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THE PAPERBACK EXPLOSION:

AN AMERICAN PUBLISHING PHENOMENON, 1939 - 1980

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ABSTRACT

Since 1939, when the Pocket Books line debuted, the mass-market paperback book has been an integral part of America's entertainment media. Yet, the paperback book has rarely been examined as a medium with its own special qualities and impact. This study traces the history of the mass-market paperback: its antecedents, early experimentation with format, and marketing techniques and relationship to cultural trends.

The scope of this study encompasses over two hundred years, but special attention is given to the period 1939 to 1955, and 1970 to 1980.

In addition to such source material as <u>Publisher's Weekly</u> and histories of specific paperback houses, this study made use of first-hand information from persons within the industry: publishers, writers, agents, and promotion and marketing personnel. These industry persons discussed their contributions to the development of the paperback book and the directions in which they see the industry moving during the nineteen-eighties.

The study concludes that the mass-market paperback book will become an increasingly important segment of the publishing industry, and that paperbacks possess characteristics which set them apart from any other kind of books published in the twentieth century.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, in 1981, the paperback book enjoys a position in American culture shared by few other mass media. As have the industries of television, films and popular music, the mass-market paperback has grown over the years into a multi-billion-dollar industry. And yet, compared to the wealth of scholarship which has emerged over the last two decades dealing with those other media, relatively little has been written about the paperback book in the twentieth century. Perhaps the paperback still is perceived as the disreputable cousin of the book family, and consequently has been snubbed by scholars who feel a sort of distaste for the format. Or perhaps the paperback book simply is not considered a medium unique enough, significant enough, to warrant separate study. A paperback is, after all, a kind of book, and much has been written about the book--its impact as a medium, its growth into an industry. Is there anything that can be said of the paperback book per se that warrants more than a passing footnote?

From the point of view of this study, the answer is a resounding Yes! Although the American paperback book industry was not founded with anything of the sort in mind, it is plain that, after forty years of growth, refinement and experimentation, the mass-market paperback has become an entity unto itself--one which operates on principles apart from the hardcover book, which appeals to an audience different from that of the hardcover book, which can appear in places that a

hardcover book cannot, which often is created through the talents of writers who do not write hardcover books. In short, the paperback book exists in 1981 in relationship to the hardcover book in a manner analogous to the relationship enjoyed today by television and films: the one may have grown out of the other, but the end results are two entirely different products. "Taxi" and Annie Hall both work with the stuff of comedy, but one could hardly be mistaken for the other, just as the drama of "Dallas" is not equivalent to, or interchangeable with, the drama of Ordinary People. For that matter, television's "M*A*S*H" is not Robert Altman's M*A*S*H, although that fact is not an artistic judgment upon either of the media in which the story has been presented.

By the same token, Ashley Carter (Harry Whittington)'s Taproots of Falconhurst, a 1978 paperback original, is not Gone with the Wind, despite its debt to that archetypal work; Taproots deals with themes, introduces characters, and structures its story in a wholly other manner. Could Taproots have been published as a hardcover book? Given the economics of today's book publishing, probably not. That is not to say that Taproots is not "good" enough to exist in hardcover form, any more than one could say that "Taxi" is not good enough to be filmed as a movie. The point is, each exists as a successful exponent of its own medium, and should be judged only in terms of that medium. How good a television series would Ordinary People make? Or Raging Bull? Just as television can do certain things that film cannot, so may the paperback novel offer types of stories which

could never be published in hardcover form in 1981--and which may never again be published in hardcover form. (Why spend $10,000 promoting a mystery which will sell 20,000 copies in hardcover, when one can spend $30,000 promoting that same mystery which in paperback will sell 300,000 copies?)

It will not be the province of this study to make aesthetic comparisons between books published as hardcovers and books published as paperbacks. There may be a valid course of inquiry related to such an examination; however, this study will not address the question of aesthetics. What seems of infinitely greater import is the process of evolution by which a publishing gimmick, the paperback book of 1939, became a species apart from any other. The fact that, as the eighties begin, the mass-market paperback is carrying the rest of the book publishing industry on its shoulders only underlines the need to understand the course of that evolution, to trace its every twist and turn, its every ebb and flow.

To that end, a number of methodologies were employed in researching this history. First, the scholarship of others was consulted, which in essence consisted of a doctoral dissertation, Frank Schick's _The Paperbound Book in America_ (1958), a handful of company histories, such as Clarence Petersen's _The Bantam Story_, and a number of articles appearing between 1978 and the present in two journals, _Paperback Quarterly_ and _Collecting Paperbacks?_. Secondly, approximately forty years' worth of that indispensible industry publication, _Publisher's Weekly_, was examined--all of the issues from 1939 to 1958 and from

1977 to 1981, and selected issues from 1959 to 1976. The broad outlines of the evolution of the paperback industry exist within this single source.

I also thought it would be worthwhile to consult persons whose careers had been connected with either the creation of paperbacks (editors and writers) or their production. I had the good fortune to interview and correspond with a number of industry pioneers and current luminaries. Their willingness to share their experiences was an invaluable addition to this study. Finally, the books themselves were closely examined. That is, thousands of paperbacks dating from 1939 up to the present were studied in terms of both their packaging and their content. This hands-on experience with the books led to some insights which might not have been gained otherwise.*

For the rest, the study was organized along both chronological and thematic lines. Neither system seemed adequate by itself, so both were employed. If what emerges is a clear portrait of one American industry's growth into an indispensible mass-medium, then the aims of this history will have been achieved.

*Interested readers will find a set of illustrations of book covers and promotional pieces related to this study on file at the Popular Culture Library of Bowling Green State University.

CHAPTER I

One Hundred and Fifty Years of Antecedents

The Paperback Revolution. That is the phrase by which Pocket Books now points to the impact of its signal effort in 1939. But, while the word "revolution" is not inaccurate in terms of explaining the effects Pocket Books and the paperback houses that followed had upon the American publishing industry, one should not assume that the world had never seen a paperback book prior to 1939. Far from it. The revolution came about only after over a hundred years of experimentation with formats, prices, and methods of distribution and marketing.

Inexpensive editions of books, published in a compact size with paper covers, apparently first appeared in America in the form of John Bell's "British Poets" series of eight-shilling volumes, of which some 190 were published between 1777 and 1782.[1] In Europe, it was the paper-covered reprints of classics published in 1809 by Karl Christoph Traugott Tauchnitz, a Leipzig printer, which became the first series of paperback books.[2] Tauchnitz' line lasted well into the twentieth century, which duration ultimately attaches to them greater significance and influence than Bell's short-lived series. Tauchnitz became the first printer to make use of the stereotyping process in 1819, which along with electrotyping had just been developed. In conjunction with the invention of the cylinder press, mechanical typesetting and machine-made paper, for the first time in history the technology for cheap, high-speed printing existed.[3]

America first made use of this technology in 1829, when the Boston Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge issued softcover books of a technical nature. Two years later, the American Library of Useful Knowledge began, in its own words, "to issue in a cheap form a series of works, partly original and partly selected [i.e., reprinted], in all the most important branches of learning."[4] But the first popular works to be issued in cheap editions were those of the Wilson & Co.'s Brother Jonathan series. This weekly tabloid pirated the works of English authors--there did not yet exist an international copyright law--and then took advantage of the low postal rates for periodicals through mail order sales. A year later the founders of Brother Jonathan, New York journalists Park Benjamin and Rufus Wilmot Griswold, sold their profitable enterprise to New York Sun publisher Benjamin Day, and promptly began a rival line of reprints called New World. In 1841, New World set off the great publishing war of the decade by issuing Charles Lever's novel Charles O'Malley as a fifty-cent "supplement." Benjamin Day published the same novel shortly thereafter as a Brother Jonathan "extra," and marketed his edition for a quarter. Soon these unbound books were being published two or four to each tabloid extra, with pictorial covers. Only Americans received royalties, which kept the overhead low.[5]

The transformation of these newspaper-format books to what we now would recognize as paperback books came in the midst of this publishing war, when both Brother Jonathan and New World reduced their

sizes and added pages. Other publishers in New York, Boston and Philadelphia also began to publish novels in paper covers as "extras." By 1843, the market was glutted. Finally, the Post Office imposed book rates on these editions, further diminishing the profit margin. Prices had to stabilize at twenty-five and fifty cents, so a truce in the war was called.[6]

Then came a real war, the Civil War, and Erastus F. Beadle's dime novels became an institution among both battlefield and home-front readers. Once again, however, fierce competition for this new market was to ensue. Dime Novels were joined by "De Witt's Ten Cent Romances" and by the Boston publishing house Elliot, Thomas & Talbot's "Ten-Cent Novelettes." In 1873, the New York _Tribune_ implemented its "Tribune Novels" series, in the newspaper format of _Brother Jonathan_. Two years later, the "Lakeside Library Series" of ten-cent books began production out of Chicago. The development of high-speed rotary presses and the increasingly cheaper cost of paper enabled a total of fourteen paperback houses to enter the market by 1877, including one, the Seaside Library, which issued a new title every single day.[7] Seemingly the market could not sustain this sort of production, but it did, with a total of twenty-six houses in operation by 1887, including Chicago publisher John B. Alden's compact and inexpensive hardcover reprints. By this point, though, the market was so glutted that many of the paperback publishers had to combine their operations into a trust called the United States Book Company. The effort was too late; the paperback book could no longer earn an adequate profit. The inter-

national copyright agreement of 1891 put the final nail in the coffin. For the next few decades it would be the inexpensive hardcover reprints of such houses as A. L. Burt and Grosset & Dunlap (standard price: 49¢) which commanded the market.[8]

One of the first paperback book lines of the twentieth century was the Paper Books imprint of Charles and Albert Boni, which began in June of 1929 after the brothers had lost their share of Boni and Liveright publications to Liveright on a coin toss.[9] The brothers then devised the plan of selling inexpensive, softcover reprints through a subscription plan, whereby the subscriber would be mailed a new book on the twenty-fifth of each month. The price of these Paper Books was fifty cents. All featured endpapers designed by famous illustrator Rockwell Kent, who was on the editorial board of the company. Paper Book titles included _The Bridge of San Luis Rey_, _My Reminisces as a Cowboy_ and _Prosperity: Fact or Myth_.

Selling as they did through subscriptions, the Paper Books line cannot really be considered a mass-market paperback. But in 1930 the Bonis suspended their subscription plan, after sixteen Paper Books had been issued, and started over again selling their books through bookstores. Although the format of Paperbooks was retained, the name of the line was changed to Bonibooks. A total of forty-three titles were issued, including the sixteen which originally had been published as Paper Books.[10] Among the twenty-seven new titles were works by such authors as D. H. Lawrence, Oscar Wilde, Bertrand Russell, Sherwood Anderson, Gustave Flaubert, Colette, and James Branch Cabell. From

this list, one can perceive the high-culture intentions of the Bonis. Perhaps for that reason, the Bonibook failed to find a mass audience. Or, possibly, it was the high price of Bonibooks which deterred buyers. To keep the fifty-cent price in perspective, most of the hardcover reprint lines sold for thirty-nine and forty cents during the thirties. Customers might well have paused before buying a softcover book, albeit a well-made one, which cost more than a hardcover. Whatever the reason, the Bonibook disappeared sometime in the early thirties.

Over in Europe, developments were taking place which would have far-reaching effects in the States. Kurt Enoch, a German publisher, began production of a line of softcover reprints in 1932 which he named the Albatross Series. So attractive were Enoch's books that they almost immediately were merged under Enoch's direction with the Tauchnitz line.[11] Enoch, who during the forties would come to America and eventually become president of New American Library, had designed a type of paperback book which could be marketed cheaply enough to appeal to a mass audience. The Albatross Series, though, presented the same sort of high-culture product that Bonibooks had. Although the format was right, Albatross books did not offer reprints of popular novels.

In America, paperback series such as Bestseller Library, Modern Age Books and Hillman Books began publication in the 1930's. Bestseller Library was a digest-size line which reprinted mysteries, a category of literature which would reach new heights of popularity once made available in inexpensive forms. But the most significant imprint to debut during this period emerged not in the United States, but on the

other side of the Atlantic. Its name was Penguin Books, and one can safely say that, had it not existed, the face of the American paperback book industry would have been profoundly altered.

Penguin was the brainchild of Allen Lane, a managing director of Bodley head. His notion was to provide England with a cheap series of paperbacks which would reprint good books. On July 30, 1935, the first ten Penguins appeared. Among the first titles were Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms, Dorothy Sayers' The Bellona Club, Agatha Christie's Murder on the Links, and Andre Maurois' Ariel.[12] This mixture of popular novels with more serious works was a concept which worked so well that it would determine the policy of the Pocket Books line, which would debut in four years. These early Penguins were priced at sixpence, a most affordable sum.

Distributed as they were through both conventional book outlets and outlets at which books had never before been sold--such as the Woolworth's variety store--Penguins reached into totally new markets. In an important sense, the penetration achieved by the Penguin line made it the first paperback series to reach a truly mass market.

From the late thirties through the end of World War II, Lane published a number of Penguin Specials, including Germany Puts the Clock Back, The Air Defense of Britain and Blackmail or War?[13] These original editions demonstrated possibilities for the paperback book which eventually would be exploited by the American companies, albeit after considerable resistance to the notion of a book being published as a paperback original.

In 1937 Lane began exporting certain titles to America, although the American operation would not open until 1939.[14] But America would not be conquered by the Penguin paperbacks as England had been. The sedate package design of Penguins simply could not have competed with the visibility of American periodicals. But by 1939 Lane's concept had already been applied to the sort of package that would attract the eye of the American bookbuyer. Thus would Pocket Books, in the company's own words, "re-invent the book,"[15] and set off a revolution in publishing which today, in 1981, has not yet spent its energy.

Notes to One Hundred and Fifty Years of Antecedents

[1]Clarence Petersen, The Bantam Story (New York: Bantam, 1975), p. 3.

[2]John Tebbel, Paperback Books: A Pocket History (New York: Pocket Books, 1964), p. 5.

[3]Ibid., p. 6.

[4]Ibid., p. 6.

[5]Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[6]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[7]Ibid., pp. 11-13.

[8]Ibid., pp. 14-16.

[9]Peter Manesis, "The Bonibooks," Paperback Quarterly, 2(4) (Winter 1979), p. 27.

[10]Ibid.

[11]"Penguin Ends British Affiliation and Adopts New Name," Publisher's Weekly (hereafter referred to as PW), 31 January 1948, p. 628.

[12]Eric Tucker, "The Penguin Story," Paperback Quarterly, 2(3) (Fall 1979), p. 18.

[13]Ibid., p. 19.

[14]"Penguin Ends British Affiliation and Adopts New Name," PW, 31 January 1948, p. 628.

[15]Advertisement in PW, 31 October 1980, p. 25.

CHAPTER II

Pocket Books and Its First Competitors

In the late 1930's, the arm of publishing involving inexpensive hardcover reprints was weakening. Rental libraries, an invention born of necessity during the Depression, had cut deeply into the sales of cheap reprints of bestsellers, most of which sold for between thirty-nine cents and one dollar. Robert de Graff had headed two of the leading exponents of hardcover reprints, Doubleday's Garden City Books and his own Blue Ribbon imprint, and sensed that the needs of the market were changing. He therefore approached the firm of Simon & Schuster with a plan for the production of a line of softcover reprints which could undersell the hardcover lines. Lincoln Schuster was well aware of the success in England of Allen Lane's Penguin Books, and already had considered developing a line of twenty-cent paperbacks to be called the Twentieth Century Library.[1] Along with Richard Simon and Leon Shimkin, de Graff and Schuster laid plans for the production and distribution of Pocket Books.

The key to the Pocket Books campaign was in the marketing strategy. There were many more newsstands and department stores and drugstores in the United States than there were bookstores. De Graff's initial concept was to employ only the outlets employed in the mass-market distribution of newspapers and magazines, but Cedric Crowell, the president of the American Booksellers Association, convinced the Simon & Schuster group to include bookstores among their target areas.[2] With an initial investment of $30,000, the group pro-

duced 2,000 copies of Pearl Buck's The Good Earth, a phenomenal best-seller in hardcover which had gone through sixty-one printings prior to its acquisition by Pocket Books. As Leon Shimkin recalls,

> We issued The Good Earth by mail, asking people whether they liked the idea of a book of this size and make-up. They responded with cards we had inserted. We got the names by collecting lists of Book-of-the-Month Club members and people who regularly bought books from Brentano's and Scribners. The response was very favorable, which encouraged us to embark on a program of ten more books, for sale only in New York City.[3]

Along with the test copy of The Good Earth, which was published in November 1938, a 50,000 piece direct mail campaign was conducted. Brashly, de Graff invited respondents to order from a list of fifty-two titles, most of which Simon & Schuster did not own the rights to.[4] Money had to be returned on many occasions, but valuable information was gained via the responses to this campaign. Ten more titles were selected for publication, which began in June 1939 with James Hilton's Lost Horizon.

These first Pocket Books releases contained insert cards which read: "The low price of Pocket Books precludes extensive advertising. Will you therefore print in the space below the names of any friends you would like to have informed about Pocket Books. No postage is necessary on this card. Thank you."[5] Lost Horizon contained an additional card asking readers to have their local theater owners show the film version (which had been released two years earlier). Restricted to New York City, the first ten Pocket Books were printed in the following quantities:

#1 Lost Horizon, by James Hilton . . . 10,070.
#2 Wake Up and Live!, by Dorothea Brand . . . 9,900.
#3 Five Great Tragedies, by Wm. Shakespeare . . . 10,450.
#4 Topper, by Thorne Smith . . . 10,750.
#5 The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, by Agatha Christie . . . 10,680.
#6 Enough Rope, by Dorothy Parker . . . 7,600.
#7 Wuthering Heights, by Emile Brontë . . . 10,000.
#8 The Way of All Flesh, by Samuel Butler . . . 9,790.
#9 The Bridge of San Luis Rey, by Thornton Wilder . . . 10,600.
#10 Bambi, by Felix Salten . . . 10,270.[6]

While the sixth, eighth and tenth releases did not sell particularly well, most of the others sold in excess of a million copies over the next twenty-five years, indicating the sort of batting average de Graff, Shimkin and Simon & Schuster would compile in the years to come.

Wallis E. Howe, Jr., an advertising specialist, was hired to develop accounts for Pocket Books in New York City. Two department stores, Macy's and Liggett's, placed the largest orders.[7] After the initial printings sold out, the first ten titles went back to press, while new titles were also prepared for release. (The Good Earth became Pocket Books #11 in August of 1939.) A full-page ad was taken in the New York Times, proclaiming "a revolution in book publishing." The day after the ad ran, Leon Shimkin recalls, "People all over the country were calling us morning, noon and night; they wanted to join the revolution!"[8] But it would be several months before Pocket Books could be prepared for national distribution.

The first Pocket Books were printed at a small press in Massachusetts, for reasons described by Leon Shimkin:

> We couldn't find a printer willing to print our books at first; the size would have disrupted the operations of most presses. But after some research we found a plant in Clinton, Massachusetts, called the Colonial Press.

> They had an old, but still usable press which had a small cylinder. The limit of this cylinder determined the size Pocket Books became.[9]

At first Pocket Books were sewn in the bindings, a particularly long-lasting technique which shortly gave way to the "perfect binding" process because of its simplicity and inexpensiveness: the leaves of the book were simply dipped in glue and pressed into the cover. Despite the implications of its name, perfect binding tended to separate after a few readings. But, at twenty-five cents a copy, Pocket Books probably were not purchased with permanence in mind.

The twenty-five cent price of Pocket Books was suggested by Richard Simon.[10] Four per cent of the cover price was set aside for royalty payments, to be divided equally between the original hard-cover publisher of the book and its author, the same royalty rate paid by the hardbound reprint houses. (Initial royalty agreements generally ran to ten per cent.) The standard forty-six per cent discount to wholesalers was lowered to thirty-six per cent, while discounts to retail bookstores were lowered from the thirty per cent to thirty-five per cent standard to the magazine rate of twenty per cent off.[11] Pocket Books was intent upon using the channels of magazine distribution to the greatest possible degree. There was no other way to set a twenty-five cent price on a book and still make a profit.

By 1940, Pocket Books was ready to break out of the New York market. The first wholesaler beyond New York's borders to contract to handle the line was Joe Morton, manager of the Rocky Mountain News Company, whom fate placed on a barstool next to Wallis Howe in Denver.

Soon over 600 independent wholesalers, representing some 115,000 outlets in grocery stores, chain stores, drugstores, subways and bus terminals were distributing Pocket Books.[12]

One of the special problems which Pocket Books had to surmount was having the line displayed effectively. The books were too small to compete for attention on the newsstands with magazines four or five times as large. Pocket Books quickly learned that it would have to take an active part in helping the multiplicity of outlets unify their display methods. Brentano's in Washington, D.C., for example, simply set their Pocket Books on a table situated near their rental library section.[13] In New York City, the American News Company shipped boxes containing one copy each of ten titles to its newsstands; the problem lay with the fact that some titles sold more quickly than others, necessitating the opening of new boxes when the old boxes still contained half the original stock. Pocket Books finally had to request that American News recall all the books for redistribution.[14]

The solution to this problem turned out to be the manufacturing of special wire racks and wooden tables by Pocket Books. This had already been implemented by the short-lived Red Arrow line out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which in October of 1939 had shipped its first (and only) twelve releases with special display racks holding ten of each title. While Red Arrow did not surmount the problems of achieving national distribution, their display concept was visionary. Pocket Books designed its own racks and supplied them to retail out-

lets at cost, which was thirty-five dollars, along with thirty-five dollars worth of Pocket Books. The table was five feet long by four and one-third feet high, with a width of two feet. It was designed to display seventy-six titles with the front cover fully exposed on the top, with room for several hundred more Pocket Books stored underneath with only the spines exposed. During the rack's trial usage in New York in the fall of 1940, Brentano's sales rose sixty per cent; Wanamaker's rose 80.3 per cent; the Washington Square Bookshop's increased fifty-five per cent; and the Astor Hotel and Penn Drug Store saw sales double. In October of 1940, tables were shipped to outlets in Chicago, Cleveland, Providence, Columbus, Grand Rapids, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Birmingham, St. Louis and Hollywood.[15] (Most of the paperback publishers that were to follow Pocket Books--Penguin, whose American distribution began in 1939; Dell, which debuted in 1943; Bantam, in 1946--also designed racks for their books which they supplied to retailers.)

Various methods of promotion were undertaken by Pocket Books and by the outlets selling Pocket Books. The Cunningham Drug Chain in Detroit began a series of radio broadcasts in March of 1940 in conjunction with its Ace News feature. For thirteen weeks, Cunningham's aired four or five spots daily advertising Pocket Books. The chain also took out newspaper ads, distributed handbills and placed banners on their delivery trucks.[16] Higbee's of Cleveland placed a newspaper ad which was so effective that their entire stock of Pocket Books was sold the same day the ad ran. Pocket Books itself took out ads in

print media not ordinarily used for book advertising, such as PIC, the New York Daily News and Time Magazine.[17] Once the war broke out, Pocket Books also became involved in promoting the line on War Bonds posters. Tie-ins of Pocket Books which were currently in release as films were also undertaken with many theaters. (See "Hollywood and the Paperback Book.")

One of the most unusual wrinkles developed by de Graff was his plan to allow the trade-in of a given Pocket Books title for credit towards a hardcover edition of the same title. Probably this was devised, at least in part, to placate bookstores which feared that Pocket Books editions would undermine sales of more expensive editions. However, more problems arose in connection with this plan than were solved by it. For one thing, most non-bookstore outlets--which is to say, the majority of the 115,000 outlets handling Pocket Books as of 1940--did not carry other editions of books. Customers who appraoched a cigar store owner or a newsstand operator and asked for such an exchange were probably met with a blank stare. Moreover, some people misunderstood the nature of the offer. Publisher's Weekly reported that one lady was upset that she had to buy the Pocket edition before she was allowed to purchase the hardcover edition; another person was perturbed when he wasn't permitted to exchange a copy of Topper for one of Turnabout.[18] As reports such as these began to reach de Graff, he must have had second thoughts about this clever but impractical promotional gimmick.

Another rather unusual facet of de Graff's marketing strategy for Pocket Books was his treatment of the line as magazines. He expected titles to sell out quickly; if they did not, no further printings of them were ordered. Among the titles which were dropped after the first or second printing were Appointment in Samarra (#27), The Werewolf of Paris (#97), Treasure Island (#25) and A Christmas Carol (#29). De Graff wanted to impress upon the minds of the public that Pocket Books releases were temporary and had to be snapped up quickly.[19] Only strong performers went back to press; as long as they continued to perform, they were kept in print. The normal shelf life a hardcover enjoyed in a bookstore did not apply to the Pocket line.

In its first year of existence, Pocket Books sold 1.5 million copies. Six years later annual sales would reach the forty million mark, despite competition from two dozen other paperback publishers. Clearly Pocket Books were meeting some genuine need. But was there so great a difference between a thirty-nine cent hardcover reprint and a twenty-five cent paperbound reprint? The reasons for this paperback "revolution" must have lain deeper than merely a fourteen cent margin.

One Kansas City bookshop owner suggested that, far from interfering with the sales of regular trade editions, Pocket Books actually were widening the book-buying audience: "They are making book customers for us out of magazine readers, bringing in people who never bought books before--chauffeurs, beauty shop operators, office girls, etc.,

etc." A Stamford, Connecticut, bookseller complained, "I have small patience with the argument that they may cut the sale of more expensive books. Does the sale of lollipops affect the sale of Louis Sherry candy?" A Burlington, Vermont, shop owner enthused, " . . . up here in Vermont, there are many, many people who simply cannot afford good books at regular trade prices . . . Pocket Books fills the need for them as nothing else has ever done."[20] A buyer for Strouss-Hirschberg in Youngstown noted that an industrial city such as Youngstown had a special need for such a series of reprints, and that many of these first-time book buyers branched out into other publishers' lines after acquiring the habit. "Once people get to wanting books," one bookstore owner remarked, "they will pay any price--Pocket Books just grease the skids."[21]

If bookshops and department stores were largely enthusiastic about Pocket Books in 1940, there was one arm of bookselling that decidedly did not view the new format warmly. This was the rental library, the success of which was predicated upon the unwillingness of readers to pay the full price in order to own a book. Of course, bookstores themselves were not enamoured with the concept of the rental library; as one owner remarked, "[Pocket Books] might some day kill the rental libraries, for which we should be happy."[22] Leon Shimkin recalls an example of the clash between the rental libraries and the Pocket Books line that emerged in 1940:

> One of our salesmen, Larry Hoyt, asked some ten years before we began Pocket Books if he could conduct an experiment. He wanted to build a lending library on the ground floor of Filene's [Department Store] in

> Boston, on the theory that the customers would have to through the whole store once to borrow the book and again to return it, giving the store a lot of additional traffic. This experiment worked so well that, within ten years, Larry had over a hundred department stores all over the United States outfitted with lending libraries. Then, in 1940, he calls me up and says, 'I want to thank you for having helped me go into business--and curse you for putting me out of business! People would rather buy your Pocket Books than rent my books!' I said, 'Take it easy . . . Let's put some Pocket Books in your outlets and see how they do.' And they did very well.[23]

Mr. Hoyt, concludes Shimkin, went on to found the immensely successful Walden Books chain, which is one of the biggest outlets for paperback sales in this country. But rental libraries which did not adjust to the demand for paperbacks were indeed forced out of business eventually. It was a classic case of publishing evolution forcing the dinosaurs to die off in order to make room for new breeds of books.

Like the rental library, the conventional library was not enthusiastic about the Pocket Books concept, albeit for completely different reasons. For one thing, the small size of Pocket Books made them easy targets for theft. Librarians also bemoaned the lack of durability in Pocket Books editions, because the cost of rebinding exceeded the cost of the book itself.[24] The cloth-bound reprint, then, was a more sensible acquisition for the library than was any paperback, however well made. But de Graff and his associates were not concerned with sales to libraries, or even with bookstore accounts. Their whole strategy had been devised to penetrate outlets which had never before carried books. In this they achieved an unqualified success. They

came, saw and conquered a market of which no one--probably not even de Graff and company--had realized the extent.

The vast and immediate recognition and sales enjoyed by Pocket Books between 1939 and 1941 exceeded all expectations. But this newly discovered territory simply was too rich to be the province of a single company. One of the first lines to compete with Pocket Books was Red Arrow Books, out of Milwaukee. Debuting in October of 1939--months before Pocket Books had begun distribution outside of New York City--Red Arrow Books issued its first twelve titles simultaneously, complete with special display racks. But, while intended to appeal to magazine readers,[25] the line was so poorly designed that those first twelve releases became its only twelve releases. Good works by popular authors such as Agatha Christie, Ben Ames Williams and John Rhode were hidden beneath dully-colored typographic covers which were printed on thin, unlaminated paper stock. Despite a slight size advantage over Pocket Books, the Red Arrow line looked innocuous to the point of invisibility when displayed next to the brightly colored, laminated covers that de Graff designed. While that factor alone probably was enough to account for its failure, the Milwaukee source of Red Arrow Books also handicapped the line in terms of publicity and distribution. Before those problems could be surmounted, Red Arrow Books had gone out of business.

The Foreign Policy Association's line of twenty-five cent Headline Books actually predated Pocket Books by several years, but mass distribution was not achieved until 1939. At that, Headline

Books did not rack up the sorts of sales that Pocket Books enjoyed, nor did it attempt to. The Headline Books concept was "to reduce complicated international problems to popular terms, using original charts, maps and pictorial statistics . . . to make world affairs interesting and understandable."[26] Distributed by the American News Company, one of the largest wholesalers in America, Headline Books went their modest way with such titles as Shadow Over Europe: The Challenge of Nazi Germany and Human Dynamite: The Story of Europe's Minorities. Over one hundred special wire racks for Headline Books were placed in bookstores in 1939. It is not known exactly when the line ceased publication.

The third paperback line to coexist with Pocket Books in 1939 was Allen Lane's Penguin Books. Established in 1935 in England, Penguin Books were not exported to the United States until Ian Ballantine--an American whom Lane had hired after reading Ballantine's thesis on the economics of paperback publishing, written at the London School of Economics--agreed to oversee stateside distribution. But Penguin's approach to marketing was much cruder than Pocket Books'. Ballantine simply dispatched a team of salesmen out of his New York City office to show the line to bookstores; the salesmen received commissions based on orders received.[27] It was not until 1941 that Ballantine began exploring the possibilities of mass distribution for the line. It was only then that he became aware of the blandness of the Penguin Books' covers: with their plain typographic design against dull red or green backgrounds, they looked like nothing so much as the

defunct Red Arrow line. Eventually he would implement the sort of glossy pictorial covers for Penguin Books that most of the American paperback houses were using, a necessary decision which so outraged Allen Lane when he finally learned of it that he discharged Ballantine.[28] Before the split occurred, though, Ballantine started an offshoot of Penguin Books called "The Infantry Journal," a line of war-related paperbacks which qualified Ballantine for a paper allotment he otherwise would not have received.[29] (The Infantry Journal is further discussed in "The Paperback Book in World War II.")

Sometime in late 1939 or early 1940, an unusual line of paperbacks emerged on the West Coast. Sold only through vending machines for ten cents, Bantam Books were designed by Lloyd Smith, editor-in-chief of Western Printing and Lithographing of Poughkeepsie.[30] Although the offices of Bantam Books were located in the Pacific Mutual Building of Los Angeles, little is known of the extent of the line's distribution along the West Coast, or how far inland they penetrated, if at all.[31] Apparently twenty-eight titles were produced in the short time the company was in business, among which were such varied titles as _How to Win and Hold a Husband_, _Grimm's Fairy Tales_, _The Shadow and the Voice of Murder_, _Tarzan and the Forbidden City_ and _1000 Facts Worth Knowing_. The books were very cheaply produced, as their ten cent price would suggest, with poor paper used both for the interior pages and the cover stock. The covers were unattractive, employing typography against a dull green background; the most prominent feature on the cover was the "Bantam Books" logo, which was printed at least ten

times as large as the title of the book itself. The last eight titles in the series, however, were reissued with pictorial covers, a wise marketing strategy which apparently did not increase the life of the line. Several years after Bantam Books terminated production, Ian Ballantine adopted its name and rooster colophon for his new line of paperbacks. The vending machines experiment was never again used as the exclusive means of distribution by a paperback house, although later in the 1940's vending machines were used in certain outlets to dispense the current releases of a number of different publishers.[32]

Neither Bantam Books, with its extremely limited distribution, nor Headline Books, with its restricted subject matter, nor even Penguin Books, with its dull appearance and bookstore-only distribution, posed much of a threat to Pocket Books in the early years. The first serious challenge faced by de Graff and associates came instead from the Illustrated Editions Company, which in November of 1941 began production of "Avon Pocket-Size Books." Publisher Jo Meyers selected an intelligent mixture for his first twelve releases, including William Faulkner's Mosquitoes, James Hilton's Ill Wind, Agatha Christie's The Big Four, and Edward Fitzgerald's translation of The Rubiyat of Omar Khayam. The dimensions of Avon Books were rather larger than Pocket Books, particularly in the areas of width and bulk. The first set of twelve titles, each of which was printed in quantities of at least 50,000, was shipped in a special display rack which held twenty-eight books. The first printings of Avon's first sixteen releases

included such attractive extras as illustrated endpapers, front-pieces and interior illustrations.[33]

Only one problem existed with Meyers' line of paperback reprints: in the opinion of de Graff and the other executives of Pocket Books, "Avon Pocket-Size Books" violated Pocket Books' rights in terms of both format and name. A bitter 1942 was spent in court battles between the two companies, which ended with the Appellate Division rendering a decision in favor of Pocket Books. Meyers had to delete the designation "Pocket-Size" from the front cover, and also could not stain the page-margins red.[34] Otherwise Avon Books was free to use the format of Pocket Books.

A much more modest operation which nevertheless stayed in business for more than a decade, the Handi-Books imprint published by Jim Quinn out of Kingston, New York, debuted late in 1941. Handi-Books had a format rather different from the one used by most other paperback houses of the day, being stapled pamphlet-fashion rather than perfect-bound. The savings this process represented enabled Quinn to market the books for just fifteen cents until after the war, when they rose to twenty cents and then, finally, twenty-five cents. Quinn used a bold style of calligraphy to disguise the fact that Handi-Books did not use artwork for their covers. Often it was difficult to distinguish one release from another, since Quinn favored a motif of bright reds, yellows and blacks for most of his Handi-Books. The first several years of releases were exclusively mysteries, usually abridged from the hard-cover original. After the war Quinn added romances and westerns to his

line-up. Historically, Handi-Books are important for being the first paperback house to issue original editions on a regular basis. (See "Original Editions in Paperback.")

