

Fiction Briefs

The Men's Club

by Leonard Michaels
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
181 pp., \$10.95

BECAUSE HE THINKS it holds fewer possibilities for emotional chaos, guilt, and gonorrhea than an extramarital one-night stand, the unnamed narrator of *The Men's Club* joins six other men for an evening of guy-talk. Initially, this novel seems to be about male consciousnesses being raised while the rest of the party has retired to the women's room. But nothing so banal doing. Instead it's a book in which humor, resentment, and brutality bubble forth from men trying to make sense of their lives with women.

In his previous (and acclaimed) two collections of short stories—*Going Places* and *I Would Have Saved Them If I Could*—Leonard Michaels often examines the same theme and always with the same implied conclusion: It isn't love that binds the sexes but an awful compulsion to cling together in ineluctable, primitive combat. Whether or not this view is unrealistically narrow, the stories hit the target and quiver like steel arrows because Michaels's prose is a combination of the spare and the melodramatic encountered only in rare masterpieces like Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*.

Michaels's long-awaited first novel, although funny, painful, and unflinching, runs into trouble because he hasn't applied the lean, vigorous strokes of his stories to a novel. He has simply relaxed the grip he maintains on the brush of the shorter form and has let it stray, thus providing both too much and too little. *The Men's Club* is worth reading not because it is a novel that cuts deeply, but because it is like a crucial *chapter* in a novel that cuts deeply.—DAVID FINKLE

Original Sins

by Lisa Alther
Alfred A. Knopf, 608 pp., \$13.95

THE FIVE ill-fated protagonists in Lisa Alther's latest are finger puppets, not

people. The story opens with a quintet of promising youngsters perched in a weeping beech and ends, after much waggling of novelistic devices, with their own progeny playing in the same tree. What becomes of their hopes and dreams in between?

Pretty Sally marries her cousin, the football hero, and settles into a life of daytime soaps and Eat Me Orange nail polish. Her bulldog husband Jed, still abiding by the tenets of his high-school coach, scrambles for promotion to management of the local mill. Sally's brainy sister Emily and Jed's brother Raymond flee Tennessee for New York City where they rally to the rhetoric of the popular political "isms" of the Sixties and Seventies. That leaves Donny, the maid's grandson, a "good niggah" with a dead-end job as janitor until he skips town and sprouts an Afro.

Growing up and leaving home are the themes here. Separation from family and inherited territory is the struggle represented. Oh, how hard it is, the author says; so hard, it's never really accomplished. We're all locusts who have shed our shells, "helpless larvae, cold, naked and unprotected." Despite the tired one-liners ("He picked her up

out of the dirt and turned her into the clod she was today") and the easy pokes at stale dogma, we are supposed to take this book seriously. We are supposed to care about these predictable characters and their predictably aborted pursuits of happiness.

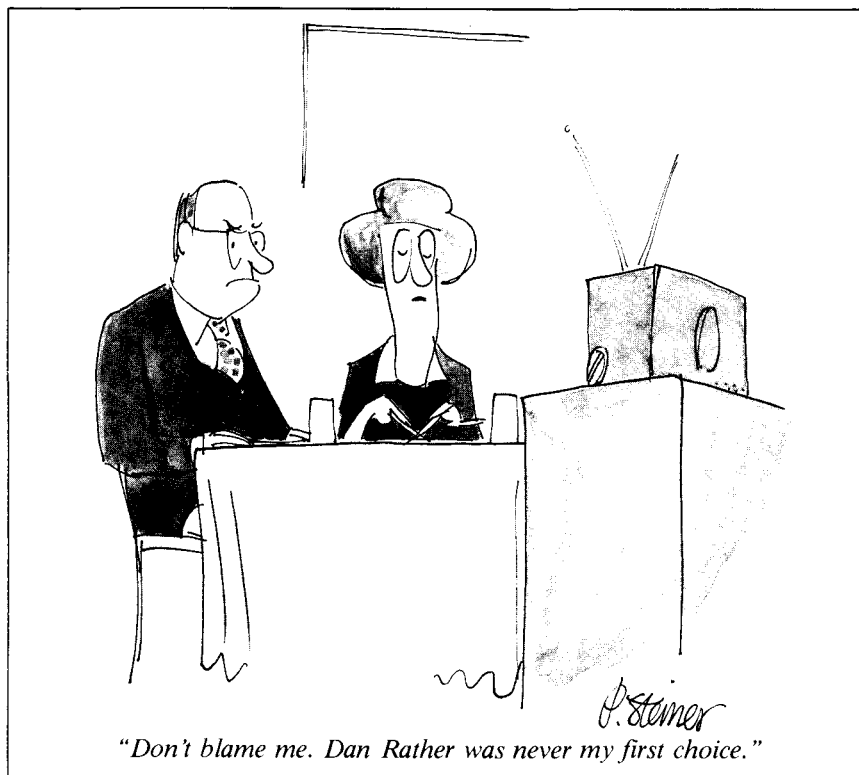
No go. Alther's *Kinflicks* was glib, but *Original Sins* is more so. In the former, the thoughts of a dying mother on the subject of her protean daughter kept the novel several cuts above sitcom. In the latter, canned laughter prevails. —LAURA GERINGER

