

# 155756 The Publishing Scene

David Dempsey

**Exciting values! Now only \$1 each!** To most bargain hunters, part of the fun of buying a remaindered book is to take advantage of publishers' mistakes, or at least of their over-optimism. To publishers, all the fun is in salvaging the production costs from books that seemingly can no longer be sold at regular prices. Although exact figures are unavailable—publishers are understandably shy on the subject—by reasonable estimate fully three-quarters of all novels and 35 per cent of nonfiction titles eventually suffer this fate.

Books by and about politicians are especially vulnerable. John V. Lindsay's *Journey Into Politics*, which was remaindered last spring when Lindsay lost the Republican mayoralty nomination, sold briskly in the cut-rate market during his campaign on the Liberal-Independent ticket. Books on Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey vanished from publishers' lists when their subjects vanished from office. Foreign statesmen do no better: the first two volumes of Harold Macmillan's *Memoirs* were on the remainder counters before the third and final volume was off the press.

Does the book trade ordinarily use the term "remainder"? Of course not—it's "publishers' overstock." This year the Harlem Book Co., largest and oldest firm in the remainder field, will decant five million volumes through its various retail pipelines, at prices ranging from 49¢ (for novels) to \$125 (for a facsimile of the first edition of the King James Bible published at \$200). Harlem employs fourteen salesmen, who also handle posters, prints and reprints. It keeps an average of 2,000 titles in stock at all times, selling direct to chain, drug and department stores, most of them in smaller cities throughout the country. The present owners, Sidney Feldman and Norman Blaustein, both veterans in this salvage work, will "package" a timely assortment of remainders for their clients, and even prepare the retail advertising.

As publishing has prospered since World War II, so has the remainder business. For one thing, prices have gone up, and book buyers wait for them to come down. For another, more money has been available for writing projects of doubtful value. Publishers take more chances, many of which, by hindsight, they should not have taken. But the reason that intrigues us most

has little to do with a book's ultimate salability: warehousing (which used to be free in most binderies) now costs money, and for a publisher to maintain a large backlist becomes expensive. With total production growing, and more books piling up in the warehouse, something has to come out. What survives is the fittest—or, maybe, the smallest.

Remaindering as a way of life in the book trade began in earnest when the late Max Salop started the Harlem Book Co. in the early days of the century. Salop was a familiar figure in publishers' offices all through the Twenties, and when the Depression hit he was a welcome figure, too. Casing the bookstores, he would sniff out the turkeys; then, his pockets full of cash, he would sally forth. "It was the green stuff that made the difference," one publisher recalls nostalgically. "We didn't see much of it then, there were payrolls to meet, credit was tight, and Salop was the next best thing to a pawnshop. It was hard to resist his offers."

Most of Harlem's purchases were sold in Salop's store on 125th Street. (The company moved downtown in 1929.) Harlem's big contribution to book retailing, however, came when Feldman induced the United Cigar Stores to stock left-overs as a sideline for their faltering tobacco sales. When United merged with the Whelan drug chain, the remainders went along, and by the mid-Thirties Harlem had developed a whole new secondary market for hardcover books, especially important in hundreds of small cities that did not even boast a primary market.

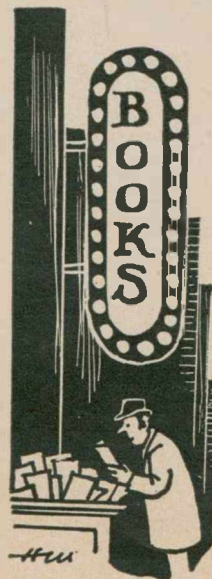
Today, publishers auction much of

their overstock to the highest bidder. Compared to list prices, the books are still bargains. Harlem resells most novels at 20¢ each (for a retail mark-up that may run as high as \$1.49). Nonfiction is sold at 10 to 50 per cent of the original wholesale price. The Marboro Book Company has refined the operation by opening its own retail outlets, although two-thirds of its volume is in mail orders. Handling about 3,000 titles a year, Marboro de-emphasizes the idea that their books were flops the first time around. "Publishers sometimes go back to press just once too often," co-owner Fred Weitzen says. "That's when they come to us." Marboro's most expensive item—and biggest bargain—is *Great Drawings of All Time* in three volumes, published at \$375, remaindered at \$125.