Despite wartime restrictions on paper allotments, 1943 saw the debut of three new paperback operations. The most obscure of the three houses--and the most unique in format--was the Royce series of "Quick Reader"'s. Measuring approximately half the size of conventional paperbacks, the Quick Reader series offered a variety of humor, mystery and movie titles, most of which contained numerous illustrations. Reprints of full-length works generally had to be abridged in order to fit the Quick Reader format. Although the line lasted until 1945, its tiny size undoubtedly hindered newsstand sales.

The two other houses that began publishing paperbacks in 1943 were much more sophisticated operations, and both quickly became leaders in the industry. Dell Books, which first appeared in January, was the brainchild of George T. Delacorte, the publisher of such Dell magazines and comic books as _Modern Screen_, _Inside Detective_, _Looney Tunes_ and _Walt Disney Comics and Stories_. Twenty-five years of experience mass-marketing magazines well prepared Delacorte for producing a line of twenty-five cent paperbacks. Distributed through the American News Company network, Dell Books were printed by Western Printing and Lithographing in quantities of about 200,000 for each title.[35] As with most other paperback lines, Dell Books were usually displayed in special racks which the company provided retail outlets. Most of the early Dells were reprints of mysteries, although an occasional war

story, joke book or romance appeared irregularly. After the war, westerns would become a staple of the line. The key to the immediate success of Dell Books (which were advertised extensively in the house magazines) was its eye-catching packaging. The front covers sported a keyhole insignia which made them easily identifiable. The stylized cover art was finished with an airbrush technique by house artist Gerald Gregg,[36] making Dell Books stand out on a crowded newsstand just as a poster would. Finally, the back covers of Dell Books (beginning with #5) carried a unique feature: a map illustrating a location in the story. In all, it was package superior even to Pocket Books.

Almost as slickly produced was the Popular Library line of publisher Ned Pines, who himself had a dozen years experience producing comic books, pulps and slick magazines for the American News Company.[37] Like Dell, Popular Library originated as a line of mystery reprints which later expanded into the western, romance and quiz-book categories. Between 1943 and 1946, Popular Library used cover art by an artist named Hoffman who applied an airbrush technique with a German Expressionist style. After 1946 the line adopted the look of the mystery pulps which, ironically, were being put out of business by paperbacks.

Only two paperback lines debuted in 1944, neither of which was to make much of an impact. The Military Service Publishing Company of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania--which had been involved in the production of Ian Ballantine's Infantry Journal imprint[38]--began publishing a line named Superior Reprints. Dull cover graphics handicapped the appeal

of the releases, which included novels and short-story collections by such popular authors as Philip Wylie, "Saki" and Ring Lardner. After the firm suspended publication in 1945, the newly-formed Bantam Books line founded by Ian Ballantine acquired the back-stock of Superior Reprints and reissued the books with glossy pictorial dust jackets. The other house to begin operations in 1944 was Bartholomew House of New York City, a small outfit which issued novels and anthologies by H. P. Lovecarft, Ben Hecht, Pearl Buck and Kathleen Norris. After the war, Bart House began a short-lived experiment: a line of original novelizations of movie screenplays, of which three were produced. In all, Bart House published thirty-nine paperbacks between 1944 and its demise in 1947.

Between 1943 and 1945, all paperback companies were dramatically affected by the restrictions in paper usage imposed by the War Production Board. The next section of this study examines the repercussions of those restrictions, as well as the other effects that World War II had upon the paperback industry.

Notes to
Pocket Books and Its First Competitors

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Personal interview with Leon Shimkin, December 1979.

[4]Simon & Schuster, p. 33.

[5]Letter from Philip Nathanson, Collecting Paperbacks?, 1(6), p. 6.

[6]John Tebbel, Paperback Books: A Pocket History (New York: Pocket Books, 1964), pp. 21-22.

[7]Simon & Schuster, p. 35.

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[9]Personal interview.

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[11]Tebbel, Paperback Books, p. 4.

[12]"A Report on Pocket Books," Publishers' Weekly (hereafter referred to as PW), 2 March 1940, p. 990.

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[15]"Pocket Books Offers Big Display Table," PW, 19 October 1940, pp. 1595-1596.

[16]"A Report on Pocket Books," p. 990.

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[24]"A Report on Pocket Books," p. 990.

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[27]Clarence Petersen, *The Bantam Story* (New York: Bantam, 1975), p. 7.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 8.

[29]*Ibid.*, p. 8.

[30]Bill Lyles, "Keyhole Confidential," *Collecting Paperbacks?*, 1(2), p. 10.

[31]Paul Payne, "Lost and Found: L.A. Bantam," *Collecting Paperbacks?*, 1(3), p. 10.

[32]*Paperback Quarterly*, 1(2) (Spring 1979), p. 29.

[33]"New 25-Cent Reprint Line Announced," *PW*, 15 December 1941, pp. 1904-05.

[34]"First Class Mail," *PW*, 20 February 1943, p. 929.

[35]"Dell, Publishers of Magazines and Reprints," *PW*, 19 May 1945, p. 1990.

[36]Bill Lyles, "Keyhole Confidential," in *Collecting Paperbacks?*, 1(3), p. 6.

[37]Frank Schick, The Paperbound Book in America (New York: Bowker 1958), p. 164.

[38]Petersen, The Bantam Story, p. 8.

CHAPTER III

The Paperback Book in World War II

Paper Quotas and Paperback Production

On January 8, 1943, the War Production Board ordered an across the-board ten per cent cut in paper consumption by the publishing community. Manpower shortages and priority uses for wood pulp necessitated the cut, which applied to the WPB's four classes of publishing: books, magazines, newspapers and commercial printing. For books, the January 8 order meant that the total tonnage of paper used had to be decreased ten per cent, while the volume in reprinted titles also had to be ten per cent smaller than the initial printing. Beyond those specifications, book publishers were free to devise whatever methods they saw fit to meet the ten per cent cuts.[1]

The paperback book publishers reacted to this call for conservation by using a thinner grade of paper than pre-1943 editions had used. A representative example is the Pocket Books title, The Pocket Book of Boners. Published originally in 1941, it was redesigned in 1943 so that its thickness had shrunk from one-half inch to three-eighths of an inch. In 1944, it was again redesigned so that its thickness was only one-fourth of an inch. Publisher's Weekly reported that sales on the latter edition had increased, suggesting that the public was not put off by receiving less bulk for its money.[2] Frederic G. Melcher, the editor of Publisher's Weekly, commented that "many believe that the public will like the change to less bulk, a change--now necessary--which

has been held off for years by the recurring report that the public buys by size."[3]

While the height and width of Pocket Books editions were not affected by the WPB edict, those of the Avon Books line--which had debuted in 1942--were. Originally published in dimensions a half-inch wider and one-fourth inch taller than Pocket Books' norm of five and three-fourths inches by eight and five-eighths inches, Avon Books gradually were reduced to what eventually became an industry wide norm for paperback book sizes. Avon Books also became significantly thinner after 1943; their first fifteen titles had measured as much as an inch-and-a-half thick.

Another effect of the WPB edict was the temporary discontinuation of lamination on the cover of Pocket Books titles. While Pocket Books had been the only company to use the lamination process prior to 1943, most paperback publishers were to follow suit once the restrictions were lifted in 1946. The thin plastic sheet that was fused onto the cardboard covers gave a paperback book a glossy look that enabled it to catch the eye of the newsstand browser.

The War Production Board restrictions also forced paperback publishers to decrease the number of titles they printed each month. Pocket Books' 1942 schedule of five new releases each month was dropped to four by mid-1943.[4] By October of 1944, the number had dropped to two.[5] The number of pages in a given volume often determined the quantities in which it could be printed. The _Pocket Self-Pronouncing Dictionary and Vocabulary Builder_ (#126) required twice as many pages

as The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam (#128); consequently, bookstores might receive a full order of the latter title, but only a half-order of the former.[6]

Occasionally Pocket Books would even scrap its original plates for an edition and manufacture new ones, a costly process which could save money and paper for titles which required printing after printing. Some of the titles which Pocket reset in ten-point monotype achieved significant drops in total page counts: The Pocket Book of Verse and The Pocket Book of Short Stories were reduced from 448 pages to 384 pages; Above Suspicion dropped from 386 pages to 288. Books of the length of The Pocket Cook Book--512 pages--were not produced after 1943. Instead, they were issued in abridged versions, with the understanding that the text would be restored after the war, a process exemplified by The Pocket Book of Modern American Short Stories and The Pocket Book of True Crime Stories, which were cut prior to publication from 512 pages to 320.[7]

The only paperbacks exempt from the above policies were those relating to the war effort. See Here, Private Hargrove, for instance, was constantly kept in print by Pocket Books, even though doing so meant giving other titles smaller and/or less frequent print runs.[8] Other Pocket Book titles to which the company allotted disproportionate amounts of their paper stock included The Pocket Book of War Humor, Defense Will Not Win the War and You Can't Do Business with Hitler. Titles in demand by the armed services were produced in suf-

ficient quantity to fill all orders by the military, despite the deeper cuts thereby necessitated in the printings of other volumes.[9]

Pocket Books made a further effort to aid the rationing of paper by dispatching twenty-one of their salesmen to work with local salvage committees around the United States. The trucks of the Pocket Books distributors were then used to pick up salvaged paper and deliver it to local stockpiles.[10]

Paperbacks for the Boys Overseas

Although the war put a crimp in the paper allotments publishers received from 1943 through 1945, it also created an enormous market. Millions of servicemen had to rely on inexpensive books as one of their chief sources of entertainment--even men who had never before thought of turning to a book for pleasure. Thus, just as the comic book flourished as it never had before, so too did the paperback book during the war years. Many Pocket Books carried suggestions on their back covers such as, "Share this book with someone in uniform," or "Send this book to a boy in the armed forces anywhere in the U.S. . . . only 4¢." The compact size and light weight of paperback books made them ideal package-stuffers during the 1944 Christmas season. Department stores such as Lowenstein's in Memphis, Tennessee, and Stix, Baer & Fuller in St. Louis reported that even those customers who included no other books in their packages filled up space with a Pocket Book or two.[11] Paperbacks often were displayed in special aisles promoting certain merchandise for overseas mailing. Agencies such as the Red Cross, the Army, the Navy, along with the private sec-

tor, ultimately sent 25,000,000 Pocket Books overseas to servicemen.[12]

In May of 1943, it was announced that Omnibook, a magazine of book abridgments which had debuted in 1938, was reducing its size to that of Pocket Books in accordance with a request by the War Department, which had been sending 25,000 copies overseas at its own expense. Upon its switch to the popular paperback-book format, Omnibook's principal distributor, the American News Company, doubled its order in anticipation of increased sales.[13]

Far eclipsing the Omnibook operation in importance, however, was a new kind of paperback book, originated by a member of the Council of Books in Wartime, W. W. Norton. In February of 1943, Norton drafted a proposal which stated,

> It has long been felt that a major contribution of the industry could properly lie along a new and completely different line, that of making freely available to our armed forces . . . the entertainment, the information, the morale, and even the inspiration, which is in books.[14]

Named Armed Services Editions, this series of inexpensive reprints began production under the direction of Philip Van Doren Stern (of Pocket Books), Malcolm Johnson (of Doubleday, Doran), John Farrar (of Farrar & Rinehart), and William Sloane (of Holt).[15] Armed Services Editions were to be published at the expense of the United States government; costs were estimated at about six cents per copy. The publishers of the hardbound editions would receive no royalty, but authors were to be given one cent for each copy printed.[16] In return for relinquishing their royalty, the publishers of record

received a guarantee that the books would be distributed only to servicemen stationed overseas; stateside servicemen would have to buy (or be given) mass-market editions. Overseas servicemen would be given Armed Services Editions free of charge, albeit without the freedom of choice enjoyed by stateside shoppers: " . . . the PX help was cutting open the bundles and dumping the things into a big bin . . . No time to shop and look for titles. Grab a book, Joe, and keep goin' . . . You can swap afterwards!"[17]

In September of 1943, the first thirty titles were issued, printed in quantities of 50,000 copies each. Among the authors represented were John Steinbeck, Charles Dickens, Graham Greene, Herman Melville, and Ogden Nash. Eventually, all types of literature--from westerns to war, from fantasy to the classics, from self-improvement to sports, from humor to philosophy--were offered. The books were published in a horizontal format, with two columns of type on each page. The cover, made of a light paper stock, reproduced the original dust jacket of each work. Armed Services Editions were produced at a variety of printing presses around the U.S.A. on special Webb presses. The books were printed twice up, then cut in half, bound with rust-proof staples, and delivered to Army and Navy depots where they were shipped overseas. The Army received eighty per cent of each printing; the Navy, the remainder.[18]

Due to the variance in book lengths and the need to standardize production methods as much as necessary, two sizes were chosen for Armed Services Editions. For books up to 320 pages in length, a for-

mat five and one-half inches by three and seven-eighths inches was used. A larger format of six and one-half inches by four and one-half inches accommodated books up to 512 pages in length. The great majority of the books were not condensed, except for the deletion of indexes, appendices and the like.[19]

By the end of December, 1944, some 42,000,000 Armed Services Editions had been produced.[20] Nearly a million had been sent to American POW's by the War Prisoners Aid Society and by the Army. Printings for each title had to be increased to 140,000 (from the initial 50,000) in the face of the enthusiasm with which the books were received by servicemen. An Army Air Force Colonel described this enthusiasm to the Council of Books on Wartime:

> While I was in Tarawa, Apamama and Nonemea, in the Gilberts, I had the pleasure of seeing three cases of your books arrive. The sight of those rugged, tropicalized American soldiers, marines and Seas-bees walking away from the head of a long Council book distribution line, enthusiastically going over their attractively-bound, bright new books, praising them, fitting them into their pockets, already bargaining with their comrades--if you had been there, I am sure you, too, would have had a little lump in your throat.[21]

Once the war ended, the need for vast quantities of Armed Services Editions lessened. But production was not halted. Rather, it was stepped down from its previous high of 155,000 copy print runs for forty titles each month to 25,000 copy print runs for twelve monthly releases.[22] A change in format was also implemented; no longer printed horizontally, Armed Services Editions appeared in the conventional paperback vertical format with squared bindings. The cover design was

slightly altered by art director William Ronin to feature more prominently the reproduction of the original edition's dust jacket. During its last year of production, the series featured novels by such authors as Erle Stanley Gardner, Zane Grey, Max Brand, Herman Wouk, Wayne D. Overholser, Budd Schulberg, John Dickson Carr and James Michener. Few of the nonfiction selections of previous years appeared. The line suspended production in 1947.[23]

There can be little doubt that the more than 130,000,000 copies of 1,322 different Armed Services Editions titles that were distributed to American servicemen overseas--most of which were read by several different "consumers"--created an appreciation for reading as entertainment among millions of former nonreaders. As one officer wrote from a hospital in England, "Some toughies in my company have admitted without shame that they were reading their first book since grammar school."[24]

War-Related Paperback Titles

Beginning in January of 1943, Pocket Books began issuing at least one title each month which related to the home front or war effort. Joseph Davies' *Mission to Moscow* and *The Pocket Book of Flower Gardening* were the first two releases in this monthly program; over the next two years they were followed by such specially selected volumes as *See Here, Private Hargrove*, *The Pocket Book of Home Canning*, *The Pocket Aviation Quiz Book*, *U.S. Foreign Policy*, *AAF: The Official Guide*, *Lend-Lease: Weapon for Victory*, *Here Is*

Your War and TVA: Democracy on the March. Several of the above were original manuscripts commissioned by Pocket Books.

None of the other wartime paperback publishers was as aggressive as Pocket Books in producing war-related titles, but Dell and Avon at least made a token effort. Dell's I Was a Nazi Flyer, G.I. Jokes, Memo to a Firing Squad, Queen of the Flat-tops and Liberty Laughs, and Avon's Stage Door Canteen, The Road to Victory, Germany: Past, Present and Future and See What I Mean? (a fable about Nazis conquering the USA) were representative of the consciousness of the war and home-front efforts within the paperback industry. The other major paperback house, Popular Library, did not deviate from its regular issue of mystery reprints throughout the war's duration. It is likely that the aggressiveness of Pocket Books in securing war-related books for paperback publication left a slim field for the other houses.

Ian Ballantine of Penguin Books created a separate imprint for his war-related titles in 1943. Headlined "A Fighting Forces - Penguin Special," The Infantry Journal imprint of Penguin Books included both fiction (They Were Expendable; The Moon Is Down) and instructional guides (This Is the Navy; Aircraft Recognition; Handbook for Army Wives and Mothers). Unlike the war-related issues of Pocket Books, Avon and Dell, the Penguin Infantry Journals were designed to look different from the non-war books. Each had bright red borders on both covers and the spine; some were printed in odd sizes. Rudolf Modley's A History of the War was printed in a horizontal format to

allow for the dozens of maps, charts and graphs contained therein. The line was discontinued in 1945, once the need for war-related books was no longer apparent.

The morale-boosting effort of the paperback book industry during World War II would prove a public-relations coup. Although the Korean conflict and Vietnam would also make their impact felt in the world of publishing, the effect of World War II upon the paperback industry was unique. But the paperback book also enjoyed unique exposure as one of the cheapest and most portable forms of entertainment for servicemen. It was a reciprocal arrangement which enabled the mass-market paperback--still something of a novelty in December of 1941--to become a familiar product to Americans by 1945. Whether the war helped accelerate this process is uncertain, but the likelihood is strong. The paperback book made many friends for itself among soldiers and civilians alike. The industry would be counting on this friendship as it resumed normal production once the war had ended.

Notes to
The Paperback Book in World War II

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[3]Melcher, "What the Paper Cut Means."

[4]"Pocket Books Plans for Fall with Shipping Quotas Strictly Enforced," PW, 17 July 1943, p. 177.

[5]PW, 4 November 1944, p. 1836.

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[7]Ibid., p. 179.

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[15]"Armed Services Editions Planned by Council on Books," PW, 22 May 1943, p. 1966.

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[21] "Armed Services Editions Received by Troops," *PW*, 12 February 1944, p. 778.

[22] *PW*, 6 July 1945, pp. 75-76.

[23] "Armed Services Editions Issued in New Format," *PW*, 2 November 1946, p. 2607.

[24] Wilk, "Of Armed Services Editions I Sing," p. 22.

CHAPTER IV

Expansion and Experimentation, 1946 - 1955

The Post-War Newsstand Glut

As the end of the war approached, the mood of the paperback companies was one of unbridled optimism. The consensus seemed to be that, once the paper restrictions had been lifted, a near-infinite expanse of marketing territory would lay before the industry, just begging to be harvested. The leader of the paperback houses, Pocket Books, was especially bullish on the immediate possibilities for expanded production and market penetration. In April of 1945, Philip Van Doren Stern, now free of his duties with Armed Services Editions, was sent on a trek up and down the eastern seaboard in an effort to secure contracts for paper, printing, and binding, pending the war's conclusion. Van Doren Stern returned brimming with confidence about the deals he had concluded; Pocket Books would not merely maintain its edge on the rest of the industry, but was now in a position to widen the gap.[1]

Wallis E. Howe, Jr., like Van Doren Stern a vice-president of Pocket Books, composed a confident essay for Publisher's Weekly entitled "Breaking into New Markets," in which he outlined the "beach-heads" that the paperback companies might seize after the war: 55,000 drug stores, 5,145 variety stores, 18,000 cigar stores, 250,000 automobile supply stores and filling stations, 9,100 general merchandise chains (including J. C. Penny, Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery

Ward), and 550,000 supermarkets.[2] Added to the 78,000 outlets which already carried paperback books, these potential markets, Howe suggested, could be tapped by all segments of book publishing, not merely the paperback houses: "Pocket Books may be the front wave of assault on the greatest buying terrain of all, and pave the way for the forces of occupation, higher-priced books."[3] Nor would these 800,000 new outlets pose a threat to the 2,854 bookstores already in existence, Howe assured his readers:

> It strikes me that the competition in our industry is not between Harcourt and Harper . . . or between Pocket Books and any of its imitators, but rather the competition is between Reading and Going to the Movies, between Reading and Playing Gin Rummy or any other purposes to which a free person will devote his leisure time and leisure money . . . When books are as accessible as cigarettes (in normal times) and Coca-Cola, we'll be on our way to becoming a reading nation.[4]

Howe's predictions in several instances were to be proven uncannily accurate, particularly his assessment of the supermarkets as a potentially rich market for paperback sales, but in others Howe was way off base. Perhaps the most dangerously optimistic of his statements was the one insisting that the territory secured in the five-and-dime stores (like Woolworth's) would not be jeopardized by the resumption of the production of merchandise at pre-war levels. "There are those, I know," said Howe, "in the publishing world who hold that books will lose out to cookies and doodads when the war is over; but I doubt it. As long as the books are worth buying, and reasonably priced, you can count on their being displayed and pushed . . ."[5] But, as a 1946 Publisher's Weekly report maintained, paperbacks were actually being

squeezed off the counters in variety, chain, and drug stores by other kinds of items:

> Several buyers for large chains, including one of the major drug syndicates and one of the biggest variety stores, are now frank in their statements that they intend to fill their shops with merchandise that sells the fastest, whether that merchandise be books or soap dishes. In such mass operations, books are simply 25¢ or 49¢ or $1 items competing with similarly priced items, and if the book counter is needed for a better selling article, there will be no crocodile tears shed by the owner of the stores.[6]

As events developed through the rest of 1946, this caution proved to be well founded. The paperback houses had indeed stepped up production upon the lifting of the wartime paper quotas--Pocket Books was issuing ten titles each month, five for national distribution and five for test markets--but the outlets were not cooperating by expanding their display space for the books. Too, new companies had emerged after the war, eager to carve out for themselves a hunk of the territory being exploited by only a handful of paperback publishers. These new imprints included Pony Books, based in Stamford, Connecticut; Pelican Books, the nonfiction companion to Penguin Books; and a host of former digest-size lines of mystery reprints, which converted to the conventional mass-market size during 1946. Among the imprints in this last group were Century, Green Dragon, Black Knight, Hangman's House, Bleak House, Bonded, and Death House. But the biggest impact was made by the debut of Bantam Books, which immediately set about to dominate the industry.

Bantam Books was created by Ian Ballantine, who had split with Allen Lane and Penguin in 1945. The company was bankrolled by

Grosset & Dunlap, a hardcover reprint house which itself was under the joint ownership of Random House, Scribner's, Little, Brown, and other publishing giants. Given these resources, and the distribution of clout of the Curtis Circulation company, Bantam exploded onto the publishing scene with an initial release of twenty titles on January 3, 1946.[7] Most of these titles were given printing runs of between four and five hundred thousand copies. And Bantam left nothing to chance in being allotted adequate display space; the company spent almost a half-million dollars in the manufacture of special display racks which were given to sales outlets with the understanding that only Bantam paperbacks were to be exhibited thereon.[8] Almost at once, Bantam became the second most powerful paperback house.

It was precisely the sort of aggressiveness displayed by Bantam and Pocket which led to the first serious newsstand glut in 1946. These torrents of paperbacks were being funneled into the same number of outlets that had existed before the production increases, and, as noted earlier, some of those outlets were decreasing the display area given to paperbacks. The problem facing the paperback companies in 1946 was, what happens when a gallon of water is poured into a pint container? Leon Shimkin, one of Pocket Books' founders, recalls this time of product overflow:

> Once the paper became available, everybody and his cousin started a business. There was a constant desire to dominate the market by pushing the books into all the available outlets. As a result, far too many books were being published for the room that existed for display. It got so bad that most wholesalers would receive the books, not even open the the cartons, and return the whole shipment. We found that

> our returns were far greater than we could hold in our warehouses. So we had to bury them. We couldn't even shred the returns or repulp them, because the glue we put in our bindings made the paper useless.[9]

The distribution system for paperbacks that existed in the 1940's was quite different from the one used today. Returns from wholesalers to the publishers were not then called or thought of as "returns," because the wholesaler did not receive a refund; instead, he was given credit towards a new release.[10] This system of "exchanges" worked efficiently when the rate of production approximated the rate of sales, but with the channels of distribution clogged as they were, wholesalers found themselves exchanging one unopened box of paperbacks for another box, which itself would remain unopened. And all the while, blissfully unaware of the magnitude of this problem, publishers continued to order print runs of between 200,000 and 600,000 copies of each title.

By June of 1946, the situation had reached a state serious enough for Publisher's Weekly to run a report in which sales of paperback books, comic books, pulps and digest were shown to be in a serious sales slump; the slick magazines apparently were in less dire straights.[11] Advertising campaigns for many paperback lines were cancelled, while industry leader Pocket Books withdrew several titles from circulation and adjusted its print runs downward.[12] Charles Heckleman, editor of Popular Library, claimed to have anticipated the crisis, and halved the line's rate of production.[13] Penguin also averted the worst of the newsstand recession, as its returns

allegedly did not exceed the usual rate.[14] But other companies were not so fortunate. During 1947, several of the imprints that had debuted the previous year ceased production, including Pony, Bonded, Eagle, Green Dragon, Black Knight, Hangman's House and Bleak House. In retrospect, the decision of the digest lines to convert to pocket-size might have been a mistake. The word was, "Production is tight and uncertain."[15] It was a desperate situation which called for desperate measures.

One of the most inventive methods some companies found of dealing with those millions of returns was to unpack them, slip on dust jackets featuring new cover art, and send the books back for a second go-round on the racks. Pocket Books was one of the first houses to attempt this strategy, re-releasing such titles as The Maltese Falcon, Busman's Honeymoon and Chicken Every Sunday with glossy dust jackets. New American Library also reissued a handful of Penguin titles, covering Robert Jonas' abstract compositions with dust jackets featuring the newly popular naturalistic style of art. Among the books so redesigned were The Laughing Fox, The Talking Clock, The Rasp and The Perennial Boarder, all mysteries. But the most aggressive use of this experiment in packaging was made by Bantam Books, which between 1947 and 1949 reissued at least twenty titles with dust jackets. This prolific output was due in large part to Bantam's acquisition of the Superior Reprint backstock after that company ceased operations in 1945. (Ian Ballantine, one of Bantam's co-founders, had worked with the Military Service Publishing Company,

the publishers of Superior Reprints, during the war.) Bantam placed dust jackets on a dozen or so Superior titles, among them A Saki Sampler (retitled The She-Wolf on Bantam's dust jacket), The Love Nest, The Informer and The Navy Colt, and numbered the jackets in sequence with the company's regular releases. Between 1948 and 1950, various Bantam backlist titles, including The Great Gatsby, Babbitt, Cannery Row, The Man Within and The Bruiser, also were reissued with jackets featuring a more modern look. (As the dust jackets themselves bore no date, one can only approximate the dates of their release.) Few dust jackets appeared on paperbacks after 1950, suggesting that this solution to the returns problem had not been especially effective. The problem of overproduction could not be solved by clever recycling; it had to be cut off at the source.

To that end, in October of 1946, Pocket Books had devised a method of refining production and marketing procedures. This complex system divided the new releases into three priority levels. The first-level books were given initial printings of about 400,000 copies; the second- and third-level titles were printed in quantities ranging from 150,000 to 250,000 copies.[16] It was learned very quickly that 400,000 copies for some of the first-level releases was far too conservative a printing, and certain "guaranteed" successes--such as Rosamond Marshall's Kitty--were given initial printings in the 700,000 range. Allowances were also made for seasonal variances; traditionally, summer sales of Pocket Books had been the lightest, so production was cut ten per cent to twenty per cent for

all three levels of books that were to be released in the summer. Within six months, Pocket Books was able to report new total sales records, easing of distribution clogs and a marked decrease in returns.[17]

Pocket Books' impressive results were proudly touted, and its proportional-distribution system probably was adopted by the other paperback houses in a very short span of time. The desire to conquer the market temporarily had deferred to common sense. The companies were finding that even being able to reserve space for their special rack was a luxury whose time rapidly was passing. Rather than admit this fact of publishing life, though, some of the houses made one last stab at staking out private territory for their paperback lines by reviving the vending machine concept, last seen on the West Coast several years earlier in the service of Bantam Books of Los Angeles. Pocket Books was the first to devise a vending machine to market its books. In December of 1947, the "Dadson" machine, holding ninety-six Pocket Books, made its brief appearance.[18] Around the same time, a "Book-O-Mat" vending machine carrying a number of paperbacks from various houses made a brief appearance.[19] Then in 1950, Avon introduced the "VendAvon" machine, which held between 350 and 650 copies of twenty-four different titles. A pilot model was installed at LaGuardia airport for an undetermined length of time.[20] In the opinion of Robert de Graff, co-founder of Pocket Books, these machines were untenable marketing outlets because people were unable to examine the books prior to purchase.[21] Whatever the specific cause of the failure of these paperback dispensers to catch on, the companies learned

an important lesson: exclusivity of sales territory was no longer possible. They would have to share the racks and peacefully coexist in the same outlets if they were to survive.

With the market having stabilized somewhat by the paperback houses' implementation of production cutbacks, optimism suffused the industry as 1948 began. Unfortunately for the industry, its enthusiasm took the form of bullish production and expansion, the same problems which created the crisis of 1946-47. During 1948 and 1949, a dozen new imprints appeared on the newsstands. Comet Books was a line of juveniles produced by Pocket Books; in its oversized format, thirty-four titles appeared before Comet changed its size to conventional dimensions and its name to Pocket Books Jr. in 1950.[22] Permabooks was a genuine anomaly--a line of paperbacks with hardcovers. An offshoot of Doubleday, Permabooks released about one hundred titles in this peculiar format before changing to softcovers in 1951. After an additional two hundred plus titles had been issued, Doubleday sold the line to Pocket Books in 1954. Hillman Books, a division of Hillman Periodicals, Inc., debuted in 1948 with a mixture of western, crime, and instructional titles before suspending operations in 1950 after its forty-eighth release; the line would re-emerge in 1957 before finally succumbing in 1960.

The Novel Library imprint of Diversey Publishing (originally of Chicago, later of New York) specialized in cheesecake covers and "spicy" titles such as Bedroom Eyes, Broadway Virgin and Playthings of Desire. More than any other paperback line, Novel Library suc-

ceeded in transporting the utter sleaziness of the under-the-counter digests and pulps to the mass-market paperback format. By 1950, forty-six Novel Library books had been issued, many of which had first been published by Diversey as digests. Several of these digests later appeared as releases from Avon Books, suggesting that Novel Library and the other Diversey publications were absorbed by that company sometime in 1950.

In January of 1948, two imprints appeared for the first time. Signet Books and Mentor Books were published by the newly formed New American Library (NAL), which had just split from Allen Lane's Penguin operation. As had occurred between Ian Ballantine and Allen Lane a few years earlier, Kurt Enoch and Victor Weybright, Ballantine's successors at the American arm of Penguin Books, could not reconcile their philosophy of marketing--which included the use of brightly colored pictorial covers--with Lane's conservatism. Enoch and Weybright split with Lane and simply continued the format and numbering sequence of Penguin Books as Signet.[23] Mentor Books, the nonfiction companion imprint previously called Pelican Books, included such weighty tomes as _The Limitations of Science_, _The Coming of Age in Samoa_ and _Psychopathology in Everyday Life_. Both of NAL's imprints were published in the taller Penguin format, at that time unique among mass-market paperbacks. They were distributed by the Fawcett Publishing Company, which shortly would begin its own revolutionary line of paperback originals.

1949 saw no slow-down in activity among new publishing houses. Red Circle was founded by Martin Goodman, a New York-based publisher whose periodicals included the Timely Comics line (later to become Marvel Comics) as well as several dozen confession, movie and cheesecake magazines.[24] The nine Red Circle books that Goodman published were all of the Novel Library school of titillating subject matter, indicated by such titles as Hot Date, Leg Artist and Body or Soul. Late in 1949, Goodman rechristened his line Lion Books, continued his numbering sequence, and added mysteries, science fiction, sports and westerns to such exploitational subjects as homosexuality (Twilight Men), interracial romance (Walk Hard--Talk Loud) and prostitution (America's Cities of Sin). Over 400 Lion Books and Lion Library titles were issued before the company folded in 1957. The Almat Publishing Company, another magazine publisher, founded the Pyramid Books imprint in 1949. Like Lion Books, Pyramid initially specialized in the reprinting (and, often, retitling) of novels dealing with such "spicy" subject matters as homosexuality (The Divided Path), White slavery (23 Women) and illicit sex (Roadside Night, Female Convict, Love Camp). Eventually Pyramid moved into the more respectable genres of science fiction, mysteries, sports and westerns. Perhaps surprisingly, given its initial smarmy look, Pyramid went on to become one of the few imprints to survive into the 1970's, during the latter part of which it was acquired by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and renamed Jove Books.

Of much shorter duration was the life of Checker Books, an inexpensively produced and marketed (fifteen cent cover price) line founded by Lyle Kenyon Engel,[25] who during the 1970's would become the premier packager of paperback originals in America. Only twelve Checker Books were released, all during 1949, before Engel terminated publication. Probably the fifteen-cent price worked against the success of Checker Books, as too small a margin of profit was available to retailers to make it worth their while to display the line. The Graphic Books imprint, which survived through eight years and 157 releases, specialized in men's action genres--primarily detective tales and westerns--with an occasional cartoon collection thrown in for variety. 1949 also saw the test-marketing of two paperback anthologies by Fawcett; the line would begin full-scale operations a year later under the Gold Medal name. Another 1949 entry was the St. John Publishing Company's Reader's Choice Library, which briefly converted from its original digest-size format to paperback size for nine titles before returning to digest size in 1950; westerns and mysteries were the primary fare.

