

war is a game. The Crusaders treated it as a game—and the Saracens won. The Cavaliers played at it—and the Roundheads whipped them. The Aztecs had the sport developed to a very high degree—and a handful of Spanish who fought realistically, for survival and loot, smashed a civilization.

If war is hell—and nothing in "Starship Tropers" says it is anything else—then the *only* sure road to salvation is to win as fast and as finally as possible. That's what the Bugs are trying to do. Can we do less?



THE DUPLICATED MAN, by James Blish and Robert Lowndes. Avalon Books, New York. 1959. 222 pp. \$2.95.

Blish or no Blish—Lowndes or no Lowndes—this is not one of Avalon's best offerings. It suffers most from an over-van Vogtian complication of who is doing what for which faction, and its best feature is a fascinating and valid switch on duplication machines, which produce five quite different copies of plotter Paul Danton. However, the six Dantons get into the act too late to be used to their best advantage.

As for plot, we have two oligarchies—the Security Council on Earth and the Government in Exile on Venus—each with its own underground opposition: the elaborately entangled Pro-Earth Party here, the obscure Earth Party on the dusty, formalde-

hyde-soaked surface of Venus. Venus has been enclosed in the Thomas Screen, which lets chemical missiles through but explodes all nuclear weapons or engines; from behind this shield the Exiles, headed by a grotesquely fat, seemingly immortal Thomas, continually bombard the surface of the planet from which they fled and to which they want to return as rulers again.

Danton, a fairly important "dendrite" in the Pro-Earth Party, hopes to achieve peace with Venus by using the Duplication Machine to multiply the hierarchy of the Security Council, so that it will bog down in a muddle of conflicting actions by the replicas. Instead, he is himself replicated and some of him are sent to Venus to louse things up for the Exiles, one of whose leaders they resemble.

It all becomes very confusing before it's straightened out.



THE BEAST MASTER, by Andre Norton. Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York. 1959. 192 pp. \$3.00.

Again Andre Norton proves that she can write just about the best far-worlds-adventure stories anyone is doing nowadays. They have color; they have action; they have mystery; they have the "sense of wonder" that some people would contend is out of place in Twentieth Century writing; and they are so well-written that every detail is convincing. I'm not sure that "The Beast Master" is one

of the best she has done, but its basic theme is a grand one—although it was used just as well in Murray Leinster's "Combat Team"—and I hope we haven't heard the last of Hosteen Storm and his team.

Storm is a Navajo Indian, one of the last survivors of a planet that was destroyed in a war with the humanoid Xiks. With the animals he has trained, and with whom he is in rapport, he joins the explorers and settlers of the colonial world, Arzor. Because, on Arzor, he expects to find the enemy he has never seen and whom he must kill for the honor of his tribe and his people.

Needless to say, much happens before young Storm, his eagle, his sand cat, and his two meerkats, come to grips with that hereditary foe. He finds Arzor with its wild-horse herds much like the plains of lost Terra, and its goat-horned tribesmen good friends. He uncovers a triple mystery—of human outlaws who masquerade as natives, of a hidden outpost of the Xiks, and of an unknown, ancient race from beyond the stars, whose secrets are buried in the honeycomb of tunnels under Arzor's wild Peak country. And he finds his own Indian heritage both a handicap and an advantage in dealing with the native Norbies, whose ways are so like those of the ancient Navajos in the days before Man took to Space.

There are loose ends, but I have an idea the author has left them dangling for Hosteen Storm, and Logan Quade, and young Gorgol of

the Norbies to knot up with the help of Baku the eagle, Surra the giant cat, and clownish, clever Hing the meerkat.

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THE GOLDEN APE, by Adam Chase.  
Avalon Books, New York. 1959.  
221 pp. \$2.95.

This is one of the lows in the Avalon series, and I suspect the fault is largely the publisher's, even though the original magazine story, "Quest of the Golden Ape," can't have been any masterpiece. The *Amazing*—or was it *Fantastic*?—version can't have been much more than a novelette length, since Avalon has had to use oversize type, with widely spaced lines, to stretch it out to fill the standard number of pages. Then it must have run a few pages over, because there are places where chunks have evidently been lopped out of the narrative, without any attempt to smooth over the wound.

I am not one to complain when an old and honored plot or gimmick is well-handled, but I'll yawn and scream when it isn't. This is an Edgar Rice Burroughs formula with a few terms missing, a few signs wrong, and most of the constants treated as variables.

The John Carter of the book, who has Tarzan overtones since he's also a lost heir, is Bram Forest, who wakes from a hundred-year sleep in a vault on Earth, finds a mysterious disk—shades of Lens!—that snatches