Within the writing community as it exists outside of the comic arena, film and TV adaptations are generally looked upon as the unloved stepchildren of real novels; books that are written to capitalize on the success of a given project (or recoup expenses if the show is a bomb). The writers that take on these projects are, by and large, taking them on out of financial necessity.

Because of the stigma that goes along with the word “novelization” (sometimes deservedly so), substantial contributions are sometimes overlooked. For example, Alan Dean Foster’s work on the Star Trek Log series, based on Star Trek’s animated incarnation, contained significant enhancements in terms of drama and characterization.

This observation holds true in the novelizations of three of the four Planet of the Apes sequel films. While the original Pierre Boulle novel served as the foundation for the screenplay that started the series, writers such as Johnikes, Jerry Pournelle, and Michael Avallone took liberties that not only enhanced their individual efforts but served to tighten an already strong continuity between the stories.

Planet of the Apes (original novel)

The entire Planet of the Apes phenomenon was born of the Pierre Boulle novel Le Planete des Singes, first published in France in 1963. In the translation to English it became known as Monkey Planet. He also contributed a draft screenplay for the first film and an un-produced sequel, Planet of the Men, elements of which showed up in Escape from the Planet of the Apes. The book is distinctly different than the film and there was no novelization.

Astronaut Arthur Levain and his colleagues journey from Earth and end up on a world where apes are the dominant species. Aside from the astronauts themselves, major differences include the level of technology (much higher than the film apes) and the treatment of humans (mostly better, but still not good). The novel ends with Levain and Nova returning to Earth only to be greeted by apes. Interestingly, the novel touched on the subject of race conscious memory much earlier than many of its science fiction peers.

Beneath the Planet of the Apes (movie novelization)

This adaptation of the second Planet of the Apes feature is based on a screenplay by Paul Dehn and is the first look at familiar events from a different perspective. The differences between novelization and film are more psychological in nature in their examination of how his mission to rescue Taylor has presented astronaut Brent with a mind-bending contradiction that brings him to the edge of his sanity.

In the film, actor James Franciscus portrayed Brent as more of the action hero, using whatever means at his disposal in his quest to find Taylor. In the novelization, author Michael Avallone...
paints a different portrait. His Brent is a man on the edge. The idea of ending up on a planet where apes talk and humans are dumb brutes is something that Brent fights as much with his head as with his hands. As the story moves underground, so does the mood of the writing. The realization that he is still on Earth sinking slowly in, Brent becomes more resigned and moves ever closer to madness as new proof of his fate confronts him at every turn.

**Escape from the Planet of the Apes (movie novelization)**

This novelization had probably the toughest job of the series… because it required the author to explain how apes, who had no technology, no sources of power, and could not even conceive of flight, could repair and launch a spaceship. But Jerry Pournelle, writing from a Paul Dehn screenplay, does a masterful job of re-crafting ape society and avoids contradicting what has come before… all the while making us believe that apes can fly!

Several key sequences from the film are expanded in the book. While in the holding pen at the Los Angeles Zoo, the ape refugees marvel at the technological society commanded by man. The doomed Dr. Milo is moved to remark that “the stories were true” about man having such a culture.

Later, as Cornelius and Zira are examined by the Presidential Commission, Cornelius reveals that the apes did not have technological culture not because they didn’t know how, but because they had no choice.

It seems that, although not revealed to the general ape public, man had completely depleted and exhausted the fossil fuels from planet Earth. Following these revelations, and the introduction of the kindly circus owner Armando (who will play a pivotal role in the next installment), the story moves forward and we are left with a greater sense of injustice at the fate of the apes, present and future.

**Conquest of the Planet of the Apes (movie novelization)**

In this installment of the series, director J. Lee Thompson (director of the original *Cape Fear*) created a level of violence that was unlike any previous apes film. Indeed, it was so violent and incendiary that a re-edited version with a new ending replaced the version that had been screened for test audiences. Following director

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Before North & South and after "The Trouble With Tribbles," John Jakes and David Gerrold wrote *Apes* novelizations.
PLANT OF THE APES CHECKLIST
THE MAGAZINES

#1 (Aug 1974)
Terror on the Planet of the Apes
Prologue
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Mike Ploog

Planet of the Apes
Part One
Writer: Doug Moench
Pencils: George Tuska
Inks: Mike Esposito

#5 (Feb 1975)
Evolution’s Nightmare
Writer: Doug Moench
Artists: Ed Hannigan & Jim Mooney

Planet of the Apes
Chapter Four: “The Trial”
Writer: Doug Moench
Pencils: George Tuska
Inks: Mike Esposito

#6 (Mar 1975)
Terror on the Planet of the Apes
“Malegusa in Zone Forbidden”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Mike Ploog