Of the twelve imprints that debuted during 1948 and 1949, only Hillman, Novel Library and Checker Books failed to survive past 1950--although the Comet Books/Pocket Books Jr. experiment was something less than a world-beater, suspending publication in 1951 after a combined total of seventy-seven releases. The relative success of so many companies and imprints suggests that the market had to some degree expanded since the disasterous 1946 wave of paperback

expansion. It is also likely that the Pocket Books inventory-control system was being implemented by many of the houses. Publishers had probably learned to be more conservative in their printing runs. Finally, many of the pulp magazines that had consumed a significant portion of newsstand display space either had terminated publication or converted to the smaller digest format by 1949, opening up more display area for paperback books.

Whatever the factors responsible, most of the major publishers reported upward curves on their sales charts for the first half of 1949. Dell and NAL claimed the strongest gains, while Pocket Books and Popular Library showed more modest gains. Avon and Bantam Books slumped, but not as severely as in the past couple of years. For the last quarter of 1949, Avon announced a list numbering forty-two releases, compared to thirty-two each for Pocket and Bantam, twenty-eight each for NAL and Dell, and a modest twenty for Popular Library.[26] Avon's general manager, Maurice Diamond, admitted the firm had been guilty of overproduction, the extent of which can be estimated by projecting Avon's forty-two-title quarterly release schedule over an annual rate of 168 titles, multiplied by the sixteen or so imprints being produced during 1949. Luckily, most paperback houses were more conservative than Avon; even so, the space crunch problem on the newsstands had by no means been solved as 1950 began, a fact publishers who had designs on further expansion would learn from bitter experience.

New Formats, Higher Prices, More Imprints

The market recovery of 1949 had a predictable effect upon paperback publishers: they stepped up production. The 659 titles that appeared in 1949 grew to 940 titles in 1950, according to a study done by Bantam Books, while the 184 million paperbacks printed in 1949 swelled to 214 million. Those figures translate into a sixteen per cent growth in numbers of copies produced, and a whopping 42.6 per cent increase in the number of titles issued.[27] The 214 million paperbacks produced in 1950 were more than three times the number produced in 1945. Yet, the same eighty to one hundred thousand outlets that existed in 1945 were expected to handle this mammoth escalation. This expansion continued in 1951, when the number of paperbacks issued reached a record high of 231,000,000 copies, an increase over 1950 of eight per cent. Of the various categories into which paperback books issued in 1941 fell, Bantam estimated that General Fiction accounted for the largest percentage, 46.7 per cent, with Mysteries next (26.8 per cent), followed by Westerns (15.2 per cent), Miscellaneous (7.5 per cent) and Nonfiction (3.9 per cent). Nongenre novels also showed the largest growth over the previous year, with mysteries the only other category to gain ground.[28]

A large part of this growth in contemporary novels can be credited toward Fawcett's Gold Medal Books, which began regular publication early in 1950, after its two test-marketed titles from 1949 apparently scored well. The only other imprint to debut in 1950 was the

Croydon line, which briefly converted from its digest-size format to compete on the racks; by 1951 it had returned to digest size.

One incentive for a house such as Croydon, which specialized in steamy sagas of illicit love, to issue its books in the digest format was that an extra dime could be charged without arousing consumer resistance. Digests looked more substantial than paperbacks (even though in actual wordage they were not), and so could be marketed for thirty-five cents. Also to be considered was the sales ceiling on the type of story Croydon--and other digest imprints such as Avon Monthly Novel, Original Novels, Venus Books, Rainbow Books, Exotic Novels, Ecstasy Novels and Falcon Books--relied upon. It was extremely unlikely that any of these sensationally packaged potboilers would achieve bestseller status, or even the 200,000 to 300,000 copies level of a modestly successful Pocket Books release. Low as the volume of digest sales was, the extra dime was an imperative to earn back costs. Retailers and wholesalers both would have been more inclined to carry a thirty-five cent publication with marginal sales than a twenty-five cent one, since their own margins of profit were tied to cover price and sales volume. With the newsstand racks for mass-market paperbacks having been filled by a record number of books during 1950, small houses were being squeezed out of display space just as Hangman's House, Bonded, Green Dragon, Black Knight, Pony and other minor-league paperback imprints had been squeezed out in 1947. The digest format was probably perceived as a way to avoid the paperback book glut. But digests still had to be

sold on the newsstand, and the newsstands had less room with each passing year. By 1954, most of the digest lines had failed. (See "Original Editions in Paperback.")

While digest-size paperbacks were dying a slow death, those published in the Pocket format were experimenting with ways to increase unit sales and profits. Pocket Books had been the first to break the twenty-five cent price barrier with its 1947 reissue of Benjamin Spock's _The Pocket Book of Baby and Child Care_.[29] But it was Bantam Books which first priced several of its books-invariably those of exceptional length--at thirty-five cents. Beginning with Taylor Caldwell's _This Side of Innocence_, the thirty-five cent level was set for more than a dozen of Bantam's 1950 releases, including _Leave Her to Heaven_, _Tender Is the Night_, _A Lion Is in the Street_ and _Never Love a Stranger_. These volumes carried a banner across the top of the cover proclaiming each to be "A Bantam Giant." Four hundred pages was the minimum length of these thirty-five cent specials, which were made more attractive by the use of wrap-around illustrated covers. One of Bantam's releases, _Roosevelt and Hopkins_, was of such length that it had to be issued in _two_ thirty-five cent volumes, one of 540 pages and one of 460 pages.

That same year NAL's Signet imprint matched Bantam's lead and went it one better: not only were certain volumes released at a thirty-five cent price, but a few special titles were marked at the (then) astonishing price of fifty cents. To impress upon readers the value of the fifty-cent package, the spine printed the title

twice upon two different background colors, making the book look as though two of the regular twenty-five cent editions had been bound together. Knock on Any Door, Forever Amber, The Naked and the Dead and The Young Lions were the first novels NAL released with a fifty cent price; all contained 600 or more pages of text. Signet's thirty-five cent "Giants" began in 1950 with such formidable novels as Native Son and Arch of Triumph; these ran to about 400 pages. Signet Books would later become the first to attain the seventy-five cent level, although this price was reserved for very special reprints like James Jones' From Here to Eternity and Ayn Rand's The Fountainhead. (An attempt had been made by NAL in 1949 to avoid such dramatic price hikes by issuing a long work--such as Look Homeward, Angel and An American Tragedy--in an abridged format that could be sold for twenty-five cents,[30] but this experiment found favor neither with readers nor with the American Book Publisher's Council, necessitating the thirty-five cent and fifty cent levels.)

Despite the failure of the dust jacket experiment of a few years earlier, the creative juices of the industry yet bubbled. One of the more interesting format variations was attempted with Dell's Ten Cent Books, a series of sixty-four page booklets which, as advertised, sold for a mere dime. Thirty-six of these smartly designed books were issued during 1951, displayed in some 50,000 specially designed racks provided by Dell.[31] But it became apparent to Dell that this low price, while popular with consumers, did not permit adequate profits for the wholesaler and retailer. The logical step

was to discontinue the ten-cent and begin a thirty-five cent line, which in 1952 is precisely what Dell did. Fawcett also saw the wisdom of the higher profit margin, and that same year began its thirty-five cent Red Seal imprint. But by 1953, Fawcett had become aware that its two lines were competing with, rather than complementing, each other. Subsequently, Fawcett issued its longer works in thirty-five cent Gold Medal editions.

Avon Books also created a companion imprint, but the rationalization for Eton Books, which debuted in 1951, is not easy to grasp. Priced at twenty-five cents, the same as the regular Avon line, in the same size as Avon's 1951 releases, Eton Books might have been conceived as the outlet for Avon's nonfiction titles. But after ten titles (including The Hygiene of Marriage and This Is Russia--Uncensored!) had been issued, Eton Books began to feature original novels in the mystery and western genres. They also adopted Gold Medal's taller format. This schizoid imprint was discontinued in 1953 when Avon came to the same conclusion that Fawcett had: the newsstands were clogged enough without a company creating competition for itself. Beginning in 1953, Avon mixed its reprints and originals, and tall format and short format books, within its regular series of Avon Books, while issuing its thirty-five cent releases in the Avon "T" and "AT" series. Avon also experimented with a fifty cent line in 1951, which issued titles sporadically throughout the decade.

Aware of the success other houses had achieved with selective use of thirty-five cent editions, Popular Library and Pocket Books

entered the thirty-five cent edition sweepstakes in 1952, the former with Popular Library Giants (which featured illustrations on both covers), the latter with Cardinal Editions (distinguished by a gold border along the spine). A year later, Popular Library began issuing Eagle Books, which basically were thinner versions of the Giants, priced at twenty-five cents. Why Popular Library wanted three separate imprints operating simultaneously is a matter for speculation, but both the Giants and Eagles did well enough to last for several years. Pocket Books apparently was also well satisfied with the performance of its Cardinal line, as in 1953 it created a separately numbered companion series of Cardinal editions priced at fifty cents apiece. Pyramid followed the Bantam and Signet methods of interspersing thirty-five cent "Giants" with its regular twenty-five cent releases. By the end of 1953, then, all of the major paperback publishers were, in one form or another, issuing thirty-five cent editions in addition to twenty-five cent titles. The days of the twenty-five cent paperback were numbered, however; publishing economics and acceptance by the public indicated clearly that thirty-five cent and even fifty cent paperbacks would soon become staples of the industry, rather than special occurrences.

The last great expansion took place between 1952 and 1955, when four new paperback companies would begin operations, accompanied by the appearance of a half-dozen spin-off imprints. The two houses which were formed in 1952, Ace and Ballantine, would eventually become two of the industry leaders. Ballantine Books, as the name

suggests, was the brainchild of Ian Ballantine. The concept of Ballantine Books was unique (and, it turned out, years ahead of its time): the simultaneous publication of hardcover and softcover editions, with profits shared by the two divisions. As a page in a 1952 Ballantine release explains,

> This book is the outcome of an innovation and a belief. The innovation is the idea of publishing original books of high quality in paper covers with simultaneous hard-bound editions. The belief is that authors and readers will respond to this idea: authors, because the plan gives them greater income and wider readership; the public, because the plan makes many good new books available at reasonable prices.
>
> --The Golden Spike, Ballantine #2, 1952.

The "greater income" referred to above was a royalty to authors of eight per cent, considerably more than reprint rights traditionally garnered. These high royalties were made possible because the hard-cover publisher absorbed the cost of producing the paperback edition, for which share he was rewarded with a larger share of that income.[32] Originally the same plates were used for both editions, which permitted the hardcover to be priced at $1.50, but the small size that resulted for the trade edition was found not to be quite attractive enough, and new plates were devised in order to produce a larger hardcover edition, which was marketed at two dollars. Ballantine paperbacks were priced at thirty-five cents. Although this joint-publication scheme only lasted a few years (only two hardcover publishers, Houghton Mifflin and Farrar, Straus and Young, committed themselves to the plan), Ballantine Books survived on its own quite well, and became one of the leading publishers of science fiction titles, many of them original editions.

The other major paperback house to debut in 1952 was the Ace Double-Novel Books imprint of A. A. Wyn. Edited by Donald Wollheim, these thirty-five cent books possessed a gimmick that was brilliant in its simplicity: each volume contained two complete novels, each of which had its own front cover. The novels were bound upside-down from each other, so that they ended in the middle of the volume, whereupon the reader had to flip the book over and begin again from page one. Action genres such as hard-boiled mysteries, westerns and science fiction provided the bulk of Ace's early releases, with cartoon collections, historicals and nonfiction being added to the schedule as the fifties progressed. After a few years, Ace occasionally would issue a single novel priced at either twenty-five cents or thirty-five cents, depending on the length of the manuscript, although the double-novels concept was retained until the early 1970's. Generally, one-half of each double volume would contain an original novel, with the other half containing a reprint. Genres were never mixed: a western was backed with a western, a mystery with a mystery, and so on. Pulp-style artwork was used for the covers, an appropriate advertisement for the types of stories the reader would find inside. More than any other paperback house, Ace Books filled the gap left by the failure of most of the pulp magazines. By the 1970's, Ace was specializing in just three genres: gothics, science fiction and westerns.

As Avon Books had created a companion imprint with Eton, Fawcett Gold Medal with Red Seal and Popular Library with Eagle, so too did

Bantam and Dell initiate companion imprints in 1953. Bantam's Pennant Books, like Avon's Eton line, did not exist for any obvious reason, since it published the same types of novels as did the parent company, all of which were reprints, as were Bantam Books releases. After two years and seventy-nine titles, the imprint was discontinued. By contrast, Dell's 1953 entry displayed a sound editorial basis. Dell First Editions, as the name suggests, were books which had never before appeared between covers. Priced for the most part at twenty-five cents, Dell First Editions often were expansions of magazine stories from publications such as Colliers, The Saturday Evening Post and Cosmopolitan. Eventually, new manuscripts were acquired and published. Westerns, science fiction, mysteries and contemporary novels dominated the releases in this series, with occasional "how-to" books, collections of plays and cartoon anthologies also appearing.

Just as Dell wanted to segregate its original publications from its reprints, so it appeared that Pocket Books had acquired Permabooks imprint for that purpose from Doubleday in 1954. But most Permabooks titles were reprints, not originals. In a perverse move, Pocket Books even used the same silver band on the spines of Permabooks that it did for its own imprint. As both imprints were published in the same size, sold for the same twenty-five cents and featured the same mixture of popular genres of fiction, the newsstand browser even might not have been aware that two different lines were involved. Despite this confusing marketing philosophy, Pocket Books did publish a few original manuscripts by mystery writers like Evan Hunter and Henry Kuttner under

the Permabooks imprint, a nod to the success of Fawcett's Gold Medal originals. Fawcett, in the meantime, expanded in the reverse direction; already possessing an imprint which specialized in the publication of original novels, the company decided to begin lines which would feature reprints of fiction and nonfiction. In 1955, Fawcett's Premier and Crest lines debuted. Occasionally, though, an original novel would be published under the Crest imprint, a decision for which neither Fawcett's writers or editors seem to recall the logic.[33] NAL also began a line in 1954 which specialized in nonfiction reprints; named Signet Key, the imprint featured self-help books like Electronics for Everyone (1958), How to Spell and Increase Your Word Power (1959), and Diet to Suit Yourself (1954).

Despite the prevalence of spin-off imprints in the early and mid-fifties, wholly new paperback companies did emerge at times. Two of the more successful lines of the mid-fifties were Beacon Books, which first appeared in 1954, and Berkley Books, which began operations in 1955. Beacon was an arm of the Universal Publishing and Distributing Corporation, which in 1952 had issued a series of thick, digest-size novels which were distinguished by their unregenerately lurid covers. (Even authors like Mark Twain, H. Rider Haggard and Samuel Butler had their novels published in "uncensored" editions, whatever that meant.) Beacon Books were every bit as exploitational as their digest-size predecessors; the company's titles and packaging style are discussed at greater length in "Sensationalism and Censorship." Berkley, on the other hand, offered a rather more tasteful package. Founded by former

Avon editors Frederic Klein and Charles R. Byrne, Berkley published two series of paperbacks, one priced at twenty-five cents, the other at thirty-five cents. Among the top-flight authors who appeared under the Berkley imprint during the fifties were John Cheever, Aldous Huxley, John Dickson Carr, Horace McCoy, Robert Penn Warren, and Chester Himes. Initial printings of Berkley Books were set at a sensible 150,000 copies; the Kable News Company handled distribution after 1956, inheriting the task from the American News Company.[34] Berkley is one of the few paperback companies established after the war to be in operation in 1981.

Although new paperback lines would emerge after 1955--among them Midwood and Zenith in 1958, and Belmont in 1960--never again would there be an explosion of companies and imprints to match the one that lasted from 1946 to 1955. Nor would there again be the sort of overproduction that necessitated the burying of millions of returned paperbacks in the Erie Canal, as Pocket Books reportedly did in the late forties.[35] The industry would continue to make mistakes in judgment involving packaging, production, and marketing, but not to the extent that was typical of this turbulent decade. The years immediately following the war put the fledgling industry through a trial by fire. The paperback publishers did not emerge from this trial unscathed, but they did manage to avoid the fate of the casualties of the nineteenth century publishing wars. Had history repeated itself, the mass-market paperback book would now be just a quaint artifact, like the dime

novel, instead of a medium which seems a permanent fixture as publishing moves into the eighties.

Notes to Expansion and Experimentation, 1946 - 1955

[1]"Pocket Books Expansion Goes into High," Publisher's Weekly (hereafter referred to as PW), 23 February 1946, p. 1243.

[2]Wallis E. Howe, Jr., "Breaking into New Markets," PW, 27 January 1947, pp. 429-31.

[3]Ibid., p. 431.

[4]Ibid., p. 431.

[5]Ibid., p. 430.

[6]"The Quest for New Markets Continues," PW, 22 June 1946, pp. 3195-96.

[7]Clarence Petersen, The Bantam Story (New York: Bantam, 1975), pp. 9-12.

[8]"Bantam Books Pushing Special Display Rack," PW, 22 June 1946, p. 3213.

[9]Personal interview with Leon Shimkin, December 1979.

[10]Petersen, The Bantam Story, p. 13.

[11]"Newsstand Sales in Heavy Slump," PW, 8 June 1946, p. 3009.

[12]"Publishers of 25 Cent Books Watching Title Output," PW, 28 September 1946, p. 1595.

[13]"Reprints and Bargain-Price Books for Mass Markets," PW, 5 October 1946, p. 1980.

[14]Ibid., p. 1979.

[15]Ibid., p. 1971.

[16]Eric Swenson, "Pocket Books Works Out a New Distribution Formula," PW, 17 May 1947, p. 2493.

[17]Swenson, "Pocket Books Works Out a New Distribution Formula," p. 2493.

[18]Bill Lyles, "Keyhole Confidential," Collecting Paperbacks?, 1(2), p. 10.

[19]"Paperback Promotionals," Paperback Quarterly, 2(2), p. 28.

[20]Lyles, "Keyhole Confidential," p. 10.

[21]"Paperback Promotionals," p. 28.

[22]"Teen-Age Pocket Books Take a New Form," PW, 17 December 1949, p. 2425.

[23]Petersen, The Bantam Story, p. 15.

[24]"Fifteen-cent Checkerbooks Now on Newsstands," PW, 24 December 1949, p. 2499.

[25]Frank Schick, The Paperbound Book in America (New York: Bowker, 1958), p. 168.

[26]PW, 14 August 1949, p. 1036.

[27]"Number of Newsstand Titles Increased 42.6% in 1950," PW, 20 January 1951, p. 223.

[28]"Newsstand Book Production Increased Moderately, 1951," PW, 19 January 1952, pp. 195-96.

[29]"Pocket Books Sets 35 Cent Price for a Leading Nonfiction Title," PW, 6 December 1947, p. 2542.

[30]"New American Library Plans 25-cent Editions of Wolfe Novels," PW, 25 September 1948, pp. 1433-34.

[31]"Dell Starts New 10¢ Line of Short Fiction Reprints," PW, 27 January 1951, p. 525.

[32]Schick, The Paperbound Book in America, p. 153.

[33] Correspondence with Gil Brewer and Jim Trupin, January 1981.

[34] Schick, The Paperbound Book in America, p. 175.

[35] Schick, The Paperbound Book in America, p. 89.

CHAPTER V

Sensationalism and Censorship

Perhaps it was due to the intense competition on the newsstands after the war. Perhaps American mores had been altered by what millions of returning servicemen had seen and endured while fighting overseas. Whatever explanation one cares to construct, the fact is that, between 1946 and 1956, the paperback book became enamoured of sex and violence as selling points. And, as the industry was to learn, some American communities had a low tolerance level for mass-marketed sensationalism.

The origins of this trend are not easy to pin down, but one would be hard-pressed to find paperbacks with overt erotic and/or violent covers prior to 1946. That seems to be the year that Pocket Books reissued Dashiell Hammett's classic detective novel The Maltese Falcon, which between July 1944 and October 1945 had already gone into eight printings, in a dust jacket which bore a rather different approach from the paperback's original cover. Where the 1944 Manso cover provided a striking illustration of the falcon statuette surrounded by three groping hands, the Stanley Meltzoff dust jacket chose a less representative moment from the novel for its subject: the scene wherein Sam Spade orders Brigid O'Shaughnessey to strip, so that Spade can determine if she pocketed a one-thousand-dollar bill as Gutman alleged. The dust jacket depicts the nearly naked Brigid, her back to us, standing next to a curtain, through which we can see the silhouette of Sam Spade as he searches her clothing.

Under the book's title is a terse explanation of this scene: "Sam Spade searched each article of the girl's clothing." The back of the dust jacket provides copy of an equally sensational nature:

> Color Flushed Her Face.
>
> 'Don't make me do it, Sam,' she said. 'Can't you see you'll be killing something between us?'
>
> Sam Spade did not raise his voice. 'I've got to make sure you're not mixed up in this mess . . . Take them off.'
>
> She drew herself up tall. Removing her clothes without fumbling, she tossed them out to him.

Although these quotes are indeed accurate, in conjunction with Meltzoff's voyeuristic illustration (why aren't we shown the side of the curtain on which Spade is sitting, with Brigid in silhouette?) they take on a lurid connotation which is less faithful to the story than Manso's symbolic composition.

Why did Pocket Books employ such an approach to a book which had already achieved solid sales? The likelihood is that forty or fifty thousand copies of The Maltese Falcon had been returned during the worst of the 1946 newsstand recession, and were taking up warehouse space which Pocket Books really did not have. The dust jacket was designed to make the book leap off the racks once the backlog had been reshipped to the retailers. Perhaps it was successful; there weren't many paperbacks in 1946 or 1947 that offered such a provocative cover. Of the several dust jackets which Pocket Books designed in the late forties, though, this was the only one to carry an erotic charge. But the lesson was not lost upon the rest of the industry: one "hot" moment in a story could be exploited to heat up the book's sales.

An even more avid producer of sensational covers was Popular Library, which specialized in scenes of negligeed women screaming while being menaced by clutching hands, knives, guns, ropes, and other nasty articles. Popular Library was part of the Pines magazine chain, which included pulps such as Thrilling Detective and Popular Detective. Although the first hundred or so Popular Library paperbacks were packaged in surrealistic covers (many by an artist who signed himself "Hoffman"), after 1947 the line began using the same covers featuring the same elements, painted by house artists like Rudolph Belarski. While these post-1947 covers were well executed, their quotient of violence and sexual tension was undeniably high.

In response to this trend, Publisher's Weekly presented an editorial in June of 1949 entitled "A Cycle That Can End in Vulgarity." In it, publisher Frederic G. Melcher argues that the contemporary paperback book was repeating a cycle undergone by its nineteenth century antecedents, which "started with melodrama, wild west and detective stories, and tended finally towards a vulgarity which brought about their end . . . ." Melcher continues,

> This reaching out for more readers by following the earlier lead of the pulps as to covers and text is as unfortunate as would be a trend toward copying the comics in their experiments with the themes of crime and passion . . .
>
> In less than ten years the paper book market has become a matter of importance in book trade decisions. The new market has been built up by the appeal of titles and jackets, and can be lost by copying the worst appeals of pulps and comics, which are on simultaneous display. It is important that quality be kept up.[1]

Apparently the response of the paperback industry to Melcher's plea was underwhelming, as three months later Melcher proffered a second anti-vulgarity editorial. Entitled "Let's Not Cheapen Books," this statement again demanded an elevation in industry standards and practices:

> Every over-flashy book jacket, every bosomy picture, every cheap sales appeal gives the impression to those who buy and those who don't that books are not just what they had been told they were, a heritage, an inspiration, and a healthy diversion for young and old . . . Every book is in a way a public relations representative of the whole industry . . .
>
> There is one publisher who is not likely to forget that, when he was presenting in Washington the case of a better postage rate for books, a congressman had on his desk a copy of 'The Girl in the Green Pajamas' and inquired sarcastically if books really had the cultural and information value that was claimed for them.[2]

Although there is no paperback bearing that exact title--Melcher was probably referring to the innocuously packaged Avon edition of R. A. J. Walling's <u>The Corpse in the Green Pajamas</u>--Melcher's point was legitimate, in that the levels of sensationalized cover art and content in paperback books had been rising. And they continued to escalate, despite Melcher's two editorials. Major houses such as Avon, New American Library and Dell began producing ever-more explicit covers, whether or not a book's contents actually merited such treatment. At the same time, new lines were emerging which specialized in tawdry romances packaged in "cheesecake" covers: Novel Library (1948), Century Books (after 1947), Red Circle (1949) and such digest lines as Ecstasy Novels and Exotic Novels. One of

the more dramatic illustrations of this trend can be seen in Dell's variations in packaging for a given title over the span of several years. The cover of Dell's 1947 edition of Brett Halliday's mystery, The Corpse Came Calling, offers a stylized airbrush composition which typified the company's early look. The 1949 cover of the same title employs a Robert Stanley illustration which could have come from an issue of Better Homes and Gardens, so devoid is it of any elements suggesting that the book is actually a murder mystery. In stark contrast to these first two packages is the cover used on Dell's 1954 edition, a vivid Robert Schulz painting of a terrified woman whose mouth is taped and whose arms are bound behind her. The back cover of this edition matches the implicit violence of the front:

> 'Slug him,' the thug said. 'But easy, so he can watch this.'
>
> Mike Shayne's Wife was tied to the chair. One of the gun-wielding thugs stood over her . . .
>
> 'Do you tell us what we want to know, Shayne? Or do you want to see your wife . . .'
>
> He reached for the knot that held her robe together . . .

From this steamy excerpt, one would never guess that The Corpse Came Calling is one of the most innocuous, least sadistic private-eye yarns of the period.

Another case in point is Pocket Books' 1952 variation on Raymond Chandler's classic Farewell, My Lovely. Where the first nine printings of this title had used Hoffman's original, moody illustration, the tenth printing offered a new cover by Paul Kresse depicting a man being struck in the face with a wire spring. Although the close-up provided could hardly be interpreted as anything else, Pocket made

certain of the point by describing the action: "I smashed the bed-spring against his cheek." Of course, this sequence does occur in the novel, just as there actually is a scene in Conan Doyle's Hound of the Baskervilles wherein a woman has been bound to a pillar. But somehow Bantam's choice of that sequence as its cover (a painting by Bill Shoyer) seems a bit misleading. Such heightened action could be found on hundreds of paperback covers by virtually every mass-market publisher.

Nor was such sensationalism found only in the artwork of paper-backs during this period; often the titles were equally lurid. The smaller imprints like Lion and Pyramid seemed especially fond of tabloid-esque titles, such as I Was A Drug Addict, Female Convict, Sinful Cities of the Western World, Teen-Age Vice!, The Indiscreet Confessions of a Nice Girl, America's Cities of Sin and Dormitory Women. And, when the book's original title wasn't provocative enough, the paperback houses rarely hesitated to give it a "better" one. Thus did James Hadley Chase's Figure It Out for Yourself become The Marijuana Mob for the 1952 Eton edition, while Stephen Long-street's The Sound of an American was rechristened Two Beds for Roxanne for its 1952 Avon edition.

A company which specialized both in sensational packaging and sleazy subject matters was Beacon Books, which Universal Publishing founded in 1954. One of the first Beacon novels, Lady Cop, amply illustrates the company's approach. The cover depicts a young woman in pink panties, who is clutching a towel to her bare chest as a man

bursts into her room. Above the book's title is this teaser: "Her Beat Was Sin Street--Her Body Was Bait!" The spine of the book repeats the teaser along with the book's title; the author's name does not appear. The back cover describes the story in more detail:

> Lady Cop is a first class shocker, exposing the seamy, sadistic passion-ridden side of law enforcement. For the first time, it takes the lid off methods making use of female police--shows the almost hopeless battle against corruption facing every woman officer!
>
> --Beacon B112, 1955.

Although not unusual by the standards for digests of the 1950's, Beacon's fascination with exploitational subject matter such as juvenile delinquency, interracial sex, promiscuity, drugs, nymphomania, weird cults and lesbianism--often in combination--was a first for over-the-counter, mass-market paperbacks. Beacon books were by no means pornographic in content, but they did offer a new level of luridity for paperbacks.

In a 1957 address to New York University students, Freeman Lewis, executive vice-president of Pocket Books, and Keith Jennison, editor and promotion director at Viking Press, debated the existence of sensationalism in paperback packaging. Jennison charged that the philosophy of the mass-market houses seemed to be, "The lower the cleavage, the better the sales." Lewis countered that this trend, brought on by the influx of pulp and "girlie" magazine publishers into the paperback business after the war, already had been arrested. Lewis also refuted Jennison's contention that this "dreadful" packaging had

spurred many local censorship drives by pointing out that content, rather than cover art, had been the crux of such cases.[3]

In this, Lewis was correct. Through the late forties and into the fifties, community resistance to sensationalism in paperbacks tended to be centered upon books which were _not_ packaged in an exploitive manner. Charges of obscenity had been leveled in 1948 against a number of works only after they had appeared in paperback, including _The Amboy Dukes_ (in Toronto) and _God's Little Acre_ and _Serenade_ (in Massachusetts). In the case of _The Amboy Dukes_, the distributor of the Avon paperback, the American News Company, had been the recipient of the charge, while in the cases of _God's Little Acre_ and _Serenade_ (which were tried jointly) it was the publishers of both the hardcover and paperback editions which were charged.[4] New American Library was the paperback publisher in both cases, and clearly it was their editions which had brought about the charges, since James Cain's _Serenade_ had been out in hardcover since 1937 without attracting attention from the censors. NAL's packaging of _Acre_ and _Serenade_ was beyond reproach--both editions used the abstract compositions of Robert Jonas which had appeared on the original Penguin printings--suggesting a different basis upon which the charges of obscenity had been brought. The crux of the matter seemed to hinge on the availability of the books to juveniles; in testimony given by Massachusetts policemen, youths were alleged to have been looking at the NAL editions in a store.[5] The danger of these books corrupting the morals of a minor was the case advanced by the prose-

cution. Of course, a minor could also walk into a bookstore and buy the hardcover editions of these works, but the thrust of the case seemed to be directed against the newsstands which handled paperbacks.

The censorship question took on an added dimension in March of 1949, when the Police Chief of the Jersey City, New York police department, Charles Wilson, banned the sale of three Erskine Caldwell books currently on the stands in NAL editions: God's Little Acre, Tragic Ground, and Journeyman. NAL protested the action, calling it "unwarranted and a highly prejudicial interference with the freedom of the press."[6] The prejudice, of course, was directed against paperbacks as much as it was against Caldwell per se; Wilson's order had gone out to newsstand and cigar store proprietors, rather than bookstore owners.[7] NAL might complain, "It is beyond our understanding how a police chief can take it upon himself under our system of law to determine what the rest of the community may be permitted to read," but in truth local merchants had to remain sensitive to the desires of the community, or risk being blackballed out of business. As one historian of the time explained the vulnerability of the paperback retailer, " . . . he cannot be expected to let the concepts of constitutional liberty or freedom of the press interfere with his business."[8]

The Detroit Police Department followed the lead of other literary censors by banning some fifty-seven paperbacks and forty-six magazines seized during 1955. Among the banned books was some outright pornography, but others in the group included classics by the likes of

Hemingway, Huxley, Steinbeck, Mailer and Sartre.[9] These actions, inspired by the Gathings Senate Committee's vigilante censorship, in retrospect seem outrageously totalitarian. But this was the time of Senator Joseph McCarthy's reign, and smut, like communism, was perceived as having infiltrated our American insitutions--like the local cigar store and newsstand. In banning certain paperbacks, communities made it eminently clear to local retailers that sex could not be paraded in the open. (Apparently violence was okay; none of the banned titles include murder mysteries.) The retailers got the message and relayed it to the wholesalers by returning any paperbacks which might be deemed objectionable, which in this day of lurid covers and provocative blurbs included a great many releases. In turn, the wholesalers passed the message along to the publishers by passing along the returns. This enforced boycott had the desired effect; the paperback publishers toned down the covers and manuscripts, and the community called off the dogs. By 1960, only small houses such as Beacon and Midwood were publishing sleazy titles, and the newsstands could contain this relative trickle of soft-core material; Pocket Books, Avon, Bantam, Dell and Popular Library, in the meantime, had regained their images as the high-class operators of the industry.

It is ironic that in 1980 the same problem once again was being fought between magazine retailers and the local morality police concerning the men's "sophisticates"--Hustler, Chic, Club, et al. But this time the paperback industry will not be drawn into the fracas.

The major publishers do not dabble in lurid material any more--or, if they do, they are careful not to distribute it indiscriminately to all outlets. The lines of soft-core novels produced by Pocket Books since 1971, and NAL since 1975, are cases in point. Bearing photographs of voluptuous young women attired in filmy underthings on both covers, these original novels can be distinguished from the hard-core sex books only by the Penthouse-style gauziness of their covers; the hard-core books tend to use high-clarity photocovers which look rather tacky. Books in NAL's series, some authored by "John Colleton," include Two Nymphs Named Melissa, Replenishing Jennifer, Between Cloris and Amy and Miriam at Thirty-Four. Despite those provocative titles, though, the contents rarely contain even the amount of explicit sex that the soft-core paperbacks of the sixties offered. This type of book seems to represent an effort by NAL and Pocket Books to produce a tasteful line of "sophisticated" sex novels which can be sold in markets not affected by community imposed standards, such as airport newsstands and bookstores carrying adult publications.

The problem with these books lies in their deceptive packaging; they look like porn, but they aren't, and people who spend the $2.50 expecting porn are not going to be happy with the publisher. Nothing in the books' cover blurb or first-page teaser attempts to discourage the impression that they offer explicit sexual adventures, indicating a certain hypocrisy on the parts of NAL and Pocket. In one New York City bookstore, The Colloseum, these books were indeed displayed on

the same racks as the hard-core paperbacks. Whether this sort of quasi-porno novel will be a success in its targeted mass-market outlets remains to be seen; if they are, a new sort of paperback genre may have been born. More likely, though, the publishers will receive some very angry mail from the community protesting the _lack_ of prurient content--a case of censorship in reverse.

Notes to Sensationalism and Censorship

[1] Frederic G. Melcher, "A Cycle That Can End in Vulgarity," *Publisher's Weekly* (hereafter referred to as *PW*), 4 June 1949, p. 2304.

[2] Frederic G. Melcher, "Let's Not Cheapen Books," *PW*, 17 September 1949, p. 1428.

[3] "N.Y.U. Speakers Report Trends in Paperbacks," *PW*, 18 November 1957, pp. 22-23.

[4] "*The Amboy Dukes* Cleared by Ontario Court," and "Massachusetts Supreme Court Hears Censorship Appeals," *PW*, 26 March 1949, p. 2424.

