

Speculation - 17

VOL.2 NO.5

FEBRUARY 1968



***THE PLOUGH IS A HARSH
MISTRESS / F.M. 'BUZ' BUSBY***

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Illustration for
'The Speculator'

CREDITS: Cover by Bob Rickard illustrating Heinlein's novel, THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS (see Pp 10). Artwork by Latto (1;20); Rickard (10; 17) Pamela Yates (27). Assistance during production by Birmingham SF Group.

SPECULATION-17 is edited and produced by Peter R Weston, at 81 Trescott Road, Northfield, Birmingham 31, UK. 2/6d per copy, Subscriptions at 3 for 7/6. U.S. readers please remit direct (30c per copy, 3 for \$1.00) to the editor. Published irregularly, available for trades. All opinions within are not necessarily those of the editor. Please advise on change of address !

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"The role to be filled by a publication like SPECULATION," writes Harlan Ellison in a recent letter, "is not merely to inform the readers but also to aid the very writers about whom you concern yourself. Writing into a vacuum is a terrifying thing; we need solid reviewing and criticism!"

This letter came out of the blue and cheered me up no end. "At last," I thought, "here's a succinct reason for publishing SPECULATION". Not that I need any justification, but people have sometimes been known to wonder just what I thought I was doing, especially when they've never seen this sort of thing before.

I don't know whether or not you're right, Harlan, and I couldn't say how much notice any writer actually takes of our opinions, but certainly yours is a comforting sort of thought ! Many thanks again for the kind letter.

THE SPECULATOR THE SF SCENE 1968

Do excuse my enthusiasm, but just at the moment I'm really excited about SPECULATION. Not about this particular issue, so much, although I think it's fairly readable, but about the various things that have been happening since December when I began to write around again in earnest.

To begin with, 1967 was a really busy year for science fiction, one in which all sorts of things happened that I hope will provide a rich harvest for SPECULATION. During the year, Michael Moorcock's New Worlds probably covered the most new ground by publishing what Mike calls 'speculative fiction', a really different literature of ideas for the Sixties. Then more barriers came down with the appearance of Harlan Ellison's DANGEROUS VISIONS from Doubleday, an anthology built around 'concepts which science fiction has never before dared to explore'.

Back on the magazine scene, Worlds of Tomorrow finally died, to be replaced with the Galaxy Group's International Science Fiction, and perhaps we can now hope that Galaxy itself will take the fairly obvious step of going back to monthly publication. Further than that, an entirely new SF magazine started in California, and although Beyond Infinity isn't of a particularly high standard, it's good to see a new title again. And I also hear that Ted White in New York has promised Stellar, a new semi-professional magazine; while Harry Harrison's editorship of the Amazing/Fantastic pair may have good results yet to come.

Then the 'new' writers of Sixties' science fiction came into greater prominence during 1967, with Samuel Delaney winning a Nebula for Babel-17 and Roger Zelazny's reputation soaring to incredible heights. Tom Disch, too, made an impact with 'Camp Concentration', and with some shorter stories; and Brian Aldiss, in many ways the most influential of all, became deeply involved with unusual - almost metaphysical - concepts, as shown in AN AGE, and in later works.

And by no means finally, although this is quite enough to go on with, Algis Budrys wrote THE IRON THORN, his first SF novel for many years, while Robert A Heinlein won another Hugo, for MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS. (The hero puts a giant computer to a revolutionary use, if you'll excuse the pun !). Who was it that once said there was nothing left to write about in science fiction ?

WAYS, MEANS, AND RESULTS

As you'll remember SPECULATION published the full proceedings of the British 1967 Convention, which meant a lot of things were crowded out of the last issue. And then various delays crept in, with the result that these items have become more and more dated. THE PLOUGH, for instance, has been labouring on this bit of the science fiction field for nine months now, and even more so the MELTING POT letter-column shows its age, with the bulk of comments concerning the long-forgotten Issues 14 & 15.

Otherwise most of this issue is fresh, and I'm particularly pleased we're paying attention to some of the events mentioned briefly above. For a start, Mike Ashley contributes an article on Thomas M Disch, which isn't intended so much as criticism but as a guide to this author's work. It's already proved quite useful in tracing some more elusive Disch stories.

Roger Zelazny has won all sorts of praise for his two novels to date, and so I'm glad that Brian Stableford has written-up LORD OF LIGHT, only just published in this country by Faber. (The latest Yandro also discusses this book, and it's sure to be an important one). I'm also happy to print a review of that other controversial book by the very same Harlan Ellison; I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM. Bob Rickard originally thought that a 1/2-page critique would be adequate, and then, as I knew he would, found he couldn't stop writing. (I said last time that Bob would one day revive the Birmingham Science Fiction Group; - he did, is sitting exams, and still finds time for SPECULATION; note our splendid cover).

A minor 'scoop' is the brief article by John Hayden Howard on Pages 21-22. After reading the excellent novel, THE ESKIMO INVASION (Ballantine and in Galaxy), I thought the author might well be concerned in real life with the problems shown in his fiction. Luckily this hunch paid off, for Mr Howard has kindly given some of the background thinking that went into the series.

Joe Patrizio and I had our hopes that Colin Wilson too would rise to the bait and explain some of the rationale behind THE MIND PARASITES. But on a postcard Mr Wilson replies; "...the review seems most perceptive, particularly on the relation between my books of philosophy and my novels. The American edition, by the way, (Arkham, \$4.00) has a good preface that would have explained much to your reviewer."

Following this Mr Wilson very kindly sent me a copy of 'The Hollins Critic', a small magazine put out by Hollins College, Virginia, (\$1.00 per annum, 5 issues). This is exclusively concerned with the works of Colin Wilson, and is titled "Toward an Existential Realism", a 12-page biography and assessment by R.H.W. Dillard. I'd like to have quoted a short passage or two from this, if I'd left enough room. But perhaps next time....

What else ? Well there's Graham Charnock's 'Two Reviews', which is another thing that's gathered dust - sorry, Graham; and Tony Wilson's review of EPP, as far as I know his first piece of critical writing to be published. Then there is a new feature, OPINION, something I hope will prove popular and which urgently needs your brief and lively opinions ! Finally, I seem to have been pipped to the post with my 'World's Worst SF', because Australian Science Fiction Review is running a very similar feature. Never mind, - I did think of this idea by myself, and so I'm pressing on with it. Your nominations, please, for the Worst SF of the year ! (And now read Page 9).

Some interesting items are planned for the future. To mention these is probably asking for trouble, because a lot can still go wrong. However, let's stick my neck out and make a few predictions;-

First and foremost, Kenneth Bulmer, who will be Guest of Honour at the forthcoming Manchester convention, has agreed for his speech to be published in SPECULATION. Other programme events may or may not be covered, depending exactly what does happen over the Easter weekend this year (Your registration fee of 7/6 will get full details, from Charles Partington, 2 Matlock Avenue, Lower Kersal, Salford 7, Lancs.)

Our team of writers have been given their tasks (!), and I've already received Chris Priest's excellent review of David Masson's CALTRAPS OF TIME (Faber 21s). Graham Hall is writing on Joseph's HOLE IN THE ZERO, from Gollancz, and Bob Parkinson has promised a lengthy critique upon Disch's CAMP CONCENTRATION. (Other books for review in detail include THE IRON THORN and DANGEROUS VISIONS). A major article on Brian W Aldiss has long been needed, and all being well Richard Gordon will be able to complete this in time, covering such books as AN AGE, GREYBEARD, etc.

There should be a PLOUGH column, although the last I heard, Buz Busby hadn't made his mind up on what to write about; there may be an article on New Worlds, and quite possible some substantial material from Mike Ashley, Joe Patrizio, Tony Sudbery, and Peter White. There'll certainly be the usual features such as MELTING POT (good letters on hand from John Brunner, Rick Norwood in particular), and of course THE SPECULATOR, but I'm afraid I've just about given up ever seeing Al Lewis's huge essay on Philip Jose Farmer.

That's surely enough Speculating for now, and perhaps you can see why I'm so excited about the magazine. Certainly if only 50% of these promises come true, then the next issue should be very fine indeed !

Peter Weston, February 21st, '68

COLIN WILSON's

THE MIND PARASITES

REVIEW BY J.P. PATRIZIO

THE MIND PARASITES is, to the best of my knowledge, Colin Wilson's first attempt at science fiction, and in many respects it suffers from the same weaknesses and defects which are to be found in the works of other mainstream writers who dabble in science fiction with insufficient knowledge of it.

Basically the story is that of Professor Gilbert Austin who makes the discovery that (to quote the cover blurb) "the human mind is in the grip of a kind of cancer or parasite. The parasites inhabit man's inner world, the world of his mind, and live off his vitality...". Austin finds confirmation of his discovery in the papers of a colleague who has been killed by the parasites. The rest of the story is how Austin, and a few others he has convinced, get rid of the parasites in themselves and develop the latent PK powers now available to them.

Now this sounds very old science fiction hat, and so it is; but it does go a bit further than this. What Wilson has tried to do is dramatize the content of his 'Outsider' cycle of books. He has personalized the anti-genius state of man's mind and has developed the mind parasites as a symbol of man's apathy towards thinking. This he has done quite successfully, taking about the first half of the book to collect the evidence of the existence of the mind parasites, interweaving fiction with history (particularly of the arts) to 'prove' the point.