One of the curious results of these clearance sales is a revival of interest in a book. Delayed, and favorable, reviews will give a publisher second thoughts after he has already unloaded his inventory. Result: he calls the remainders back. On one occasion a warehouse shipped a consignment of new books to Harlem by mistake. "They were actually being remaindered before they had been published," Sidney Feldman recalls wistfully.

"Appearance counts," Feldman adds. "Years ago, some merchants bought by the pound. They don't any more, but there is no doubt that big books sell better than small books. They look like more of a bargain." Unexpectedly, "hard to sell" books such as poetry, mysticism, etc., are often popular on the remainder counters—perhaps because poetry-lovers and mystics are usually poor. Moreover, such books receive a much wider distribution through drug and department stores than they ever had in bookstores, which are apt to be too busy with greeting cards. Unexpectedly, too, the paperback revolution has actually helped the remainder business: publishers want to dispose of their hardcover stock before the reprint comes out.

What happens to books that even the remainder house can't sell? Good question. Many of them are re-remaindered to novelty firms, at which point they are made into lamp bases, or hollowed out and tricked up with hotdogs on springs. Thus is literature submitted to its ultimate indignity. Remainder people regret the necessity for this, and try to pick items that won't have to be eviscerated. Harlem executives, for instance, visit the annual convention of the American Booksellers' Association, where forthcoming titles are displayed by the publishers. Their presence is not a matter for rejoicing. "We're here to look over next year's remainders," Feldman tells the booth attendants.



30.15(73)

# The Groovy Revolution

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by HENRY S. RESNIK

According to a biographical sketch in *Woodstock Nation*, Abbie Hoffman, who describes himself as a "revolutionist," was thrown out of high school for hitting his English teacher. It seems that Abbie has always had a brilliant sense of theatrical irony—the class was probably discussing *Silas Marner* at the time. Abbie's grammar still isn't very good, but that hasn't stopped him from writing books of his own. *Woodstock Nation* is his third.

Abbie Hoffman has been in an excellent position, in fact, to document, through books and articles, the "youth" movement so vividly represented by the Woodstock Music and Art Fair of August 1969, for he has been consistently at the center of the action during the last several years. He was involved in the "exorcism" of the Pentagon in October 1967, for example—an attempt to levitate the dread polyhedron three feet in the air by surrounding it with a magic number of chanting people, and thus rid it of its evil spirits. (The Pentagon stayed put.) Abbie lent his own special élan to the "Festival of Life" in Chicago during the 1968 Democratic Convention, which culminated in a police riot. And now he is one of the Chicago Eight, whose trial on charges of conspiracy he calls "the World Series of Injustice." Wherever Abbie goes these days, there is magic—and theater and media and, if possible, dancing and sex and laughter. As Abbie

HENRY S. RESNIK, frequently reviews books about the counter-culture.

## WOODSTOCK NATION: A Talk-Rock Album

by Abbie Hoffman

Vintage, paperback, 154 pp., \$2.95

## THE FREE PEOPLE

Photographs by Anders Holmquist,  
introduction by Peter Marin

Outerbridge & Dienstfrey/Dutton,  
\$6.95, paperback \$2.95

## THE MAKING OF A COUNTER CULTURE

by Theodore Roszak

Doubleday, 303 pp., \$7.95, paperback  
\$1.95

himself often says, it's a groovy revolution. He lives it all the time, even, as the following will show, during taped interviews.

H.R.: Who do you want to buy your book, anyway?

A.H.: I don't want anybody to buy it—I want them to steal it.

H.R.: Okay, who do you want to steal your book?

A.H.: Seven-year-old kids, cause that's who I write for. They're the vanguard of the revolution.

H.R.: But why write books at all?

A.H.: I don't write books. *Woodstock Nation* is a talk-rock album—it's a record album. They're all songs and cuts . . . I paint books . . . and sing them . . .

H.R.: Are seven-year-olds reading books? Are fifty-year-olds reading books?