[5] "Decision Awaited on Books Tried in Mass.," *PW*, 2 April 1949, p. 1514.

[6] "Jersey City Police Ban Novels from Newsstands," *PW*, 2 April 1949, p. 1515.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] Frank Schick, *The Paperbound Book in America* (New York: Bowker, 1958), p. 111.

[9] *Ibid*., p. 115.

CHAPTER VI

Hollywood and the Paperback Book

During the 1920's, a number of books were produced which contained stills from currently popular movies on the jackets and, at times, the interior as well. These tie-ins, as they would come to be known in the industry, included such silent films as The Hunchback of Notre Dame (Burt edition), Playthings of Desire (Macauley) and The Blood Ship (Grosset & Dunlap). Perhaps the most prolific publisher of such tie-in editions, though, was the Jacobsen-Hodgkinson Corporation, which during the twenties issued a least thirty titles in its "Popular Plays and Screen Library" series. These volumes were digest-size softcovers which, at least in some cases, adapted the screenplays (if such they were in the days of silent films) into original novels. The popular Lon Chaney movie, The Road to Mandalay, was so novelized in a 1926 Jacobsen-Hodgkinson edition which featured a hand-colored still from the production on the front cover, and monochrome stills within and on the back cover. Other novelizations in this series included films by such stars as Norma Shearer, Gloria Swanson, Jackie Coogan, Richard Dix, Ramon Navarro, John Barrymore, Rin-Tin-Tin and Hoot Gibson. Not only was the Screen Library series one of the first movie tie-in productions, but it also appears to have been the first series of original paperback novels to appear in the twentieth century.

When Pocket Books began production in 1939, only one of its initial ten releases--Wuthering Heights--was currently in release as

a film, but no effort was made to relate the two. A number of 1939 and 1940 Pocket Books titles coincided with current movies, including The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Elizabeth and Essex, Swiss Family Robinson and Gulliver's Travels. Of these, though, only the last bore a mention of the film, and that only in the form of text on the back cover. Pocket Books was making an effort to coordinate promotions of their paperbacks with local theaters exhibiting the film version by having the theater provide stills from the movie to bookstores, which would then display the stills alongside the appropriate Pocket Books release.[1] The simplest method of joint promotion--printing a movie still as the book's front cover--had not yet occurred to the powers at Pocket, despite its use by such hardcover reprint houses as Triangle Books.[2]

Finally, in April of 1940, Pocket Books availed itself of this obvious gimmick when its edition of Paul deKruff's Microbe Hunters was published under the title of the current Edward G. Robinson film, Dr. Erlich's Magic Bullet. A murky still of Robinson in character was printed as the book's front cover. Once the movie had gone out of release, Pocket Books dropped the still and reverted to the original title, Microbe Hunters. Thereafter, Pocket Books did produce a number of movie tie-in editions, among them The Philadelphia Story, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and The Man Who Came to Dinner. An indication of Pocket Books' growing awareness of the importance of these tie-ins came when the company withheld release of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde when it learned that M-G-M had delayed the release date of

the film.[3] Even so, Pocket Books missed several other opportunities to exploit its titles with concurrent film releases; neither Pride and Prejudice (1940) nor The Glass Key (1943) used stills from the movie versions, possibly due to problems in gaining permission. Nor did the company make use of the "Screen Library" device of binding in a few pages of stills in any of its tie-in editions. As usual, Pocket Books was displaying the conservatism typical of an industry leader.

The other paperback houses of the early 1940's were not much more aggressive in their production of movie editions. Avon, which debuted in 1941, did have the distinction of releasing the first novelization from a film screenplay since the Jacobsen-Hodgkinson line of the 1920's, that being Stage Door Canteen (1943). This edition featured stills of "stars" Cheryl Walker and William Terry on both the inside front cover and the outside back cover. Delmar Daves is credited with the novelization; whether he also wrote the original screenplay for United Artists is not mentioned. Whatever the success of the Avon edition of Stage Door Canteen, the house declined any other potential film tie-ins for several years, including so likely a candidate as Double Indemnity (1945). Dell, the other major American paperback house of the early 1940's, never seemed to acquire titles that were being produced as films. The Fallen Sparrow (1944) did follow close on the heels of the Warner Bros. release; however, no mention was made either of the film or of star John Garfield.

Once the war was over, though, paperback houses both large and small seemed to acquire some sort of gold-rush mentality when it came

to acquiring and promoting film properties. Bart House, which had existed primarily as a mystery reprint house since 1944, announced that it would be releasing an original novelization of a new movie each month in its "Film Hit of the Month" series.[4] Three adaptations--Mr. Ace (starring George Raft), The Sin of Harold Diddlebock (starring Harold Lloyd), and Honeymoon (starring Shirley Temple) were produced before Bart House suspended publication in 1947. These novelizations were handsome affairs, sporting as they did photo tie-in covers and endpapers; however, none of the three films became popular, lessening the chance of healthy sales for Bart House. Another small house, Anson Bond publications, began production of a series of film novelizations in its Movie Mystery Magazine (actually a digest-size paperback) late in 1946. Among the movies adapted were The Chase, which starred Bob Cummings, and The Stranger, which starred Edward G. Robinson and Orson Welles. These editions featured numerous interior stills from the film (still a novelty at this time), as well as a photocover. Poor distribution was the likely culprit in the demise of the Bond line, which suspended publication early in 1947.

Perhaps the most attractively packaged movie tie-in paperbacks of the 1940's were the Century Movie Books produced by the Chicago-based Century house. Their first two novelizations--The Dark Corner and Singapore--apparently were digest-size productions.[5] But Body and Soul, Sleep, My Love and A Double Life, all released in 1947, were conventional-size paperbacks which featured painted likenesses of the stars on the front cover, monochrome stills on the back cover, and

numerous interior black-and-white reproductions from the films. *A Double Life* was a particularly fortunate choice, figuring prominently as it did in the Academy Awards for 1947, but all of Century's Movie Books featured attractive stars: Ava Gardner, Ronald Coleman, John Garfield, Claudette Colbert, Don Ameche. The post-war newsstand glut is probably again the blame for failure of these tie-ins to find their audience. The Ruth Gordon/Garson Kanin screenplay for *A Double Life* is credited on the cover of the Century edition as the basis for Manly Wade Wellman's novelization; *Sleep, My Love*, on the other hand, credits only Leonard Q. Ross (who also adapted *The Dark Corner*) as author.

While Anson Bond, Bart House and Century publications were falling at the newsstands because of poor distribution and overcrowding, the paperback giants--Pocket Books, Avon, Popular Library, Dell, and the recently formed Bantam line--were learning something about promotion and exploitation of movie tie-ins. Pocket Books in particular had fumbled several opportunities to package properly titles which were on the newsstands while the films were in the theaters. On some releases, Pocket used painted likenesses of the stars which were so poorly rendered as to be nearly unrecognizable, as happened with the 1946 editions of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, and *The Song of Bernadette*. All that was changed, however, when the Popular Library edition of *Duel in the Sun*, featuring a photocover of stars Gregory Peck and Jennifer Jones, became the success story of 1947. Published in December of 1946 in an edition of 500,000 copies, an enormous amount for the time, it quickly sold out and had to be reprinted--and reprinted

again, and again, and again. Fifteen weeks after its initial publication, Duel in the Sun had sold 1,500,000 copies, with 100,000 copies moving each week.[6]

The success enjoyed by the paperback reprint of Duel in the Sun might have been phenomenal, but it was no accident. Popular Library promoted it quite aggressively, placing full-page ads in house publications like Startling Stories and America's Best Comics, and offering special distribution service through American News to bookstores who wanted to carry Duel in the Sun, despite not stocking paperbacks in general.[7] More than 2,500 copies of the paperback were sent out as advance copies to editors, reviewers and columnists of magazines and newspapers to coincide with half-page ads for the Popular Library edition. 100,000 copies of a circular advising newsdealers of the sales possibilities were also mailed out.[8] But the best promotion for the book was its cover photograph (strangely, in black and white) of Jennifer Jones in a seductive pose, with Gregory Peck standing over her. This was the first movie tie-in paperback to depict an action sequence from a film, rather than just a neutral shot of the star(s), and the idea was a good one to judge from the book's sales totals. This "lusty novel of the Southwest," as the front cover slug boasted, set off the movie tie-in sweepstakes in the paperback industry.

Pocket Books was one of the first houses to employ the techniques of promotion and exploitation devised for Duel in the Sun. When MGM unexpectedly released its version of The Sea of Grass early in New York, Pocket Books made a special printing of 25,000 copies

featuring a photocover of stars Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn for distribution in the New York area;[9] the edition released nationally had a poorly painted likeness of the stars. One month later the same procedure was followed for the Pocket Books edition of Odd Man Out, although this time the photocover of star James Mason was retained for both the New York and national editions. In addition, Pocket Books mailed out 25,000 copies of a poster showing the cover of the paperback with the slogan, "Read the POCKET BOOKS/See the MOTION PICTURE."[10] Unfortunately for Pocket Books, neither The Sea of Grass nor Odd Man Out enjoyed the popularity as films which Duel in the Sun achieved, which limited the success of those editions. In 1948, Pocket Books released several additional tie-ins, including Peabody's Mermaid, Mr. Blanding Builds His Dream House and Oliver Twist. Two unusual promotions were also staged that year. Michael North, who appeared in the Warner Bros. production of Charlotte Armstrong's The Unsuspected, autographed copies of the Pocket edition in Ligget's Drug Store in Boston,[11] although Claude Rains, rather than North, was pictured on the cover of the paperback. And one million copies of a program which featured a full-page ad for the Pocket editions of Shakespeare's Four Great Tragedies and Shakespeare's Four Great Comedies were distributed at theaters showing the Universal-International production of Hamlet, although Laurence Olivier's likeness was not used on the books.[12]

Bantam Books also intensified its movie tie-in promotions during 1948. Entering into a unique three-way arrangement with Columbia Pic-

tures and the Post Cereals Divison of General Foods. Bantam produced a photocover edition of Margaret Ferguson's The Sign of the Ram, which was then promoted on the front of Post's 40% Bran Flakes cereal boxes as part of a "two-books-for-25¢-and-a-boxtop" premium. The cover of the Bantam edition featured a color still of star Susan Peters. The first printing of The Sign of the Ram was reserved entirely for this mail-in offer; newsstands and bookstores eventually were shipped the second printing of the title.[13] Bantam repeated this gimmick in 1949 with Mrs. Mike (which starred Dick Powell) and with Family Honeymoon (which starred Fred MacMurray and Claudette Colbert) offered as the Post premiums.[14] One of the first regional promotions for a paperback movie tie-in was also devised by Bantam for its edition of Borden Chase's Red River (#205), which featured a back-cover photo from the Howard Hawks film starring John Wayne and Montgomery Clift. The extent of the Bantam/Columbia joint promotion was described in Publisher's Weekly:

> A series of ten stills, showing stars posing with Winchester rifles and smallarms, is provided for tie-ins with local Winchester dealers. There is a broadside based on the 'Keeping Posted' (promotion) page of the Saturday Evening Post, which can be used as an 8 x 10 card or blown up to 40 x 60 for lobby displays; and there has been a vast amount of promotion for the movie itself. The film promotion has included rave messages by the governors of Texas and New Mexico, screenings at colleges in Texas and Oklahoma, stickers for display, a Red River Week beginning August 26 in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, banners along the Chisolm Trail, 24-sheet outdoor posters, gas station posters, screening in key cities, displays in stores in the four states of the Red River, local radio quiz contests on the Chisolm Trail, and special trailers, mailing, posters, newspaper and radio publicity.[15]

Other Bantam movie tie-ins issued in the late forties include Sorry, Wrong Number (Barbara Stanwyck), Joan of Arc (Ingrid Bergman), Twelve O'Clock High (Gregory Peck) and The Red Pony (Robert Mitchum and Myrna Loy). Bantam also reissued The Great Gatsby with a dust jacket depicting the likeness of Alan Ladd, the star of the 1949 film version. One of Bantam's more important movie tie-ins was its 1948 edition of John Steinbeck's The Pearl, which was simultaneously published by Viking and Bantam in hard and softcovers, respectively. The Pearl contained eight interior pages of stills from the movie, printed on special stock to retain high definition. This idea would catch on during the fifties, and become one of the chief selling points of the movie tie-in paperback. Joan of Arc is also something of a curiosity, as author Frances Winwar altered her original novel, The Saint and the Devil, in order to incorporate scenes that had been added to the movie adaptation, making the Bantam edition a hybrid of the screenplay and book.[16] Of equal interest is Bantam's 1950 edition of Graham Greene's The Third Man, which Greene apparently expanded from his original story, published the year before in The American Magazine.

While the other large paperback houses were not as active in producing movie tie-in editions as Pocket Books and Bantam Books, they did at least get their feet wet. Avon used a movie still on the back covers of both The Private Affairs of Bel Ami (1946) and The Amboy Dukes (1948; film version entitled City Across the River), while Dell issued photocover editions of The Unafraid (1948), Rope (1948), So Dear

to My Heart (1949), Little Women (1949), and Anna Lucasta (1949). Of these, Rope and Anna Lucasta were novelized especially for the Dell editions, a process repeated a year later for the Dell adaptation of H. Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines in order to incorporate the variations in the Deborah Kerr/Stewart Granger film version. Penguin Books, in the meantime, issued the screenplay of Bernard Shaw's Major Barbara (1946)--a first which would not catch on in paperback publishing for another ten years--and also published a novelization of Twentieth Century Fox's Kiss of Death (1947), which Eleazer Lipsky adapted from his own screenplay in the record time of one month.[17] Penguin also used a painted likeness of actor Ray Milland on its 1948 edition of The Lost Weekend even though the film had been released three years earlier. But Penguin, Dell and Avon did not mount promotional campaigns to publicize their movie tie-ins, and consequently never enjoyed a runaway bestseller such as Duel in the Sun.

As the 1950's unfurled, the relationship between the paperback industry and the film industry became even stronger. New imprints such as Fawcett's Gold Medal Books specialized in publishing original material, making it a favorite target for authors interested in novelizing their screenplays, thereby reaping a second payday. The process also began to work in reverse: the film studios, always hungry for good, new stories, began optioning paperback originals for development as screenplays. At one point in 1956, sixteen Gold Medal books were in the process of being filmed, including Johnny

Concho, The Shrinking Man (released as The Incredible Shrinking Man), The Law and Jake Wade and Desire in the Dust. One that never reached production--Louis L'Amour's To Tame a Land (#516)--was optioned by Marlon Brando.[18] Added to such earlier Gold Medal successes as Hondo, Bad Day at Black Rock and Blood Alley, these tie-ins represented a significant fraction of Fawcett's leading titles.

New American Library's Signet imprint was especially active in the production and marketing of its movie tie-ins. More than any other house, NAL employed the glossy-photo insert as the key device for motivating purchases. The 1951 Signet edition of Tennessee William's A Streetcar Named Desire is particularly interesting in that its eight-page photo-section uses stills not from the Elia Kazan film version, but from the New York, London and French stage productions, starring respectively Marlon Brando and Jessica Tandy, Vivian Leigh, and Arletty and Yves Vincent. The cover of this bestselling edition reproduces the striking Thomas Hart Benton painting depicting a scene from the play. Other important Signet movie editions of the fifties include first editions of such award-winning films as Separate Tables, Tea and Sympathy, The King and I, The Prince and the Showgirl, The Rose Tatoo, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and Sweet Smell of Success. One of NAL's most intense promotions during this period was expended upon their edition of James Jones' From Here to Eternity, which Columbia pictures released in 1953. The paperback did not sport a photocover, but otherwise NAL pulled out all the promotional stops:

> NAL dealers were sent reprints of reviews of the film and of the Columbia pressbook, explaining methods of tying in with theaters. Hundreds of thousands of promotional pieces were distributed including 100,000 bulletins, 10,000 book rack display cards, 10,000 center display cards, 2,000 truck banners, 50-copy shipping cartons for quantity display, 4,000 radio spot announcements, 2,000 press releases, window stickers, mailing circulars, stills from the movie, teaser postcards showing the movie stars (Deborah Kerr, Frank Sinatra, Montgomery Clift and Burt Lancaster). Additionally NAL sent out thousands of review copies.[19]

Promotional techniques for movie tie-in editions grew in sophistication as the 1950's progressed. New American Library and United Artists entered into a joint promotion for UA's film version of Mickey Spillane's The Long Wait; 5,000 posters and 2,000 truck banners depicted the cover of the multi-million-selling Signet paperback rather than stars Anthony Quinn and Peggy Castle.[20] NAL also designed an elaborate multi-media tie-in for Ira Levin's A Kiss Before Dying in 1956, the motion picture of which was being released by United Artists. An autographing party with stars Jeff Hunter and Virginia Leith was held at the Washington News Company in Boston, while wholesalers and book critics across the country were invited to attend private screening of the film. At the same time, RCA Victor, MGM, and Epic records all issued 45s of the title song, "A Kiss Before Dying." Finally, radio station WVDA in Boston held a contest in which the winning letter-writers were awarded copies of the paperback, records and theater passes.[21] All this for a title which NAL had first issued in paperback two years earlier.

Occasionally a paperback house was the indirect recipient of another party's promotional stunt, as was the case with Bantam's

reprint of W. J. Stuart's Forbidden Planet (#1443, 1956). MGM had arranged a tie-in with the Quaker Oats cereal company to include 60,000,000 free tickets to the film inside the cereal boxes. All Bantam had to do was get the book onto the newsstands and into the bookstores in order to enjoy their highest-ever sales figures in a ten-day span for a thirty-five cent title.[22] Bantam also got sales mileage from its joint promotion with Warner Bros. for Sayonara, for which a contest was mounted ("Why I wanted to see the movie after reading the book") offering the winning letter-writer a trip to the 1958 Academy Awards presentations.[23] But for sheer energy expended, it would be hard to top the lengths taken by Avon Books and Allied Artists for their joint releases of The Hunchback of Notre Dame. The 1957 Avon paperback, which included numerous interior stills of stars Anthony Quinn and Gina Lollogrigida, was given away to the best "Why-I-Want-to-See-the-Movie" letter writers in fifty cities across the country. The contest was supported by broadcast spots five times daily on 600 radio and TV stations, along with newspaper ads, promotion kits distributed to wholesalers by one hundred field men, posters and flyers, and, best of all, a touring float featuring the Avon tie-in and "lovely professional models" which arrived in each city for the week before the local opening of the film.[24]

There was little new the sixties could offer in the way of promotional techniques for movie tie-in paperbacks, other than refining and expending upon uses of radio, television and print advertising. One of the more energetic tie-in campaigns was mounted in August of

1964 by Columbia Pictures, which had recently acquired several of Donald Hamilton's Matt Helm books, a series of spy adventures published by Fawcett Gold Medal. As described in Publisher's Weekly, the stunt was a choice illustration of the James Bond dementia then sweeping the United States:

> Columbia Pictures has launched a 'mammoth, nation-wide talent search to find a leading man virile enough--and ruthless enough' to play the role of American secret agent Matt Helm in the forthcoming film, 'The Silencers' . . . A series of ads is currently running in some of the country's largest circulation newspapers. They ask prospective Matt Helms to answer such questions as, 'If Your Mistress Was a Spy, Would You Kill Her?' or 'Matt Helm Can Kill a Man in Less Than Two Seconds! Can You?' Columbia says that it will screen all applicants who can answer 'Yes' convincingly.[25]

Despite Columbia's enthusiasm, the promotion must not have been very successful, because the role of Matt Helm ultimately went to Hollywood star Dean Martin. (Fawcett did eventually issue tie-in editions of Murderers' Row and The Silencers, two of the series filmed by Columbia.)

The sixties also were the peak period of the paperback novelization of the television series. While a few tie-ins had appeared during the fifties--notably Ace Books' Best Television Humor of the Year (1956) and Ballantine Books' Sergeant Bilko (1957), both collections of actual scripts--the TV/paperback explosion did not occur until the first two volumes of Ace's "Man from U.N.C.L.E." series (adapted by paperback veterans Mike Avallone and Harry Whittington, respectively) sold over one million copies each in 1965. Within a year, paperback adaptations of such television shows as "Secret Agent," "The Green Hornet" and "Felony Squad" were on the market,

with "The Partridge Family," "The Avengers," "Hawaii Five-O," "Star Trek," "The Mod Squad," "Cannon," "The Prisoner," and "It Takes a Thief" shortly to follow. Norman Daniels, who novelized two television series, "Ben Casey" (1963) and "The Rat Patrol" (1966), contends that "it was impossible to make any money [writing] these books," an attitude undoubtedly echoed by Harry Whittington, who received the royal sum of $1,500 for his "U.N.C.L.E." novelization, *The Doomsday Affair*.[27] Paperback houses which otherwise paid well for original manuscripts seemed to pinch pennies when it came to television and film novelizations, perhaps on the assumption that the buyer of such tie-in editions would be less critical than the ordinary book buyer, and consequently could be pleased by substandard work, commissioned for substandard pay. Mike Avallone admits to writing certain novelizations in "two or three days."[28]

Paperback tie-ins did show advances in production techniques during the sixties, although these advances were more apparent in editions of film screenplays than in novelizations. Ballantine Books produced two excellent books in Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1961) and *Juliet of the Spirits* (1966), the former offering over a hundred stills from the movie, the latter fifty-two, both accompanied by the full screenplay. The same format was used for the Ballantine edition of the Bob Dylan documentary, *Don't Look Back* (1966). The Signet tie-in with the animated Beatles' feature, *Yellow Submarine* (1968), used hundreds of full-color animation cels to recreate the film's special effects.

With the barriers between the experience of watching a film and the experience of reading a book having been diminished by movie books like Yellow Submarine, it was only logical that the next step in the evolution of the paperback tie-in would be the Fotonovel--a book composed entirely of movie stills, with dialogue balloons inserted in each panel in the place of text. The concept was developed by Herb Stewart, Jr., who in 1975 made an arrangement with Nancy Hardin at Paramount studios to produce a series of these "movie comic books."[29] Stewart and Hardin saw an immediate audience for Fotonovels in the legions of "Star Trek" fans, and set about subleasing the rights to all seventy-eight television episodes. Bantam was selected as the publisher of these adaptations, which indeed sold well. The first full-length film to be adapted as a Fotonovel was Close Encounters of the Third Kind, which Dell published in 1978.[30] But Stewart and his partner, Laszlo Papas, soon realized that greater profits could be realized by packaging the adaptations themselves, and entered into a distribution arrangement in 1978 with Independent News for two Fotonovels each month. Fotonovels often were displayed next to teen magazines (as well as on regular book racks), because their appeal was thought to lie mainly with children and teenagers.[31] That assumption seems to have been accurate, judging by the success of the Fotonovel adaptation of Paramount's Grease, the 1979 John Travolta/Olivia Newton-John film which was so popular with the subteens. But while Grease sold in the millions, there simply was not enough quality film product to keep up with the release rate of two

titles per month. Many Fotonovels tie-ins have been abject failures, such as Americathon, Nightwing and The Champ. Others such as Rocky II, Ice Castles and The Lord of the Rings have enjoyed decent sales.[32]

One of the problems facing Fotonovels is the cost of production. Those hundred-plus pages of full-color reproductions, printed as they are on heavy stock to retain good definition, make the average Fotonovel cost "about five times as much as the cost of a novelization," according to Stewart.[33] Even a $2.50 cover price will not compensate for the high production costs unless at least 200,000 copies are sold. If the film itself bombs at the box office, Fotonovels is left holding the bag. Production costs are also inflated by the costly lab process Fotonovels entail, since most feature movies are shot in anamorphic film which vertically distorts the image on each frame; Stewart had to invent a process to reverse that distortion.[34]

Imitation, the most serious problem facing Fotonovels, is a consequence of the line's success. In 1979 Pocket Books (which, like Paramount, is a subsidiary of Gulf & Western) produced a "Videonovel" of the ABC television show, "Mork and Mindy," while Berkley issued a "Photo Story" of the ABC series "Battlestar Galactica." In 1980, Avon produced a lavish trade-paperback photonovel of the movie Alien. The name "Fotonovel" might be copyrightable, but the package and the process are not. As Lisa deFaria, Managing Editor of Fotonovels, explains,

> Often we've found the political and economic ties between studios and their publishing counterparts have been prohibitive . . . A studio is naturally more inclined to

> relegate a given film title for Fotonovel production to their publishing arm, and competition has risen. Often a studio would rather no Fotonovel existed, thus competing with the novelization . . . thus no Fotonovel is published.
>
> Some producers don't want to see a Fotonovel of their film published. Some still believe it is a 'glorified comic book,' and somehow demeaning to their film. Others have jumped on the bandwagon in an effort to tap their percentage of the royalties generated by such a tie-in. Many screenwriters, for instance, contract for a percentage of the Fotonovel sales up front. Some actors, too, include clauses whereby the use of their likeness in a Fotonovel can only be secured at rather significant cost.[35]

DeFaria goes on to note that a Fotonovel has been found to be a useful educational tool in remedial reading and special education classes. In an effort to reduce criticism of the "comic-book-look" charges, deFaria also notes that Fotonovels has eliminated its balloon-encased dialogue in favor of "more sophisticated" typography.[36]

Whatever the fate of the Fotonovel as an entity in paperback publishing, it seems certain that the film and publishing industries will remain in close association through the 1980's. Often the web connecting the two is too tangled to unravel, as is the case with the Jove paperback series "The Borodins." This four-volume historical saga about a family living during the Revolutionary Russia is already in production as a TV miniseries by MCA/Universal. However, it appears that MCA commissioned the novels originally, expressly as a property for film production. The fact that MCA owns Jove books illustrates the sometimes incestuous relationships among the subsidiary media owned by today's mega-corporations.[37] If "The Borodins" turns out to be a success both in print and as a miniseries on TV, we can expect to see more umbrella-type deals in the future.

The future of the tie-in paperback seems a bit uncertain as the 1980's begin. Some publishers have lost money on their editions of films that failed at the box office, like F.I.S.T., and even on films that were box office hits, like The Rose.[38] Despite the millions of copies sold of recent tie-ins like The Omen, Holocaust, Jaws II, Grease, and Star Wars, the feeling in the industry is that not every hit film will necessarily succeed as a paperback. As Pocket Books president Ron Busch contends, "There's obviously no consistency in the tie-in business. Like French wine, it doesn't travel . . . The whole area is a very big crap shoot."[39] Bantam's editor-in-chief, Rollene Saal, concurs: "Tie-ins are very hit or miss . . . A lot of people got carried away by things that have worked very well. But the book has got to work by itself."[40] Ballantine's Nancy Coffey is even more pessimistic about the future of the tie-in edition: "I think the market is declining . . . We'll see a big change in publishers' responses to tie-ins in a few months. The bloom is quickly coming off the rose."[41]

While the rising cost of securing novelization rights to untested film properties has paperback publishers now bypassing the "crap shoots" which a few years ago they might have played, the tie-in that comes from an established backlist title--a book that has already demonstrated its appeal on its own merits--will in all likelihood continue to be a staple of the industry.[42] As long as TV movies and miniseries, like the February 1981 adaptation of East of Eden, continue to draw from the classics, there will be paperback reissues which feature

tie-in artwork, photographs, and/or cover blurbs. But the novelization which cannot stand on its own, as a "real" book, may well have breathed its last.

Notes to Hollywood and the Paperback Book

[1]"Pocket Books Promotes Whole Series," *Publisher's Weekly* (hereafter referred to as *PW*), 3 February 1940, pp. 618-19.

[2]*Ibid*.: photograph.

[3]*PW*, 5 July 1941, p. 21.

[4]"Bart House to Publish 25-cent Books," *PW*, 2 November 1946, p. 2609.

[5]Kevin Hancer, *The Paperback Price Guide* (New York: Harmony, 1980), p. 160.

[6]*PW*, 12 April 1947, p. 2039.

[7]*Ibid*.

[8]*PW*, 16 November 1946, p. 2823.

[9]*PW*, 15 March 1947, p. 1636.

[10]*PW*, 17 April 1947, p. 2513.

[11]"First Pocket Books Autographing Party Held in Boston," *PW*, 13 March 1948, p. 1331.

[12]"Pocket Books to Advertise in Program for Olivier's 'Hamlet'," *PW*, 21 August, 1948, p. 658.

[13]"Books for Boxtops Are Offered in Bantam-Cereal-Film Tie-Up," *PW*, 7 February 1948, p. 843.

[14]*PW*, 5 February 1949, p. 830.

[15]*PW*, 11 September 1948, p. 1055.

[16]*PW*, 31 July 1948, p. 383.

[17]*PW*, 6 September 1947, p. 1048.

[18] _PW_, 21 April 1956.

[19] Bill Crider & Billy C. Lee, "Some Notes on Movie Editions," _Paperback Quarterly_, p. 29.

[20] _PW_, 19 June 1954, p. 2652.

[21] _PW_, 18 June 1956, p. 2647.

[22] _PW_, 21 April 1956.

[23] _PW_, 16 December 1957.

[24] _PW_, 18 November 1957, pp. 42-43.

[25] _PW_, 23 October 1964, p. 17.

[26] Personal interview with Norman Daniels, July 1980.

[27] Harry Whittington, "Why Is a Writer?," Keynote talk delivered to the Florida Suncoast Writer's Conference, University of South Florida, 27 January 1978. Unpublished transcription.

[28] Personal interview with Michael Avallone, December 1979.

[29] Patricia Holt, "And Now, Fotonovels: The Hollywood Look," _PW_, 28 May 1979, p. 37.

[30] _Ibid_.

[31] _Ibid_.

[32] _Ibid_.

[33] _Ibid_.

[34] _Ibid_.

[35] Correspondence with Lisa deFaria, 20 December 1979.

[36]Correspondence with Lisa deFaria, 4 January 1980.

[37]Paul S. Nathan, "Rights and Permissions," PW, 8 February 1980, p. 36.

[38]"Whither the Tie-in?," PW, 4 April 1980, p. 43.

[39]Kenneth C. Davis, "A Trio of Types," PW, 11 January 1980, p. 47.

[40]*Ibid.*

[41]*Ibid.*

[42]"Whither the Tie-in?"

CHAPTER VII

Original Editions in Paperback

The first mass-market paperbacks were reprints drawn from the classics of literature, contemporary fiction and bestselling self help books. For the first few years of its existence, Pocket Books issued no category fiction other than mysteries; westerns were added to the list in 1942. But the advent of the war created new categories to which the hardcover publishers had not already sewn up first publication rights: the homefront advisor and the frontline entertainer. Both Pocket Books and Penguin Books began issuing nonfiction books and anthologies slanted towards the needs of the transplanted serviceman and the conscientious civilian. Ian Ballantine, the managing editor of Penguin Books' American operation, published several original editions in his Infantry Journal line during the war, including _Christianity and Social Order_ and _Battle Experiences_.[1] Pocket Books also began producing collections of war and home-front-related essays and articles in 1941 and 1942, among which were such titles as _The Pocket Book of the War_, _I Saw It Happen_, _The Pocket Aviation Quiz Book_, _The Pocket Book of Home Canning_ and _The Pocket Book of Vegetable Gardening_. Perhaps the most elaborate of Pocket Books' original editions was its 1943 release, _Official AAF Guide Book_, which included sixty-four pages of photographs printed on special stock, four pages of color photographs, and hundreds of maps, drawings and diagrams. Original collections such as Dell's _G.I. Jokes_,

Pocket's The Pocket Entertainer and The Pocket Book of War Humor and Penguin's Cartoons for Fighters were designed to amuse the boys overseas, just as Penguin Infantry Journal originals such as What's That Plane? and Handbook for Army Wives and Mothers were designed to instruct those on the homefront.

Part of the impetus for paperback publishers compiling their own war-related titles was provided by the paper quotas imposed by the War Production Board in 1943. In order to qualify for a larger allotment, Ian Ballantine began his Infantry Journal imprint.[2] As the etiquette of the time dictated the lapse of about a year between the publication of a book in hardcovers and its appearance as a paperback reprint, houses such as Penguin and Pocket were faced with the prospect of missing out on heavy sales of topical books by waiting to acquire the reprint rights. Hence, they created their own topical titles.

At some point in the mid-forties, paperback publishers must have come to the realization that they had latched onto a good thing with their original editions. The royalties on paperback sales traditionally had to be split between the paperback house and the original hardcover publisher;[3] by creating their own manuscripts, paperback publishers got to keep a larger portion of the proceeds. (Royalties still had to be paid to the author, of course.) Original anthologies began to appear that were not war-related, such as The Pocket Book of Science Fiction, The Pocket Book of Jokes, The Avon Story Teller, Avon Book of Puzzles, Avon Bedside Companion, and Avon Improved

Cookery Book. Some of this material was drawn from magazines, while others--such as the puzzle and joke collections--probably had never been published in any form. While the bulk of the paperback originals issued during the forties tended to be anthologies, a few fiction originals were also produced. The first such work may have been H. H. Holmes' Rocket to the Morgue (1942), the lone release of Phantom Mystery. Interestingly, the work was a science fiction-murder mystery. The Avon novelization of the film Stage Door Canteen, which was issued in 1943, appears to have been the next original paperback novel. A year later, Thomas McClary's fantasy novel Rebirth was issued by Bart House, which had also produced several original anthologies among its early titles. Bart House also instituted a regular series of novelizations of film screenplays in 1947 which lasted through only three releases. Indeed, movies were to provide the basis for a number of original paperback editions during the 1940's, including Penguin's 1946 edition of the screenplay to Major Barbara, Bantam's 1948 novelization of Joan of Arc, Penguin's 1947 novelization of Kiss of Death, Dell's 1948 adaptation of Hitchcock's Rope, and Anson Bond's 1946 digest-size novelizations of The Stranger and The Chase. (See "Hollywood and the Paperback Book.")

Adaptations from other media also were experimented with during the late forties. In 1948, Dell Books issued original novels based on two of the nation's most popular comic strips, Blondie and Dagwood in Footlight Folly and Dick Tracy and the Woo-Woo Sisters, while a year later Checker Books made its first release a novel based on

Terry and the Pirates called The Jewels of Jade. Neither house apparently was very happy with the results, however, as no further comic strip adaptations were produced. But original collections of cartoons were another matter. In the first six months of its release, the Pocket Books collection of Jimmy Hatlo's panel cartoon They'll Do It Every Time went through five printings. During the 1950's, the original cartoon collection would become a mainstay of the paperback industry.

