

vanced audio-visual methods to generate recorded "memories."

Meanwhile, the scientist whose personality has been recorded and transferred to the "simultaneous" man who will be made into a synthetic replica of himself is being kept out of the way. The authorities don't want him meddling, don't want to hear his second thoughts about what they are doing, don't want anyone wondering about the manufacture of programmed geniuses from nobodies out of the jails.

And then "Black Bear," the Negro murderer who has been made into a synthetic scientist, escapes to Russia . . . and Horne goes after him—after himself in another body.

It may not get it, because fans may not read it before they vote on the best science-fiction novels of 1970, and because the SFWA Nebula awards tend to go to writers from within the guild, but "The Simultaneous Man" definitely rates an award.

### ICE CROWN

*By Andre Norton • Viking Press,  
New York • 1970 • 256 pp. •  
\$4.75*

This is one of the minor offerings in Andre Norton's impressive shelf of "juvenile" science fiction—which loses the stigma when the paperback editions come out. It may start a new series which will develop some of the themes and

mysteries at which the author only hints now. However, the book's shortcoming is simply that it is a standard costume romance decked out with the trappings of science fiction—one of the author's own excellent historical yarns in future costume.

We learn a little more about the future universe in which all, or most, of Miss Norton's books are set. In the distant past were the Forerunners, the exceedingly powerful race or races which ruled the galaxy for aeons and disappeared before men spread out to the stars, leaving a few relics and many mysteries behind them. They are always present, or just off-stage, in Andre Norton's books.

Mankind did replace them on the starworlds, and a decadent elite known as the Psychocrats rose to the top. Among their experiments were what later men call the "closed" worlds—populations brainwashed, given false memories, programmed by totipotent computers, and dropped on strange planets to play out their "Guardians" fantasies. Clio is such an experimental world, forgotten when the Psychocrats were overthrown some three hundred years before the story opens. It is a world where feudal Europe had been reconstructed, with royal lines selected and made powerful by the Psychocrats' "crowns."

Roane, the heroine, is the orphaned niece of a rather self-cen-

tered archaeologist. She is taken to Clio as his assistant in a search for Forerunner treasure. Instead, she finds herself drawn into the palace intrigue of the kingdom of Reveny, whose young queen is hunting for her lost crown. Interference with native affairs is strictly forbidden, but Roane cannot help herself. They find a Psychocrat conditioning station—find the Ice Crown with the bones of the schemer who stole it—but that is where the trouble starts.

Because Andre Norton paints strange worlds so vividly and builds the mystery of the Forerunners so subtly, "Ice Crown" seems something of a let-down. Her "Janus" books are my favorites, I think, and her new "Zero Stone" series is far from finished. Perhaps Roane will uncover—and solve—more and deeper mysteries on Clio. Do some of the Psychocrats still survive—and rule behind the scenes on Clio and elsewhere? What Forerunner ruins and marvels are yet to be found? What will happen to Reveny with the Psychocrat conditioning lifted—if it is lifted? Even tepid Norton is pretty good.

### TAU ZERO

By Poul Anderson • Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y. • 1970 • 208 pp. • \$4.95

Part of this book was serialized in *Galaxy* three years ago as "To Outlive Eternity." It is the only book I can think of offhand that

deals with travel at speeds approaching that of light, in a "quantitative" way and as the basis for a legitimate story.

What makes low-tau space flight feasible as a substitute for the more familiar generation ship, as a means of reaching other stars and galaxies, is the *Leonora Christine's* Bussard drive. This is based on the knowledge that interstellar space is awash with hydrogen, and that this can be swept up by the ship and used as fuel in a kind of ram-jet operation. The faster the ship moves, the more hydrogen it sucks in, and the faster it accelerates . . . until it approaches the velocity of light, the outside universe has become exceedingly strange, and aeons go by back on Earth for every moment of ship's time.

All very fine, and it is going to take a picked crew to find another home among the stars, but one little, unpredictable cosmic joke is played on them, and presently they are in a runaway ship that is spanning galaxies and intergalactic voids as if they were planetary distances. This is the "hard science" framework of the book. Played against it is the personal story of the members of the crew, not as convincing as in some of Poul Anderson's other books, but real enough.

I don't think the book will be very popular now, but I have an idea people will remember it and go back to it for a long time.