A.H.: No, but they're listening to albums, and since this is an album they'll listen to it.

H.R.: Is this thing meant to be on a record?

A.H.: It's meant to be swum in, it's meant to be sung, it's meant to be looked at. In *Woodstock Nation* there's nobody who's gonna read it from front to back unless you're over seventy. You read it from blue to green to red and then you look at the written part and you look at the pictures and then you read the end to see how it ends and then you go and look at the list of song titles and then you look at the back—that's how you do it; that's how I wrote it.

Abbie wrote *Woodstock Nation*, the jacket copy proudly announces, "in longhand while lying upside down, stoned, on the floor of an unused office of the publisher." Don't underestimate Abbie; he *could* lie upside down. But don't expect *Woodstock Nation* to herald a cultural revolution, either. The book is more of the "revolutionary" same: a slick, pseudo-media mix, with several different colored papers and myriad type faces and text-over-picture pages, and an apocryphal "last letter" in longhand from Che Guevara, and a film scenario in "sprocketed" frames. You will find every turned-on trick in the book in this volume (derived, no doubt, from the work of Quentin Fiore, Marshall McLuhan's designer-collaborator), and by now you ought to be catching on to the fact that books like *Woodstock Nation* only



—From "The Free People."

"A way of living and surviving . . ."

aspire to being outasight—Quentin Fiore's remarkable vision loses all its power when it becomes just another gimmick.

For the sake of those septuagenarians who are likely to read *Woodstock Nation* as if it were a book, at any rate, some explanation is in order. First of all, and most important, it gives relatively little attention to the Woodstock Music and Art Fair. Most of it is about Abbie Hoffman's adventures as a revolutionary culture hero and enemy of the state—the United States of America, which he calls "Pig Nation." And the record is impressive: Abbie was busted on one charge or another ten times in 1968 alone, and in the past five years or so he has been beaten and jailed so often that he could be a leading candidate for martyrdom if he didn't make people laugh so much. On the surface, Abbie's life is one fabulous put-on; at another level, there is a certain dreary routine to having a lawyer as a traveling companion. Abbie and his friends really *do* get hassled.

A.H.: All the money from the book goes to the trial—what else is there? Except a little for dope. I ain't paid taxes in eight years; I don't keep the money. I got ten grand advance, I got rid of that in less than five hours. That money went to, like, the John Sinclair defense fund, to try and get him out of prison—he got ten years for having two joints of marijuana, and it's an important case. The rest went for the conspiracy trial in Chicago.

The main idea of the book, in short, is that *Woodstock Nation* was not just a music festival, but that it continues to be a way of living and surviving within the confines of Pig Nation. The citizens of *Woodstock Nation* are those who either think of themselves as cultural revolutionaries or have dropped out of the predominant culture—they are the mind-blown "hippies" and the

radical activists; their numbers constantly grow.

Woodstock Nation did not really begin to dawn on Abbie as a political fact until "the rains came" on Saturday of that mad August weekend—then, suddenly, the 600 acres in White Lake, New York, were no longer the setting of a festival but a palpable enemy and threat. "Those that stayed," Abbie writes, "are better for it all, including me. When you learn to survive in a hostile environment, be it the tear gas parks of Chicago or the mud slopes of Woodstock Nation, you learn a little more of the universal puzzle, you learn a little more about yourself . . ."

And it is here, when Abbie gets into a description of his experience at the festival (including a bad acid trip), that the monumental egotism of his writing glares, that his prejudices and his staged reality come sharply into focus. "Everything was so beautiful," Abbie says earlier in the book, describing a visit to ultra-liberal Antioch College, "I was completely bored after three hours. The school lacked the energy that comes from struggle." For the Abbie Hoffmans of America the absurd overkill of modern communications and the domination of technology has made only one kind of struggle really interesting: guerrilla theater, play-revolution, and ultimately the mock wars of the SDS Weathermen. All other struggles are a bore; action is the key, violence the reward. There are no writers in Woodstock Nation, Abbie tells us—only "poet-warriors."

