGee and Lew Archer appear as bodyguards to a notorious governor of Connecticut, one Cleaver Gleaver.

All in fun, of course, with no intention to offend JDM buffs. After all, I'm one myself.

((Our first reaction to your description of your novel was "Ohmigawd!" However, not having read the novel, we reserve final judgment until we have the opportunity to do so. It may not offend the JDM buffs and one hopes it will not offend either of the MacDonalds, even though it is "all in fun". There was more confusion among readers between John D. and Ross when the latter (Kenneth Millar) was writing under John Ross or John R. Macdonald (with at least one slip when "John" with no middle name or initial "Macdonald" was used on one of his books). That got changed to simply "Ross Macdonald", to help de-confuse the situation. John D. (for Dann) MacDonald is his real name. He has never deliberately used a pseudonym, though many of his stories in the pulps were published under "house names" when he had more than one story in an issue. - ljm))

HARRY WARNER, Jr., Hagerstown, MD: I was happy to see the letter from the creator about Travis McGee's age and aging. Maybe it will save both a few writers and a lot of readers from endless concern in years to come over some secret clue to the chronology of the novels which they might have imagined the author had included in the text. I think this is also an object lesson in general, to the effect that authors don't always work out such background material to the nth degree.

I wonder what it would do to the Baker Street Irregulars, if someone should happen across a six-inch sheaf of letters from Sir Arthur in which he disclaimed to a correspondent all efforts to be consistent among the stories and pointed out inconsistencies and contradictions among them which aren't apparent to a person in the late 20th century? ((Under the rule of "The more things change, the more they remain the same"-- not much. - jmm))

If they ever give the Hugo to the fan writer whose style is most distinctive, Dean Grennell would win it every year without competition. I don't believe that style has changed essentially since he entered fandom back in the 1950's, and that is a remarkable thing because it is so dependent on enthusiasm and energy, qualities which most of us begin to misplace after the passage of twenty years or so. Dean seems just as zestful for whatever he's interested in as he did back in the days of GRUE and BLEEN. In a sense, I suppose, he represents the last surviving fan writer of the great fanzine era of the 1950's. Others who were prominent then are still writing occasionally, but not in the manner that they once wrote; autumnal hues are coloring their formerly verdant styles or they are writing about altogether different topics than those that interested them in the long ago.

This thing of remembering some of the heroine's names, for instance. It's something I could never do because I've read so many stories and have grown so jaded by most fiction that a heroine's name sticks in my memory about as long as a telephone number that I dial once every Whitsunday. I envy Dean's Lazarus Longish ability to remain so intent that he files such trivia away in memory and then is able to find much of it a long time later. I didn't like Mary Alice McDermit for another reason. That was the one McGee book whose general plot course I was able to foresee in the early chapters. So I considered her inexcusably careless, compared with the protagonists in the other McGee novels who are able to keep surprising me right up to the final pages.

The question of whether it's moral to kill any creature seems to me as incapable of solution as how an individual should take safety measures if he has just fallen out of a thirty-third story window. The argument that homicide of small creatures within one's body justifies killing insects and animals and fishes outside the same body isn't quite valid because the former is involuntary and the only alternative, suicide, will be disastrous for many of those tiny organisms anyway. But I feel as much respect for a plant as for an insect, and my only way to survive is to ear, which involves the death of either animal or vegetable organisms or parts of them which are the organisms' future generations in embryo. Maybe it would be possible to stay alive by earing parts of plants whose loss doesn't destroy the plants or its seeds, like selected clippings from leaf lettuce, but I wouldn't want to risk it. So I compromise my conscience by eating both meat and vegetables but not killing by hunting or fishing; I destroy cockroaches and squirrels if they commit breaking and entering on my home but I don't bother them outdoors; and I never put weed-killer onto my lawn, evidence of which noble trait is visible to any visitor during the growing season.

The Bouchercon report made me wish I would prod myself into going to one. But remember, I'm a neo in the mystery field and I wouldn't really get the proper benefit out of attending a Bouchercon because I haven't read enough of the basic classics to carry on conversations or listen to talks in a knowing manner.

Your letter section was highlighted by the Jean Linard letter. I have the oddest suspicion that Jean could write English with a Churchillian sonority and perfection if he permitted himself to do so, and that he creates these fascinating twists of syntax because he thinks fandom expects them of him.

I hope you'll be able to continue the Bibliophile somehow, even if it's just on a token basis until you get your second wind. Couldn't you lessen the financial burden by opening it to paid advertisements? There must be a lot of dealers and readers seeking specific titles and university presses releasing learned tomes related to mystery and suspense fiction to guarantee a substantial amount of extra income.

Incidentally, Advent is talking about getting the new fan history book out in 1976, maybe even before the Tuck set is completed. I still don't know what the title would be, because I've encountered some opposition to the title I want, A WEALTH OF FABLE. It'll be a fat book, since the manuscript ran to 481 pages, which are double-spaced with much

smaller margins than I would use in a manuscript submitted to a big publisher. You can't imagine how much relief I feel at the lifting of the eternal burden of thinking I really should be working on that book instead of doing this or that.

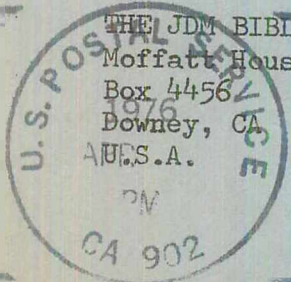
((Even neos in the mystery field have fun at Bouchercons because their interest is broadened to include a desire to read more in the field. Shucks, it even happens to us older types. I always come away from a Bouchercon with new pieces of knowledge and a renewed interest in reading more, especially those authors I haven't tried yet, as well as the desire to re-read certain authors or particular stories. From what I've heard, it seems to have a similar effect on the writers who attend, too.

If money were our only problem--i.e., if we had the time and energy to publish on a truly regular schedule, and more than once a year--we probably could sell advertising to offset the costs. But, we don't feel we have the right to sell ad space in a magazine that appears so infrequently. There is an ad for a bookstore in this issue, but, as in the past, we insert it as a free plug because (1) we want to encourage bookstores that specialize in our favorite forms of fiction, be it mystery or s-f, and (2) they have offered to help us advertise the Bouchercon.

We are looking forward to your second volume on science fiction fandom's history. We are still recommending the first volume:

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS  
Advent Publishers  
Box 9228  
Chicago, IL 60690  
\$7.50

to all and sundry. - ljm))



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