Other than the handful of movie and comic strip novelizations discussed above, not a great deal of fiction saw print in paperback original format prior to 1950. Jim Quinn's Handi-Books line issued two original mysteries during 1946: Norbert Davis' Oh, Murderer Mine and Joel Townsley Rogers' Lady with the Dice; both authors were veterans of the pulp magazines. Quinn apparently did not publish any other original novels until 1949, when he began regularly to release mystery, western and romance originals. Avon Books attempted an unusual gambit in 1949 when editor Donald A. Wollheim, Jr. produced two collections of original short stories. The Girl with the Hungry Eyes contained six science fiction stories (labeled "fantasy thrillers," since "science fiction" had not yet become familiar terminology outside of the pulps), while the contents of the Avon Book of Great Stories of the Wild West are obvious from the title. In essence, Wollheim had published two pulp magazines in paperback format. The experiment must not have set any sales records, since it was not repeated; Avon subsequently restricted its early originals to quiz and puzzle books, and various nonfiction collections.

It was also during the late 1940's that the digest-size soft-cover lines began to explore the possibilities of publishing original novels. The American Mercury's Bestseller Mystery imprint had been the first digest line to collect the short stories of Dashiell Hammett and Carter Dickson (John Dickson Carr) in 1943. Avon's Murder Mystery Monthly series followed suit with first book editions of the stories of Raymond Chandler and William Irish (Cornell Woolrich) between 1944 and 1946. But the first novel-length fiction by a major writer to appear in original digest format seems to have been James Cain's Sinful Woman, a 1947 release in Avon's Monthly Novel series. Other original novels in that series were issued between 1947 and 1949, most of them of the sleazy-sex school of potboilers. The digests did not pay well for original manuscripts, but neither were their standards very high, and a writer who could type fast and didn't look back could get a good return for a modicum of time and effort. As Norman Daniels, veteran of thousands of pulp-magazine stories dating back to 1934, describes the digest houses for which he turned out dozens of novels between 1951 and 1953,

> Falcon and other small houses were mainly fly-by-night types. They offered no [editorial] guidelines and they paid about half of what the larger houses did. They wanted only stories which were, at that time, considered 'hot'--by today's standards they could have been read in Bible class. Pen names were used because these books were, in plain English, garbage. I did not enjoy writing these things, but at the time the better comapnies were in a dol-drum and not buying.[4]

Evan Hunter, author of The Blackboard Jungle and, as Ed McBain, the popular "87th Precinct" series, seems to concur:

> They [his first two books] were slightly pornographic novels done for a small book company called Falcon. I got $500 for each effort and the editor kept telling me, 'Throw in another sex scene, throw in another sex scene.' [The Evil Sleep!] was a terrible novel and Don't Crowd Me was only a step above it.[5]

Both Daniels and Hunter would go on to write many paperback originals for the conventional houses subsequent to their embarrassing digest work.

On the other hand, not all veterans of the digest-size paperbacks consider the experience a negative one. Harry Whittington, author of more than a hundred novels published as paperback originals between 1950 and 1980, fondly recalls his arrangement with one digest house for which he wrote some twenty novels during a three-year span:

> Venus Books, Original Novels, Carnival Books and Phantom Books all belonged to Paperback Library [then called Hanro]. My deal with publisher Mauri Lantzen was very helpful at that time. I could submit a three-page outline at any time and they would send me a check for $375, no matter how many other 'ideas' they'd already bought! They paid an additional $375 when I submitted the finished novel, and $375 for each reprinting. Most of their books averaged between $1,500 and $3,000 [in royalties], counting reprints. Some made more. As near as I can tell from my lousy records, Backwoods Hussy went into ten printings.[6]

While Whittington's mystery and suspense digest originals compare favorably in quality to the original novels being produced at that time by such paperback houses as Fawcett, Graphic and Ace (for all of which Whittington also wrote), there is no question that, as a whole, the novels published as digest originals were a sorry lot. Sporting sensational titles such as The Private Life of a Street Girl, Once There Was a Virgin, Part-time Virgin, Careless Virgin, Naughty

Virgin and The Virgin and the Barfly and containing cheesy interior photos "specially posed by professional models," the digest lines inevitably failed to deliver on their promises of sinfully exciting stories. How could they have? No self-respecting newsstand during the early fifties could possibly have displayed books which dealt explicitly with seduction, prostitution, adultery and promiscuity. (See "Sensationalism and Censorship.") Hedging their bets, the digest lines--which themselves bore such provocative names as "Ecstasy Novels," "Exotic Novels" and "Intimate Novels"--produced harmless romance packaged to look like something out of Fanny Hill. Either the public became aware of the variance between the promise and the product, or the newsstand dealers stopped displaying them for fear of reprisals from the community, but the digest original had virtually become extinct by 1954. The better writers--Whittington, Daniels, Hunter--had no problem catching on with the more respectable paperback houses, but several digest mainstays, such as Norman Bligh, Albert Quandt and James Clayford, were never again heard from. (These might have been house names, however, which preserved the anononymity of writers who did indeed go on to write paperback originals.) In the history of mass-market paperback originals, the digests provide an interesting but decidedly minor footnote from a time of great industry expansion.

The watershed year for paperback original novels was 1950. It was then that Fawcett began regular production of its Gold Medal Books. While its first few releases were actually collections of stories and

articles which had appeared in such Fawcett magazines as True, True Police Cases and Today's Woman, Gold Medal soon initiated a policy which would revolutionize the paperback industry: all of its titles would be original works either of fiction (the vast majority) or fact. The other paperback publishers were rather leery of this philosophy, as it challenged the concept upon which the American paperback had been founded: the provision of inexpensive reprints for the masses. Paperbacks traditionally had bent over backwards to express gratitude to the hardcover houses for permitting them to reprint their books. Now, suddenly, the hardcover houses were being challenged for their right to publish first an author's work. Fawcett was offering a $2,000 advance for all manuscripts accepted for publication--a sum which compared favorably with what an author of mysteries and westerns would receive for reprints of work published first in hardcovers, which paid one-half cent for each of the first 150,000 copies sold, and three-quarters of a cent thereafter.[7] Fawcett further sweetened the pot by guaranteeing additional royalties each time a book went back to press. With printing runs generally set between 200,000 and 300,000 copies, the Fawcett author could be fairly certain of adding to his $2,000 advance. Exceptionally popular writers such as Richard Prather, who created the Shell Scott series for Fawcett, could realize upwards of $15,000 for a single novel over a period of several years--a figure far in excess of what most mystery writers received from hardcover royalties and their half of the paperback reprint royalties, which the Mystery Writers of America claimed might be as little as $900.[8]

The source for Fawcett's manuscripts was in large part the displaced legions of pulp magazine veterans. By 1950, most of the detective pulps either had folded or were on their last legs, and the western pulps weren't much better off. For that matter, the pulps never had provided a very steady source of income; their rates generally were set between one and three cents per word, which netted the author of a 60,000 word novel as little as $1,500. Nor was there any chance of deriving additional income from reprintings with the pulps. It is easy to understand how, within its first two years of operation, Fawcett's Gold Medal Books attracted such genre luminaries as Sax Rohmer, Will F. Jenkins, Luke Short, Day Keene, Lester Dent, W. T. Ballard, Steve Fisher, Bruno Fischer and Octavus Roy Cohen. Fawcett's on-the-job training also created a stable of new writers who shortly joined the ranks of the decade's most popular, including John D. MacDonald, Gil Brewer, Howard Hunt, Richard Himmel, Richard Prather, Edward S. Aarons and Theodore Pratt. Author Harry Whittington recalls giving Fawcett first crack at all of his work after selling them _Fires That Destroy_ in 1951 because, in addition to the hefty advance and royalties for subsequent printings, the company also allowed writers to keep such auxiliary rights as overseas sales, movie options, and the like.[9] Undoubtedly other writers were equally impressed with those benefits.

While a few paperback lines possessed ties to hardcover houses (as, for instance, Pocket Books did with Simon & Schuster) and consequently could not plunge into the original novels tide without

hurting their own interests, the immediate success of Gold Medal Books was not lost upon the rest of the industry. Within two years of its debut, the Gold Medal formula was being applied at Avon, Graphic, and Lion Books, imprints which had been founded as reprint lines. Hillman Books published The Dying Earth, an original science fiction novel by Jack Vance, in 1950, while Pyramid made Roadside Night its first fiction original in 1951. The former novel has since been recognized as a classic in its genre; the latter has long since been forgotten (if ever it was noticed in the first place). This disparity in quality was typical of early paperback originals, as a manuscript rarely could not find a home, so hungry was the market for product. According to Harry Whittington, only a few basic qualities were expected of paperback originals and their authors:

> Softcover editors loved timeliness, movement, action and color. You had to tell a vital, hard hitting story. You had to keep it moving. You had to give it emotional pull. You had to make your story matter, inside you, in your guts. You had to care . . .
>
> I sold as fast as I could write. I gave it all my heart and my mind and my emotions. I chose consciously to write swiftly and with spontaneity.[10]

It was to be expected that new paperback lines devoted to the publication of original editions would soon follow Fawcett's lead. In 1952, two of the most important imprints debuted: Ace Double-Size Novels and Ballantine Books. (For details on the founding of these houses, see "Expansion and Experimentation.") Ace Books, drawing on publisher A. A. Wyn's experience with pulps and comic books, and editor Donald A. Wollheim's experience with Avon Books, offered

a foolproof combination: one original novel--usually a western, mystery or science-fiction story--backed with one reprint. The authors Ace attracted included many who also were writing for Fawcett--Whittington, Jenkins, Brewer, and Keene among them--as well as pulp veterans Louis L'Amour (whose first two books for Ace were published under the pen-name "Jim Mayo"[11]), Leigh Brackett, Robert Bloch, Philip K. Dick and L. Sprague de Camp. Writers from Jim Quinn's Handi-Books stable, such as Paul Lehman and Joe Barry, also were available after Handi-Books folded in 1951, and quickly found work with Ace. Perhaps the most important original novel published under the Ace imprint was Junkie, the first novel by William Burroughs, who used the pen-name "William Lee" for this 1953 edition. Wollheim himself edited a number of original collections of science fiction stories drawn from the pulps. Later in the 1950's, Ace would expand its categories to include historicals, contemporary fiction and juvenile delinquency.

The originals published under the Ballantine Books imprint, despite much more elegant packaging, fell into the same basic categories, with a greater emphasis on contemporary fiction and, surprisingly, a total lack of mystery titles. A great deal of classic science fiction appeared as Ballantine first editions, including Theodore Sturgeon's More Than Human, Arthur C. Clarke's Childhood's End, Ray Bradbury's Farenheit 451 and Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth's The Space Merchants; most of these works, however, had appeared in the pulp magazines in abbreviated form prior to publication by Ballantine.

Anthologies seemed to have been one of Ballantine's favorite categories during the fifties, judging from such original collections as Star Science Fiction Stories, The Best Short Stories of 1953, Prize Articles: 1954, New Short Novels and Stories of Sudden Truth. Ballantine Books also published a considerable number of nonfiction works, including original biographies, World War II histories, and child-care volumes. One of the house's most inventive stratagems was its publication of television screenplays, of which Best Television Plays (edited by Gore Vidal) and Sergeant Bilko (ten scripts by Nat Hiken) are two prime examples. Another Ballantine innovation was its commissioning of cartooning genius Harvey Kurtzman (a former editor of the E. C. line of comic books) in 1959 to produce a wholly original volume of graphic narratives, which resulted in the marvelous Harvey Kurtzman's Jungle Book, a commercial failure which is now recognized as a landmark in American comic art.

By the middle of the decade the paperback original had become so entrenched that only Bantam Books was not issuing them at least on occasion. Even the staid Pocket Books line reversed its anti-originals stand, approaching Evan Hunter to create a series of original mysteries for their newly acquired Permabooks imprint. This Hunter did under his "Ed McBain" pseudonym, and the popular "87th Precinct" series was born.[12] Some companies released their originals mixed in with the regular line of reprints, while other companies created separate imprints which specialized in originals, as did Dell Books with its First Edition series. Whatever the approach, the

paperback industry had seen the wisdom of Fawcett's proud cover banner--"Original Gold Medal Novel-Not a Reprint"--and adopted its philosophy, at least to a degree. The efficacy of the paperback original would never again be doubted.

Despite the expanded market that the paperback original made available to writers during the fifties and sixties, some questions about the legitimacy of that market existed. As author Robert Block remembers the situation, Ace Books was but one of several paperback houses which conveniently lost the sales records whenever the royalty checks were due to be figured. The three novels and one short story collection Ace published as originals between 1954 and 1958 netted Bloch between $750 and $1,000 apiece; none was ever reprinted, so Bloch never received any additional income for the work.[13] At those rates, Bloch probably became nostalgic for the pulps' two-cents-per word guarantee. (On the other hand, Bloch's experiences with Fawcett, which brought out two of his works in the early sixties, provided him with happier memories of bigger paydays.) Norman Daniels is just as cynical about the houses for which he wrote original novels: "It was impossible to make any money . . . The advances were fair for those days, but I'm sure I never received a royalty."[14] Harry Whittington recalls payments ranging from as low as $750 for his Handi-Books and Hanro digests to highs of several thousand dollars from Fawcett; Ace and Graphic were toward the low end of the scale, with close-ended "advances" of $1,000 per novel. Of Ace, Whittington notes, "They were hard to pin down or keep track of. I don't know

how honest they were in accounting for sales."[15] But, while Whittington expresses an acceptance of these business practices in the industry's early days, he still groans when he thinks about the novel he wrote for Ace's "Man from U.N.C.L.E." series in 1965:

> They [Ace] agreed to pay $1,500 for outright purchase of all rights . . . This publisher had never offered me any contract that didn't provide for royalties. The agent advised me to accept this one. But the agency knew what I didn't know. The first such book had sold over a million copies and its writer [Michael Avallone] was bleeding all over their floor in rage . . .
>
> The book was called The Doomsday Affair. It was on the paperback bestseller lists for one whole year . . . And I, who owed my shirt, made $1,500 on a book that would easily have paid off all I owed and more.

So disgusted was Whittington that he retired from writing for several years. "I still loved to write," recalls Whittington, "but nobody cared. Nobody wanted me."[16]

Michael Avallone, who in 1979 and 1980 wrote three entries in Pinnacle's "The Butcher" series under the house name "Stuart Jason," claims that $2,500 is still the average fee for this type of paperback original.[17] (Allowing for the devaluation of the dollar since 1950, when Fawcett was paying roughly that sum as its advance, one can see why a writer like Harry Whittington temporarily ended his association with the paperback industry.) Avallone does not retain any rights to the work he does on "The Butcher" series--it is "work-for-hire," which means Pinnacle Books does not share its profits with the author. Presumably, many other writers of paperback series are in the same boat. It is easy to comprehend why Avallone had to sell twenty-seven novels one year to make ends meet, and why he often writes an entire novel in

three days.[18] Why did, and do, paperback writers put up with such exploitation? Harry Whittington explains that he needed the "quick decisions--quick pay" of the paperback houses; hardcover houses could take several months to deliver royalties.[19] Robert Bloch looks at the paperback collections of his stories as advertisement for himself:

> Since coming to Hollywood in '59 I've sold dozens of stories to television and films, plus hundreds to anthologies--only because the material was made available in those grubby collections. They showcased items long out of print, and whatever I may have lost on royalties was more than offset by sales to other media.[20]

On the other hand, some of the most popular authors did not need to rationalize their sales to paperback houses. Norman Daniels and his wife, Gothic-author Dorothy Daniels, have "positively no regrets for having confined our work to paperbacks . . . Paperbacks are fun: no revisions, no rejections, fast pay, good royalties."[21] John D. MacDonald, author of the bestselling Travis McGee series for Fawcett, contends that his rewards were far greater precisely <u>because</u> he was willing to write original novels for paperback publication:

> I become practically apoplectic when it is suggested that soft-cover originals were some sort of salvage for hard-cover rejects. Perhaps they were in many cases. But not for me. What did your average 'mystery novel' return in the 1950's in royalties? Five thousand? Six? And in return for that, you give up thirty to forty thousand in paperback royalties? No way!
>
> I have never done a book that could not have gone into hard-covers just as readily . . . But I decided to use hard-cover only for those novels which were outside the mystery genre, and then to negotiate the best possible deal on the split of reprint royalties . . . The decision-making formula was this: Is there enough chance of subsidiary income to make up for the loss of half the

> paperback royalties? Sometimes my agent and I were dead wrong. In other cases . . . we were proven abundantly right.[22]

Some authors have been treated quite well by the paperback industry. Jack Kerouac had gained notoriety during the fifties with his chronicles of the Beat life, On the Road and The Dharma Bums. But the largest advance he ever received for a work was the $7,500 Avon Books paid him for the manuscript to Tristessa, issued as a paperback original in 1960.[23] A more recent example is Madeline Robins, author of two novels for Warner's Regency Romance imprint, who expresses satisfaction with the $5,000 she garnered on her first book, and the $2,500 she was advanced for her second: "Obviously, it is not enough to keep myself on, but does enable me (to use a Regency phrase) to 'command the elegancies of life'--at least, some of them."[24] Robins notes that although she retained no rights for her first novel, Althea, she was permitted to retain film, television, book club and overseas rights for her second novel, Jenny. This would suggest that the author of paperback originals may be rewarded by the company for a good sales performance with increasingly remunerative contracts.

The question of money aside, there yet remain certain negative elements in being classified as a "paperback writer." One such factor was, and is, the lack of prestige accorded authors of paperback originals by the critics and others in the writing community. Gil Brewer, one of the most popular paperback writers of the fifties, still is bitter over this prejudicial treatment: "They [the critics] had some silly, preconceived notions as to what [paperback originals]

were . . . They missed out on a lot of fine writing by behaving in such a negative fashion."[25] Harry Whittington compares the lack of critical attention afforded paperback originals to "having children, sending them off to school where they excel in every way--and then they're failed by the authorities."[26] On the other hand, author John Jakes, whose eight "Kent Family Chronicles" books have sold over thirty million copies as paperback originals, contends that the lack of reviews given paperback original novels in the fifties and sixties was justifiable: "The work was turned out very quickly and probably didn't deserve any."[27] The paperback original novel was the Rodney Dangerfield of the publishing industry: deserving or not, it would get no respect. This second-class-citizen treatment of paperback originals began with statements of the sort made in 1950 by Pocket Books' vice-president Freeman Williams, who charged that such works were "mostly rejects, or sub-standard books by usually competent writers."[28] Years later, when Pocket itself was issuing originals, Williams probably came to regret those words. But the damage had been done, the seed planted: the paperback novel was junk, trash, the work of hacks. It was an attitude that so firmly implanted itself that not until the mid-seventies would the paperback original be regarded with less than total scorn by the mainstream critics. But developments of such a profound nature would take place during that decade that forbade further superciliousness. Soon the paperback original was to be perceived not as the black sheep of the industry, but as the prodigy upon which the hopes of the future were pinned.

John Jakes and Paperback Genres of the Seventies

The career of John Jakes has revolved primarily around the paperback industry. After more than thirty years of writing paperback originals, Jakes can claim to have seen and done it all. His experience represents in microcosm every triumph and every disaster that can befall the paperback writer, from multi-million sellers to rip-offs of the most vile sort. He has written in the science fiction, sword and sorcery, hard-boiled detective, western, spy and gothic categories in addition to the genre that he himself helped create: the generational saga. But his story properly begins not with an account of the blockbuster series that would make him a millionaire, but rather with an assignment that nearly broke his spirit. In 1973, Jakes' agent committed him to write a novelization of the screenplay of the film Conquest of the Planet of the Apes. His fee: $1,500, with no further royalties or bonuses. That sum was less than authors of paperback originals were receiving from Fawcett back in 1950, and to Jakes it was a slap in the face: "I had irretrievably been classed as a low on-the-scale paperback writer . . . I felt that my career was going nowhere fast, unless perhaps it was down; that perhaps I had wasted twenty years on a false hope."[29] It was the same dark night of a writer's soul that had forced Harry Whittington into seclusion for several years. And Jakes had a lucrative career writing advertising meetings waiting in the wings for him. But then--like a scene from a Busby Berkeley musical--an unexpected phone call was to alter Jakes' fortunes, along with the course of the entire paperback industry.

> In March of 1973 I received a phone call from a former advertising colleague, Don Moffett, who had been approached by Lyle about doing this five volume series for Pyramid Books. Don suggested that Lyle [Kenyon Engel] get ahold of me, since he had other commitments.
>
> A couple of days later, Lyle called me, full of his typical enthusiasm, and described the type of series he wanted: a fictional family traced through American history. Really the kind of thing Zola had done almost a hundred years earlier with his cycle of novels about the descendants of a French family. Not a new idea, but a good one, pegged to the Bicentennial.
>
> The timetable called for five books, bringing the family up to 1976, the last book to be published not later than July 4, 1976. It was originally called 'The American Bicentennial Series,' but was rechristened 'The Kent Family Chronicles' when it ran on beyond that date.[30]

So successful were the first three volumes of the series that Jakes was able to renegotiate his contract with Engel, who up to that point had been sharing equally in all proceeds. The series was expanded to run for eight volumes once it became apparent that two hundred years of American history could not be squeezed into a mere three thousand pages. As it developed, though, even the series' ultimate page count of five thousand only managed to carry the Kents up to the turn of the twentieth century. Even so, after the publication of the eighth volume, The Americans, Jakes decided he needed a rest from the Kents, and put further entries in the saga on indefinite "hold." By way of unwinding, he is writing a series set in the mid-1800's--a mere trilogy--for Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, the hardcover imprint of the company that published the Kent Family Books. But Jakes promises that, if and when the Kent series is resumed, he will not opt for the more prestigious route of first publication in hard-

covers: "I think that would be disloyal to the original audience that created their popularity."[31] Jakes has had the satisfaction of seeing the first three volumes in the Kent saga produced by Universal (yet another arm of MCA, the corporation that owns Jove Books) as television mini-series. Despite gaining wealth and fame which few in his profession have achieved, however, Jakes has no illusions about his sudden realization of the Horatio Alger myth:

> I am a popular writer . . . I have no pretensions of belonging elsewhere. I know writers who have the most dreadful pretensions about their abilities. I also have no grasp of whether people will be reading the Kent books fifty years from now. I only know that they met a particular hunger at a particular time. I think it's very likely I'll never have another success this big. It's a ride that comes only to a few writers . . . If you can be happy writing what your readers like, then that's what you should do.[32]

"The Kent Family Chronicles" affected the paperback book industry in a number of ways, many of which have had far-reaching significance. Jakes' series proved that paperback originals, given the proper promotion, could achieve the same bestseller status as previously had been gained only by reprints of hardcover successes. The first volume in the series, _The Bastard_, became the first paperback original ever to make the New York _Times_' bestseller list; each of the next seven volumes would duplicate that feat. The sixth volume in the series, _The Warriors_, had the largest first-printing ever assigned to a paperback book, original or reprint: three-and-one-half million copies. Three volumes appeared on the _Times_' bestseller list during 1976, the first time an author had ever placed three books on that list in a single year.[33]

The response of the other paperback houses to Jakes' success was quite predictable: imitate, imitate, imitate. Among the series of paperback originals applying the Kent Family formula that one can find on the newsstand racks: Dell's "The Making of America" and "The Australians"; Fawcett's "Falconhurst" and "Blackoaks" (both written by Harry Whittington under the name "Ashley Carter"); Warner's "Wyndward" and "Rakehell Dynasty"; Bantam's "Wagons West," "Colonization of America" and "American Southwest"; Pinnacle's "Windhaven"; Playboy Press' "The American Freedom Series"; and New American Library's "Oakhurst" and "The Haggard Chronicles." Many of these series have already exceeded five installments, with "The Making of America" leading the way with fourteen volumes as of January 1981. Lyle Kenyon Engel's Book Creations, Inc. is responsible for creating the premises and hiring the writers for several of these Kent Family spin-offs, a fact which Jakes accepts with resignation:

> It's very flattering to be imitated. And it's to be anticipated that such imitations would come along from Lyle and other packagers. The imitative mentality is very strong in all creative fields in this country. There are only a few original thinkers; consequently, those who fill most of the jobs can only think, 'If one was good, three more will be better.' It's always more tempting to go with the proven success. It's worth noting that the cover concept of the Kent series has sparked its share of imitations, too. Again, that is the sincerest form of flattery for the men who jointly came up with the concept, illustrator Herb Tauss and Pyramid's art director, Jim McIntyre.
>
> I liken hardcover publishing to motion pictures, and paperback publishing to television. The thinking I just described is more prevalent in television and in paperback publishing . . . [Imitation] is easier and less risky.[34]

Pessimistic as Jakes might be about the long-term viability of the series concept in paperbacks, many in the industry continue to bank on the success of this format. A significant percentage of rack space in drugstores, supermarkets and chain outlets has been devoted to these series, an indication that they still are moving briskly. While none of the series noted above has matched the success of Jakes', collectively they represent a major share of today's paperback market. Concept-monger Lyle Kenyon Engel is optimistic about such original series, although he denies that any sort of trend of series fiction presently exists:

> There are no trends . . . there are merely junky imitations. When people talk about a trend, they really mean a ripoff of some good book, produced in less time, for less money and with not as good a writer. People see a bandwagon and everyone jumps on it and it gets overloaded.[35]

This is a most curious reaction from the most prolific contributor to the overloading of the paperback racks with historical series. Perhaps Engel feels as though he has spawned a Frankenstein monster which he can no longer control, given the market entries produced by such "outside" book packagers as Pocket Books' Richard Gallen. In any case, Engel can complain all the way to the bank, as his Book Creations, Inc. pockets a full fifty per cent of the royalties from each volume in each series, for which share Engel's and his staff of twelve handle such secondary matters as editing, proofreading, legal fees and subsidiary rights.[36] Engel pays his writers' expenses (research and the like) out of his own share of the advance provided by the publisher,

who has paid anywhere from $50,000 to $150,000 on the basis of a story "treatment" and, sometimes, a fully developed chapter.[37] The contract calls for a certain number of volumes to be delivered on a strict timetable; if the series goes over well, the number of volumes in the series can be expanded. A somewhat different approach is taken by Richard Gallen Associates, which pays the advances to its authors out of its own pocket, thereby retaining a larger share of whatever a publisher finally pays for the finished product. So successful have Gallen's romance originals been that his own imprint, Richard Gallen Books, has been awarded by distributor Pocket Books.

One of the more intriguing effects Jakes' Kent Family series has had upon the publishing industry is that successful paperback originals now may be reprinted in hardcovers. Doubleday initiated this reversal with Jakes' series for its book club, which proved so popular a notion--book club members apparently disdain anything published in softcovers--that the Literary Guild club followed suit, offering an edition of John Saul's _Comes the Blind Fury_, a 1980 Dell paperback original. Danielle Steele's _Loving_ and V. C. Andrews' _Flowers in the Attic_ and _Petals on the Wind_, all of them bestsellers as paperback originals, also have been issued in hardcovers for the Doubleday Book Club.[38]

A further consequence of this increasingly symbiotic relationship between the paperback and hardcover publishers is that some paperback houses have initiated their own hardcover imprints. Dell's Delacorte line will publish Sally Mandel's _Change of Heart_, the manuscript of which had been acquired with the intention of releasing it as a paper-

back original. NAL also has a hardcover operation, which will be put to good use now that it has lured popular horror-story author Stephen King away from Doubleday. NAL had been reprinting King's novels as Signet paperbacks; now, having granted King a larger share of the paperback revenues, the company has the luxury either of auctioning off the hardcover rights to King's new works, or publishing his books themselves.[39] Bantam Books is following a similar course with its hardcover publication of Tom Robbins' Still Life with Woodpecker.

In a way, Jakes' historicals can be perceived as an outgrowth of the historical romances that have been popular for the last decade. The romance category actually includes several subdivision, including the historical, gothic, nurse, and contemporary romance. The first company to mine this genre on a large scale was Canada's Harlequin Books, which Pocket Books began distributing in the U.S. around 1960. American houses such as Ace Books and Paperback Library quickly picked up on this trend, and soon the market was jammed with original romances. By the early seventies, the sales of gothics and nurse novels had tapered off, so the houses directed their energies toward the historical and contemporary types. Harlequin now issues about a dozen titles each month, and many of its authors have developed cult followings. One such star in the Harlequin firmament was Janet Daily, author of more than fifty Harlequin Romances between 1974 and 1979. Dailey's batting average was so formidable that Pocket Books lured her away and put her to work writing long historical romances such as The Rogue, a bestseller in 1980.[40]

This competition between houses for popular authors is just the tip of the iceberg clogging the paperback romance channels. Today's marketplace is jammed with paperback imprints specializing in original romances. There is Bantam's Barbara Cartland line, Dell's Candlelight Romances, Fawcett's Coventry, Kable News Company's Tiara Books, Warner's Regency Romances, and Pocket Books' Silhouette. All are frankly imitative of Harlequin's format, but Silhouette apparently was a bit _too_ frank, as Harlequin hauled the company into court in 1980. Some thirty points of unfair competition were lodged against Silhouette.[41] To date, a preliminary injunction against Silhouette's "deceptively similar" packaging has been the only result of what undoubtedly will be a long and bitter battle reminiscent of the one fought in 1942 between Pocket Books and Avon Books. Ironically, this time it is Pocket Books which is the defendant. At stake are the $70 million in sales Harlequin realized in 1979--nearly one-tenth of the total gross for all mass-market paperbacks--a figure made all the more remarkable when one notes the $1.25 and $1.50 price tags on most Harlequins, compared to industry norms of $2.50 and $2.95.[42] Harlequins make up for these relatively low prices by achieving high volume sales. As the _New York Times_' paperback analyst, Ray Walters, noted, Harlequin's books are "written, packaged, and promoted as uniformly as if they were boxes of cornflakes or bars of soap."[43] With an estimated audience of some 20,000,000 women, the competition promises to grow increasingly fierce, lawsuits or no lawsuits. Pocket Books has started a second romance imprint, Richard Gallen Books, which in 1981

will issue four titles each month, while Harlequin has countered with its "Harlequin Presents" and "Harlequin Super-Romances" series of longer and slightly more explicit romances.[44] The formula of the Harlequin-type romance is fairly rigid. It can best be illustrated by the following "tipsheet," provided by Jove Books to authors interested in writing romances for their new "Second Chance at Love" imprint:

> 1. Plot. The plot must involve the heroine's 'second chance at love.' Her previous relationship or marriage has ended (she can be a divorcee or a widow) and in the novel she will succeed in finding all the happiness she missed or lost before.
>
> 2. The Heroine, aged 20 to 29, is not to be naive and virginal, but rather a mature woman. Although the failure or loss of her first love has made her suffer, she must never be portrayed as depressed or depressive! Even in the beginning of the story she has a vivacious spirit. She must never be dreary!
>
> 3. The Hero in the contemporary novel can be American or foreign, and while he need not be rich, he must be successful at whatever he does. He can possess a complex personality, but serious problems or neuroses such as alcoholism, impotence, addictive gambling, must be avoided, nor should there be any 'gothic' elements such as a wife hidden away in a secret wing of the house.
>
> 4. Sex. The hero and heroine make love even when unmarried, and with plenty of sensuous detail. But the explicit details will be used only in foreplay, and the fadeout will occur before actual intercourse. The setting and circumstances of the lovemaking are also crucial and should contribute to a slow build-up of sexual tension. The hero and heroine should not make love too early in the plot. In the Regency novels the sex can stop before intercourse, since the lack of birth control devices creates an element of worry that isn't present in the contemporary romances.
>
> 5. Children. The heroine or hero can be a parent, but the plot should not be built around children and the children should not create complications.

> 6. Length: 65,000 to 70,000 words.
>
> 7. Point-of-View. The story should be told through the third person from the heroine's point of view.[45]

Presumably the other romance lines supply similar guidelines, albeit without the "second chance at love" premise as a prerequisite. Of course, the paperback romances of the early sixties were even less frank about sex than today's romances.

As well as the Harlequin-type romance presently is doing, another kind of paperback romance seems to be in ascendancy, to judge from its representation on racks in airports, drugstores, supermarkets and newsstands. This is the historical romance, which is likely to be two to three times the length of the regular Harlequin-type novel. Adorned with Gone-with-the-Wind flavored titles, such as Tears of Gold, Purity's Passion, Wicked Is My Flesh, Secret Sins, Unholy Desires, This Towering Passion and Ashes in the Wind, the emphasis of these longish works differs from that of the Jakes-style historicals in that the romantic tribulations of the heroine are the focus, rather than a family's trials over the span of generations. As the author of Sweet Love, Bitter Love, Shannon Harper, describes the formula of the current paperback romance,

> First of all, the heroine must be beautiful. Not average beautiful but incredibly beautiful, so men cannot keep their eyes, or hands, off her. She must be stubborn and willful, passionate, but it must be unawakened passion. Basically, she loves only one man, but she has to have relationships with three or four others before she realizes she has one true love, whom she met in the first chapter . . . (He) needs to be mysterious, a loner and brooding, the person no one can really know . . . He is very strong. He is the kind of man no woman has ever tamed--until he meets our incredibly beautiful heroine.[46]

Packaged in montage wraparound covers "dripping with guilt and desire,"[47] these "bodice-rippers" are so popular today because they answer the question, "Where are the Maureen O'Haras and Errol Flynns of yester-year? On the pages of Jennifer Blake's latest," according to one paperback editor.[48] The leading authors in this genre include Rosemary Rogers, whose Avon originals have amassed sales in excess of fifteen million, Jennifer Wilde, Laurie McBain, Patricia Matthews, Danielle Steel and Christina Savage, all of whom have written paper-back original romances which sold a million copies.[49]

The romance novel further entrenched itself during the seventies by conquering the trade paperback format. Avon Books was the first to succeed with this large-size, high price format for a fiction original when it published Kathleen Woodiwiss' The Flame and the Flower in 1972. Eight hundred thousand copies later, Avon realized it had struck a rich vein. Woodiwiss' Shanna topped the trade paper-back lists for nearly two years before being reprinted in Avon's mass market format. The combined sales of the two editions exceeded three million for this paperback original, a figure which becomes even more impressive when one takes into account the higher price on the trade paperback edition. In 1979, Woodiwiss surpassed Shanna's sales with Ashes in the Wind, which sold an astonishing two-and-one-quarter mil-lion copies in a little over a year.[50] Added to million-plus sellers such as Avon's Sacajawea and The Crowd Pleasers, the trade paperback successes opened up new sales vistas for the paperback industry. Indeed, of the seventeen trade paperbacks that exceeded the 200,000

copies mark in sales, a convincing thirteen were original paperback editions (both fiction and nonfiction).[51]

Yet another variation of the historical romance that made its mark during the seventies was the Southern historical, or Plantation novel, a rather steamier and more violent sort of historical saga than Jakes' kind. Beginning with the multi-million sales of Kyle Onstott's Mandingo (1957), this genre gradually grew into a staple of the paperback originals market. More than a half-dozen successful sequels to Mandingo by Onstott and his collaborator, Lance Horner, convinced the other paperback houses to join Fawcett in its development of Plantation series. During the seventies a number of exponents of this genre appeared on the stands, including the "Sabrehill," "Windhaven" and "Bondmaster" series. Fawcett itself exploited the concept with a "Blackoaks" saga, which is being written by Harry Whittington, the inheritor of the "Falconhurst" series upon Horner's death in 1974. Whittington estimates that sales for his latest series entry, Scandal of Falconhurst, had passed the half-million mark in its first six months, on a print run of about 700,000.[52] While rather modest by the standards of Mandingo, which has sold about five million copies,[53] such sales figures pleased Fawcett enough to order several additional entries in the "Falconhurst" and "Blackoaks" sagas from Whittington, who invokes the Gone-with-the-Wind-ish pseudonym of "Ashley Carter" for these works.