Abbie may be fine as a media clown, and his courage and idealism are admirable, but he cannot qualify as a poet in anyone's nation. His strings of wordy sentences, spun out in a number of styles so blatantly conflicting that the over-all effect can only be called schizophrenic, amount to one huge, leaden rap. *Woodstock Nation* is, in fact, little more than clumsy propaganda for a "revolution" that Abbie takes with what seems to be great seriousness—the overthrow of the United States government. If such a revolution ever occurs, however, it will need better propaganda than *Woodstock Nation*.

There is some kind of awful yet unfathomable tragedy here, and Abbie may yet emerge a unique kind of hero that Orwell and Huxley never dreamed of. The purpose of the propaganda, after all, is to raise money for the Trial. And the Trial is one absurdity that Abbie Hoffman didn't invent—he has been completely upstaged, in fact, by the United States Department of Justice. Nor, for that matter, is Vice President Agnew the mere fantasy of

some diabolical cartoonist. Abbie's book is ridiculous, but he and his comrades are the leading figures in a crisis that can only widen the schism dividing our country. We may have to defend him soon whether we take him seriously or not.

A.H.: I don't think I have much to say. I think I have a lot to do and I think I'm pretty clever and I know how to do a lot of things, but I don't think I have much to say. I don't think there's anything more to say. I think the ideas are already in.

H.R.: Do you have much to give?

A.H.: Yes, I have my life to give.

While *Woodstock Nation* does not satisfy either as poetry or as propaganda, the authors of *The Free People* have struck just the right note in presenting a genuinely poetic view of the counter-culture that Abbie Hoffman symbolizes. A collection of 154 black-and-white photographs of young rebels in their many natural habitats—Berkeley, the Lower East Side, Chicago, beaches, roads, woods, and music festivals (including Woodstock)—*The Free People* has a tender, loving quality that manages to avoid the usual slick simplemindedness of most journalism sympathetic to the subject. Even Peter Marin's introduction, unabashedly lyrical in tone, has a solid earthiness quite foreign to the usual media treatment. Perhaps this is the book that Abbie Hoffman would have made if he didn't find words such useless things while insisting on using them anyway. For if the old adage has any validity, *The Free People* is worth approximately 154,000 words. This

book is probably more relevant, in fact, than any treatise on the counter-culture to date; its pages are filled with vitality, beauty, and joy.

Though conventional in form and scarcely revolutionary, Theodore Roszak's *The Making of a Counter Culture* is the most comprehensive and sophisticated analysis of what is happening among the young people of the Western world yet to emerge from the ever-increasing flood of speculation. A frequent contributor to *The Nation*, a teacher of history at California State College, and a leader among the self-proclaimed radicals who maintain their ties to the academy, Roszak has an aggressive, clear-headed way of summing up phenomena that the media have made blurred or shapeless, or merely unreal, and putting the whole counter-culture in perspective. Roszak's premise is that "the rivalry between young and adult in Western society during the current decade is uniquely critical" and that we should consider, first of all, why this situation exists and, secondly, where it is likely to lead.

Roszak has strong leanings towards the counter-culture himself; admirably, he lays his prejudices on the table: ". . . to make my own point of view quite clear from the outset, I believe that, despite their follies, these young centaurs deserve to win their encounter with the defending Apollos of our society. For the orthodox culture they confront is fatally and contagiously diseased." What Roszak and the counter-culture oppose is the absolute domination in the Western world, particularly in America, of science and technology—a "technocracy" that is subtly totali-



Abbie Hoffman—a new kind of hero?

—Wide World.

tarian, yet beyond conventional politics.

This predominating super-rationality and dependence on the authority of science is contrasted with the personal, mystical, anti-intellectual culture of the rock-drug-beat-“hippie”-Zen generation and the search for true liberation, humanity, and community. But the counter-culture is more than new art forms and philosophies, in Roszak's view; it is also a political phenomenon, an “insistence on revolutionary change that must at last embrace psyche and society.” It is a movement that includes much of the New Left and the hippies as well, communes and free universities, music festivals and anti-war demonstrations. And, Roszak insists, the counter-culture is not so mindless as some technocrats might fear: evidence for this is “the strong influence upon the young of Eastern religion, with its heritage of gentle, tranquil, and thoroughly civilized contemplativeness.” Thus, the essence of the crucial early chapters, in which Roszak picks through the garbage-heap of information that the media have piled up in the last decade, and, more often than not, sets matters unequivocally straight.