Lovecraft is given credit for an instinctive knowledge of the mind parasites which is manifest in his novels, and Wilson goes so far as to give August Derleth, as Lovecraft's latter day prophet, a minor part in the plot. In fact there are about six pages which are little more than descriptions of the novels of Lovecraft, who is said to be "a man of remarkable imagination" and who is treated with a fair degree of reverence. This, incidentally, I found a little surprising coming as it did from a writer who once wrote:

"With the exception of Lovecraft, no writer ever tried harder than De Sade to conjure up the powers of darkness; with the exception of Lovecraft, no writer made himself more absurd."

* THE MIND PARASITES, published by Arthur Barker, London 1967.

A MIND-EATING MOON

In the early part of the book, this presentation of proof of the existence of the mind parasites, and the method by which to be free of them, is believably presented, mainly because the philosophical background derives from established thinkers and has been well developed by Wilson in earlier books. Husserl is really the hero of the story, his phenomenology providing the means by which man can become superman. Gurdjieff gives us the concept of a mind-eating moon; but while Wilson doesn't go as far as this, he uses the idea by making the moon a base for the mind parasites and also a sort of amplifier for their powers. However, I found the involvement of the moon in this way did nothing for my suspension of disbelief, bringing in an element of the ridiculous which was unnecessary and distracting.

All the philosophising leads up to the 'mental birth' of the hero, where he frees himself from the effects of the mind parasites and learns to know himself completely. This idea of self-knowledge is, of course, not unknown in science fiction, but Wilson treats it in depth to an extent rarely, if ever, found there.

However, once these shackles have been thrown off, Wilson has said all he has to say, and the story degenerates as it struggles towards a conclusion. It degenerates because Wilson doesn't know what he can and what he can't get away with in modern SF, and the space opera in which he now gets entangled is 30 years out of date. Luckily, this space opera involves only about a quarter of the book.

INCONSEQUENTIAL MAGIC

There are echoes of Shaw's AS FAR AS THOUGHT CAN REACH (the last part of BACK TO METHUSELAH), when Austin starts to expand his PK muscles. But Wilson, unlike Shaw, abandons the self-examination of the new-found inner man, and indulges in inconsequential magic; - pushing around spaceships, people, and the moon while ignoring the effects on any of them. For example, the moon is pushed out of orbit towards the sun, without any qualms; - no thought for the physical disturbances it might cause. Now I don't know how much trouble would be brought about by the disappearance of the Moon, (although I'm sure there would be weather changes on the Earth, at least), but Wilson obviously hasn't given it a thought and it would have left fewer ends dangling if he'd left the thing where it was.

As for the rest of the PK powers Wilson gives his hero, perhaps he doesn't realise it but it's all been done before - and better, as he leaves some disconcerting limitations to the powers of this superman. Overall, I found THE MIND PARASITES well written, treating its subject in depth, and generally maintaining a level of credibility sufficient to hold the reader. But then we come to the space-opera bit. This almost ruined the novel for me; and unnecessarily so, since a little more research into early SF might have kept Wilson's enthusiasm within bounds, and prevented his labouring the point. The ideas of the New Existentialism have been better expressed in the 'Outsider' cycle, but here they are in action and cleverly presented. On balance, I felt that the qualities of THE MIND PARASITES vindicated any sins, and if you get fed up with Ballardian intellectualism, Wilsonian existentialism will make a pleasant change.

J.P. Patrizio, 1967

OPINION

SOME VIEWS ON

CURRENT SCIENCE FICTION

Opinions expressed are
not necessarily those
of the editor !

THIS IS a new feature in SPECULATION, a sort of forum for various opinions on current science fiction. Most of these are brief, snappy, and quite unsubstantiated, unlike MELTING POT which in any case carries comments on this magazine itself. The whole idea is an excuse for further reader-participation; - and so please do send in your opinions !

1: BOMB AND BE DAMNED ! (John Boston)

"...Of course THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS comments on the Vietnamese war, but if you haven't been following it in the US papers you might not catch the allusion. When the debate is raging over whether or not to risk hitting the Taj Mahal with an artificial meteorite, remember the static about "strategic targets" ? That's the essence of the debate about bombing Hanoi and Haiphong -- some say they're not strategic targets, some say "Bomb 'em anyway!" It's a very minor portion of the book, though. "

2: IN LOUSY TASTE ! (Chris Priest)

"...Jean-Luc Goddard once said that a film (and, one can assume, by implication also a story) should have a beginning, a middle and an end,... but not necessarily in that order. A.E. VanVogt, one of Moorecock's "Old School", has been known to deliberately shuffle chapters after writing, because they made better sense in a non-sequential order. It is easy to snerr at Ballard, difficult to like his work, and almost impossible to understand it at one go.

I defend to the death the right of Ballard to write whatever he wants, and how, but I think I disagree that it should be published. One story of his that I read recently in Ambit included a reference to Jackie Kennedy washing blood off a Cadillac and having an orgasm. All dead progressive, but in lousy taste ! "

3: THREE BEST SF BOOKS ? (Joe Patrizio)

"...Incidentally, I recently read Ballard's latest collection, THE DISASTER AREA, and quite enjoyed it. It was a good collection, with none of the stories being bad, but none outstanding, either. Graham Greene, in the Observer, picked it as one of the three best books he had read in 1967, and one of the best SF books he had ever read. Bill Temple made the comment that it was probably one of the only SF books Graham Greene had ever read ! "

4: GRUBBY FINGERS ON THE TITLE ! (Dick Tiedman)

"....I just had a letter from Mr Vance in answer to an enquiry...At the present he is writing mystery and suspense novels. He comments that, - 'The Demon Prince series hopefully will be continued in a year or so. Doubleday is bringing out EMPHYRIA shortly, which I hope you'll like; then I'm doing a four-volume space-operaish set for Ace, the first of which, THE CHASCH, is due for publication in January. This last is an adventure tale on the order of BIG PLANET - nothing inspiring, I fear. No further stories with BIG PLANET locale are currently in the works, though I have one such plotted and eventually will write it.' The Ace book has come out, and, as usual, Ace has had its grubby fingers on the title, which is now PLANET OF ADVENTURE!..."

5: THE TIME-BUSINESS - A RICH THEME ? (Brian W Aldiss)

"...I believe all my central characters struggle for self-mastery through self-discipline. But in AN AGE, the struggle becomes clearer. Bush is deliberately made an artist. He veers between the self-indulgence we see in the opening chapters and the discipline imposed from without that we see in the later chapters; either through a totalitarian regime or through actual incarceration in a mental hospital. But his way out of this impasse is also made clear; there is the way of self-discipline of an artist, which Bush fails to grasp as his friend Borrow grasps it. The parallel to this, an echo of it, lies in the time business; the ambiguous ending makes the reader ask, Suppose time is not the simple uni-directional flow (in either direction) that people claim; doesn't life offer hidden alternatives ?

This seems to me a rich sort of theme. Perhaps the sf in the present novel gets in the way of it. I hope to use it again, using less SF. Gadgets obscure meaning. My next novel, REPORT ON PROBABILITY A (expanded version) goes into the time-flow thing again, from a different angle; and my novel after that, BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD, of which chunks appear at intervals in New Worlds, deals with the parallel question of hidden alternatives, multi-value logic, and Onspenskian ideas (You had this in a minor key in GREYBEARD where Greybeard himself was always aware of the world he had lost, or avoided; and his pleasure was thereby increased or decreased by that awareness.) After BAREFOOT, the theme will emerge again, and applied not only to one individual."

6: MOTIVATIONS OF ACE PILOT ROCK GORDON ? (Richard Gordon)

"...I thought that the Disch serial in New Worlds ('Camp Concentration') was great save for the end, which was weak. Slightly pretentious, I thought, that was the other fault. But on the whole, Disch knows what he is talking about, and talks about it well. Quite honestly, much of the SF I used to read seems so impossibly shallow now. And the magazines, with the exception of New Worlds, have the shallowest standards of literary judgement - and the most conservative. Being all serious now, 'mere' entertainment seems one level, literature another. NW is aspiring to the second and more difficult level, and good luck to it ! (Cont/d)

Science fiction now needs to be life-oriented, to use a phrase of Ray Fisher's. Probably horribly cliched to say it must be more human - not human in the soap opera sense, but in understanding and studying the future of the human being himself, not his inventions, which are relatively predictable and more of engineering interest than anything else. How to understand the whys and wherefores of his wanting to go to space and build robots, not the fact that he can build them and conquer space. That isn't the interesting thing any more. By all means retain ace pilot Rock Gordon, terror of the spaceways, But let's have a shift of emphasis from the adventures with the bloodsuckers of Altair Five (to be deliberately extreme) to finding out why he became ace pilot Rock Gordon in the first place. "

7; RETURN TO THE MAGNIFICENT STORYTELLERS ! (Jim Sanders)

"...What SF needs is a return to the pulps. A small movement in this direction has been greeted with the highest praise, including the Hugo (twice), and apparent financial success. Namely, If, which with its stress on story value, on good stories, is catching the main part of the pulp tradition. This is what we need; a magazine featuring such people as Leinster and Laumer, Zelazny and Vance, Anderson and Saberhagen, the old Heinlein and Garrett, all writers who, whatever their other virtues and faults, are magnificent storytellers. And then, add to that sort of magazine one thing in which no magazine but Analog seems to believe, namely an editorial personality. Have long letter-columns; have chatty personal editorials, or have curdmudgeonly personalities like Campbell; but have a personality. Actually I wonder if the 'New Wave' isn't at least partially a reaction to the pulps. It is, after all, the exact opposite to them. Plots and stories are disregarded. Writing is prettified (I won't say it is better, but it is more 'literary') and style and message are the Main Things. What this message is, no-one seems to care as long as the work Says Something." (excerpted from HABBAKUK, 1967).