An illustration of how the Plantation novels relate to the current craze for long historicals is embodied in the experience of Norman

Daniels. His two short Plantation novels, Law of the Lash (1968) and Master of Wyndward (1969) were acquired by Warner Books (after original publisher Lancer had gone out of business), and combined into one long book entitled Wyndward Passion. Given a print run of 400,000 for its 1978 reissue, the book performed so well that Daniels was commissioned to write five sequels.[54] Thus can a modest genre entry be repackaged into a bestseller.

Western series also have enjoyed a renaissance in recent years. Although original Western paperbacks had existed since 1949, when several were published under the Handi-Books imprint, it was not until ten or twelve years ago that the original series concept began to be applied to the Western. In 1980, virtually every paperback house was producing an original western series, some featuring anti-heroes of the Clint Eastwood "Man-with-No-Name" breed. Among the current entries: Bantam's "Derby Man," Dell's "Foxx," Berkley's "Floating Outfit," NAL's "The Trailsman," Jove's "Longarm" and "The Easy Company," Warner's "The Renegade," Pinnacle's "Edge" and "Adam Steele," Playboy Press' "Jake Logan" and "J.D. Hardin," and Fawcett's "Buchanan," the longest-running series in this genre with nineteen volumes to date.[55] Major promotions are being accorded some of the above in an effort to expand the market by broadening the demographics and geography of readership, which traditionally have been older males in the Southwest and Midwest. Many of these series require the services of several writers, so frequently are they issued. The ubiquitous Harry Whittington recently contracted to write six novels in the "Longarm"

series under the house name of "Tabor Evans"; his work will be issued as every fourth release in the series, indicating the existence of other "Tabor Evans"-es.[56]

The male-oriented tough-hero series has been one of the most reliable categories of paperback originals since 1950, when Richard Prather created his Shell Scott private-eye series for Fawcett's Gold Medal line. Among the early detective series produced in paperback original editions were William Campbell Gault's Joe Puma, Evan Hunter's Curt Cannon, Michael Avallone's Ed Noon, Richard Himmel's Johnny Maguire and John Jakes' Johnny Havoc. Series featuring tough cops were also popular during the fifties; among the best were Chester Himes' Gravedigger Jones and Coffin Ed Johnson, Jonathan Craig's Pete Selby and Ed McBain's 87th Precinct. In the late fifties, the success of Ian Fleming's James Bond novels triggered a number of original paperback spy series, including Donald Hamilton's Matt Helm, Edward S Aarons' Sam Durell, and Richard Telfair's Montgomery Nash.

During the sixties, these genres coalesced into a new type of story, one featuring a hero--or, more often, an anti-hero--who worked independent of any organization or social structure. John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee series, created for Fawcett in 1964, revolved around an independent soldier-of-fortune who happened to be highly moral; Richard Stark (Donald Westlake)'s Parker series, created for Pocket Books in 1962, featured an amoral protagonist who stole for a living, yet was admirable for his total professionalism. It was this violent anti-hero type which author Don Pendleton used as the basis of his "Executioner"

series, which during the seventies sold tens of millions of copies for Pinnacle Books. In turn, the success of "The Executioner" spawned dozens of baldly imitative series by numerous paperback houses (Pinnacle among them), including "The Penetrator," "The Butcher," "Death Merchant," "The Mercenary," and "The Destroyer," this last a semi-satirical treatment of the formula which has made the series second only to "The Executioner" in longevity. Most of these vigilante-hero series release new installments every four to six months, making them the modern counterpart of pulp-magazine series featuring characters like Nick Carter, The Shadow, Doc Savage, and Tarzan.

The pulp-hero series was not the only contribution of the old pulp magazines to the categories of paperback originals. Science fiction, which as recently as 1949 was a novelty as a mass-market paperback release, has grown over the years into one of the pre-eminent paperback genres. In addition to the original science fiction novel, which companies like Ace and Ballantine established in the mid-fifties, the anthology of original short stories has been an important division of the science fiction paperback book. The first series of specially commissioned short story collections in this genre was Ballantine's "Star Science Fiction," which under the editorship of Frederic Pohl issued six volumes between 1953 and 1960. Damon Knight's "Orbit" series, published by Berkley, debuted in 1966; while the first ten volumes were paperback originals, the success of the series led to hardcover publication for subsequent releases. At the beginning of the seventies. a mini-boom of original-story series took place, with Robert Hoskins'

"Infinity" (Lancer, 1970) and Terry Carr's "Universe" (1971) among the ones issued as paperback originals. Currently, the Ace "Destiny" series is the foremost exponent of the magazine-in-book-format concept.

Major science fiction authors continue to have work published first in paperback editions, although this is less common today than in the fifties and sixties. Philip José Farmer, author of the immensely popular "Riverworld" series, had Jesus on Mars, a novel, and Riverworld and Other Stories, a short-story collection, published as paperback originals in 1979. Robert Heinlein's novel, The Number of the Beast, appeared as an original trade paperback in 1980, complete with illustrations. The trade paperback format would seem particularly conducive to the publication of new science fiction works, offering as it does a more permanent, more attractive package for fans of the genre, and a higher royalty base for authors. (Westerns, on the other hand, might realize a higher gross from editions priced at $1.95, as opposed to $5.95 trade editions.)

Implications of the Trend Toward Paperback Originals

Most industry observers agree that the paperback original edition will become the publishing wave of the eighties. If nothing else, economics will dictate that trend. As agent Nat Sobel points out, "Having access to originals is a life-and-death matter for paperback houses. They can no longer depend totally on inexpensive product from the hardcover houses."[57] Pocket Books' president Ron Busch concurs:

> With the paperback original, you have the opportunity to make some money, and if you fail or have only moderate success, you don't get crucified on your losses for an overguaranteed book. That doesn't mean we're going to

> stop buying those books. But we're certainly not going to build a publishing program around reprints. It can't be done anymore.[58]

Also to be considered is the fact that, when a paperback house contracts to reprint a book, the hardcover house only licenses the rights for five to seven years; if a second term is desired, the paperback company has to buy the lease again. The paperback original, on the other hand, is owned by the house for the length of copyright, which is twenty-eight years.[59]

The money saved on the acquisition of an original manuscript enables the paperback house to spend more money on promotion. Louis Wolfe, executive vice-president of Avon, explains the benefits of that position as exemplified by a recent Avon original, The Second Son:

> The advance for The Second Son was in the low six figures. Right away, we have extra dollars to fool around with. We may pay the same seven figures down the road in royalties, but from a cash-flow point of view, the dollars you pay up front are the dollars you don't have in the bank. If we took the amount we saved on the advance and put it in the bank, the interest alone would pay for the publicity campaign.[60]

NAL spent $100,000 promoting Phoenix, a paperback original that went on to sell a million copies in 1979. The book was purchased for less than the sum that was spent advertising it.[61] Authors are quite pleased by this media attention; they do, after all, receive royalties based on number of copies sold, and the better a book is promoted, the better its chances for bestsellerdom. As Nancy Coffey of Ballantine explains, "A paperback original launched well with major promotion will

make an author a household name overnight. That rarely happens with a first novel in hardcover."[62]

The fly in the ointment here is that paperback originals still do not receive the same review attention as hardcovers, due to what agent Nat Sobel describes simply as "old-fashioned prejudice."[63] Ron Busch feels the situation is grossly unfair:

> There is an elitist point of view. Look at the major consumer review outlets. When was the last time you saw a review of a major paperback original in The New York Times or in Time magazine? They simply don't like us. I'm co-chairman of The American Book Awards, and the people who are giving us the most trouble in terms of expanding the awards to include paperbacks have been the critics.[64]

One editor states, "I'd love to be able to publish some important writers in paperback, but I cannot, in good conscience, promise them major review attention."[65] But, as Ron Busch points out, the perception of a hardcover edition as the "real" book and the paperback as a piece of ephemera can change once a generation of critics who haven't been spoonfed that mentality emerges.[66]

With paperback houses like Jove committing themselves entirely to the production of paperback originals,[67] and most other mass-market houses issuing originals as forty per cent to fifty per cent of each month's list,[68] the economic viability of the paperback original appears secure. And, as the distance between the hardcover book and the mass-market paperback is bridged by the trade-format softcover, even the critics might forget their prejudices and give paperback originals their due. Peter Mayer, of Avon Books, is optimistic:

"Format is an instrument--a tool for anybody to use . . . I don't see any reason why the original can't be a major force in literary publishing. There is nothing inherent in the original that makes that impossible."[69]

Notes to Original Editions in Paperback

[1] *Publisher's Weekly* (hereafter referred to as *PW*), 1 August 1942, p. 259.

[2] Clarence Petersen, *The Bantam Story* (New York: Bantam, 1975), p. 8.

[3] *PW*, 20 July 1946, p. 290.

[4] Personal interview with Norman Daniels, July 1980.

[5] David Harlequin, "Ed McBain," *Mystery*, 2 (January 1981), p. 14.

[6] Personal interview with Harry Whittington, June 1980.

[7] *PW*, 20 July 1946, p. 290.

[8] "Authors, Publishers and Royalties," *PW*, 22 December 1945, p. 2692.

[9] Personal interview with Harry Whittington.

[10] Harry Whittington, Why Is a Writer?, Keynote Talk delivered to the Florida Suncoast Writer's Conference, University of South Florida, 27 January 1978. Unpublished transcript.

[11] John D. Nesbitt, "Louis L'Amour's Pseudonymous Works," *Paperback Quarterly*, 3 (Fall 1980), p. 5.

[12] Harlequin, "Ed McBain," p. 15.

[13] Personal interview with Robert Bloch, October 1980.

[14] Personal interview with Norman Daniels.

[15] Whittington, Why Is a Writer?.

[16] *Ibid*.

[17] Personal interview with Michael Avallone, December 1979.

[18]Personal interview with Michael Avallone.

[19]Personal interview with Harry Whittington.

[20]Personal interview with Robert Bloch.

[21]Personal interview with Norman Daniels.

[22]Personal interview with John D. MacDonald, December 1980.

[23]Barry Bernard, "Mass Market Murmurings," in _Collecting Paperbacks?_, 2(3), p. 7.

[24]Personal interview with Madeline Robins, December 1979.

[25]Personal interview with Gil Brewer, September 1980.

[26]Personal interview with Harry Whittington.

[27]Personal interview with John Jakes, June 1980.

[28]"Debate about Original Fiction in 25-Cent Paper Editions," _PW_, 21 October 1950, p. 1842.

[29]Personal interview with John Jakes.

[30]_Ibid_.

[31]_Ibid_.

[32]John Baskin, "America's Best Selling Author," _Ohio Magazine_, July 1980, p. 26.

[33]_Ibid_.

[34]Personal interview with John Jakes.

[35]Joseph McClellan, "The Plastic, Fantastic Novel Factory," in _The Washington Post_, 12 February 1979, p. D-15.

[52]Correspondence with Harry Whittington, 9 December 1980.

[53]Christopher Geist, "The Plantation Novel: Paperback Genre of the 1970s?," Paperback Quarterly, 3 (Spring 1980), p. 42.

[54]Ibid., p. 44.

[55]Wendy Smith, "Saddle Up, Pardner, It's Gonna Take a Posse to Corral This Spring Roundup of Westerns," PW, April 1980, pp. 40-42.

[56]Correspondence with Harry Whittington.

[57]Kenneth C. Davis, "The Cinderella Story of Paperback Originals," PW, 11 January 1980, p. 44.

[58]Ibid., p. 44.

[59]Ibid., p. 44.

[60]Ibid., p. 45.

[61]Ibid., p. 45.

[62]Ibid., p. 46.

[63]Ibid., p. 48.

[64]Ibid., p. 48.

[65]Ibid., p. 48.

[66]Ibid., p. 49.

[67]Ibid., p. 46.

[68]Ibid., p. 43.

[69]Ibid., p. 50.

[36]McClellan, "The Plastic, Fantastic Novel Factory," p. D-15.

[37]Joyce Bermel, "Inside Today's Package Deals," PW, 13 June 1980, p. 27.

[38]Paul S. Nathan, "Changing Covers for the Clubs," PW, 28 March 1980, p. 18.

[39]Nathan Cobb, "The Man Who Likes to Scare People," in The Boston Globe, 10 October 1980, p. 28.

[40]Lillian Freedman, "Put Up or Shut Up," Marketing Bestsellers, March 1980, p. 38.

[41]Ray Walters, "No Love Lost as Harlequin Wars with Silhouette," CPDA News, November 1980, p. 27.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ray Walters, "Paperback Talk," The New York Times, 24 February 1980, pp. 47-48.

[44]Carol Wallace, "Harlequin Presents pulsating love stories that are selling," The Boston Globe, 26 November 1980, p. 29.

[45]"Jove to Bid for Female Readers with 'Second Chance at Love' Romance Line," PW, 16 January 1981, pp. 43-45.

[46]Suzanne Dolezal, "Sizzling Formula for Selling Books," in The Boston Globe, 21 February 1979, p. 55.

[47]Bermel, "Inside Today's Package Deals," p. 27.

[48]Maureen Baron, "The Facts about Paperback Originals," The Writer, April 1980, p. 13.

[49]Sally A. Lodge, "Paperback Top Sellers," PW, 22 February 1980, pp. 44-47.

[50]Ibid., pp. 46-47.

[51]Ibid., p. 46.

CHAPTER VIII

The State of the Industry--1980

The paperback book industry existed at the end of 1980 in the most advantageous position it has ever enjoyed--and in the most dangerous. Its strength lies in its unprecedented influence over the decisions made by the formerly dominant hardcover publishing houses. But the very weakness of these trade publishers constitutes a threat to the stability of the industry as a whole. The paperback book does not exist in a vacuum; if a malaise seizes the publishing world, it cannot help but affect the paperback. It is one thing to be able to dictate policy, after having been on the receiving end for over thirty years, but the paperback industry must exercise its new-found clout judiciously, lest it precipitate the collapse of the publishing structure as it has existed for most of this century. The plain fact is that the hardcover book business cannot survive without revenues gained from subsidiary sales to the paperback houses--but the paperback houses are discovering that they might be able to exist without properties acquired from the hardcover people. If this suspicion proves to be true, the American publishing world is heading for an upheaval that will eclipse all of the events that have shaped the industry over the last hundred years.

A number of developments are responsible for this volatile state of affairs, most of which are interrelated. But without question one of the most significant factors has been the entry--some would say invasion--into the publishing industry by conglomerate organizations. In

1960, the Alfred A. Knopf and Pantheon Books hardcover houses were acquired by fellow publishing concern Random House. A few years later, communications giant RCA acquired Random House, along with the independent paperback imprint Ballantine Books. Then RCA sold the whole group to the Newhouse corporation, which among other things owns a newspaper chain.[1] Although it would be several years before the wholesale acquisition of book companies by conglomerates would occur, that sequence revealed the shape of things to come. Within the last eight years, Dell Publishing has been purchased, along with the Literary Guild book club, by Doubleday & Company; Fawcett Publications and Popular Library, two of the leading paperback houses, were acquired by CBS, along with hardcover house Holt, Rinehart & Winston; IT & T bought hardcover house Bobbs-Merrill; Gulf & Western, which owns Paramount Pictures, acquired Simon & Schuster and Pocket Books; Time, Inc. bought Little, Brown & Company and the Book-of-the-Month Club; MCA, which also owns Universal Pictures, acquired paperback houses New American Library and Berkley Books, along with hardcover publisher G. P. Putnam's and Sons; Penguin Books, the British paperback leader, bought hardcover house Viking Press, then itself was acquired by a British corporation; and Bantam Books was purchased by the German publishing concern of Bertelsmann Verlag.[2]

To say that this succession of corporate mergers had far-reaching effects upon the publishing business would be understating the case. These maneuverings did not merely introduce new signatures on the weekly paychecks; they also drastically changed the rules by which the

publishing game could be played, and the stakes for which it would be played. As Ronald Busch, then the president of Ballantine Books, described the situation in 1977,

> With all the conglomerate money in publishing today, it's like playing monopoly. If we had to use our own resources, we'd think twice about bidding as much as we do . . . But with a parent or conglomerate that has annual sales of two billion dollars and up, with two or three million shareholders, what's the risk?[3]

Since 1972, when Harper & Row sold the paperback rights to the best-selling self-help book, I'm O.K.--You're O.K., to Avon for one million dollars, the clout of conglomerate money has enabled paperback houses to bid ever-more astonishing amounts for the right to reprint both fiction and nonfiction bestsellers. Avon paid $1.1 million to Macmillan for the rights to Jonathan Livingston Seagull, also in 1972, while Warner Books paid a million dollars for the rights to All the President's Men in 1974, even before the book had been published in hardcovers.[4] The escalation of subsidiary rights fees began in earnest in 1976, when Avon paid a total of $3.45 million to the hardcover publishers of two books, The Final Days and The Thorn Birds, and Bantam paid Random House $1,85 million for Ragtime. The two-million-dollar barrier was broken in 1978, when Fawcett bought Linda Goodman's Love Signs for $2.25 million, and NAL paid $2.55 million for Mario Puzo's Fools Die (along with the conversion of rights to The Godfather, which Fawcett had owned since 1968. But the all-time winner (so far) was the novel Princess Daisy, which in September of 1979 was put on the auction block by hardcover publisher Crown.

The bidding opened at one million dollars, prior to the publication of the hardcover edition. After an epic bidding session, Bantam won the rights by offering $3.2 million. Ballantine came in second with a three million dollar bid. And Judith Krantz was rich.[5]

The response throughout the industry to this record-setting bid was mixed. Roger Straus, of hardcover house Farrar, Straus & Giroux, commented, "It's revolting."[6] Naturally, Krantz disagreed: "In my heart of hearts, I know they [Bantam] are right to pay more."[7] Although merely the culmination of a trend that had existed for several years, the sum realized by Princess Daisy brought home to the industry that blockbuster properties were calling the shots. Without highly promotable, widely publicized books like Princess Daisy, neither hardcover nor paperback publishers would feel secure. At the same time, the dangers are clear. Bantam's money made both Crown Books and Krantz (and Krantz' agent) wealthy--but what if Bantam could develop such a property on its own? Where would Crown be without its half of the $3.2 million? Could the operation continue without this huge influx of cash? The situation is analogous to the one facing movie studios in 1981, albeit with somewhat lower stakes. But when a film studio spends forty million dollars on a Star Trek, a Blues Brothers, a Heaven's Gate, and Apocalypse Now, there is not much ready cash available for the development of smaller properties. All monies and energies are expended upon the blockbuster; if it fails, the company is in trouble. If it succeeds, the company looks for further block-

busters. Either way, the modest property is being ignored. As one publisher puts it, "A book is either a hit or you can't give it away. You hit the jackpot or nothing . . . And that's why everyone is so nervous."[8] This trend so alarmed the Authors Guild that they alerted the Federal Trade Commission about possible violations of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act by the conglomerates, whose policies and bankrolls inspired this blockbuster syndrome.[9] The result of the investigation has not yet been announced.

While Bantam Books will not be hurt by its bid on Princess Daisy--the company is charging $3.95 for a book that cost only about fourteen cents to print, due to the multi-million copy run the book has been given[10]--there is a sense within the publishing community that the benefits gained through corporate ownership have been outweighed by negative factors. Oscar Dystel, former president of Bantam, predicted in his 1980 Bowker Memorial Lecture that the interference by parent companies with the operations of their publishing concerns, and the insensitivity of those owners to the problems faced by the publishing industry, will see many of the conglomerates withdraw from publishing in the next few years--and none too soon, to Dystel's thinking:

> Today we count nickels and dimes. Our margins are harder to maintain. Higher cover prices have flattened unit sales. We have bankrolled hardcover publishing too long and I believe that trip is about over. Some mass-market houses are putting firm lids on bids . . . and others are simply walking away from auctions. Where big money bids are made, terms will be tougher . . . I'll make a flat prediction: Within the next five years, three to five mass market paperback firms here and abroad will be spun out from under their present corporate umbrellas. Odds are that many of these conglomerates would have done better investing in U.S. Treasury Notes, and their management knows it.

> That's too bad . . . Long term success can only be achieved by maintaining publishing independence and editorial integrity. That demands flexible thinking many large corporations simply do _not_ have.[11]

Even without having to deal with the pressure of conglomerate demands for steady profit increases, the paperback industry faces numerous challenges to its continued success as the eighties begin. Cover prices of bestsellers are now regularly fixed at $2.95 and $3.50, with $3.95 a certainty within the next year or two. These high prices discourage book buying to a measurable extent: unit sales of paperbacks fell in 1979 between ten per cent and twelve per cent,[12] a reversal which could be the beginning of a disasterous trend. Equally grim is the fact that a full forty-five per cent of all mass-market paperbacks printed today end up as unsold returns which become fodder for the shredding machines of the wholesaler.[13] (The days of burying returns in the Erie Canal have long since passed.) The irony of this situation is that the paperback companies are complaining that the rising cost of paper is in large part responsible for their ever-higher cover prices. If only the paper used for those millions of shredded returns could be recycled . . . but, at present, it cannot, and so waste occurs on an immense scale.

The solutions to these problems are not yet apparent, but they must be devised soon. One possible answer lies in the exploitation of new markets. Hardcover house Putman's tried marketing Steve Martin's _Cruel Shoes_ in record stores, a nod to Martin's success with comedy albums.[14] The possibilities of offering paperbacks as pre-

miums with products such as liquor and cigarettes are already being explored. And, as discussed earlier in this study, many paperback houses have begun their own hardcover and trade-paperback operations, a development which enables mass-market houses to acquire major properties without paying tribute to the hardcover houses. This means higher margins of profits for the paperback houses, but immense drops in revenue for the hardcover publishers. Roger Straus even suggests that the hardcover book may become extinct in the near future, its place taken by the trade paperback book.[15] If that day comes, such paperback houses as Bantam, Ballantine, Dell and Avon will be well equipped to increase their share of the market.

Whatever the fate of the hardcover book, it appears certain that the book published in paperback format will be around for as long as books exist. There simply is no more convenient format in which a book can be published. Even with their escalating prices, paperbacks remain a good value, considering the cost of other forms of entertainment in America. If the bidding wars cool down, one might even see a gradual decrease in the prices of paperbacks. Certainly the price could be lowered if the industry can figure a way to sell more than fifty-five per cent of a given book's print run. In the meantime, the paperback book will remain the integral part of American mass culture that it has been since its debut in 1939.

Notes to The State of the Industry--1980

[1]Thomas Whiteside, "The Blockbuster Complex, Part I," _The New Yorker_, 29 September 1980, p. 48.

[2]_Ibid_., p. 49.

[3]_Ibid_., p. 59.

[4]_Ibid_., p. 65.

[5]Thomas Whiteside, "The Blockbuster Complex, Part III," _The New Yorker_, 13 October 1980, pp. 104-127.

[6]_Ibid_., p. 123.

[7]_Ibid_.

[8]N. R. Kleinfield, "A Troubled Time for Paperbacks," _The New York Times_, 9 October 1980, p. D1.

[9]Whiteside, Part I, p. 55.

[10]Whiteside, Part III, p. 130.

[11]Oscar Dystel, unpublished transcript of Bowker Memorial Lecture, delivered 25 November 1980, pp. 24-26.

[12]_CPDA News_, September 1980, p. 42.

[13]_CPDA News_, August 1980, p. 35.

[14]N. R. Kleinfield, "The Shifting Paperback Market," _The New York Times_, 10 October 1980, p. D5.

[15]_Ibid_.

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APPENDIX

The eight interviews which follow took place between December 1979 and December 1980. With the exception of the one with Michael Avallone, which was held in Lindy's restaurant in New York City, all of the interviews were conducted through the mail. While each interview was tailored to the career of the particular author, certain standard inquiries about matters such as pay scales, editorial policies, and critical recognition (or the lack thereof) were made. The authors were free to ignore any question which they did not feel was appropriate; they also were free to comment upon matters which had not been included among the questions asked them. Several authors followed up on the original interview by sending additional information under separate cover. The interviews were then edited to read as one continuous exchange. The John Jakes interview was transcribed from a tape sent by Mr. Jakes in response to his questionnaire; Mr. Jakes received a copy of the transcript and gave it his approval.

The "chronologies" which follow the first seven interviews list the paperback original works of each author in order of publication. Each author received a copy of his chronology and was asked to make corrections where necessary. Much of the information in the chronologies was acquired by searching the card catalogues of the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress. _The Paperback Price Guide_ of Kevin Hancer (Harmony, 1980) was also consulted in order to determine specific book numbers. Although several of the authors interviewed had a significant amount of their work published first in hardcovers, none of

that work is listed in the chronologies. In the cases of authors whose work spanned a number of genres of fiction, the chronology is preceded by a code system which designates those genres.

The Norman Daniels chronology does not list any of the scores of gothics which he wrote under the name of, and sometimes in collaboration with, his wife, Dorothy Daniels; it was too difficult to determine which of these paperback originals were Daniels' and which were his wife's. No chronology appears for Madeline Robins, as the author has but two books to her credit at present, and both are referred to in the text of the interview.

An Interview with John Jakes
Conducted in June, 1980

MB: Your first novel appears to have been Gonzaga's Woman, although it is virtually forgotten today, and has never been reprinted. Do you recall the circumstances surrounding the writing of this obscure book?

JJ: My friend Jack Gaughan reminds me of it once every year or so, though I'd like to forget it. It was my (pathetic and laughable) attempt to write a Gold Medal original paperback--in a day in which I had neither the understanding of what that meant, nor the talent to do it even if I had understood. Never selling a book to Gold Medal remains one of the two biggest disappointments of my early career; the other is my inability to have sold a science-fiction piece to John Campbell.

MB: Michael Avallone, a fellow author of paperback originals, referred in conversation with me to a novel you wrote in the mid-fifties for a magazine he was editing for Lyle Engel. Do you recall this first relationship with Lyle Engel?

JJ: Your question about AMERICAN AGENT magazine really brings back memories. I hadn't thought of that subject in years. Sometime in 1954-55 I did indeed write a spy novel entitled Hunting Zero. The Scott Meredith agency was unable to sell it until editor Mike Avallone picked it up for the first and only issue of AMERICAN AGENT magazine. The novel was the featured piece, but the issue also included one of my short stories under my "Alan Payne" pseudonym, which I used now and then to hide multiple contributions in a given magazine issue. My detailed records begin in 1957, so I can't say with certainty what I received for the story, but my memory, which may be faulty, tells me it was $500.

For some curious reason, I saved a letter from Lyle Engel dated August 14th, 1963, which was sent to me directly, rather than in care of the Meredith agency. In it, Engel proposed that I consider reworking the spy novel, which had been published under the title Operation Zero, as the second book in his new Nick Carter series for Conde Nast publications. I declined, because my arrangement with Scott Meredith prohibited such direct dealings with publishers and packagers, and because Engel's terms were unsatisfactory: of a $500, he proposed to retain two-thirds. If it indeed became part of the Nick Carter series, this happened without my knowledge or consent. It would appear that Avallone's comment about my selling the work a second time "for a lousy 500 bucks" is about 500 dollars too high.

MB: The SAINT MYSTERY LIBRARY series of paperback originals published several of your spy stories during 1959 and 1960. How did you contract to write for that short-lived experiment, a magazine published in paperback-book format?

JJ: These were written on "spec"--twelve short stories featuring a spy named Roger. (Whether "Roger" was his first name, his last, or both I don't know even today.) Hans Santesson bought the entire group as a package, publishing some in the SAINT magazine and some in the book format.

MB: One of your earliest series was the "Lou Largo" one you did for Monarch Books in the early 1960's. Why did you use the name of William Ard, himself a mystery writer?

JJ: The original proposal came from the Scott Meredith agency. Ard had died, and someone at Monarch, maybe the editor, Charlie Heclemen, wanted to continue the Largo series that Ard had begun. The Meredith agency arranged it so that 75 per cent of the fee went to me, and 25 per cent to Ard's widow.

MB: Because the private-eye genre is one of my favorites, I have a special place in my heart for the "Johnny Havoc" series you did for Belmont Books during the 1960's. Did you enjoy writing that series as much as it appears you did?

JJ: You're talking about four of my favorite books. Yes, they were very, very important to me, and I like them very much. I don't think they were very well-written, but I had a ball writing them. As I recall, not one of the four emerged with its original title; Belmont, which was the only place Scott Meredith could sell these books, retitled them. Of course, they never sold well at all.

MB: Between 1959 and 1964 you wrote a half-dozen novels in the Historical Romance vein. Why did some appear under the Avon imprint, others under Ace's?

JJ: The two titles that came out at Avon--I, Barbarian and The Veils of Salome--were done on "spec": that is, they were my own ideas. the four that were done for Ace were suggested by Don Wollheim, to the point where he told Scott Meredith, "I would like a pirate novel," which became Strike the Black Flag. Neither house wanted to commit itself to Jay Scotland's output, because at the time historical novels were very difficult to sell. None of these books did well at all.

MB: Were these Historicals researched in the same manner you researched the Kent Family series?

JJ: I did research each period, but not as exhaustively as I did the backgrounds for the Kent books.

MB: With the benefit of twenty years' hindsight, how do you feel the Jay Scotland novels hold up?

JJ: A couple of them hold up fairly well; a couple of them are absolutely wretched. Arena as the best of the bunch. I did extensive revisions when some of these were reprinted [by Pinnacle, circa 1976] because I thought the writing was purple prose at its worst.

MB: In writing for such houses as Belmont, Ace, Avon and Monarch during the 1960's, did you find any significant differences among them regarding business practices?

JJ: No, not really. The advances were all about the same, in the $1,000 to $2,000 range. None of the books earned royalties. Editorially I had no contact with anyone at those houses, except insofar as the Meredith agency would occasionally send a note to me that one of the editors had written suggesting a minor change or two in a manuscript. I didn't have a favorite house, or a favorite editor, because I never got to meet any of them. Most of the work for those houses was sold on a three-chapters-and-an-outline basis.

MB: Under the pseudonym "Rachel Anne Payne," you wrote a Gothic for Paperback Library entitled Ghostwind. Did you enjoy working in that genre?

JJ: Yes, I did enjoy writing Ghostwind. I did it as a challenge, to see if I could write a novel through the viewpoint of a female character. Rachel Anne Payne, by the way, is my wife's name.

MB: Could you outline the advantages and disadvantages inherent in being an author of paperback originals? Having had books published in both hard and soft covers, do you have a preference for one format over the other?

JJ: There were no advantages in producing novels for a paperback house. But it was good, dependable money, in the sense that the houses paid fairly promptly; you got a lump-sum advance. I never earned any royalties on these early paperbacks. The disadvantages were twofold: you never got any reviews (justifiably so; the work was turned out very quickly and probably didn't deserve any), and you didn't get any editorial help that might have improved the book and your overall writing. (Although I did receive some suggestions on Ghostwind.) To show you how

much the paperback market has changed, I got fully as much editorial direction from Pyramid on the Kent Family books as any hardcover novelist.

MB: How did Lyle Engel's Book Creations, Inc. approach you about doing the Kent Family series for Pyramid/Jove?

JJ: At the time the series got underway, negotiations were well along for a sale of Pyramid Books to Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, the hardcover house. HBJ wanted to go into the mass-market paperback business. They culminated the sale, took over the imprint, and changed the name from Pyramid to Jove. After a few years of trying to crack the market--and finding it difficult to do so--the imprint was sold to MCA, which also owns the Berkley imprint.

Book Creations, Inc. did not exist in 1973. Lyle Engel was a book packager--unincorporated--operating out of New York City. In March of 1973, I received a phone call from a former advertising colleague, Don Moffett, who had been approached by Lyle about doing this five-volume series for Pyramid Books. Don suggested that Lyle get ahold of me, since he had other commitments.

A couple days later, Lyle called me, full of his typical enthusiasm, and described the type of series he wanted: a fictional family traced through American history. Really the kind of thing that Zola had done almost a hundred years earlier with his cycle of novels about the descendants of a French family. Not a new idea, but a good one, pegged to the Bicentennial.

The timetable called for five books, bringing the family up to 1976, the last book to be published not later than July 4, 1976. It was originally called "The American Bicentennial Series," but was rechristened "The Kent Family Chronicles" when it ran on beyond that date.

MB: When did the proposed five-volume series expand to eight?

JJ: The need to expand the series became apparent to me about the time I finished writing the second volume, The Rebels. At that time, I still had hopes the story could be brought up to 1976 with eight volumes. The deal for expanding the series was signed with Pyramid on September 10, 1975, a few weeks after publication of The Seekers. Pyramid knew by then that it had a hit on its hands, so was quite willing to expand to extra books. It was also about this time that I renegotiated my terms with Lyle.

MB: How extensive was the outline, or "treatment," which Lyle Engel developed prior to you signing on for the project?