A.H.: The reality is that no politician in this country, in Pig Nation, is going to endorse what happened [in Woodstock Nation] . . . The people that make up the military-industrial complex in this country, they're shit-tin about the Woodstock Festival. They're uptight about it. They got three enemies—Nixon laid em out—they got the Vietcong, they got niggers, and they got drugs. Drugs don't mean penicillin, it means *us*.

Roszak believes that the counter-cultural revolution is nearly inevitable, but he admits early in his discourse a number of serious obstacles. One of these is perhaps best illustrated by Abbie Hoffman himself: it is the idea, widely popularized in this country by Herbert Marcuse (whom Roszak contrasts in the book's most thoughtful chapter with Norman O. Brown), that the liberal technocracy is infinitely capable of absorbing dissent—through the attention of the media and commerce, through the overwhelming idolization of youth, even through the modification of existing laws (the legalization of marijuana, for example, which is much more likely now than it seemed a decade ago). The Nixon-Agnew maneuvers are an exception, of course, but they could well be a merely unfortunate episode, a spasm in the unfolding of technocracy's destiny. Nixon and Agnew lack vision, after all; they may have to jail and batter thousands of youthful dissenters before  
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## The Questing Mind

### THE UNEXPECTED UNIVERSE

by Loren Eiseley

Harcourt, Brace & World, 239 pp., \$5.75

FOLLOWING UPON THE SUCCESSES of his widely read *Darwin's Century*, *The Firmament of Time*, and perhaps especially *The Immense Journey*, Dr. Loren Eiseley continues to reward his faithful readers with still another account of our cosmos as viewed and contemplated through the eyes of a poet disguised as an anthropologist. Or might one more aptly describe this nearly unique genre as poetic anthropology? The question is academic, because, even in this far from tranquil era, sensitive humanists will find in this charming collection of new writings combined with modified earlier lectures and essays the always difficult to present “delicate mystery” in which all of us find ourselves immersed. Since, for such readers, pregnant myth is fortified by the authority of Dr. Eiseley's unquestioned scientific training, they will recognize immediately of what he is writing.

At the same time, those who are more inclined toward direct scientific analyses will find themselves enriched if they realize that these essays are indeed science in a humanistic language. Lest these potential readers be apprehensive, permit me to state unequivocally that Loren Eiseley has researched his material well and that it is wisdom to understand that the very finest scientific findings need not be reported solely in formulae and jargon.

But I sense a possible stylistic problem for some. This is not to state a thesis apropos writing styles, yet to those who are unacquainted with Dr. Eiseley's genuinely captivating style—I personally could not pause in the middle of any of the ten chapters—it should be said that they may experience an initial (and quite false) im-

pression that they have been “had.” That is, they may feel that what the author has reported as a naturalist is probably new in detail, but that a common thread running throughout, reflecting man's utter isolation if not desolation, is scarcely new. The difference, of course, is that Dr. Eiseley is basically optimistic. In addition, he has wisely not labeled this work as either a scientific report in the customary sense or as a medieval philosophical *questiones*. This is a book that elucidates precisely what its title implies: the *unexpected*—not necessarily the unexplored, or even the yet to be understood—universe.

Perhaps the heart of the stylistic matter to which I allude—and this is mentioned only in the hope of explaining it, and not to condemn it—is the author's repeated usage of extended metaphors. Let me cite as an example the brief yet telling description of the universe of the orb spider as related in a chapter called “The Hidden Teacher.” After happening upon a spider and its web in some Western Gulch while fossil hunting, Dr. Eiseley paused to consider this creature who turned out to be a hidden teacher. Almost as anyone else might do out of sheer curiosity (though I dare say with far more expertise), he gently prodded the web:

A pencil point was an intrusion into this universe for which no precedent existed. Spider was circumscribed by spider ideas; its universe was spider universe. All outside was irrational, extraneous, at best, raw material for spider. . . . I realized that in the world of spider I did not exist.