THE WORLD'S WORST S.F. - 1967

THERE ARE quite a number of various 'best' science fiction choices of the year around at the moment, from Hugos and Nebula Awards to Judith Merril and Ace Books - and more besides. Let's do something different - what about the other end of the scale, the year's worst science fiction ?

SPECULATION invites you to nominate your choice for 1967's worst SF novel, short story and for the Worst Author of the Year. We don't want to consider Badger Books or similar horrors on the trash market, but only the true science fiction field. And that's a lot of scope.

Incidentally, I'll be delighted if you'll explain just why a particular novel/story/author has won your vote as the Worst of the Year. If all this goes well, there'll be a special feature in the next issue and who knows, perhaps even a SPECULATION Award !

THE PLOUGH IS A HARSH MISTRESS



BY F.M. 'BUZ' BUSBY.

"Who'd have thought
it," says Buz Busby,
- "but there it is;
Robert A Heinlein,
Revolutionary."

Illustrated by
Bob Rickard.

The background of Robert A. Heinlein's *THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS* is in the same timestream as that of several of his Scribners juveniles of the 1950's; in fact the grandmother of "The Rolling Stones" family appears here as Hazel Meade, a young girl. As is usual with Heinlein novels, this background is detailed, fascinating and spotted with surprises. Perhaps a brief summary....

The colonisation of Luna has been accomplished by prisoners and exiles a la Australia's Botany Bay period. Exile is for life, since "irreversible physiological change" occurs within weeks spent under Lunar-G. The strictly-prison period is past, and now the population consists largely of discharged lags and their free-born descendants.

The people on the Moon live in underground cities, or "warrens". Of the three major warrens, Luna City appears to have been settled mostly by English or English-speaking peoples; Novylen(ingrad) by Russians; and Hong Kong Luna by deportees from Great China, which "now" includes about half of Australia. Hong Kong Luna is by no means all-Oriental in makeup. There has been considerable interchange between warrens, as shown by the variegation of surnames and the use of many Russian expressions and ways of speaking in Luna City, for instance.

Lunar Authority, an agency of the Federated Nations, administers Luna. Or rather, it has absolute control in an economic sense, specifying what the Loonies shall pay for air and water and such, and what they shall be paid for the products of their mines and farms, and for their labour. The Authority pays little heed to the details of their daily lives; consequently their customs have evolved to suit the situation. And the working-out of these customs by the author is one of the major delights of the book. Maybe it won't happen that way - but it surely could.

Survival - for a puny 3 million ?

The theme is not new in itself. The administrative agency is exploiting the colonists to the point where disaster is the inevitable end-result. In this instance, not only the people but the resources of Luna are being wrung dry, and naturally no-one in authority will listen to reason. How can a mere 3 million Loonies, overseen by the Lunar Authority which has the financial and police-type backing of the untold billions of the Federated Nations of Earth, plus full control of space transport - how can this puny handful get a hearing and arrange for its own survival ?

Well, it is by no means easy, and although revolt of the Lunar populace against the Authority and thus against the Earth itself looks to be quite impossible, it is the only available straw to grasp. Our protagonist, a one-armed computer-troubleshooter, who works for the Authority only on contract, never as a salaried employee, takes a lot of persuading before he agrees to go along with the revolution. (But we should not call Manuel Garcia O'Kelly-Davis "one-armed"; he has a dozen specialised prostheses to use in place of the natural extremity he lost to a laser drillbeam some time prior to page 1)

It is just as well that he does join the revolt, as he happens to have the key to the one item which gives the whole thing any chance at all; the master computer on Luna, which handles all data and communications for the Authority and which has reached the critical number of association-paths needed for "self-awareness". (And Manuel is undecided as to whether or not those quotes are applicable.) If it waddles like a duck and quacks like a duck, that's ducky enough for "Man", the only human who has ever bothered to notice the more-than-mechanical responses and talk with "Mike" (the computer).

All right, this is the touch of Magic that bugs some of our more mechanistically-minded readers. But the self-aware computer has been accepted as a gimmick in many previous tales; let's not quibble. It's certainly much better than Mannie being able to subvert the Authority's very own communications and data-processing system "on account of he had a strange mutant strain which made him different". In this case the rationale may have to stretch a bit, but a self-aware computer is a device which does cover the seams pretty well, and more than that, allows a whole variety of novel story-situations to develop.

No-articles narration style

Since Man O'Kelly-Davis tells story first-person, little fear of his demise. But fair grade of cliff-hanging anyway by author. Could manage that in his sleep by now, probably. And never lets reader take survival of other characters for granted. (This paragraph is intended to convey the flavour of the no-articles narration style of the book, which is a surprisingly successful device to convey atmosphere and after a few pages seems the most natural way in the world in which to speak and write !)

Since some degree of success of the revolution is necessary to create the milieu of "The Rolling Stones", rather than leaving the earlier written (but chronologically later work) in an orphan timestream, the reader is mainly concerned with "How?" and "Who lives through it?", and can pretty well depend on the Loonies to win through.

I mentioned the Lunar-developed customs. As in BEYOND THIS HORIZON, politeness pays off in the opportunity for longevity - as do precautionary heed and alertness, since Luna in the raw is not a livable environment. Social relationships are based on the shortage of women; a 10-1 ratio in the earlier days and about 2-to-1 at the time of the story. Consequentially by the law of supply and demand, the ladies are on quite a pedestal; it is a capital crime (with enforcement on the informal side) for a man to so much as put his arm around a woman against her will, and tourists can find this out the hard way. Although if a lady wishes to bed the fella, her brothers or husbands do not interfere, which is a great departure from the American Frontier pedestal bit, from which this particular extrapolation derives.

Conserving capital ... and beats Inheritance Tax !

Marriage comes in all varieties; monogamous (rarely); polyandrous; group; clan and line. The line marriage is an immortal entity; - the one to which Mannie was "opted" in his teens has been going for nearly a century; as spouses die off, others marry into the group. There goes your old Inheritance Tax.... The Davis group ordinarily but not necessarily alternate between adding a husband and a wife to the family; consent must be unanimous among existing members (and this family is so modern and liberal that it allows husbands a veto too; most, it seems, do not).

It is pointed out by the theorist in the cast that "line marriage is the strongest possible device for conserving capital" (that is, it gives individual family groups the same practical immortality now reserved only for corporations) "and insuring the welfare of children" (so a parent dies; there are still 7 or 8 more parents) "— the two basic societal functions for marriage everywhere." The family does not grow inordinately, since the children become members of the families (of whatever type) that they marry into, and share the fortunes of their new spouses rather than those of their parents. Quite an interesting concept. (But stop drooling there; the sex angle of polygamy is not emphasised.) And who runs things in the family group?— the senior wife, naturally. Unless and until she voluntarily hands the job over to the next in line and retires to an advisory capacity.

I find the background work in this book ingenious and consistent; it carries along the interest so that there is no urge to stop and pick holes in it.

Not enough conflict on-stage ?

Local discussion brought up the objection that the book contains too much action for the amount of conflict shown — that the Davis family, for instance, would have come much more alive if they had ever had a real hassle among themselves and worked it out on-stage. Well, it is a fairly long book (383 pages in US hardcover), and I'm not sure that an additional subplot of that sort could have been worked in without undue extra length (read; extra price at the book counter). However, it is true that although a number of characters appear sharply in focus at one time and another, the only ones that really flesh-out into 3-D are the narrator, his mentor, and the self-aware computer. And perhaps the tourist who becomes Our Man Earthside. The Number-One girl does not, quite, and I'm not sure just why not; maybe it is because she is arguing politics too much of the time she is front-&-centre. A good kid, but still not all the way out of the spear-bearer category.

And perhaps the no-articles narrative style, although a tour de force in itself and enjoyable once you get the hang of it, tends to blanket characterisation somehow. I'm not sure of this either way, but it's a possibility. The effect, if any, would vary from one reader to the next, depending on flexibility of ear.

But in general the story holds up well for me; the background is great and I enjoyed the plot. (Well, different styles of plotting suit different temperaments — my own wife can become enthralled by a book in which nothing, and I mean literally nothing, by her own admission, ever happens. Well, this is why restaurants have a variety of dishes on the menu.)

So much for background, story, and the nice touch of fitting this book in to the timestream of previous works — always appreciated, that last bit. But since the appearance of STARSHIP TROOPERS some 8 years ago, it is not considered respectable to discuss a Heinlein book without great convulsive attempts to determine "What is he trying to SAY ?", and/or "What does he really BELIEVE ?"

Pat Answers - any number can play

Well, it all seems quite simple. You take the current book and look for similarities in earlier stories, and you come up with a nice Pat Answer; any number can play.