Planet of the Apes
Chapter Five: “Into The Forbidden Zone”
Writer: Doug Moench
Pencils: George Tuska
Inks: Mike Esposito

#7 (Apr 1975)
Beneath the Planet of the Apes
Part 1
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Alfredo Alcala

Planet of the Apes
Chapter Four: “The Secret”
Writer: Doug Moench
Pencils: George Tuska
Inks: Mike Esposito

#8 (May 1975)
Terror on the Planet of the Apes
“The Planet Inheritors”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Alfredo Alcala

#9 (Jun 1975)
Kingdom on an Island of the Apes
Part One
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Rico Rival

Beneath the Planet of the Apes
Part 3: “The Warhead Messiah!”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Alfredo Alcala

#10 (Jul 1975)
Kingdom on an Island of the Apes
Part Two
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Rico Rival

Beneath the Planet of the Apes
Part 5: “Children of the Bomb!”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Alfredo Alcala

#11 (Aug 1975)
Terror on the Planet of the Apes
“Who the Lawgiver Returns”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Mike Ploog

Beneath the Planet of the Apes
Part 9
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Alfredo Alcala

#12 (Sep 1975)
Future History Chronicles
“City of Nomads”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Tom Sutton

#13 (Oct 1975, cover says Aug)
Terror on the Planet of the Apes
“The Magik-Man’s Last Gasp: Purple Light Show”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Mike Ploog

Beneath the Planet of the Apes
Part 1: “Upward to the Earth!”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Rico Rival

Escape from the Planet of the Apes
Part 1: “But Who Shall Inherit the Week?”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Rico Rival

#14 (Nov 1975, cvr price drops to 75c)
Terror on the Planet of the Apes
“Up The Nose-Tree to Monkey-Trash”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Mike Ploog

Escape from the Planet of the Apes
Part 2: “Strangers in a Stranger Land!”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Rico Rival

#15 (Dec 1975)
Future History Chronicles
“Dreamer in Emerald Silence”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Tom Sutton

Escape from the Planet of the Apes
Part 3: “To Serve the Slayers”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Alfredo Alcala

#16 (Jan 1976)
Escape from the Planet of the Apes
Part 5: “When the Calliope Cries Death!”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Rico Rival

Escape from the Planet of the Apes
Part 6: “Conquest of the Planet of the Apes
Part 1: “Slaves”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Alfredo Alcala

#17 (Feb 1976)
Future History Chronicles
“Graveyard of Lost Cities”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Tom Sutton

Escape from the Planet of the Apes
Part 2: “Rites of Bondage”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Alfredo Alcala

#18 (Mar 1976)
Conquest of the Planet of the Apes
Part 3: “To Serve the Slayers”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Alfredo Alcala

Escape from the Planet of the Apes
Part 4: “In The Cradle of a Father’s Sins!”
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Rico Rival

(Continued on page 30)
Thompson’s lead, author John Jakes (yes, that John Jakes) depicts a world of brutality and totalitarianism that makes this novelization a worthy successor to its film counterpart. Jakes, taking full advantage of his ability to create without a thought to movie ratings, leads the reader through a visceral study of apes in revolt.

Set in 1991, the story follows Armando and Caesar (the now fully-grown son of Cornelius and Zira) as they travel to a city where apes make up the cruelly treated servant class. Although it is not clear what specific events have happened to create such a drastic change in American government as depicted in the film, the novelization presents a theory. The abandonment of basic civil rights in favor of a police state is the direct result of the apes travelling to the past as seen in Escape from the Planet of the Apes. More specifically, Cornelius’ testimony, at the time hypothetical, regarding how his society came to be, with the plague that killed all the Earth’s dogs and cats, is confirmed as true and was the turning point that turned the United States into a police state. [See John Jakes sidebar]

**Battle for the Planet of the Apes (movie novelization)**

In the aftermath of nuclear holocaust, the fifth and final chapter of the apes saga follows Caesar as he leads a group of human and ape survivors into the wilderness to start a new world. While his intentions are noble, it is obvious that the humans do not enjoy equality with the apes. Further, there are apes (specifically General Aldo) that delight in bullying their one-time masters. This is set against the backdrop of Caesar’s search for information about his parents and Earth’s ultimate fate in the bomb-laced remains of a nearby city. While in the city, Caesar’s party is discovered by mutated humans who still live in the radioactive ruins. Again directed by J. Lee Thompson, this film is played more for its action-adventure content and less for its sociopolitical commentary.

The novelization by David Gerrold follows this lead and the result is little more than a bland retelling of what was, essentially, a film for children. While there are some notable elements to this adaptation and there is a brilliant scene with the humans as they share a forbidden meal of meat (the apes have dictated a vegetarian diet), the novelization follows the film almost like a blueprint.