At this moment the reader is sure to realize what is to come. Not the unexpected psychology of the orb spider, not the tensile strength of its web, but the inevitable lesson: “The spider was a symbol of man in miniature.” But further, this most elastic metaphor enables the author deftly to arrow home the ramifications of this thought. Are man's thoughts while contemplating war and peace, or stars, or uncontrolled populations, or viruses *really* unbridgeably different from the concerns of the spider (substitute phagocytes, or DNA coils, or . . .)?

Similar metaphors focus our thoughts in chapters entitled “The Ghost Continent,” “The Unexpected Universe,” “The Star Thrower,” “The Angry Winter,” “The Golden Alphabet,” “The Invisible Island,” “The Inner Galaxy,” “The Innocent Fox,” and “The Last Neanderthal.”

One must presume that positivistically oriented readers may tend toward impatience with Dr. Eiseley's lack of “answers,” or even theories to explain his thoughtful observations. Perhaps



There is no real answer; but it is certainly time to be afraid when we begin to wonder whether we could save a little tax money if "the great Powers got together each year and agreed on the names and the number of scientists each of the Powers would undertake to rub off among their own nationals, so as to keep the balance of terror in perfect equilibrium." It is time to be afraid when man tries to "become a cur" since there might be "peace and innocence in being a cur." And then, it just might scare the daylight out of all of us if we could—just once—take a look at that face of innocence we had "before the world was made."

**William C. Hamlin**

*William C. Hamlin is professor of English at the University of Missouri, St. Louis.*

### **BARNETT FRUMMER IS AN UNBLOOMED FLOWER**

by **Calvin Trillin**

*Viking, 98 pp., \$4.50*

So BARNETT FRUMMER is an unbloomed flower, according to his friend and mentor Roland Magruder—and friends and mentors like Roland Magruder, who always do everything right, who needs? If your every scheme to get close to Rosalie Mondle—she who is always *avant* of the *avant garde*, the girl with "the only natural-blond Afro haircut on East Seventy-fourth Street"—was nipped in the bud, you'd be an unbloomed flower, too.

To me, however, Barnett Frummer is a blooming joy, and so are Rosalie Mondle, Roland Magruder, and their friends, all of whom populate these ten short stories that mesh to create a hilarious, satiric swipe at what passes for life among the social and socially conscious, ever *au courant* of the middle class on the Manhattan-to-East Hampton run. These are the people who are always with it, always in, who always know where it's at—the con artists of self. They are people like Elliott and Myrna Nardling, who got "their six-year-old daughter accepted at a fashionable and over-applied progressive school by formally declaring her a Negro," and whose dinner parties are in honor of the person whose book has the front-page review in *next Sunday's New York Times*; or else they are people such

as Rosalie Mondle, who one-ups the Nardlings by skipping their party in order "to help Roland Magruder sew some insignia on his Army Reserve uniforms."

The big bleeding heart who ties it all together is Barnett Frummer, scion of a family awning business. Can he hope to catch up or keep up with a lady whose typical escorts for one evening's nightclubbing are "a United States senator, a fabulously successful sixteen-year-old designer of African earrings for men, and a pretender to the Serbian throne"?

Poor Barnett is always a country mile behind Rosalie. By the time he had heard about an insurance company's plans to create jobs for blacks outside of Harlem, Rosalie was saying that the answer lay in providing investment capital inside. Naturally, Barnett joined with a group of white businessmen in backing a Negro designer and a Harlem dress store. "How does it feel to be a neocolonialist?" Rosalie asked."

My favorite adventure has nothing to do with Barnett and Rosalie. It concerns Lester Drentluss's attempt to identify with his Jewish roots, no mean feat for a boy whose family boasts only of their five generations in Baltimore, Maryland, and who once spanked Lester "for doing an imitation of Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*." It's not that Lester cares about his heritage, it's just that he's a guy who can spot a trend. When Yiddish expressions crop up in the speech of his firm's top editor, Douglas Drake, a Methodist minister's son from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, it's time for Lester to get with it.