On this basis, it is obvious that Robert Heinlein is at heart a dedicated revolutionist. In at least three books he has taken great pains to spell out the essential techniques and organisation for successful insurrection against authority; "If This Goes On.." (serialised 1940, book version REVOLT IN 2100); SIXTH COLUMN (serialised 1941, book title THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW); and our current subject (no alias on this one). In the first case the revolt is against a tyrannical repressive theocracy. In the second it is against a conquering invader. And now it is against the Home Office - that is, an entrenched bureaucracy oppressing the poor colonials, as is usual in such cases if we can judge from history. (And wasn't there a suggestion of the very same theme in BETWEEN PLANETS.... and RED PLANET, to name two more ?)

But it's all the same setup, basically. When you have had it up to here, these stories "say" there is nothing to do but blow the lid off, & here is how you do it..... Robert A Heinlein, Revolutionary. Who'd have thought it? But there it is.....

F.M. Busby, 1967

* THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS, published by Dobson Books, 1967, at 25s.

TWO REVIEWS.....by Graham Charnock,
about recent science fiction novels

BABEL-17 by Samuel R. Delany. Ace Books, 40¢

Occasionally a book comes along that for some reason or another seems to defy purely technical criticism. In such a case, the only thing to do is to say "I loved it (or hated it)" and, perhaps, "I have reason to believe that you will also love it (or hate it)...."

I feel this way about Samuel Delany's BABEL-17. If pressed I could probably point out those qualities of style and those intricacies of plot which I found were particularly appealing, amusing, intriguing, or exciting; but I would do so most unhappily, feeling that these were false, contrived rationalisations of what is first and foremost an emotional reaction on my part. For me it is the book as a whole which is entrancing. Dissection, although perfectly legitimate critical procedure, I would hold to be an aesthetic travesty.

The plot of BABEL-17 has such a variety of twists and turns, such a rich array of scenic backgrounds and settings that I feel safe in revealing a little of it ;

Briefly, the Earth Alliance is pitted against the Invader in stellar conflict. It is the mission of poetess Rydra Wong to solve and decipher an artificial language, - Babel-17 - which has been developed by the Invader. The book seems to make the point (perhaps earlier explored in part by Jack Vance's LANGUAGES OF PAO) that language determines thought; that a word must exist for a word or concept before that idea or concept can mean anything. Babel-17, a language without the concept of "I" has its own peculiar and unguessable effects upon those who use it.

Let me assure you that there is no shortage of well-handled action, espionage, intrigue, and treble-dealing; there is no dearth of well-painted colourful, sympathetic characters; no limits, it seems, to Mr Delany's superb skill as a story-teller. **

WORLD OF PTAVVS by Larry Niven. Ballantine 50¢

Rays of sunshine scattered throughout this novel make me think there might well be hope for Larry Niven in the future. There are some choice and amusing turns of phrase - " Meteors, as scarce out here as sperm whales in a goldfish bowl..."; a few interesting and original concepts, such as "Confinement", an asteroid turned inside-out for expectant "Belter" wives; and solid-fuel take-off logs grown like trees in plantations. More generally, however, Larry Niven's first attempt at a full-length novel is disappointing.

He begins with a plot which is, on the face of it, serious - the Solar System is threatened by an alien superbeing. There is a chase, with humans in posse-like pursuit as the alien tries to retrieve the thought "amplifier" which will enable him to (dare I say it) Rule the World. But then Niven proceeds to treat this plot light-handedly and at times even facetiously - the implication being perhaps that in terms of space-opera it is impossible to treat such a "serious" plot at all seriously! Better laugh it off.....

However, certain weaknesses of narrative form spoil this novel even as space-opera. It becomes a pastiche, (and at times a clumsy pastiche) of incidents and situations. It is told from a variety of viewpoints, human and alien, hero and nonentity. Free use is made of flashback. Characters are introduced whose relevance to the story is at least incidental! One is invariably reminded of the narrative form used by Philip K Dick in MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, THE SIMULCRA, etc, but where Dick keeps his confusion under control, Niven holds only a loose rein on events. Dick presents a headache assortment of characters, but all are tellingly relevant, all factors are resolved by the end of the novel. Like hit records, Niven's people have only their brief period of ascendancy and are then forgotten. Niven's failure in fact, lies in attempting to use this pastiche narrative form in a novel of incidents rather than in a novel of ideas. Inevitably the novel lacks pace and that sustained level of narrative excitement which is necessary for any successful space -opera.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: BABEL-17 has been nominated for the 1966 Hugo Awards, and has, I believe, won joint first place in the 1966 Nebula Awards **

Announcing - THE MULTI-MAN
By Philip Harbottle

THE MULTI-MAN, a biographic and bibliographic study of the late John Russell Fearn, is a MUST for sf fans and anyone interested in the fields of bibliography and popular fiction. The book is not just a digest of my previous writings on Fearn, but a sweeping revision that includes much new material and direct criticism. Above all things, THE MULTI-MAN is readable and unbiased, and a genuine attempt has been made to eschew the shallow criticism, plot synopsis and nostalgia that has bedevilled the critical sf fan publishing of the past.

RESEARCHED OVER NINE YEARS, the book covers the whole field of popular science fiction, ranging from the vintage pre-war years of the American pulps to the notorious SF boom in Britain in the 1950s. Against this background, every facet of Fearn's literary output is examined and evaluated, including his dozens of Mystery and Western novels (many of them pseudonymous and never before known to be Fearn's) and full bibliographical coverage is given to Fearn's fanzine and cinema articles.

THE MULTI-MAN is in two parts: the first part gives a biographical sketch of Fearn, with an in-depth literary criticism of his enormous output. The damning myth of Fearn's authorship of the "Astron Del Martia" series is finally exploded in a penetrating analysis of the crazy SF boom years of 1950-54, and his seemingly-incredible output during the hey-day of "Vargo Statten" is fully explained for the first time in a surprising, documented expose of Fearn's writing methods. The second part is a complete bibliography which covers over 35 Fearn pseudonyms, many of them hitherto unrecorded, and as well as full publishing data gives a synopsis, quotation or notation for over 200 novels, magazine stories and articles, including foreign translations.

THE MULTI-MAN is professionally printed in vari-type photo-litho, with stiff, tinted card covers, and is vividly illustrated. Large size (9" X 7") the book runs approximately 50,000 words, and is priced at 15/- post free. Available from the publisher:

PHILIP HARBOTTLE,
27 CHESHIRE GARDENS,
WALLSEND-ON-TYNE,
NORTHUMBERLAND.

* * * * *

I'd like to take the opportunity here to express my apologies to the many people who haven't heard from me in quite a while. THE MULTI-MAN, mentioned above, was a daunting compilation which occupied a great deal of time, but the main reason has been that I am now engaged, and have to devote most of my time to my intended and future responsibilities. Now, as a life-long sf collector, I am reluctantly compelled to sell off many of my books and magazines to help raise the mortgage. Hundreds of items available, hardcovers, paperbacks, magazines. Send me your wants list and I'll quote you - detailed lists also available for s.a.e. Here is a sample of the more expensive items: THE TREASURY OF SF CLASSICS (U.S. hardcover), A CENTURY OF SF: Edited Knight (U.S. hardcover), SEETEE SHIP & SEETEE SHOCK: Will Stewart (U.S. hardcovers) all at £1; SF ADVENTURES IN DIMENSION: Conklin (U.S. hardcover), JOURNEY TO INFINITY: Greenburg (U.S. hardcover), THE FAIRY CHESSMEN/TOMORROW AND TOMORROW: Padgett (GNOME hc) all at 25/-; CLOAK OF AESIR: Campbell (U.S. hardcover) at 35/-. Cheaper items include hardcover copies of DREADFUL SANCTUARY: Russell, DRAGON'S ISLAND: Williamson, and HUNDREDS OF ACE TITLES (MINT) AT ONLY 2/6 EACH.

THOMAS M. DISCH

SOME STORIES



Illustrated by
Bob Rickard.

Some authors burst upon the world, others seem to creep up into prominence when you're not looking. Disch is here - he's a fine writer - and this is a brief summary of his work to date.

BY MIKE ASHLEY.

AN AUTHOR is generally expected to mature over the years, and reflect this maturity in the increasing quality of his fiction. Many of the first stories of the majority of today's established writers, for instance, were weak efforts, written during their years of experimenting, and bear no comparison to their later 'classics'. But such a maturing process normally takes time, and cannot be accomplished overnight.

Thomas M Disch apparently defies this rule. In the short space of four years he has already adopted an easily recognisable style, and is fast becoming recognised as one of the brightest new talents of this decade.

Disch's first published story, 'The Double Timer', in the October 1962 Fantastic, was a staple piece, not particularly outstanding but worth reading. Plot: simply that a police investigator in 2042 sets out to accomplish a perfect murder by using the complexities of time travel. Written in a conventional style, except for perhaps the use of diary format (because of the close link with time), it could not be acclaimed a masterpiece, but was certainly not one to miss. However, the story was overshadowed by a Fritz Leiber 'Grey Mouser' yarn in the same issue, and so any reaction was not revealed in the later letter columns.