Seagull

by Yashar Kemal
translated by Thilda Kemal
Pantheon, 250 pp., \$11.95

SINCE PASSION and desire are rarely the stuff of stories about children, Yashar Kemal's *Seagull*, a grand and ramshackle examination of precisely these emotions, is a noteworthy addition to that small list of vigorous books that can be read by both adults and children for equal if not exactly the same exhilaration.

Salih, a young Turkish boy living in a contemporary but not altogether mod-



SR Vacation Planner

A unique travel planning service to assist you in planning vacation or business travel to all points of the globe. Circle the numbers that interest you on the postcard facing this page and drop in the mail—the first step toward a bon voyage. If your card has disappeared from your copy of SATURDAY REVIEW just send this page with your information requests circled directly to: SATURDAY REVIEW.

3. Air New Zealand

The South Pacific is so much more than you bargained for! Beyond the tropical islands you've dreamed about, there are other islands. Touch a little of each and you've taken the trip of a lifetime. Air New Zealand.

4. Balloon Ranch

America's only hot air ballooning resort. Pleasure rides, certified FAA instruction & balloon sales. Unique Colorado Rockies country resort offering all amenities & activities: swimming, tennis, rock climbing, 4-wheel tours, horses, sauna, hot tub, wilderness & fine dining. Color brochure. Del Norte, Co. 81132 (303) 754-2533 or 3474

5. Belgium National Tourist

This beautiful country is aptly called "The Surprise Package of Europe." There's food to rival Paris, castles to capture your heart, scenery to take your breath away, festivals and night life to take your inhibitions away. You'll come home bedazzled but not bedraggled, because all Belgium's surprises can be seen in day trips—without changing hotels! Send for our free color brochure.

6. Big Wyoming

Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks plus 17 national monuments, recreation areas, historic sites, forests and wilderness areas. Guest ranches and resorts feature river float trips, breakfast rides, back country pack trips, golf, tennis, fishing, etc.

7. Breckenridge, Colorado

With its reputation for "Great Times Since 1859" Breckenridge offers an unforgettable mountain vacation experience. Surrounded by Colorado's most un-exploited treasures, this charming old Victorian mining town boasts some of the finest shops and restaurants in the Rockies, and accommodations that are unsurpassed. Our Free brochure will show you how pleasant it is to MAKE OUR HISTORY PART OF YOUR HISTORY.

8. Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs and Pikes Peak offers over 40 major attractions with a variety to please everyone. Send for big colorful information packet.

9. Europe By Car

Rent, lease or buy a car for European trip. Also camper rentals and youth Eurail pass. Complete information. Europe by Car, 45 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020; 9000 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069.

10. New Zealand Government Tourist Office
New Zealand is literally a pocket wonderland

with an amazing variety of scenic and tourist highlights squeezed into two green islands in the South Pacific. There are soaring alps, majestic fiords, sandy beaches, lakes and streams teeming with trout, and some of the warmest and friendliest people found anywhere. Let us send you our "one-step world tour" Kiwi Pack.