JJ: He didn't provide any outline or treatment. As a condition of getting signed on to do the series, I had to provide Lyle with a relatively brief outline of how I proposed to treat all five books, along with a more extensive outline of the first novel (which at that time was not called The Bastard). Lyle showed these treatments to Pyramid, to prove he had a writer in his stable who was willing and able to handle the assignment. Shortly after that, he revealed to me the name of the publisher (which he hadn't done previously), and after some negotiations over research money and joint copyright, I signed my agreement with him for five books.

I knew at the time, of course, that Lyle's method of operation--keeping 50 per cent of the earnings--was contrary to everything set forth by the Author's League, of which I was a member. Nevertheless, my career as a writer prior to 1973 had not really gone anywhere. In fact, I was getting very depressed about it. I was making an exceptionally handsome living writing sales meetings and audio-visual presentations on a free-lance basis. I was making $150 an hour writing for clients such as RCA and General Motors.

I broke with Scott Meredith because I felt that, for whatever reason, I had irretrievably been classified as a low-on-the-scale paperback writer. The last assignment they had been able to get me was a $1500 novelization of CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES. I felt that my career was going nowhere fast, unless perhaps it was down; that perhaps I had wasted twenty years on a false hope.

That was the frame of mind that induced me to go along with Lyle's deal, even though I knew it was contrary to all the precepts of all the writers' organizations to which I had belonged.

Lyle is a very shrewd bargainer, but I have always found him to be honest in paying what is owed. If every publisher paid as promptly as he did, writers would never have any complaint.

But after The Seekers [Volume III], I went back to him and said, in effect, "Lyle, I'm very unhappy; I feel I'm contributing more than 50 per cent to these books." We then negotiated. I came out with a substantially higher percentage of all subsequent earnings, and that arrangement is in effect now.

MB: Do you realize any additional monies if a part of the series is adapted for television, as was The Bastard? Of if a book club reprints one of your novels in hard covers?

JJ: I share in all subsidiary rights.

MB: Including the Kent Family Encyclopedia? That struck me as a rather superfluous endeavor.

JJ: The project was off the ground (i.e., sold) at Bantam before Jove ever knew about it--or yours truly. Unfortunately, under the terms of my original deal with Engel, while I get a good share of money from all subsidiary projects, I have no say in whether they do or do not get done.

I have heard--only heard-- that Bantam intended to package the Encyclopedia so that it would appear I had written it. Some foot-stomping and teeth-gnashing by my lawyer put a stop to that.

In any case, Jove (MCA version) was quite put out that the Encyclopedia was never offered to them. The Encyclopedia has not done as well as others expected, and I believe this has put a stop to other projects that Lyle was discussing with Bantam: The Kent Family Album (paintings of the characters) and (heaven help me) The Kent Family Cook Book.

Perhaps the sincere (if that's the right word) desire of some people to actually publish such stuff will further explain my reference to some parts of publishing as suffering from "TV mentality." Everyone concerned (except me) was quite willing to profit from my embarrassment over these non-books. Fortunately, the Encyclopedia was pretty well-written by Robert Hawkins--even if it remained largely a useless, purposeless book, as many reviewers commented.

MB: For the sake of those reviews, and general prestige, do you have any regrets that the Kent Family series was not published first in hard covers?

JJ: No, I've never had a single regret about that. In fact, I have always believed that the series came into the market at exactly the right time, when readers were ready for major original works in paperback. I was lucky enough to be there in the first year of this paperback revolution. The readers created the success of Kathleen Woodiwiss, Rosemary Rogers, and yours truly.

I have never held back an ounce of energy or effort in my writing; nevertheless, I realize that I'm not a Charles Dickens or a Franz Kafka or an Ernest Hemingway. I really think I would do very badly in the arena where the so-called critics are the arbiters.

Now that I'm doing a hardcover novel for HBJ [North and South], I'm not writing it any differently than I did the Kent series: the best I know how. I consider myself to be in the same branch of the writing fraternity as Harold Robbins and Irving Wallace--people whose favorable reviews come from the readers, rather than the academics.

If ever the Kent series is continued, I would want it published in the paperback original format. I think that switching to hard covers would be disloyal to the original audience that created its popularity.

MB: You have announced that the Kent Family Chronicles will not be continued beyond Volume VIII, The Americans. Is this decision final? I know there must be a few million disappointed fans upon hearing that piece of news.

JJ: I've really been astonished at the volume and the emotional intensity of the mail that has come in following the conclusion of the series . . . I have letters from people who have stayed up all night, who have stayed up eighteen hours reading continuously. And I even have, I'm amazed to say, tearstained letters from ladies who cried as they finished the book, and immediately sat down to write a letter. A writer can ask for no more, no greater reward, than that kind of response. Perhaps, because of that, I could conceivably go back at some time in the future and pick it up again.

MB: Between 1974 and 1979 you produced eight novels in the Kent series totaling some 4,000 pages. That strikes me as an almost superhuman rate of production, given the extensive research that each volume required. Do you maintain a staff to help you? If not, what's your secret?

JJ: I've always been cursed--or blessed--with the ability to write very rapidly; my advertising career made that imperative. I began in the old pulp magazines, where you were paid a penny a word, so the emphasis was on speed rather than quality. The Scott Meredith agency really put a premium on keeping its writers working at top speed. In fact, the Meredith philosophy seemed to be: get the writers signed to eight or ten contracts, and worry later about whether they're able to produce the material on time.

Generally, I set myself a quota of about 2,500 words per day. I start about nine in the morning, and I conclude at two in the afternoon. Then I prepare my notes for the next day's section. I do not maintain a research staff. My wife, Rachel, helps me from time to time with specific research problems. Otherwise, I do it all myself.

MB: The Kent Family Chronicles has spawned a number of similarly structured series, many from Book Creations, Inc. Do you see this trend eventually creating a market glut? Is the audience for these series likely to maintain interest for the next several years?

JJ: It's very flattering to be imitated. And it's to be anticipated that such imitations would come along from Lyle and other packagers. The imitative mentality is very strong in all creative fields in this country. There are only a few original thinkers; consequently, those who fill most of the jobs can only think, "If one was good, three more will be better." It's always more tempting to go with the proven success. It's worth noting that the cover

concept of the Kent series has sparked its share of imitations, too. Again, that is the sincerest form of flattery for the men who jointly came up with the concept, illustrator Herb Tauss and Pyramid's art director, Jim McIntyre. Wholesalers consider the art design one of the all-time best.

I liken hardcover publishing to motion pictures, and paperback publishing to television. The thinking I just described is more prevalent in television and in paperback publishing. One occult novel that's successful will spawn forty imitations, because it's easier and less risky. I think there's a definite danger of overkill here. Danger is too mild a word; I think it's a certainty. My hardcover publisher, Bill Jovanovich, said to me some months ago that the family-saga series concept has been beaten to death. It's his judgment that by next year the bloom will be off the series rose.

A Chronology of Paperback Originals by John Jakes

Genre Codes: G = Gothic; SF = Science Fiction; PI = Private Eye; H = Historical; F = Fiction, miscellaneous.

Gonzaga's Woman. Royal Giant #22, 1953. F
This'll Slay You. Ace D-289. As Alan Payne. PI
I, Barbarian. Avon T-375, 1959. As Jay Scotland. H
Johnny Havoc. Belmont #204, 1960. PI
Strike the Black Flag. Ace D-523, 1961. H
Make Mine Mavis. Monarch #215, 1961. As William Ard. PI
And So to Bed. Monarch #231, 1962. As William Ard. PI
Give Me This Woman. Monarch #269, 1962. As William Ard. PI
Johnny Havoc Meets Zelda. Belmont 90-261, 1962. PI
Sir Scoundrel. Ace F-146, 1962. As Jay Scotland. H
The Veils of Salome. Avon F-123, 1962. As Jay Scotland. H
Arena. Ace G-520, 1963. As Jay Scotland. H
Traitor's Legion. Ace G-532, 1963. As Jay Scotland. H
G.I. Girls. Monarch #339, 1963. F
Johnny Havoc and the Girl Who Had "It". Belmont 90-289, 1963. PI
Ghostwind. Paperback Library, 1967. As Rachel Anne Payne. G
When the Star Kings Die. Ace, 1967. SF
Brak the Barbarian. Avon, 1968. SF
Making It Big. Belmont, 1968. PI
The Asylum World. Paperback Library, 1969. SF
Brak the Barbarian Vs. the Mark of the Demons. Paperback Library, 1969. SF
Brak the Barbarian Vs. the Sorceress. Paperback Library, 1969. SF
The Hybrid. Paperback Library, 1969. SF
The Last Magicians. Signet, 1969. SF
The Planet Wizard. Ace, 1969. SF
Tonight We Steal the Stars. Ace, 1969. SF

Black in Time. Paperback Library, 1970. SF
Mask of Chaos. Ace, 1970. SF
Master of the Dark Gate. Lancer, 1970. SF
Monte Cristo #99. Curtis, 1970. SF
Six-Gun Planet. Paperback Library, 1970. SF
Mention My Name in Atlantis. DAW, 1972. SF
Witch of the Dark Gate. Lancer, 1972. SF
On Wheels. Warner Paperback Library, 1973. SF
Conquest of the Planet of the Apes. Award, 1974. SF
The Bastard. Pyramid, 1974. Vol. I of the American Bicentennial Series. H
The Rebels. Pyramid, 1975. Vol. II of the ABS. H
The Seekers. Pyramid, 1975. Vol. III of the ABS. H
I, Barbarian. Pinnacle, 1975. Revised version.
The Veils of Salome. Pinnacle, 1976. Revised version.
The Furies. Pyramid, 1976. Vol. IV of the ABS. H
The Titans. Pyramid, 1976. Vol. V of the ABS. H
King's Crusader. Pinnacle, 1977. Revised version of Sir Scoundrel.
The Man from Cannae. Pinnacle, 1977. Revised version of Traitor's Legion.
The Warriors. Pyramid, 1977. Vol. VI of the ABS. H
The Lawless. Jove, 1978. Vol. VII of The Kent Family Chronicles. H
The Americans. Jove, 1980. Vol. VIII of TKFC. H

An Interview with Harry Whittington
Conducted in July, 1980

MB: Your earliest paperback sales were to Jim Quinn's Handi-Books line. How did Quinn run his operation? Do you have any notions as to why Handi-Books folded at the end of 1951, just when the boom in paperback originals was beginning?

HW: Slay Ride for a Lady was my first paperback sale, made for me by writer William T. Brannon. Quinn also published my The Lady WAS a Tramp and The Brass Monkey. Jim Quinn did not suggest any guidelines for his books. He was kind enough to tell Brannon that he bought Slay Ride because "it's the kind of novel I'd like to write."

I can only guess as to why Handi-Books folded. I would say Jim's decision to produce "odd"-sized paperbacks, which could not be displayed on the standard racks and so had to be stacked with the magazines instead, must have cost him. Perhaps distribution was poor because of this.

On the other hand, Jim Quinn was an excellent artist--often did his own covers and layouts (Slay Ride for one), as well as editing and proofreading. There was every reason he should have succeeded. Before he went into publishing originals, he had reprinted some of the biggest names in suspense and modern novels. I was sorry to see him go.

MB: What were the pay scales like in those first days of paperback originals?

HW: Jim Quinn paid me $750 advance on each of the novels he bought from me. ACE was a weird outfit and set their own pay rates. They paid me $1,000 each for Drawn to Evil and So Dead My Love! They paid as high as $2,500 advance, but generally between one and two thousand dollars. They may have paid other writers less, others more; they were hard to pin down or keep track of. I don't know how honest they were in accounting for sales.

Venus, Original, Carnival and Phantom all belonged to Paperback Library. My deal with Paperback Library publisher Mauri Latzen was very helpful at that time. I could submit a three-page outline at any time and they would send me a check for $375, no matter how many other "ideas" they'd already bought! They paid an additional $375 when I submitted the finished novel, and $375 for each reprinting. Most of their books averaged between $1,500 and $3,000, counting reprints. Some made more. As near as I can tell from my lousy records, Backwoods Hussy went into ten printings between 1952 and 1963.

Graphic Books bought three of my novels at $1,000 advance on each. They were also printers and lithographers and I believe they used the books just to keep their presses busy.

MB: How did one go about submitting an original manuscript in those days, with so many houses eager for product? Who made the choice?

HW: I had an agent from 1950 to 1962 who decided arbitrarily where he would submit my work. Early in the fifties, I wanted all of them (except the plot outlines I sold to Paperback Library) sent first to Fawcett, because they paid a $2,500 advance and paid for each reprinting. They also allowed writers to keep all foreign, movie and other rights. Gold Medal was the prestige paperback line. After they bought Fires That Destroy from me in 1951, they got first look at most of my work.

MB: Was there much difference among the houses in the sort of product they wanted? Did any house ever specify that they wanted a more sexy sort of story than what you had submitted?

HW: I don't think there was much difference between publishers--and I had many! Ace never used sex in any overt way. Gold Medal thought they did--but looking back, we know there was no sex in any of those books!

MB: What factors persuaded you to try to crack the paperback market in the first place?

HW: It just happened that way. They were looking for writers who could produce swiftly and I was looking for publishers who paid promptly. I needed money to live and support my family. As you know, fewer than 400 writers actually support themselves from writing full-time. I did--for more than 30 years. I needed the "quick decisions--quick pay" of the paperback houses.

MB: Do you ever regret being categorized as a "paperback writer" rather than a "hardcover author"? Did this ever work against the success of any of your books?

HW: Unfortunately, the prestige was nil in the early days and the books died after a few weeks or months on the newsstand shelves. But, on the other hand, many of the "trade" book writers of the same period who appeared in hardcover were paid less, lasted no longer, and faded after a summer or two. So, who knows?

Naturally, I regret that a few of my books which were rated very highly by respected critics--such as Porgy winners Panama and Rampage, and Spur winner Saddle the Storm--never received more attention than they did. It's like having children, sending them off to compete in school where they excel in every way--

and then they're failed by the authorities. I may be prejudiced, but I believe that many of the writers being touted, publicized and lionized to instant fame in hardcover publicity campaigns are going to flounder and fail if they are ever put in direct competition with paperback writers who have had to learn their craft.

MB: Your novel Rampage had an interesting premise: the huge rock festival that causes all sorts of conflicts within the town that has booked it. How did you come to choose this subject?

HW: There had been several rock concerts--some replete with riots--in Tampa. I got as close to them as possible. My agent in Hollywood and I worked on the music/film background.

I don't think Rampage sold nearly as well as my Ashley Carter books. I thought Fawcett gave Rampage very poor exploitation and distribution. I liked it as a book.

MB: It's difficult to find many of the pseudonymous works you wrote over the years, so I'm only hazarding a guess, but isn't the Greenleaf Classics imprint a porn line? The two novels you wrote for them, The Mexican Connection and Nightmare Alibi, don't sound like typical porn titles. Were they? Star Lust, from B & B Library, does sound like a sex-oriented novel; was it?

HW: None of the books you mentioned were written as porn, but they may have been spiced up by the editors. I don't know. They told me they wanted "books written your way, not ours." When a book of mine didn't sell to Gold Medal, Avon, Ace, Pyramid or Paperback Library, my agent usually sold it off where he could.

MB: The Gold Medal FALCONHURST titles provide a biographical sketch of Ashley Carter, which reads as follows:

> Ashley Carter traces his Deep South ancestry back at least nine generations to Noble Worthington Hardee (1693-1743), who settled on the James River in Virginia. His great-great-uncle, Lt. Gen. Wm. J. Hardee CSA (1815-1873), was one of Lee's generals. His great-grandfather, Maj. Charles Seton Henry Hardee (1830-1927), was treasurer of the city of Savannah, Georgia, for forty years.

Allowing for the obvious promotional value of having an author of Southern Historicals described in such a manner, exactly how much truth is there to the Carter/Whittington pedigree?

HW: The biographical data on Ashley Carter is totally authentic, through my mother's family, the Hardees of Savannah.

A Chronology of Paperback Originals by Harry Whittington
(Compiled with the aid of Les Amis du Crime #5, March, 1980)

Slay Ride for a Lady. Handi-Books #120, 1950.
The Lady WAS a Tramp. Handi-Books #131, 1951.
The Brass Monkey. Handi-Books #138, 1951.
Call Me Killer. Graphic #36, 1951.
Murder Is My Mistress. Graphic #41, 1951.
Fires That Destroy. Gold Medal #190, 1951.
Swamp Kill. Phantom Books #508, 1951. As Whit Harrison.
Satan's Widow. Phantom Books #505, 1951.
Married to Murder. Phantom Books #503, 1951.
Violent Night. Phantom Books #511, 1952. As Whit Harrison.
Mourn the Hangman. Graphic #46, 1952.
Body and Passion. Original Novels #714, 1952. As Whit Harrison.
Savage Love. Original Novels #718, 1952. As Whit Harrison.
Forever Evil. Original Novels #708, 1952.
Backwoods Hussy. Original Novels #723, 1952. As Hallam Whitney.
Sailor's Weekend. Venus Books #153, 1952. As Whit Harrison.
Drawn to Evil. Ace D-5, 1952.
Rapture Alley. Carnival #918, 1953. As Whit Harrison.
So Dead My Love!. Ace D-7, 1953.
Girl on Parole. Venus Books #158, 1953. Retitled Man Crazy. Zenith, 1960.
Prime Sucker. Universal Giant #1, 1953.
Army Girl. Venus Books #194, 1953. As Whit Harrison.
Shack Road. Original Novels #731, 1953. As Hallam Whitney.
Vengeful Sinner. Croydon #35, 1953. Retitled Die, Lover. Avon T-450, 1961.
Cracker Girl. Uni-Book, 1953.
Sinner's Club. Carnival Books #923, 1953. Retitled Teenage Jungle.
Avon T-241, 1958.
Shanty Road. Original Novels #742, 1954. As Whit Harrison.
City Girl. Original Novels #737, 1954. As Hallam Whitney.
You'll Die Next!. Ace D-63, 1954.
The Woman Is Mine. Gold Medal #366, 1954.
Wild Oats. Uni-Book #70, 1954.
Backwoods Shack. Carnival #931, 1954. As Hallam Whitney.
Saddle the Storm. Gold Medal #401, 1954.
The Naked Jungle. Ace S-95, 1955.
One Got Away. Ace D-115, 1955.
Shadow at Noon. Pyramid #169, 1955. As Harry White.
A Woman on the Place. Ace S-143, 1956.
Wild Seed. Ace S-153, 1956. As Hallam Whitney.
Desire in the Dust. Gold Medal #611, 1956.
Brute in Brass. Gold Medal #595, 1956.
Saturday Night Town. Crest #151, 1956.
The Humming Box. Ace D-185, 1956.
Across That River. Ace D-201, 1957.
One Deadly Dawn. Ace D-241, 1957.
Temptations of Valerie. Avon T-187, 1957. Novelization of film.

Man in the Shadow. Avon T-196, 1957. Novelization of film.
Web of Murder. Gold Medal #740, 1958.
Star Lust. B & B Library, 1958.
A Ticket to Hell. Gold Medal #862, 1959.
Halfway to Hell. Avon T-299, 1959.
Backwoods Tramp. Gold Medal #889, 1959.
Strictly for the Boys. Stanley Library #72, 1959.
Strange Bargain. Avon T-347, 1959.
Heat of the Night. Gold Medal #959, 1960.
Hell Can Wait. Gold Medal #1044, 1960.
Rebel Woman. Avon T-403, 1960.
Nita's Place. Pyramid G525, 1960.
A Night for Screaming. Ace D-472, 1960.
Connolly's Woman. Gold Medal #1058, 1960.
Strip the Town Naked. Beacon, 1960. As Whit Harrison.
Any Woman He Wanted. Beacon, 1960. As Whit Harrison.
Guerrilla Girls. Pyramid G600, 1961.
Desert Stake-Out. Gold Medal #1123, 1961.
Journey into Violence. Pyramid G578, 1961.
The Young Nurses. Pyramid F680, 1961.
A Woman Possessed. Beacon, 1961. As Whit Harrison.
God's Back Was Turned. Gold Medal #1134, 1961.
The Searching Rider. Ace D-510, 1961.
A Trap for Sam Dodge. Ace F-103, 1961.
A Haven for the Damned. Gold Medal #1190, 1962.
Wild Sky. Ace F-148, 1962.
69 Babylon Park. Avon F-146, 1962.
Hot As Fire, Cold As Ice. Belmont 90-269, 1962.
Small Town Nurse. Ace D-543, 1962. As Harriet K. Myers.
Don't Speak to Strange Girls. Gold Medal k1303, 1963.
Drygulch Town. Ace F-196, 1963.
Prairie Raiders. Ace F-196, 1963.
Prodigal Nurse. Ace D-564, 1963. As Harriet K. Myers.
Cross the Red Creek. Avon F-219, 1964.
The Strange Young Wife. Beacon #682, 1964. As Kel Holland.
His Brother's Wife. Beacon #698, 1964. As Clay Stuart.
The Tempted. Beacon #714, 1964. As Kel Holland.
Hang Rope Town. Ballantine, 1964.
High Fury. Ballantine, 1964.
Samuel Bronston's The Fall of the Roman Empire. Gold Medal d1385, 1964.
Novelization of film.
Wild Lonesome. Ballantine, 1965.
Valley of Savage Men. Ace M-126, 1965.
The Doomsday Affair. Ace G-560, 1965. THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. #2.
Doomsday Mission. Banner, 1967.
Bitter Mission of Captain Burden. Avon, 1968.
Smell of Jasmine. Avon, 1968.
Charro! Gold Medal r2063, 1969. Novelization of film.
The Mexican Connection. Greenleaf Classics, 1972. As Howard Winslow.
Nightmare Alibi. Greenleaf Classics, 1972. As Henri Whittier.

<u>The Golden Stud</u>. Gold Medal, 1975. As Lance Horner. Edited and rewritten by Whittington after Horner's death.
<u>Master of Black Oaks</u>. Gold Medal, 1976. As Ashley Carter.
<u>Sword of the Golden Stud</u>. Gold Medal, 1977. As Ashley Carter.
<u>Secret of Blackoaks</u>. Gold Medal, 1978. As Ashley Carter.
<u>Rampage</u>. Gold Medal, 1978.
<u>Panama</u>. Gold Medal, 1978. As Ashley Carter.
<u>Sicilian Woman</u>. Gold Medal, 1979.
<u>Taproot of Falconhurst</u>. Gold Medal, 1979. As Ashley Carter.
<u>The Outlanders</u>. Jove Books, 1980. As Blaine Stevens.
<u>Scandal of Falconhurst</u>. Gold Medal, 1980. As Ashley Carter.
<u>Strangers in Eden</u>. Harlequin Super-Romance, 1981. As Suzanne Stephens.
<u>Heritage of Blackoaks</u>. Gold Medal, 1981. As Ashley Carter.
LONGARM. Jove, 1981-82: Series #'s 28, 32, 36, 40, 44, 48. As Tabor Evans.

An Interview with John D. MacDonald
Conducted in December, 1980

MB: Your first novels were placed with Fawcett's Gold Medal imprint almost as soon as the market for paperback originals originated. Did you select Fawcett because of what other paperback authors remember as its superior rate of payment?

JM: Fawcett did not offer superior pay in the fifties. The advances were competitive, but Fawcett had a far more aggressive reprint policy, and paid on print order rather than on a royalty basis for copies sold. So, the total take was higher.

MB: After several years of having your novels published exclusively by Fawcett, you switched to houses such as Dell and Popular Library. Had you received an especially attractive offer from those houses, or did you have a falling-out with the people at Fawcett?

JM: I had a personality conflict with Dick Carroll, the editor at Fawcett. In the period 1954 through 1958, I placed nine paperback originals with Knox Burger of Dell First Editions and four with Charles Heckelmann at Popular Library. When Fawcett hired Knox Burger as editor, I returned to Fawcett. Years later, Fawcett acquired publication rights to the books I had done for the other two houses.

MB: What inspired you to create that immensely popular character, Travis McGee? Did you intend from the first for Travis to be the protagonist of a long-running series?

JM: In 1952 Ralph Daigh at Fawcett asked me to try a series character. I was so new in the book business, I thought I might be locked in if I began a series. That was a risk I did not care to take. By 1963, when Knox Burger suggested I try a series (Fawcett had just lost Shell Scott by Richard Prather to Pocket Books), I was sufficiently established to afford the risk.

MB: Could you explain the arrangement you made with Fawcett which enables you to veto the reprinting of works which you don't want reissued? It seems unusual for an author to have the power to deny the publisher the power of choice in such a matter. Why refuse a reprinting when it would generate extra income for you?

JM: "Refused" and "deny" give the wrong flavor to the transactions. I have nothing in writing that would permit me to require Fawcett to hold back on reprinting. I merely did not like _Weep for Me_ (written in 1951) nor _I Could Go on Singing_ (written in 1963), and asked my friends to please take them off the reprint schedules.

I thought both books less than adequate. Now that CBS owns Fawcett, that sort of relationship is impossible. They could reprint, and I could not stop them. But I would have very damn little to do with them from then on, and that might give them pause to reflect.

MB: What factors influenced you to have most of your pre-1975 work published as paperback originals? Would you have opted for hardcover publication if the opportunity had been there?

JM: I have never done a book that could not have gone into hardcovers just as readily. But the hardcover fellows presented a united front in those days. They demanded--and got--50 per cent of all paperback income. We had many, many contacts from hardcover houses during those twenty years. But I decided to use hardcover only for those novels which were outside the mystery genre, and then to negotiate the best possible deal on the split of reprint royalties. And so Cancel All Our Vows (1953) and Contrary Pleasure (1954) went to Appleton; The Executioners (1958), Please Write for Details (1959), The Crossroads (1959), The End of the Night (1960) and A Flash of Green (1962) went to Simon and Schuster; and The House Guests (1965), The Last One Left (1967) and No Deadly Drug (1968) went to Doubleday.

The decision-making formula was this: Is there enough chance of subsidiary income to make up for the loss of half the paperback royalties? Sometimes my agent and I were dead wrong. In other cases, such as The Executioners--which was serialized in the Ladies Home Journal, a main selection of the Literary Guild, and adapted as the movie CAPE FEAR--we were proven abundantly right.

I become practically apoplectic when it is suggested that softcover originals were some sort of salvage for hardcover rejects. Perhaps they were in many cases. But not for me. What did your average "mystery novel" return in the 1950's in royalties? Five thousand? Six? And in return for that, you give up thirty to forty thousand in paperback royalties? No way!

MB: So there is more income to be derived from paperback sales over the long haul than from hardcover sales?

JM: There are perhaps forty-five of my titles in print in paperback, including my first book, The Brass Cupcake. And so the proceeds from the initial hardcover sales are less than a significant percentage of total royalty income.

MB: Have you any particular favorites among your early novels?

JM: I would say that my personal favorite from among the novels of the fifties and sixties is The End of the Night, with Slam the Big Door, The Deceivers and A Key to the Suite all tied for second place.

MB: In conclusion, what do you see as the biggest problems facing the paperback industry as it moves into the 1980's?

JM: I feel the paperback publishing business is in bad shape, and it is getting worse. Costs are climbing. The books are being priced out of their normal market range, and thus the second-hand book-stores are thriving. All over the country, retail outlets have the best-seller disease, displaying only the fifteen top sellers. When you give readers less choice, they read less and enjoy it less. Reading should be an infinite buffet. Anyone condemned strictly to best-seller fare would eventually give up reading.

A Chronology of Paperback Originals by John D. MacDonald

The Brass Cupcake. Gold Medal #124, 1950.
Murder for the Bride. Gold Medal #164, 1951.
Judge Me Not. Gold Medal #186, 1951.
Weep for Me. Gold Medal #200, 1951.
The Damned. Gold Medal #240, 1952.
Dead Low Tide. Gold Medal #298, 1953.
The Neon Jungle. Gold Medal #323, 1953.
All These Condemned. Gold Medal #420, 1954.
Area of Suspicion. Dell First Edition #12, 1954.
A Bullet for Cinderella. Dell First Edition #62, 1955.
Cry Hard, Cry Fast. Popular Library #675, 1955.
April Evil. Dell First Edition #85, 1956.
You Live Once. Popular Library #737, 1956.
Border Town Girl. Popular Library #750, 1956.
Murder in the Wind. Dell First Edition A113, 1956.
The Empty Trap. Popular Library #830, 1957.
Death Trap. Dell First Edition A130, 1957.
The Price of Murder. Dell First Edition A152, 1957.
A Man of Affairs. Dell First Edition B112, 1958.
Soft Touch. Dell First Edition B121, 1958.
Clemmie. Gold Medal #777, 1958.
The Deceivers. Dell First Edition B117, 1958.
Deadly Welcome. Dell First Edition B127, 1959.
The Beach Girls. Gold Medal #907, 1959.
The Lethal Sex. Dell First Edition B141, 1959.
Slam the Big Door. Gold Medal s961, 1960.
The Only Girl in the Game. Gold Medal s1015, 1960.
Where Is Janice Gantry? Gold Medal s1076, 1961.

One Monday We Killed Them All. Gold Medal s1177, 1962.
Key to the Suite. Gold Medal s1198, 1962.
The Girl, the Gold Watch, and Everything. Gold Medal s1259, 1962.
On the Run. Gold Medal k1292, 1963.
The Drowner. Gold Medal k1302, 1963.
I Could Go on Singing. Gold Medal, 1963.
The Deep Blue Good-By. Gold Medal, 1964. TRAVIS McGEE
Nightmare in Pink. Gold Medal, 1964. TRAVIS McGEE
A Purple Place for Dying. Gold Medal, 1964. TRAVIS McGEE
The Quick Red Fox. Gold Medal, 1964. TRAVIS McGEE
A Deadly Shade of Gold. Gold Medal, 1965. TRAVIS McGEE
Bright Orange for the Shroud. Gold Medal, 1965. TRAVIS McGEE
Darker Than Amber. Gold Medal, 1966. TRAVIS McGEE
End of the Tiger. Gold Medal, 1966. Short Stories.
One Fearful Yellow Eye. Gold Medal, 1966. TRAVIS McGEE
Pale Gray for Guilt. Gold Medal, 1968. TRAVIS McGEE
The Girl in the Plain Brown Wrapper. Gold Medal, 1968. TRAVIS McGEE
Dress Her in Indigo. Gold Medal, 1969. TRAVIS McGEE
The Long Lavender Look. Gold Medal, 1970. TRAVIS McGEE
A Tan and Sandy Silence. Gold Medal, 1971. TRAVIS McGEE
Seven. Gold Medal, 1971.
The Scarlet Ruse. Gold Medal, 1972. TRAVIS McGEE

An Interview with Gil Brewer
Conducted in September, 1980

MB: Your first paperback sales were to Fawcett, the company that pioneered the concept of large-scale publication of paperback originals. How did your long-running and successful relationship with Fawcett begin?

GB: My agent at that time was Joseph T. Shaw, famous as the editor of BLACK MASK, who brought to fame such writers as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. I was writing for the pulps at this time. One day I sat down at the typewriter just to see if I could write a suspense novel; it took me five days. Since Joe had mentioned Gold Medal as the top market, I wrote to him and told him that I was going to do one for them. I then sat down and in two weeks turned out Satan Is a Woman, which I sent along to the agency.

At that time, my wife and I were newly married and I was writing in a small alcove off the kitchen. I would get up early and hit the keys, while Verlaine cooked breakfast. Bacon grease spattered my neck as I hammered away--there was barely room for an elbow.

Shortly, a telegram arrived from Joe congratulating me on the sale of Satan Is a Woman to Fawcett. Dick Carroll and Bill Lengel, editors at Fawcett, were excited and called for more. I had already sent Joe a copy of that five-day job, calling it So Rich, So Dead. So when Dick Carroll said he wanted another book by Gil Brewer, Joe answered, "You've already got one!" By this time I was halfway through a book called 13 French Street, which would eventually go through eight printings and sell a million copies.

MB: In the mid-fifties Fawcett began publishing your novels under their Crest imprint, which actually had been founded as a reprint line to complement the Gold Medal originals. Do you have any idea why you were shifted to Crest for two or three years?

GB: I can surmise that it might be because Bill Lengel handled Crest in the latter years and he was partial to some of my stuff. I'd just shoot the manuscript to my agent and forget about it. Crest and Gold Medal didn't bid against each other; they paid the same, ran the same overprintings (which was pleasant) and reprints. I just don't know.

MB: Did the editors who published your work at Fawcett, Ace, Avon, Berkley, Lancer and Monarch provide guidelines as to the types of stories they were looking for? Did the pay scales differ significantly from house to house?

GB: I never had any guidelines, although I know some writers did. I simply wrote 'em and let it go at that.

The payments for work did vary somewhat from house to house.

MB: So many of your novels revolve around conniving, evil women who ultimately lead the protagonist to his doom. This sort of characterization would have today's feminists up in arms. Was this anti-female slant intentional?

GB: I can't see that having a "conniving, scheming" woman is anti-female. There are, today, so many of this type. I still believe it makes for a good story. It's anything _but_ anti-female to give women characters a stronger foothold, or so it seems to me. The staid, moral, upright woman is terribly uninteresting, don't you think? I certainly like to write about the other kind.

MB: Do you have a favorite among your novels?

GB: _A Killer Is Loose_ has held up very well, but so have many others. Some very good work is in my short stories and novelettes, of which I wrote over four hundred.

MB: The Paperback Writer has had to resign himself to a general lack of respect from the critics. How do you feel about this second-class citizen treatment?

GB: Critics. Blast. They didn't read the books. They had some silly, preconceived notion as to what they were and they demolished many a fine author because of their gross carelessness. They missed out on a lot of fine writing by behaving in such a negative fashion. There were compensations for me, however. My books sold well, and my readers often let me know how much they enjoyed them. I've sold to the movies, been published in twenty-six countries, and been reprinted often. So I say "phooey" on the critics of that period.

MB: You've witnessed many trends in the paperback industry come and go. What are your perceptions of the current state of the business?

GB: If people can afford to buy them, and it seems they can, then the bloody market's in a better state than ever before. But matters have changed drastically. Writers who cannot write are flooding the field; plotless, characterless efforts litter the rack. This will all work itself out, however. Look at how many science fiction and fantasy writers are finally being recognized. And the female author now has her place, where it wasn't long ago that she was shied away from. This is healthy. And the market promises to grow still healthier. Thirty years ago things certainly were different, but . . . _Viva Manana_!