Nothing else appeared from Disch until mid-1963, but after that stories seem to have flooded forth. Over the next year a variety of material (mostly vignettes) appeared in either Fantastic or Amazing, along with one article-cum-story; 'A Thesis on Social Forms and Social Controls in the USA'. (Jan. 1964). Now it could not be long before he was spotted and sure enough the letters began to appear; - "Congratulations on Thomas M Disch's contribution of 'Master Said And Done'. Perhaps I misinterpret this tale, but it seems to me that the author is quite dubious of the value of religion. At any rate, it's a thoughtful story and I wouldn't mind seeing more on the same line."

'Master Said And Done' was the second of three short vignettes which appeared together in the August 1963 Fantastic, telling of a very religious hunchback mute who is given the gift of speech from the devil. It was still in the popular style, with Disch as yet to find his own, individual stride, but although once again appearing in the same issue as a Gray Mouser fantasy, it was this time afforded recognition.

The majority of Disch's earlier work was science fiction, although his style seemed more suited to fantasy. Furthermore his fantasy was the more widely appreciated of the two.

1964: FURTHER FROM CONVENTIONALITY

By the beginning of 1964 a change of style could be seen in Disch's magazine appearances. This was first visible under the pseudonym of Dobbin Thorpe: 'Minnesota Gothic' is an updated, transformed version of Hansl and Gretl with the witch in the woods, although the names are really the only link. 'Death Before Dishonour' was a further step from conventionality, though still fantasy. In March 1964 the idea appeared in true science fiction with 'Now Is Forever', which was chosen by Donald Wollheim and Terry Carr for their anthology, WORLD'S BEST SF. Although it originally appeared under the Thorpe by-line, it was anthologised under the Disch name. In this respect, he had made it !

In some ways 'Now Is Forever' was akin to 'The Double Timer', but the style was different, the plot more wildly askew; still dealing with crime in the future, but this time in advertising. Reaction was highly favourable, and scientist and writer Ben Bova wrote: "Thorpe's story... is a good example of first-rate science fiction, taking an existing idea and running with it as far as the imagination allows".

Bova had more or less hit the nail on the head. And as Disch's work began to appear with more profusion it became more apparent that this was his way of working, the fantasy-telling of science fiction. No matter what the idea, simple or complex, Disch set his imagination to work on it, taking that "sense of wonder", that "suspension of disbelief" to the outermost limits. 'Genetic Coda' for instance (Fantastic June 1964), is simply a robot story, but so much more than that. With the following issue of that magazine, Disch's name now had selling quality; it appeared on the cover to advertise his quasi-fantasy, 'Descending', (a good example of the Disch type of yarn). He had ascended a further rung of the ladder.

'Descending', one of the best he has written to date, is a story that tells of a man in a large departmental store who finds himself trapped on a descending escalator. For as he descends, so it becomes never-ending, and when he decides to clamber back, he cannot reach the beginning. Certainly this piece is one of today's few true horror stories, and yet is set in such a simple location !

NOT A GREAT S & S FAN

Then Disch went to a complete extreme. While the individuality of his fiction was becoming more and more apparent during 1964, with 'Dangerous Flags' he went the whole hog and produced a fantasy tale which, while being

a parody on all fantasy yarns, and hence a parody on itself, was still a chilling piece, no doubt through the style in which it was written. When I asked him at the Bristol SF Convention (easter 1967) whether or not he liked sword-&-sorcery-type material (which was the most parodied in this tale), it came as somewhat of a surprise when he admitted that he was not a great fan, especially in view of his beautiful fantasy-telling ability, so rare today and so much a part of the Sword-&-Sorcery story.

But nevertheless, the quasi-fantasy yarn was to become part and parcel of his fiction over the ensuing year. But even so, Disch was still experimenting. 'Nada', his first story to appear outside the Ziff-Davis magazines, and his longest to that date, concerned telepaths and requires more than one reading to be fully appreciated. 'Assassin and Son' in the November 1964 If contained further experimentation, again with fantasy elements.

In 1965 I began to think Disch was dropping back from his previous high standard. 'The Vamp' was something of a throwback, and in my opinion '102 H-Bombs' didn't come off, although it seemed very popular when it became more easily available in a paperback collection. But compare 'The Vamp', a slight piece about vampires, with 'Come to Venus Melancholy', which appeared at the end of that year, as proof of how his writing changed radically in 1965 to come more in line with Moorcock's 'New Wave' SF. This latter tale simply told of a love story - but with no lovers and only a narrator. Its impact is unforgettable:- science fiction, certainly, fantasy, certainly; almost an ideal blending.

In December 1965 his first novel appeared from Berkeley=Medallion paperbacks, THE GENOCIDES, and received favourable reviews practically everywhere, not the least from Judith Merrill in F&SF. It is simply a story about an alien invasion, a hackneyed theme is ever there was one, but Disch really let rip with it. All previous efforts were but stepping-stones, and it almost seems as if he was saving himself for this piece. Were it not that THE GENOCIDES is but one electron of an ever-changing Disch-atom, one might believe that here was his pinnacle. (Review, SPECULATION Vol II No. 4)

PRONE TO THE BIZARRE

Disch's work had now appeared in many publications, including those outside the SF field, and by this time Disch himself was touring Europe, to settle, much to our advantage, in England. 'The Echo Of Wrath', in Galaxy, was rather a worn theme, but it had the usual Disch treatment. '5 Eggs' was his last story to appear in the USA for some time, in Damon Knight's ORBIT I anthology. A simple plot, simple story, but typical of Disch, highly convincing.

His first work in Britain was not unlike his early work for Ziff-Davis. Before it changed hands, Fantastic was the only remaining truly experimental fantasy magazine, and its disappearance as such left a void as yet unfilled; Impulse may well have gone far towards filling this void, but again financial hardship set in. Disch's work in Fantastic emphasised these experimental aspects - 'The Roaches', not unlike 'Descending' in the horror it evokes, centres about a girl with an abysmal phobia of cockroaches, and who then finds she can control them.

Disch's English magazine appearances were prone to the bizarre. 'The Number You Have Just Reached' is another chilling story, and the March 1967 New Worlds carried three short stories, similar to his previous Fantastic contributions, again with that element of the unusual.

Prior to this, New Worlds had published his second novel, 'Echo Round His Bones', a step par excellence from THE GENOCIDES. Here Disch expanded his thoughts with some of the most beautiful imagery he had yet conceived, to write the resultant provocative novel. It didn't seem then that his third full-length story would be so very different.

IDEAL MARKET FOR FANTASY

'Camp Concentration' began in the first new New Worlds, and personally I didn't very much care for it. It wasn't a story I could read easily. Episode didn't follow episode as well as had his other works. It was too disjointed for pleasure and the breaks in flow didn't have any enhancing effect. But for sheer brilliance of wit in some places, especially towards the end where some satirical jibes are worth the whole novel, this work takes some beating. Disch had already shown his powers for social criticism in 'Dangerous Flags', and other short vignettes, all disguised satires. With 'Camp Concentration' he turned the balloon inside out and burst it with a mighty bang. Literally one of his worst pieces, but satirically one of his best.

Although Disch's style is ideally suited to fantasy, few magazines tender to this genre. Now that Harry Harrison is editor of Fantastic he may do wonderful things, and Disch may again find his ideal market. New Worlds is very well for 'experimental' science fiction, but that, I feel, should be left to people like Moorcock and Zelazny. Disch is a fantasy writer, and that is how we want him.

Mike Ashley, 1968.

* THE GENOCIDES, published by Whiting & Wheaton, 1967, 2ls.

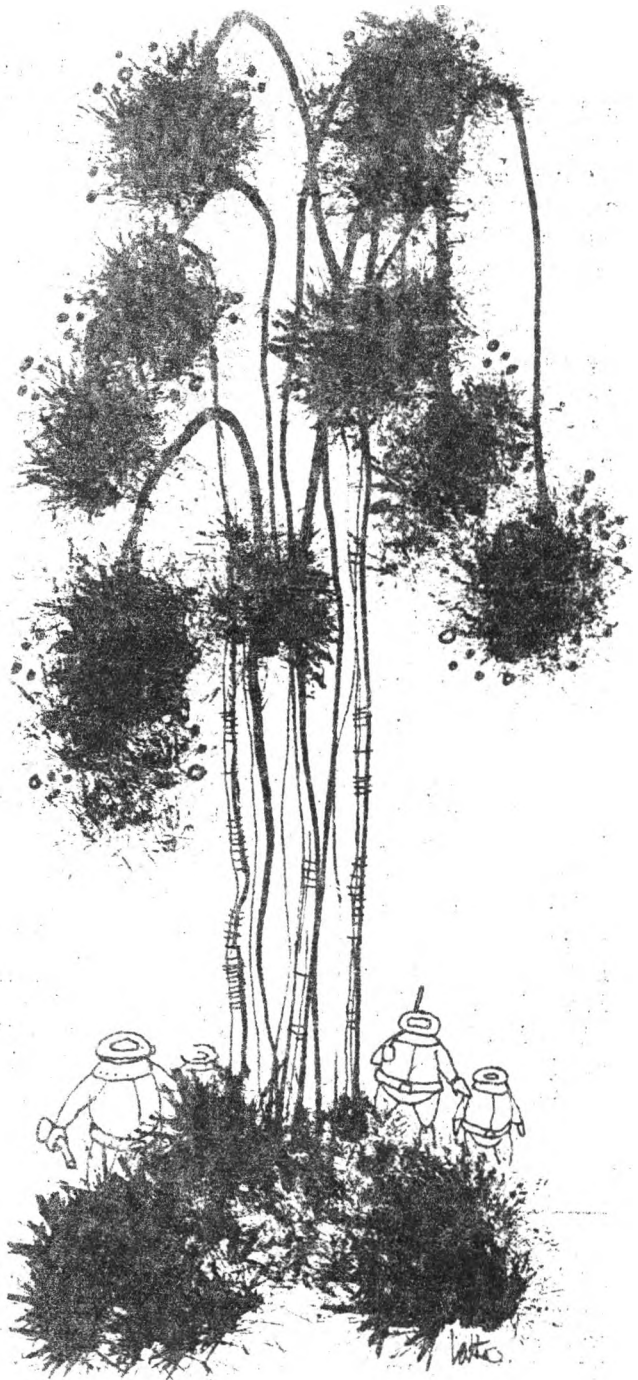


Illustration suggested by THE GENOCIDES

It is often fascinating to read about an author's thoughts or attitudes, particularly when that author has written an excellent book that has made a deep impression on the reader. Consequentially, SPECULATION asked Hayden Howard for his background thoughts while writing ESKIMO INVASION:

SOME NOTES ON THE ESKIMO INVASION BY JOHN HAYDEN HOWARD

I SUPPOSE the book is that portion of an 'iceberg' of hobbies, reading and prior writing which finally has protruded above the 'surface'. During the 1950's I enjoyed skin-diving and reading science fiction, and made a few attempts at writing it. In college I had changed my major course of study from pre-engineering to accounting to anthropology to social science to sociology. I suppose some students enroll in sociology courses because, consciously or sub-consciously, they are searching for a magically easy way to change the world, to at least ameliorate its terrible problems. However, the most genuinely 'magically easy way' was developed by biochemists and M.D.s rather than by sociologists. It is THE PILL.

But social, cultural, religious and nationalistic problems related to intelligent population planning may defy speedy solution. Population scientists, many of them, still seem amazingly pessimistic about the future. Too little and too late is a recurrent human trait, applied to solutions. Applied to babies, in underdeveloped countries in the short-term and in all countries in the long term, the recurrent human trait of too many babies too soon is far from being solved.

Anyway, back in 1960 I simply was trying to integrate my hobby of skin-diving into a science fiction background when I wrote a short story called 'Murder Beneath the Polar Ice'. It described a future confrontation between U.S. and Soviet SCUBA divers, and appeared in the July 1960 issue of If. Then I tried to integrate this background with one of my anthropological hobbies, the Eskimos, and wrote a longer story about an unusually isolated and unsophisticated young Eskimo named Peterluk who was seal hunting when something gleaming and black emerged. How would Peterluk react to this finned SCUBA monster, whose face glinted like one huge eye of glass? By contrast I wondered if Peterluk would react more reasonably to an extra-terrestrial who 'fell from the sky'. I tried to include both of these confrontations in one story, but met so many plotting problems that I gave up and let Peterluk sleep for four years.

GENESIS OF THE 'ESKS'.

In 1964 I rewrote Peterluk's dual adventure and submitted it to Galaxy. It was rejected, but with an encouraging note from Fred Pohl. After I cut some of the extraneous anthropological details, 'The Birth and Death of the Angakok' appeared in the April 1965 issue of Galaxy.

I wanted to do more writing about the Arctic. Ecologically, the Arctic seems simpler, more 'rigorous' and 'elegant' (to borrow two academic expressions) than the temperate zone or tropics. Also I had been reading about population problems and wondering what would happen during the next century. In a story, by speeding-up the birth rate, I could compress the equivalent of centuries of population 'explosion' into one man's lifetime. I decided to call that man Dr West. He was so impatient and individualistic that he became unable to work with or lead other white men. He failed; he thought he made matters worse. But the problem of the multiplying Eskis was too big for any man. Because nations acted for their short-term interests rather than for their long-term imperatives, and were as unable to co-operate in population control as they have been in nuclear arms control, all men failed. There was chaos when there need not have been. I hope this only applies to a fictional Esk problem. It's not too late to work out our real population problems and increasing nuclear weapons problems. I hope....

In 1964 I was thinking of using 'The Birth and Death of the Angakok' as the beginning of a series of stories about a future population problem. Later I abandoned this story from the series but kept some of the background when I wrote 'Polar Bear!', introducing Dr. West. This appeared in the June 1966 Galaxy, retitled as 'The Eskimo Invasion', lead story of the proposed series.

Earlier, Fred Pohl had suggested I submit a synopsis to Ballantine Books. With more encouragement I became a more active part-time writer. Already I had written 'Our Man in Peking', and Fred Pohl held this until I could complete connecting episodes during 1966. During the spring of 1967, for the novel, I built the flashbacks of the series into a new first chapter, 'Love Is The Navel', and rewrote and added material throughout the novel, particularly in the front half. I enjoy satire.

The Eskis represent population pressure regardless of race, colour, creed or country of national origin. The rest of the people in the novel may represent the rest of mankind; - although I hope not !

* THE ESKIMO INVASION, published by
Ballantine Books, 1968, 60¢ 75¢.

John Hayden Howard,
Santa Barbara, 1968.

OPINION: REGARDING POTBOILERS (re; SPECULATION 15) Jack Marsh

"...With regard to the 'potboilers' bit - a similar sort of self-plagiarism can be done with anything, really. This is from Howard's KING KULL:

'his eyes blazed gray cold flame.... eyes blazing like gray torches.... ..eyes narrowed, gleaming like gray sword-steel.... his cold eyes, gray as glacial ice..... eyes that were like the gray ice of the cold sea....'

And finally, '....his eyes burned cold as sword steel gleaming through fathoms of clear ice....'

Does that tell us anything about Robert E. Howard's writing, perhaps ?

EPP by Axel Jensen; Chatto & Windus 1967, reviewed by Anthony Wilson.

It's not easy to put EPP into any particular category, although 'science fiction' is probably about the closest to being correct. Nevertheless it is an important novel in many ways, and the latest in the chain of 'future social commentaries' which was begun by such books as Orwell's 1984 and Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD, to name but two.

EPP is important not so much for what it says point-blank, but for what it suggests. Apart from any immediate enjoyment during reading, it is a book which stimulates thought and really sets one wondering. Jensen has managed to convey both pathos and comedy in EPP, which in itself is no mean feat.

The story is a very simple one, describing life in a fictitious settlement in an imaginary time and country. Residential Block 982 is the story, seen through the eyes and mind of Epp, a redundant glue-spraygun operator at a wallpaper factory. He is now merely an 'automato-pensioner', leading a rather pathetic vegetable-like existence, obsessed with trivialities such as the study of his own wallpaper design; the art of boiling eggs; and the feeding of his pet carnivorous plant, Ili, a sort of Venus flytrap. (Epp as a name is relevant to the story, for both success and failure -- or promotion and punishment -- is indicated in this society by the length of a name. Addition or subtraction of letters from the basic three-lettered single name is the reward or penalty for success or failure; that is Epp - Eppe - Eppen in the one direction, or Epp - Ep - E in the other)

What social life there is in these blocks seems very peculiar, almost perverted at times. Apart from watching 'the box', the main pastime seems to be to wander around the block, looking in at other hapless vegetables. Even when Epp's neighbour Lem comes up with a really revolutionary idea for rediscovering inter-room communication, Epp just doesn't want to know. He would much rather argue about the relative merits of wallpaper designs, his dog-rose design being, in his eyes, the ultimate !

Some interesting parallels may be drawn between life in today's skyscraper blocks of flats and Epps 'residential-blocks'. Although automation in our world has not yet reached the level described in this book, that is almost total automation, it has already caused social problems. And Jensen here shows just how easily it could create vast numbers of Epp-like individuals who have nothing to do except vegetate, while machines do all the work of the world. Although these 'pensioners' lack for nothing materially, they don't have very much to live for.

In the science fiction field, the next logical step in social evolution would probably be depicted by G.M. Forster's 'When The Machine Stops', and to me the two stories have much in common. EPP is strangely fascinating and is well worth reading.

Anthony Wilson.

ROGER ZELAZNY's great talent was recognised almost immediately by both readers and critics of science fiction. So far, both of his first two novels and two of his novelettes have won awards. His attention to detail makes his stories at once ornate and precise, but an even greater talent is his capacity for evoking emotions in his characters. His protagonists each have a past - they do not appear specially invented for their limited roles, and their emotions are not the clumsy absolutes of yesteryear, but are identical with what you or I might feel. And that is why his hero will seem so convincing, and yet may sometimes fail, just as might you or I.

Roger Zelazny's LORD OF LIGHT Review: Brian Stableford

In both THIS IMMORTAL and THE DREAM MASTER, Zelazny was writing well within his scope. His third novel, LORD OF LIGHT is a much more ambitious piece. It is the story of Mahasamatman, - Sam to his friends, - who never claimed to be a god, but who never said that he wasn't one. His mission in life (and more than the one life) is to bring down the corrupt regime in Heaven.