Did I tell you this is a very funny, biting book, and that Calvin Trillin

has an eye and an ear that can nail a phony to the wall (don't give me from mixed metaphor when I'm happy!) before you can say, "Please, Mr. Bookseller, I'd like a clean copy of *Barnett Frummer Is an Unbloomed Flower*"?

**Haskel Frankel**

*Haskel Frankel is a free-lance critic who frequently contributes to SR.*

### **HOUSE ON FIRE**

by **Arch Oboler**

*Bartholomew House, 249 pp., \$5.95*

ARCH OBOLER'S FIRST NOVEL opens with the winning of a \$5,000 "National Science Scholarship" by a Los Angeles boy genius, aged twelve. Radio-TV reporters descend on him and his family. But something is wrong: Robin Shepherd, a girl magazine writer, feels a weird, unpleasant warmth in the presence of the boy and his seemingly angelic younger sister.

Eventually this adorable pair bring about the murder of a businessman uncle, a spinster aunt, a drunken uncle, and finally, in one glorious holocaust, their parents and all the other occupants of a supermodern California luxury apartment building thirty stories high.

Were the children possessed by the still-active spirit of their dead grandmother? Or were the older members of the Elias family ungrateful offspring of the grandmother? Lacking filial love, did they destroy themselves? Or were the two children so diabolically clever as to be capable without spirit intervention of pre-recording their grandmother's voice and razing the building by a high-frequency flame?

There are also some sideline outrages—the photographing of a drugged Robin for commercial pornography; a revolting painting the sight of which makes her faint.

If Mr. Oboler had filled in the interstices between these events with deeper portrayals and new ideas on the existence of ghosts, he might have produced a novel to rival Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*. As it is, all of the characters are amusing types limned with some individual features.

*House on Fire* might make an excellent movie. Indeed, it is easy to see in the rather thin characterizations Oboler's previous dependence on live actors to flesh out his scripts.

**Peter Rowley**

*Peter Rowley has written for many English and American periodicals, and is currently working on a novel.*



### **LITERARY I. Q. ANSWERS**

1. Eddy. 2. Ray. 3. Billy. 4. Dolly. 5. Les. 6. Dot. 7. Jimmy. 8. Sue. 9. Nell. 10. Jack. 11. Jess. 12. Harry. 13. Sally. 14. Lena. 15. Bob. 16. Kitty. 17. Bea. 18. Will. 19. Nick. 20. Sandy.

## Groovy Revolution

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they finally realize that dope and rock and electricity are bigger than all of us.

Roszak is a passionate humanist, but in the light of such problems he can do no more than warn that the survival of the counter-culture is by no means certain. In a chapter on drugs, this warning is very near to despair:

What if the psychedelic boosters had their way then, and American society could get legally turned on? No doubt the marijuana trade would immediately be taken over by the major cigarette companies—which would doubtless be an improvement over leaving it in the hands of the Mafia . . . And surely the major pharmaceutical houses would move in on LSD just as readily. And what then? Would the revolution have been achieved? Would we suddenly find ourselves blessed with a society of love, gentleness, innocence, freedom? If that were so, what should we have to say about ourselves regarding the integrity of our organism? Should we not have to admit that the behavioral technicians have been right from the start? That we are, indeed, the bundle of electrochemical circuitry they tell us we are—and not persons at all who have it in our nature to achieve enlightenment by native ingenuity and a deal of hard growing.

Though *The Making of a Counter Culture* is often a defense, even a vivid example, of the counter-culture, as well as a reasoned explanation, Roszak never confronts the major problem of how that culture will elude the subtle forces that threaten it. The book has an air of having been written for those technocrats still capable of being swayed, as if Roszak were saying, "Here it is; try it!" Perhaps there is a future for revolution through seduction, in fact—it may well be the only way.