A Chronology of Paperback Originals by Gil Brewer

Satan Is a Woman. Gold Medal #169, 1951.
So Rich, So Dead. Gold Medal #196, 1951.
13 French Street. Gold Medal #211, 1952.
Flight to Darkness. Gold Medal #277, 1953.
Hell's Our Destination. Gold Medal #345, 1954.
A Killer Is Loose. Gold Medal #380, 1954.
Some Must Die. Gold Medal #409, 1954.
77 Rue Paradis. Gold Medal #448, 1955.
The Squeeze. Ace D-123, 1955.
And the Girl Screamed. Crest #147, 1956.
Little Tramp. Crest #173, 1957.
The Brat. Gold Medal #708, 1957.
Wild! Crest #229, 1958.
The Vengeful Virgin. Crest #238, 1958.
The Bitch. Avon #830, 1958.
Sugar. Avon T-335, 1959.
Wild to Possess. Monarch #107, 1959.
Backwoods Teaser. Gold Medal #950, 1959.
The Three-Way Split. Gold Medal #987, 1960.
Play It Hard. Monarch #168, 1960.
Angel. Avon #866, 1960.
Nude on Thin Ice. Avon T-470, 1960.
Appointment in Hell. Monarch #187, 1961.
A Taste for Sin. Berkley G509, 1961.
The Hungry One. Gold Medal d1647, 1965.
The Tease. Banner, 1967.
The Devil in Davos. IT TAKES A THIEF #1. Ace, 1969. Based on TV series.
Mediterranean Caper. IT TAKES A THIEF #2. Ace, 1969. Based on TV series.
Appointment in Cairo. IT TAKES A THIEF #3. Ace, 1970. Based on TV series.
Shadowland. Lancer, 1970. As Elaine Evans.
Wintershade. Popular Library, 197?. As Elaine Evans.
Memory of Passion. Lancer, 197?. As Elaine Evans.
Black Autumn. Lancer, 197?. As Elaine Evans.
A Dark and Deadly Love. Lancer, 197?. As Elaine Evans.

An Interview with Michael Avallone
Conducted in December, 1979

MB: Your series character, Ed Noon, has appeared in novels published by a variety of paperback houses: Perma Books, Signet, Gold Medal, Belmont and Curtis. Why would a single, consistent character be bounced around in such a manner?

MA: They were interested in quick millions; they wanted a runaway best-seller. Each and every company gave you a shabby $1,500 or $2,000 advance on a print run of 200,000 copies. Now, it costs them $7,000 to print their whole volume. Even with the middle man, they never lose money. But they try you for two or three titles. At Gold Medal, for instance, I did three books. They sold 75 per cent of a 200,000 print order. That's not bad, but obviously it's not enough for them.

MB: Besides writing detective fiction, you've produced work in such categories as soft-core sex, TV novelizations and Gothics. Were there any of those types of writing which you did not enjoy doing, or which you now wish you hadn't done?

MA: I have to make a sweeping statement here: I have never written anything I don't like. I would rather write an Ed Noon novel than anything else because that's me--he went to the same high school, had the same love affairs--the only thing I didn't do is make him Italian. I wrote the Midwood titles 'way back in the early sixties when it was considered denigrating to write sex novels. I knew I would have no control over the covers. But I would go to the grave with those books, because in spite of those lurid covers and title changes, those are all very serious novels about their time and place. Sex Kitten was originally titled The Girl from Avenue J; it honestly tried to show you, with a little sexual excitement, of course, what would happen to a young kid who ran away from home and had a wild weekend in New York. It's strictly on the side of the angels. In fact, I used to have fights with the Midwood editors, because I did a book about a call girl, and to make it ultra-realistic I had her have her period. They said, "Those guys out there don't want to read about that," but I said, "Look, we're writing about people . . . even in the framework of entertainment."

MB: How does an author get approached to write movie or television novelizations? Which industry takes the initiative?

MA: Let's say Popular Library knows you and know you're a professional. They pay a license to CBS for something like HAWAII 5-0 and say, "It looks like a good detective series, we'll have Mike Avallone go down and see the pilot, Mike's a good detective story writer."

They put you into a screening room and roll the picture just for you. Then you report back to whoever sent you, and he asks, "Is there a book series in it?" And I say, "Yeah, it's a great show; just send me a rap sheet on it." So you go back and do your original novel, and they give you $2,000 or $2,500 for it.

MB: Since the fee is not very large, and you receive no further royalties, it seems essential that such work can be produced quickly. How long do you generally spend on such a book?

MA: I can knock one out in two or three days. I did one once in a day and a half; it was a rush job.

MB: As "Edwina Noone," "Dorothea Nile," "Jean-Anne de Pré," and "Priscilla Dalton," you wrote several dozen Gothics. As an author who admittedly most enjoys writing action/adventure types of stories, these romances must have presented you with quite a challenge.

MA: That _is_ an effort, because I like to work fast and be succinct. But part of you reacts to the challenge, and I'd rather write than eat. Now, in a Gothic you have to hang the drapes. The four basic rules of the Gothic are: Damsel in Distress; Old Dark House; the Old vs. the New; and Atmosphere. In the Gothic, you do have to spend longer describing the furniture, the milieu. But by the time I had come to these, I was ready for them. I wouldn't have liked it when I was 25, but at 38 or 40 I was ready to go a little slower, take a little longer. I enjoy setting the eerie mood.

MB: Lately you've been producing novels under the house name "Stuart Jason" for Pinnacle's series character, The Butcher. Do you find there are different sorts of problems in writing a character who has been created by another author, and whose adventures cannot deviate very much from the pattern that fans of the series desire?

MA: You make a very good point. Andy Ettinger (Pinnacle editor) wanted to do a package of three Butcher novels--they'd already made a lot of money through twenty-six titles--but he wanted my ideas on it. He gave me a lot of the books to read, and I read them, and I came back and said, "This is comic-book stuff, it's super-silly. Lots of action, lots of violence, minimum of characterization, guns, girls." I said, "I'd love to do the series, even though it's going to be under a house pen-name, but I'd like to make him a little more human, a little more vulnerable. Because this guy knocks off about fifteen people a book, and that's a bit much." I dedicated the first one to Mickey Spillane and _I, the Jury_; it's Ed Noon motivated by vengeance.

MB: Could you discuss your earlier association with book packager Lyle Kenyon Engel?

MA: In the summer of '56, I ran into Mr. Engel, now famous, or infamous, for the millions of dollars he made for John Jakes on the Bicentennial series. He had a great head for publishing, and he loved Ed Noon. It was Lyle's idea to turn out a series of magazines which offered the reader a new Ed Noon novel for 35¢. But the American News strike came along at just this time. If you haven't got a distributor, you're dead. We had to fold up the whole operation. It's show business, a writer's life.

A Chronology of Paperback Originals by Michael Avallone

Genre Codes: G = Gothic; PI = Private Eye; SS = Softcore Sex; MN = Movie Novelization; TVN = Television Novelization; SP = Spy Parody; HS = Hero Series

Violence in Velvet. Signet #1294, 1956. PI
The Case of the Violent Virgin. Ace D-259, 1957. PI
The Case of the Bouncing Betty. Ace D-259, 1957. PI
The Voodoo Murders. Gold Medal #703, 1957. PI
The Crazy Mixed-up Corpse. Gold Medal #718, 1957. PI
Meanwhile Back at the Morgue. Gold Medal #1024, 1960. PI
All the Way. Midwood #60, 1960. SS
Women in Prison. Midwood #120, 1961. SS
The Little Black Book. Midwood #135, 1961. SS
Stag Stripper. Midwood #132, 1961. SS
Flight Hostess Rogers. Midwood, 1962. SS
Sex Kitten. Midwood #189, 1962. SS
Sinners in White. Midwood, 1962. SS
The Platinum Trap. Midwood #202, 1962. SS
Never Love a Call Girl. Midwood, 1962. SS
Lust at Leisure. Beacon #611, 1963. SS
And Sex Walked In. Beacon, 1963. SS
The Bedroom Bolero. Belmont, 1963. PI
There Is Something About a Dame. Belmont, 1963. PI
Shock Corridor. Belmont, 1963. MN
The Main Attraction. Belmont, 1963. As Steve Michaels. MN
Tales of the Frightened. Belmont, 1963. As Boris Karloff. Radio plays.
The Doctor's Wife. Beacon, 1963. SS
Lust Is No Lady. Belmont, 1964. PI
Felicia. Belmont, 1964. As Mark Dane. MN
The China Doll. Award, 1964. As Nick Carter. HS
Run Spy Run. Award, 1964. As Nick Carter. HS
Saigon. Award, 1964. As Nick Carter. HS
The Night Walker. Award, 1964. As Sidney Stuart. MN
Station Six-Sahara. Popular Library, 1964. MN

The Thousand Coffins Affair. Ace, 1965. MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. #1. TVN
The Darkening Willows. Paperback Library, 1965. As Priscilla Dalton. G
90 Gramercy Park. Paperback Library, 1965. G
The Silent, Silken Shadows. Paperback Library, 1965. G
Corridor of Whispers. Ace, 1965. As Edwina Noone. G
Dark Cypress. Ace, 1965. As Edwina Noone. G
Heirloom of Tragedy. Lancer, 1965. As Edwina Noone. G
Young Dillinger. Belmont, 1965. As Sidney Stuart. MN
Madame X. Popular Library, 1966. MN
The Blazing Affair. Signet, 1966. GIRL FROM U.N.C.L.E. #2. TVN
The Birds of a Feather Affair. Signet, 1966. GIRL FROM U.N.C.L.E. #1. TVN
Kaleidoscope. Popular Library, 1966. MN
Daughter of Darkness. Signet, 1966. As Edwina Noone. G
The Second Secret. Belmont, 1966. As Edwina Noone. G
The Victorian Crown. Belmont, 1966. As Edwina Noone. G
The Evil Men Do. Tower, 1966. As Dorothea Nile. G
Mistress of Farrondale. Tower, 1966. As Dorothea Nile. G
Terror at Deepcliff. Tower, 1966. As Dorothea Nile. G
Edwina Noone's Gothic Sampler. Award, 1966. Anthology. G
The February Doll Murders. Signet, 1967. PI
The Man From A.V.O.N. Avon, 1967. SP
The Felony Squad. Popular Library, 1967. TVN
Assassins Don't Die in Bed. Signet, 1968. PI
The Coffin Things. Lancer, 1968. PI
Hawaii Five-O. Signet, 1968. TVN
The Incident. Signet, 1968. MN
Mannix. Popular Library, 1968. TVN
Seacliffe. Signet, 1968. As Edwina Noone. G
The Vampire Cameo. Lancer, 1968. As Dorothea Nile. G
Come One, Come All. Paperback Library, 1968. As Troy Conway. SP
The Man-Eater. Paperback Library, 1968. As Troy Conway. SP
The Big Broad Jump. Paperback Library, 1969. As Troy Conway. SP
A Good Peace. Paperback Library, 1969. As Troy Conway. SP
Had Any Lately? Paperback Library, 1969. As Troy Conway. SP
I'd Rather Fight Than Swish. Paperback Library, 1969. SP
The Doomsday Bag. Signet, 1969. PI
Missing! Signet, 1969. PI
Terror in the Sun. Signet, 1969. TVN
A Bullet for Pretty Boy. Curtis, 1970. MN
One More Time. Popular Library, 1970. MN
The Cloisônne Vase. Curtis, 1970. As Edwina Noone. G
The Blow-Your-Mind Job. Paperback Library, 1970. As Troy Conway. SP
The Cunning Linquist. Paperback Library, 1970. As Troy Conway. SP
Beneath the Planet of the Apes. Signet, 1970. MN
The Doctors. Popular Library, 1970. TVN
Hornet's Nest. Popular Library, 1970. MN
The Partridge Family. Curtis, 1970. TVN
The Haunted Hall. Curtis, 1970. PARTRIDGE FAMILY #2. TVN
Keith, the Hero. Curtis, 1970. PARTRIDGE FAMILY #3. TVN

Love Comes to Keith Partridge. Curtis, 1970. TVN
The Last Escape. Popular Library, 1970. As Max Walker.
Death Dives Deep. Signet, 1971. PI
Little Miss Murder. Signet, 1971. PI
The Craghold Legacy. Beagle, 1971. As Edwina Noone. G
A Sound of Dying Roses. Popular Library, 1971. As Jeanne-Anne de Pré. G
The Third Woman. Popular Library, 1971. As Jeanne-Anne de Pré. G
All Screwed Up. Paperback Library, 1971. As Troy Conway. SP
The Penetrator. Paperback Library, 1971. As Troy Conway. SP
A Stiff Proposition. Paperback Library, 1971. As Troy Conway. SP
Keith Partridge, Master Spy. Curtis, 1971. TVN
Shoot It Again, Sam. Curtis, 1972. PI
The Girl in the Cockpit. Curtis, 1972. PI
London Bloody London. Curtis, 1972. PI
The Craghold Creatures. Beagle, 1972. As Edwina Noone. G
The Craghold Curse. Beagle, 1972. As Edwina Noone. G
Aquarius, My Evil. Popular Library, 1972. As Jeanne-Anne de Pré. G
Die, Jessica, Die. Popular Library, 1972. As Jeanne-Anne de Pré. G
The Fat and Skinny Murder Mystery. Popular Library, 1972. TVN
The Walking Fingers. Curtis, 1972. As Vance Stanton. TVN
Who's That Laughing in the Grave? Curtis, 1972. As Vance Stanton. TVN
Love Comes to Keith Partridge. Curtis, 1972. TVN
The Hot Body. Curtis, 1973. PI
Kill Her--You'll Like It. Curtis, 1973. PI
Killer on the Keys. Curtis, 1973. PI
The X-Rated Corpse. Curtis, 1973. PI
153 Oakland Street. Popular Library, 1973. As Dora Highland. G
The Craghold Crypt. Beagle, 1973. As Edwina Noone. G
The Third Shadow. Avon, 1973. As Dorothea Nile. G
The Beast with Red Hands. Popular Library, 1973. As Sidney Stuart. G
Warlock's Woman. Popular Library, 1973. As Jeanne-Anne de Pré. G
The Girls in Television. Ace, 1974.
Fallen Angel. Warner, 1974. SATAN SLEUTH #1. HS
The Werewolf Walks Tonight. Warner, 1974. SATAN SLEUTH #2. HS
Death Is a Dark Man. Popular Library, 1974. As Dora Highland. G
Devil, Devil. Warner, 1975. SATAN SLEUTH #3. HS
Only One More Miracle. SBS, 1975.
CB Logbook of the White Knight. SBS, 1977.
Finest Films of the Fifties. SBS, 1978.
Name That Movie. SBS, 1978.
Son of Name That Movie. SBS, 1978.
Where Monsters Walk. SBS, 1978.
Where Monsters Walk Again. SBS, 1978.
Five Minute Mysteries. SBS, 1978.
The Judas Judge. Pinnacle, 1979. As Stuart Jason. THE BUTCHER #27. HS
September Slaughter. Pinnacle, 1980. As Stuart Jason. THE BUTCHER #28. HS
Kill Them Silently. Pinnacle, 1980. As Stuart Jason. THE BUTCHER #29. HS

An Interview with Robert Bloch
Conducted in October, 1980

PQ: In 1948, The Scarf of Passion appeared as a digest-size paperback in the AVON MONTHLY NOVEL series, and was reprinted twice in regular Avon Editions. Can you relate how you chose Avon to publish this novel?

RB: The Scarf was my first novel, published by Dial Press in 1947. It had considerable critical attention, including favorable comments from psychiatric journals, and went into a second hardcover printing. Dial made the deal with Avon, as I recall--and Avon, blessed with keen aesthetic sensibilities, changed the title to The Scarf of Passion. Not only was I uninformed of their editorial inspiration and the ever-so-peachy photo jacket illustration (the hardcover jacket had won the Best Design Award the previous year, but who cares about that?), but I never received any copies of editions one, two or three. My royalty statements have vanished from files and memory, but I can categorically and emphatically state that my fifty per cent of the proceeds would not have incited the envy of a Judith Krantz or an Erica Jong.

When rights to The Scarf reverted to me, I sold it again to Fawcett in 1961 and revised both beginning and endings at this time--a fact which keen and discerning students of my work never noticed.

PQ: The Kidnaper was one of your first paperback originals. How did you come to approach the Lion house with that manuscript? The scarcity of that volume today suggests that it did not sell particularly well.

RB: My agent in 1953 was Oscar Friend, who sent The Kidnaper to Lion--an outfit which all too soon went out like a lamb, carrying my novel with it. In the absence of written records, I must rely on memory to substantiate that the book sold three copies in South Baluchistan--although it was, and is, one of my favorites. The rate of payment was abysmal: I suspect $1,000 was all I got.

PQ: In 1954, Spiderweb and The Will to Kill appeared under the imprint of Ace Books. Both of these suspense yarns feature a protagonist who becomes entangled in events he cannot control, a plot structure which seems typical of most of the Ace mysteries. Did Donald Wollheim, the editor of the line, provide an outline which he wanted his authors to follow? Also, did Ace pay more than the other houses of the day?

RB: I don't think Ace paid me any better than Lion did. I can state, very definitely, that the books were not written with Ace in mind,

and that no one there ever gave me an outline or any other imperatives. Nor, for that matter, any royalty statements after publication.

PQ: Your next book for Ace was a double volume: Shooting Star, a private-eye novel, and Terror in the Night, a short story collection. Does an author receive royalties for a collection of previously published stories comparable to the figures involved for an original novel?

RB: As I recall, Shooting Star and Terror in the Night were sold for $750 each; there was no distinction between the value of the novel and the short-story collection, nor did I much care. I just took the $1,500 and squandered it on caviar, champagne and a new Alfa-Romeo--the remainder went to charity. I never received any royalty statements on this venture, either.

PQ: I believe that Shooting Star was your lone foray into the hard-boiled private-eye genre. Did you enjoy writing it?

RB: No, I didn't enjoy writing Shooting Star, largely because I didn't know a damned thing I was writing about, and was doing a lousy job. The result convinced me to steer clear of this kind of story in the future.

PQ: In 1961, you had a novel, Firebug, published under the Regency imprint, a house of which little is known today. Do you recall who was involved with Regency, and why it failed so quickly?

RB: I think Regency was owned by William L. Hamling, who also published several Chicago-based science-fiction magazines. I suppose it failed because of poor distribution; I'd hate to think that Firebug had anything to do with it. As a matter of fact, Firebug wasn't a bad job. With my permission, the first 1200 words were added to a short mss. by their then-editor Harlan Ellison. No one has ever detected a stylistic difference, which is probably a poor reflection on both of us.

PQ: A number of your short story collections were published during the early 1960's by such houses as Belmont and Fawcett. Again, I'm interested in the selection process for such collections, as well as the remuneration.

RB: Belmont put out no fewer than four titles--Nightmares, More Nightmares, Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper, and Horror-7--by cutting up my two Arkham House collections, The Opener of the Way and Pleasant Dreams. Since Arkham House made the sales, I had no contact whatsoever with any Belmont editors. Belmont paid Arkham $1,500 for each book, of which I received fifty per cent. My total earnings

for the four paperbacks, therefore, was $1,500--scarcely a giant step forward. Atoms and Evil brought me $2,000, I believe; Fawcett editor Knox Burger was a very nice guy and a pleasure to work with in selecting the proper stories.

PQ: Your involvement in the paperback industry seems to have been curtailed since 1962 or so. Why so?

RB: I didn't abandon original paperbacks. Bad businessman that I am, I continued to write novels and place them wherever circumstances and agents dictated. Thus, it came to pass that Fawcett published The Couch in 1962--my novelization of my Warner Bros. screenplay, which was based on a story treatment by Blake Edwards. The same year Belmont (you see what an idiot I am? can't even learn from experience!) brought out an original novel called Terror. It was a rather quixotic attempt to go against the trends of the time and present a "clean" teenage hero, rather than the Rebel-without-a-Cause type. To anticipate your nosey questions about money, money, money: I got $4,000 for The Couch and $2,000 or $2,500 for Terror, which was just about what each was worth in 1962 dollars.

In 1968 Pyramid published The Star Stalker, which I consider one of my best books. It was originally entitled Colossal and is about the silent film era in Hollywood. Hardcover houses weren't interested, but I wanted to see it in print, so much so that I let Pyramid have it for peanuts and also change the title. The Star Stalker sounds like science-fiction, and the cover illustration of a very foxy lady hinted at a steamy porno piece. The result, I am sure, disappointed SF and porno fans alike. However, in France, it's a very well-known and admired book, so I feel some vindication for my own judgment.

Just last year I had two original paperbacks appear. The first, Strange Eons, was published as a Pinnacle edition prior to the appearance of the Whispers Press limited edition hardcover, although the Pinnacle editor who conned me into this project promised me a lot more than he ever delivered. There Is a Serpent in Eden got a healthy advance from Zebra and appeared in 1979--but again I never saw any galley proofs, and my agent had to go into their New York offices and commandeer a few author's copies for me from the janitor or whoever was in charge.

As for the future, Psycho II will be published by Warner Paperback Library in 1981. After the handsome advance they paid me, it appears that the book will receive a little more promotion and attention than I've been accustomed to in the past. Turning Norman Bates loose on the world again seems like a logical idea.

PQ: Do you ever regret having been involved with the vagaries of paperback publishing? Has it been worth the effort?

RB: Despite the depressing aspects, I'm inclined to think that my long involvement with the paperback industry has yielded its share of rewards--ego-supportive, if not financially-supportive, ones. And that's no small thing to me. I've been a small fish in a very big pond populated by whales, sharks, barracuda and pirhana; but I've survived.

Some readers expressed concern because a number of my short story collections appeared under the imprint of lesser publishers. For modest advances. I hasten to assure these kindhearted souls that this isn't entirely a matter of stupidity on my part. Since coming to Hollywood in '59, I've sold dozens of stories to television and films, plus hundreds to anthologies--only because the material was made available in those grubby collections. They showcased items long out of print, and whatever I may have lost on royalties was more than offset by sales to other media.

A Chronology of Paperback Originals by Robert Bloch

The Kidnaper. Lion #185, 1954. Novel.
Spiderweb. Ace D-59, 1954. Novel.
The Will to Kill. Ace S-67, 1954. Novel.
Shooting Star. Ace D-265, 1958. Novel.
Terror in the Night. Ace D-265, 1958. Short Stories.
Firebug. Regency RB101, 1961. Novel.
The Couch. Fawcett Gold Medal, 1962. Novel.
Terror. Belmont, 1962. Novel.
Bogey Men. Pyramid, 1963. Short Stories.
Atoms and Evil. Fawcett Gold Medal, 1963. Short Stories.
The Skull of the Marquis de Sade. Pyramid, 1965. Short Stories.
Tales in a Jugular Vein. Pyramid, 1965. Short Stories.
Chamber of Horrors. Award, 1966. Short Stories.
The Living Demons. Belmont, 1967. Short Stories.
The Star Stalker. Pyramid, 1968. Novel.
Ladies Day/This Crowded Earth. Belmont, 1968. Novellas.
Bloch and Bradbury. Tower, 1969. Short Stories.
Fear Today, Gone Tomorrow. Award, 1971. Short Stories.
It's All in Your Mind. Curtis, 1971. Novel.
Sneak Preview. Paperback Library, 1971. Novel.
The Best of Robert Bloch. Ballantine, 1977. Short Stories.
Strange Eons. Pinnacle, 1979. Short Stories.
There Is a Serpent in Eden. Zebra, 1979. Novel.
Such Stuff As Screams Are Made of. Ballantine, 1979. Short Stories.
Mysteries of the Worm. Zebra, 1981. Short Stories.

An Interview with Norman Daniels
Conducted in July, 1980

MB: In the early 1950's you used the pen names of David Wade, Mark Reed, Norma Dann and James Clayford for such paperback digest houses as Falcon and Rainbow books. Could you describe the operations at these houses, and why they eventually folded?

ND: Falcon and other small houses were mainly fly-by-night types. They offered no (editorial) guidelines and they paid about half of what the larger houses did. They wanted only stories which were, at that time, considered "hot"--by today's standards they could have been read in Bible class. At that time there was a concentrated effort to rid the stands of "dirty" books; Falcon and the others sent out their books and the newsdealers were afraid to unpack them. Pen names were used because these books were, in plain English, garbage. I did not enjoy writing these things, but at the time the better companies were in a doldrum and not buying.

MB: Before cracking the paperback originals market, you wrote thousands of stories for the pulps. Did you find the transition from one market to another difficult?

ND: Writing for the pulps was radically different from books. Nothing was the same--plotting, quality of writing, time spent, etc. For me, the transition was easy.

MB: Another of your successes lay in the medium of radio. Did you ever return to those hundreds of "Nick Carter" scripts for story ideas? How did writing for radio compare to writing for the paperback market?

ND: I never used a radio plot for a fiction story. Radio was the easiest form of writing I have ever done. It paid fairly well in those days. I also have a number of TV shows to my credit--Hitchcock, G.E. Theatre, etc. This was, and is, the worst form of writing in history.

MB: Authors such as Michael Avallone, John Jakes and Harry Whittington have complained about the lack of royalties they received for their novelizations of popular TV shows. What have your experiences been like in this area?

ND: Long ago I wrote Dr. Kildare, Ben Casey and some others. The advances were fair for those days, but I'm sure I never received a royalty. It was impossible to make any money on these.

MB: Among the genres you've worked in are gothics, romances, westerns, mysteries, spy novels, suspense and plantation novels. Is there one you prefer over the others?

ND: For types, the gothics were fun to do. Historicals were also profitable, as were the plantations. I'm currently working on a series for Warner--three 200,000 worders are already in print--that deal with slavery before, during and after the Civil War. This is the Wyndward series, and it's doing very well.

MB: It seems to me that the symbiotic relationship you and Mrs. Daniels have in writing gothics is amazing--some you write, some she writes, and some are collaborations. Can you tell by reading the work years after the fact who write what?

ND: My wife Dorothy and I have always worked together. Sometimes I write the first draft, sometimes she does. In reading over old books, we can't tell who wrote what.

MB: You have had work published by nearly a dozen paperback houses. Could you discuss the ways in which the houses differ in such areas as editorial guidance, promotion and pay scales?

ND: The paperback houses do not differ materially. At this point I do most of my work for Warner Books. I have more or less free rein there and I work directly under the editor-in-chief. Warner does good promotion, pays very well, and are the most reliable outfit I ever worked for. Warner has us a half-dozen contracts ahead.

MB: Do you ever regret having produced primarily paperback originals over the last thirty years, given their lesser status by critics?

ND: There are positively no regrets for having confined our work to paperbacks. We have, in fact, turned down a number of offers from hardcover. Paperbacks are fun: no revisions, no rejections, fast pay, good royalties. Incidentally, neither I nor my wife has ever had a book rejected. We keep busy.

MB: Do you feel that the paperback industry is on solid ground as it moves into the 1980's?

ND: The paperback market is healthier than ever and, in my opinion, is overtaking the hardcover outfits. However, I do not like the conglomerates taking over everything they can buy. I believe the quality of books will not hold up as well as if the houses were run individually, as they used to be.

A Chronology of Paperback Originals by Norman Daniels

Wanton by Night. Ecstasy Novel #15, 1951. As James Clayford.
Come Night, Come Desire. Ecstasy Novel #17, 1951. As David Wade.
Give Me Ecstasy. Exotic Novel #18, 1951. As Mark Reed.
Four Dames Named Sin. Rainbow #105, 1951. As Mark Reed.
Street of Dark Desires. Rainbow Book #107, 1951. As Mark Reed.
Walk the Evil Street. Rainbow Book #111, 1952. As David Wade.
She Walks by Night. Rainbow Book #116, 1952. As David Wade.
Bedroom in Hell. Rainbow Book #117, 1952.
Tease the Wild Flame. Rainbow Book #114, 1952. As Mark Reed.
The Nude Stranger. Rainbow Book #120, 1952. As Mark Reed.
The Scarlet Bride. Falcon Book #22, 1952. As Mark Reed.
Lay Down and Die. Falcon Book #26, 1952. As Mark Reed.
Lida Lynn. Falcon Book #27, 1952. As Norma Dann.
Mistress on a Death Bed. Falcon Mystery #29, 1952.
Vice Cop. Rainbow Book #123, 1952. As Mark Reed.
Bedroom with a View. Rainbow Book #124, 1952. As David Wade.
Sins of the Flesh. Falcon Book #32, 1952. As Mark Reed.
Shack Girl. Falcon Book #34, 1952. As David Wade.
Raise the Devil. Falcon Book #35, 1952. As David Wade.
Sweet Savage. Falcon Book #38, 1952.
The Twist. Rainbow Book #128, 1953. As Norma Dann.
Only Human. Rainbow Book #129, 1953. As David Wade.
House of a Thousand Desires. Falcon Book #43, 1953. As Mark Reed.
The Deadly Game. Avon #864, 1959.
The Captive. Avon T-370, 1959.
Lady for Sale. Avon #868, 1960.
Sinners Wild. Avon #874, 1960. As Mark Reed.
Some Die Running. Avon #876, 1960.
Lover, Let Me Live. Avon T-479, 1960.
Spy Hunt. Pyramid G571, 1960.
Suddenly by Shotgun. Gold Medal, 1961.
Shadow of a Doubt. Gold Medal, 1961. As Harrison Judd.
Jennifer James, R.N. Gold Medal, 1961.
Ben Casey: A Rage for Justice. Lancer, 1962. Based on television series.
County Hospital. Gold Medal, 1963.
Something Burning. Gold Medal, 1963.
Arrest and Trial. Lancer, 1963. Based on television series.
The Missing Witness. Lancer, 1964. Based on "Arrest and Trial" television series.
The Hunt Club. Pyramid, 1964.
Battalion. Pyramid, 1965.
Overkill. Pyramid, 1964.
Spy Ghost. Pyramid, 1965.
Moments of Glory. Paperback Library, 1965.
Operation K. Pyramid, 1965. THE MAN FROM A.P.E. series.
Operation N. Pyramid, 1965. THE MAN FROM A.P.E. series.
The Rat Patrol. Paperback Library, 1966. Based on television series.

An Interview with Madeline Robins
Conducted in December, 1979

MB: What led you to try your hand at writing Romance novels?

MR: I began to write at the suggestion of a friend at Fawcett, who more or less dared me to write a Regency romance. I have always loved the form in general, starting with Jane Austen and continuing on with Georgette Heyer; they are still, to my mind, the best and most entertaining of the lot.

MB: Is there a particular sort of reader for whom you're writing? Does Regency advise you of demographics and other market-study statistics?

MR: As a reader, I simply wrote something that amused me. I have not been given at any time a demographic model to write for--I suppose that in my own mind I am my own model, and write what I enjoy. I am more into the "screwball comedy" genre of Regency Romance than the torrid--or, heaven forfend, the lurid--side, and my writing reflects that.

MB: Do the editors at Regency provide you with a list of attributes that the heroine must possess? There exists a certain sameness in most Romance heroines that suggests to me that some sort of formula or outline is involved.

MR: I have never been given a guideline for what the heroine should be like--although I know other Romance writers who have. I may receive criticism about the heroine from my editor, but that is mostly in terms of my writing. If a character seems weak to my editor, she will let me know, and let me rework it.

MB: How active is your readership in communicating with you about your work?

MR: I have not directly had any feedback from my audience, with the exception of the people who know me personally and have read the book for that reason. I cannot, of course, strictly go by what my friends say. I do know that Fawcett has gotten some comments from time to time, and I have heard a couple of them--favorable, thank God. And I was nominated for the Georgette, a kin of the Edgar and the Nebula awards in the Mystery and Science Fiction fields, respectively, bestowed upon a writer by other professionals in that field specific to the Regency genre. I didn't win, but it was nice to be nominated. That was for _Althea_, the first of my two books. The second, _My Dear Jenny_, will be out in April of 1980.

MB: Is writing paperback romances a lucrative profession? Are there any auxiliary rights involved with other media?

MR: Can this be lucrative? It must be--I'm doing it! Actually, I have made a bit over $5,000 since 1976 on the first book, and an advance of $2,500 on the second. I imagine that, should I decide to keep writing Regencies, the whole thing will snowball, becoming more and more remunerative as time goes by. At present, obviously, it is not enough to keep myself on, but does enable me (to use a Regency phrase) to "command the elegancies of life"--at least, some of them. The first contract I signed made no mention of TV, radio, films, book club publication, or anything else except overseas rights. The second contract, for Jenny, did. In the highly unlikely possibility that Jenny is used for films or TV, I would get a certain percentage; I believe it is twenty-five per cent. I consider such a thing as being remote, if not entirely absurd.

More likely is that, with the advent of Romance book clubs and the like, the book might be optioned for book-of-the-month or some such. There is a provision for that in my contract, probably twenty-five per cent again. Fawcett's overseas royalties are four per cent; domestic are six per cent.

Operation T. Pyramid, 1967. THE MAN FROM A.P.E. series.
Operation VC. Pyramid, 1967. THE MAN FROM A.P.E. series.
The Forbidden City. Berkley, 1967. MAYA #1. Based on television series.
The Baron of Hong Kong. Lancer, 1967.
Baron's Mission to Peking. Lancer, 1968.
Law of the Lash. Lancer, 1968.
The Tarnished Scalpel. Lancer, 1968.
The Magnetic Man. Berkley, 1968. THE AVENGERS #8. Based on television series.
The Moon Express. Berkley, 1969. THE AVENGERS #9. Based on television series.
The Kono Diamond. Berkley, 1969.
Stanton Bishop, M.D. Lancer, 1969.
Rape of a Town. Pyramid, 1970.
Jubal. Paperback Library, 1970.
The Plunderers. Ace, 1970.
Slave Rebellion. Paperback Library, 1970.
One Angry Man. Pyramid, 1971.
Operation S-L. Pyramid, 1971. THE MAN FROM A.P.E. series.
Meet the Smiths. Berkley, 1971. THE SMITH FAMILY #1. Based on television series.
License to Kill. Pyramid, 1972.
The Chase. Berkley, 1974. Based on television series.
Wyndward Passion. Warner Books, 1978.
Wyndward Fury. Warner Books, 1979.
Wyndward Peril. Warner Books, 1980.
Wyndward Glory. To be published.