11. Japan Airlines

Send for free JAL's Orient Booklet with the Orient Tour Buying Guide.

12. Keystone Resort, Colorado

Golf at 9,300-ft., serve a doubles match at a John Gardiner Tennis Ranch, root and toot at rodeos, July 11 & 12, August 1 & 2, ride, raft, sail, swim, bike, jeep, fish, or just roam the 3-level village. The Mobil 4-Star resort with deluxe hotel, condominiums and unsurpassed dining overlooking a mountain lake, features two to five-night packages.

13. Manila Hotel

The newest old tradition in the Orient, The Manila Hotel. That gracious service, old-world elegance and personal attention you thought were long gone are still very much alive at the Manila Hotel.

14. Petit St. Vincent

Tranquil, beautiful out-island resort in The Grenadines, described by Margaret Zellers, author of FIELDING'S CARIBBEAN 1981, as "one of the best to try for top luxury." PSV low summer rates apply from April 22 through August 31, 1981. PSV offers 22 luxurious villas, excellent cuisine, superb beaches, tennis and all water sports.

15. Philippine Airlines

The first Asian Airline to fly internationally, the first across the Pacific, first to Europe. First and only airline to fly daily between San Francisco and Manila and now with 3 weekly flights from Los Angeles to Manila. The first and only airline to offer 15 full length beds in first class. Philippine Airlines is the best way to tour the Orient. Send for full color brochure.

16. Pink Beach

Deluxe cottages in fashionable Tucker's Town on our own private 1800' natural pink beach. Tennis, cycling, pool terrace, dancing, informal Bermuda entertainment. Breakfast prepared and served in your cottage, gourmet dining in our clubhouse with its superb Atlantic seascape. All in the best Bermuda tradition. For reservations and information call our New York office (212) 371-1323. Or circle on your reader service card.

17. Plymouth County

PFA popular destination for thrifty travelers since

1620. Come for the history, stay for the fun. Send for material which includes our 56 page hospitality guide, a full color map brochure and a do-it-yourself tour guide. This year, make it Plymouth County.

18. Poland

See Poland with Orbis in 1981. An exciting destination where you will be welcomed everywhere. Choose from 14 All-Poland Tours, 8-15 days. Cosmopolitan Warsaw. Historic Cracow. Ancient, yet lively cities. The high Tatras. Unspoiled, natural wonders. Folklore and Festivals. Music and Art. Relaxing spa vacations. Cabarets. Concerts. Savory cuisine. One country, so much variety. Combine a vacation in Poland with many countries of Eastern and Western Europe, the Near East and Africa, 11-15 days. Send for our illustrated color brochure.

19. Romania

Romantic Romania, unique vacation land. Legendary Transylvania. Black Sea beaches, sophisticated Bucharest, painted churches of Moldavia are pleasant surprises. Dr. Aslan's universally recognized therapy relieves and cures aging symptoms. Spas offer natural remedies for many ailments. Colorful brochure contains facts and information on travel to Romania; lists many tour packages to Romania only or combined with other countries.

20. Tahiti

Tahiti and our famous sister islands; the ultimate escape! Only eight hours from LA, Tahiti offers all the beauty, safety, and enjoyment associated with the fabled south seas. For detailed information on a vacation which offers the best of two worlds, excellent accommodations, a lively colorful town and the enduring Polynesian lifestyle. Ask for free 18 page color brochure.

21. Sri Lanka

Unspoiled, Unusual, Undiscovered—That's Sri Lanka (once known as Ceylon) the regal island country just off the tip of India. It's a fabulous spectacle: Miles of beaches, tea gardens on misty mountains, colorful festivals, orchids galore, Asia's best game preserves. You'll leave with a lifetime of memories. The last bargain paradise in a price-inflated world. Year-round tours combined with neighboring countries. Sri Lanka—the Pearl of the Indian Ocean.

22. Australian Tourist Commission

AUSTRALIA. CIVILIZED ADVENTURE. Discover why Australia is a Civilized Adventure. Learn about friendly and fascinating cities like Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra and the exciting adventure tours to the Outback and The Great Barrier Reef. Send for your free informative literature and learn why Australia is a Civilized Adventure.