But Roszak is still in the academy; his style is still basically analytical and rational; and his attitude toward the counter-culture is, in the long run, profoundly ambivalent. Throughout the book there is a palpable straining, almost a duel, between rationality and passion, and it is a problem of which Roszak is painfully aware. Roszak does not even begin to believe, moreover, that the counter-culture has attained a healthy balance. In a chapter on the influence of Eastern culture, he is forced to admit that the entire beat-Zen movement is terribly superficial: "Perhaps what the young took Zen to be has little relationship to that venerable and elusive tradition; but what they readily adopted was a gentle and gay rejection of the positivistic and the compulsively cerebral."

In the chapter on drugs, he sounds like a nagging grandmother: "Perhaps the drug experience bears significant fruit when rooted in the soil of a mature and cultivated mind. But the experience has, all of a sudden, been laid hold of by a generation of youngsters who are pathetically acultural and who often bring nothing to the experience but a vacuous yearning. . . . I think one must be prepared to take a very strong line on the matter and maintain that there are minds too small and too young for such psychic adventures. . ." Who, then, should be allowed to use drugs? Theodore Roszak and other dissenting academicians? Scientists in laboratories? Over-thirties?

What Roszak wants is an ideal combination of humanity and politics, tolerance and activism, and reason balanced by passion. As an example of this harmony he cites Paul Goodman, whom he lauds in a chapter that has the solid tin quality of public relations copy. Goodman has long been one of the prime intellectual movers of the counter-culture, of course, but when Roszak starts to preach rationality, one can easily envision the teenyboppers turning away in boredom. Roszak is clever and hip indeed, yet the counter-culture seems at times to be slipping away from his reasonable grasp as fast as he can describe it. The growth of the counter-culture has been toward irrationality, not away from it. Irrationality has become a last defense against the cold manipulateness of the everyday world.

Finally Roszak takes the plunge himself, concluding with a lengthy plea on behalf of shamans as culture heroes (magical, imbued with ancient wisdom and ritual, even better than Goodman) that verges on silliness. Stylistically the book is most uneven, in fact, despite the validity and strength of its important insights, for it spans the spectrum from logical essay to impressionistic blur, from hard-headed critique to mass-magazine slickness. One suspects that Roszak is quite capable of blowing his mind entirely, that he might even be happier as a Dionysiac reveler than a dissenting academician.

But the threat of the turned-on concentration camp—the infinitely tolerant technocracy—cannot be taken lightly by those who understand it. The teenyboppers and the utterly mindless have not had the problem of choosing; for the rest of us, the balance gets more delicate every day.



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## Vietnam

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provement in performance as it receives more and better weapons. The critical weakness in this whole iffy proposition, however, is the inherent contradiction between President Nixon's expressed willingness to accept a compromise peace and his continued support of the Thieu régime, which probably cannot survive without total victory.

If anything, the Thieu government has grown worse rather than better in the past few months. Persecution of the non-Communist opposition seems to have increased; and in early September General Tran Thien Khiem, a close friend of Thieu's and an outrageous opportunist even by junta standards, replaced Tran Van Huong, a civilian, as prime minister. The Khiem cabinet is uniformly right wing, hawkish, and, some say, markedly Diemist in nature. It is a war cabinet that fails to represent large parts of the Vietnamese version of the silent majority, and which could not compete effectively with the NLF were the war to end.

As the Thieu régime has become more repressive, the NLF has made a major effort to win over disaffected elements. Representatives of the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces, a transparently pro-NLF "third force" which was formed after the Tet offensive, were given visible if not terribly powerful positions in the Provisional Revolutionary Government. Ministries were also offered to several prominent non-Communists, who did not, for the moment at least, accept. The NLF has tried with some success to convince such people as Saigon intellectuals and militant Buddhists that a united front of all authentic nationalists is the only real alternative to continued domination by Thieu and the Americans.

Recently, Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh, chief PRG negotiator in Paris, went so far as to announce that the PRG would be willing to talk seriously with a peace cabinet headed by General Duong Van "Big" Minh. Mme. Binh may only have wanted to sow discord among her enemies, secure in the knowledge that her offer would not be accepted; but since formation of a peace cabinet might be taken to imply that talks could proceed within the bounds of the present Vietnamese constitution—that Thieu would not have to be replaced as at least nominal President—it would seem that American interests might be served by encouraging the South Vietnamese, NLF included, to work something out among themselves on the basis of the