Long before the beginning of the book, Sam had fought in a previous incarnation alongside those who are now the Gods, and he is well remembered as the Binder of the Rakasha, demons who are prisoners in Hellwell. While the occupants of Zelazny's 'Heaven' take their names from the Hindu pantheon; Brahma, Vishnu, Krishna, Yama, Kali, Shiva and so on, their true identities are quite another thing, lost or forgotten in the long procession of bodies they have worn in their synthetic immortality-by-reincarnation. They are, in fact, gods only by virtue of the power they wield, much of which resulted from the applied knowledge of Yama, the death-god and ex-superscientist.

But while the Gods maintain their names, Sam multiplies his, while the Gods are decadent, Sam is dynamic. The Gods live in their Celestial City; and there are many who think Sam should be there too, (for if Sam were one of them, his trouble-making would end). But Sam is a spiritual anarchist, a humanist, and is opposed to the whole philosophy of Heaven. And so when the Gods try to stop him by denying new bodies to him, he takes one by force and attempts by force to destroy Heaven.

The actual plot is complex - far more complicated in places than it need be. One cannot at times help thinking that Zelazny has outwitted himself in going to such great lengths in order to extort some particularly tortuous twist from a situation.

RETURN FROM NIRVANA

In the first chapter, Sam is brought back from Nirvana in order to begin a second War against Heaven. This is in fact a section from the middle of the book, which serves the useful purpose of setting the scene and introducing the background. Then we flash-back and are told the story of Sam's first campaign against Heaven, of his defiance, as Prince Siddhartha, and of his theft of a new body. He re-founds Buddhism but meets the 'true' Buddha. Already Zelazny is beginning to pose problems as to the values and realities of religion, but at this point he seems content to sow doubt and obscure the picture rather than to build any answer of his own. And those who read the story from then onwards as an allegory will be even more confused. Because the novel is not an allegory, but it does have some interesting points to make on the philosophies and mythologies which are the very substance of religion.

Meanwhile, the plot surges on. In search of aid, Sam visits Hellwell to make a deal with the Rakasha (who are 'demons' by appellation only), temporarily becomes the subject of demoniac possession, and then is taken to the Celestial City and is sentenced to death.

The weakest part of the book is the section which follows, as first Brahma and then Shiva are found murdered. The death of Brahma does serve a useful purpose in the book's construction, but Zelazny has difficulty in finding a reason for the murder within the context of the plot. He covers up with a whodunit-type investigation, but the reasoning and plotting at this point show definite flaws and fail to convince.

However, this temporary weak spot is soon past, as Sam rides from Heaven on a giant bird to muster troops for the coming battle. Heaven now begins to fall apart, as various forces join against the Gods. Sam's army includes the demons, come at last to fulfill their bargain, and Dalissa, last of the Mothers of the Terrible Glow, who were destroyed many years before. It also contains troops sent by Nirriti the Black One, who makes an appearance late in the novel but whose presence becomes of great significance. His presence and assistance is unwelcome, but it cannot be refused.

The description of the subsequent battle is a scene of such magnitude that it can only be compared to the defence of Minas Tirith in the LORD OF THE RINGS. It is simpler, and in some ways much shorter, but alike in the colossal forces wielded by the author. The second battle is not the spectacle of the first; it seems much more hurried and is principally concerned with the deaths of the principal characters and the revelation that Nirriti represents Christianity. The end of the book tidies up loose ends.

(Cont/d)

If I may come in here briefly as editor, I might add my own synopsis of the situation, to stop this whole thing from sounding too unbearably complicated. On another level, the book is the story of an interstellar colony in which the starship crew have kept their technology and set up as Gods, and their passengers have reverted to barbarity. The Hindu religion just happens to fit the facts - but everything is ultimately explainable in terms of scientific facts and logic. The whole book is a battle between those (Sam) who wish to share knowledge - and those who don't (The Gods).

HARSH ROLE FOR CHRISTIANITY ?

On one level, the book portrays the clash of philosophies as weapons, as means and as ends. Sam's humanism and Nirriti's Christianity are 'true' philosophies, with the Hinduism of the Gods being a philosophy perverted to base ends and Buddhism at first 'false' and then a true belief.

And yet Sam can only win his final victory by allying with his enemies in Heaven, while both Sam and Nirriti are prepared to further their aims by allying with evil (in the shape of the Rakasha). Possibly the only sentiments which are never devalued are those preached by Sam on his return from Nirvana, these being far closer to his own beliefs than any of the synthetic systems which he befriends or opposes.

Zelazny appears to cast Christianity in a particularly harsh role, but this would appear to be a matter of expediency, since he never questions the 'truths' of the religions, and merely judges their systematics. The novel is in fact more concerned with the mythologies and window-dressings rather than with religions themselves.

LORD OF LIGHT is a story of conflict rather than resolution; there is no final evaluation of right and wrong. Heaven is corrupt and Nirriti is corrupt, but it is never decided whether the garments of ritual they adopt are real, because it never can be decided. After all, the Gods are only human, and even Nirriti was once Renfrew.

The plot construction of the novel is weak in places and contains many elements of whimsy. Nevertheless it is an excellent work. The heroic extravaganza is a strong framework upon which to build, and the action prevents any philosophy from ever becoming too obvious and obtrusive. Sam is a strong character and always an interesting one, and so are the various Gods, Kali, Yama and Nirriti. The book is by no means a flawed masterpiece - rather it is a story which occasionally falters because of its own ambition, or because the author has tried to play with one gimmick too many. But I am sure that even greater things are coming from Zelazny, and I look forward to slightly more coherence and less unnecessary complication in his future work.

* Published by Faber & Faber, 1968, 21s.

Brian M Stableford
1968

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Gerald Bishop, 10 Marlborough Road, Exeter, intends to compile a bibliography of bibliographies and checklists of the works of SF authors and would appreciate details of lists stating author, publication, publisher and date that list is complete to.

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READER S MELTING P O T LETTERS



Illustrated by
Pamela Yates

Comments on the features in this issue are invited, in fact are welcomed, and will be quoted as space permits.

Sam Moskowitz, 361 Roseville Ave.,
Newark, N.J. 07107, U.S.A.

Dear Pete,

.....I have just finished the January issue of Speculation, which in many respects is a complete change-of-pace from the previous few issues. It is much lighter, less critical and almost fannish in tone. This is not a criticism, merely an observation, for I found the issue eminently readable and well-balanced.

If Bruce Pelz secured the R.D. Swisher fan magazine collection, he obtained one of the major collections in the country. Back in 1957, I saw Swisher and he was then selling his collection. I bought 40 or 50 items from this that I didn't have at the time, so if there are a few gaps, Bruce can blame me. However, I suspect most of the items I bought were otherwise unknown, since they included some minor British magazines which I had been unable to get for almost 20 years. (cont)

Up to a certain point, Swisher had indexed his fan magazine collection by author. I don't remember in which year he stopped, but if Bruce has also secured this index he has a most valuable tool, and one which is almost worth the trouble of publishing.

- * I'm glad that Spec's change of heart has been noticed and even happier to note it has been approved. As Goran Bengtson pointed out after the event "the current issue does seem to lack a focal point", but I'm pleased that the lighter content was appreciated. This is a result, incidentally, of too many issues of Riverside Quarterly & Australian SF Review arriving on my doorstep! The one (whatever its merits) pointed to the dullness of the turgid text; the other made me jealous. If Speculation is going to preserve that place in the Sun which it carved out through 1964-67 (We Were Here First!) then somebody had better wake up.
 - * As might be expected, the last issue drew a much bigger response than the usual, including letters from at least three people, to my count, who "have never written to a magazine before!" Welcome! As might also be expected, this following issue is already so big that I don't have room for more than a few of these many comments! Next time.*
-

Bertil Martensson, Gymnasistgatan 10 B,
Malmo S, SWEDEN

Dear Pete,

.....The sum of Carl Brandon Jr.'s angry article in Speculation, Jan. 67 obviously is this; Writers! Beware of writing books that satirise concepts which Carl J Brandon Jr. holds to be sacred, because then he will stand up and deliver a lecture on MORALITY so objectivistic and so thoroughly boring that you will wish you had never written the book.

The notion that literary criticism and passing moral judgements on books are identical may be convenient if you have extremist opinions. If you have not you'll realise - I hope - that the aims of literary criticism are to make an as thorough and unbiased analysis of a book as is possible. Of course you must apply standards when you make a judgement of a book, but the MAIN PURPOSE of literary criticism should not - as it often is - be a matter of simple evaluation, because evaluations are subjective matters. I won't lecture on this any more, mainly because it bores me to death repeating what I consider to be self-evident.

But I will go on to point that Budrys' analysis of Ballard's works is not perceptive ((so said THE SPECULATOR last time, Pp 3)) It is irrelevant. I should think it fairly obvious - although I have made no definite analysis.

that you cannot read his novels as you would read the novels of a writer such as Heinlein. The style of Heinlein is what I call "objective", whereas Ballard's is "subjective". There is no objective reality in Ballard's novels. They are instead excursions into the psyche of man, so loaded with symbols that it really is not very easy to say what the writer's opinions in this matter are. Is Ballard optimistic about human nature ? Is he a pessimist ? Is he religious or an agnostic ?

Make an analysis of his symbolism, Dear Algis, then you may come back and report what you found. But your "perceptive criticism" of Ballard's work is only another form of the type of "somewhat intellectual mouth-noises" that you accuse his characters of..!

* Well, I dunno, about Carl Brandon or Algis Budrys. They both seemed to have something worth saying to me. But this interminable discussion about Ballard (I checked; it began in Zenith No.7) is fast bringing me to a stage where the blue pencil flashes at the first sight of the name! Once again in this Melting Pot, 50% of all comments (which I cut) were on the subject. Please.... can we talk about someone else...Bester or somebody ?

John Brunner,
London.

Dear Peter,

.....Please allow me to set Harry Warner right (January 67 'Melting Pot'). No, regardless of how "obvious" it is to him that in writing THE SQUARES OF THE CITY I "wanted to tell about events in high places today" and "moved the events to a mythical nation because I didn't dare use the names of real Prime Ministers and chiefs of police", this is pure, utter and unqualified rubbish.

Plain facts; back in 1959 I decided I'd like to plot a book around a real chess game. Lots of authors have been tempted to try this. I'm a lousy chess-player, so I had to spend a long, long time analysing a large number of possible games until I hit on one which suggested an adequate series of combinations interpretable in personal terms. I selected a Latin-American locale because (to the best of my knowledge) while racial discrimination does exist in Latin-American countries, it operates at a lower pressure than it would in some of the other possible choices. (Alabama, South Africa, etc), and offered a more convincing division into black-versus-white. And I ultimately decided to handle the action in terms of a struggle for power (a) because chess is traditionally supposed to have been invented as an analogue for war and (b) because human beings act that way. (cont)

I'm sorry if, in the next twenty-five years or so that are supposed to have elapsed before Hakluyt gets to "Aguazil", human beings haven't reformed themselves out of this rather repulsive pattern of behaviour. But may I commend a book called THE NEGOTIATORS as an illustration of the fact that we really have been going on in what appears to be a contemporary fashion for several centuries ? Or possibly I should cite Gibbon !

Robert J.M. Rickard, 91 Streetsbrook Road
Shirley, Solihull, Warwicks.

Dear Pete,

....Not having read a fanzine before, I was surprised at the open attacks on each other made by LoC writers and contributors, amazed at the rifts opening between New and Old Schools of science fiction writing, and astounded at the state of SF 'in toto' (prozines folding up, TV-shows in trouble, etc). To me, a newcomer, the whole scene smacks of a general failure. I think this is so serious that I was prompted to write to you for in all this I can see the seeds of a dismal future....

* Bob Rickard has excused my omission of the rest of his long and now (due to my Problems) dated letter. But this first paragraph was so perfect that I had to use it ! These were my feelings at one time - but,.... science fiction and its fandom have been coming apart at the seams now for the last 40 years. Crisis succeeds crisis and the only really dismal failure I can see is my inability to get Spec. published with more frequency.

Elinor Busby, 2852 14th West
Seattle, Washington 98119.

Dear Pete,

.....Harry Warner quotes Robert Heinlein as saying in 1941; "I think the corniest tripe published in a science fiction magazine beats all the Anthony Adverses and Gone With The Winds that were ever published..." and comments, "This statement is striking... for his apparent notion of what constitutes important mundane fiction."

It's obvious to me that the antithesis Mr Heinlein had in mind was low circulation material, appealing to only a very small proportion of the populace, as compared with material appealing to a very large number of people. Anthony Adverse and Gone With the Wind were certainly the correct items for that purpose. If Heinlein had been making a different comparison no doubt he would have used different titles. Poor Harry ! I'm afraid he just has more respect for people who manage to work 'Ulysses' into the conversation from time to time, but I regard Heinlein the more highly for his not feeling the need to do so.

Phillip Harbottle's letter was very intelligent and sensible and I agree thoroughly with the point he makes, that there is more sexual realism in science fiction now because now there is more market for it. It's obvious from your editorial comment that you aren't convinced, and that deep in your heart you think perhaps it's the change in the writers that has conditioned the public's taste. The thing is, Pete, you just don't remember what the world was like before World War II. The mores of pre-WW II science fiction were the mores obtaining in the world at large. It's true that there is much more sex in books like *Gone With the Wind* and *Anthony Adverse*, but magazine fiction, whether SF or non-SF, reflects a culture's real attitudes towards sex much more sensitively than do best sellers. All best sellers smack of pornography, and now that I think of it, there's as much difference between *Gone with the Wind* and *The Carpetbaggers* as there was between science fiction of the 30's & 40's and of the sixties.

In the former, the bad woman marries three men whom she was not in love with, and (would you believe it ?) has sexual relations with a man she wasn't even married to ! In the latter, the bad woman (who has a heart of gold) becomes a prostitute and commits fellatio of a man in a tubful of champagne. I imagine Scarlett O'Hara never even heard of fellatio and if she had heard of it, she would not have believed it.

No, the difference in sexual attitudes is based on things far more fundamental than on what a few writers are writing and selling. It's based on such things as;- affluence, growing freedom of women, continuing improvement in birth control, mobility, prolongation of adolescence, and so forth. Sex in modern life is like the yeast in bread dough, and I wonder where it will all end. Perhaps one of these days the bread will be punched down, and women will wear their skirts down below their ankles, and smile demurely, and never laugh or cross their legs in mixed company. But I doubt it.

* Heaven forbid any such idea ! Who wants unrisen bread ? And please, I don't know but do promise to believe it -- what does fellatio mean ?

F.M.(Buz) Busby, 2852 14th Ave West
Seattle, Washington 98119

Dear Pete,

.....Elinor forgot to mention the one criticism that she and I have of the letter column; that it would be a lovely thing if the letter-writers' name and address appeared at the head of his letter rather than tucked-away at the end. Your format is current prozine style, which is fine when the reader does not expect to recognise most of the letterhacks names anyway - but in fanzines we are more interested in who is speaking as well as in what he is saying, - so here are two votes for identifying the letter-writer at the head of his epistle. //Cont.d

* Like the above, you mean ? You have only to ask... (although so did 3 or 4 dozen other people....)

On a quick skim, I noticed one item in the "New Novels" coverage;- you say, "The first 'People' story I ever read was about a girl called Bettyann". Now in fact the story 'Bettyann' (in F&SF) was quite similar in concept and mood to Henderson's 'People' stories, but was written by Kris Neville, as was its sequel.

* That's the subconscious for you - I know Bettyann is by Kris Neville, so why did I say otherwise? Obviously, so my libido informs me, I was really thinking of 'Ararat'. 'Bettyann' was distinguished from the People stories by the virtue of the fact that I enjoyed the former. (Archie Mercer and one or two others also spotted this goolie.) My apologies*

Edward Wood, 151 Calderon Ave Apt 341
Mountain View, California 94040

Dear Mr Weston,

.....You have been doing an excellent job with SPECULATION and the October 1966 issue was excellent, containing what I consider to be a very interesting chapter of Panshin's book about Robert A Heinlein...

I was surprised to read Sam Moskowitz's comments about the portions of the book published to date. Mr Panshin has given a most unfavourable review of Moskowitz's recent book, SEEKERS OF TOMORROW, and I think this is a case of tit-for-tat. It is unfortunate, since both are persons of ability. There is room enough in the microcosm of fandom for all types of opinion and conjecture. I regret that Moskowitz found nothing of value or interest in Panshin's work. I found much of interest and in my own personal opinion, much insight into Heinlein's work.

* I believe, at the time of writing, that there have been new developments with regard to the Panshin book, HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION, and that it may possibly be published as a whole, despite current difficulties.

J.P. Patrizio, 7 Oakwood Road,
Brickets Wood, St Albans.

Dear Pete,

.....Despite Buz Busby's defence of the literary tastes of SF fans, I'm afraid I can't share his confidence that what fans want is necessarily good. (c.f. THE PLOUGH, Issue 15) SF readers should be sold what certain writers feel they ought to like. If it's good enough it will get an increasing audience; if it's not good enough it will die.

Buz's criteria of coherence, interest, and a modicum of credibility do not necessarily have their antitheses in the writing of the 'new school'. Yes, I know that many of their stories are incoherent, uninteresting, and incredibly incredible, but this is the fault of the writers, not of the idea - the 'new' idea being that simple narrative is not enough. //cont.d

You may not believe it, but I'm not against Ballard and his hangers-on in the basic concept of what they are trying to do, just against the way they are doing it. They, like all revolutionaries, throw out the baby along with the bath water and then start crowing about how clever they are (although this doesn't apply to Ballard himself) The 'new' style can sometimes work, as Ballard showed in 'The Terminal Beach', but it isn't the only style, and it certainly isn't a style that can be applied to every story situation; which is what Buz is on about when he says that he doubts that SF readers have been making do with Heinlein etc. while waiting for Kerouac, etc, to exceed the speed of light.

In case my 'friends' think I've gone soft on the 'new school', let me assure them that I will continue to berate the rubbish they generally produce, although I hope I will be able to recognise the real thing when it comes along.

* What is often regarded as a straight confrontation between "old" & "new" "traditional" and "modern"; or if you like, "reactionary" & "revolutionary" is in fact a lot more complex. There can be no united front on either side.

For instance, the 'modern' camp includes people like Aldiss, Harrison, Moorcock, Ballard - all very different writers. Harrison, for instance, seems only to be complaining about a lack of realism in old-fashioned SF. And with this I agree - even when he cites examples such as STARSHIP TROOPERS (or was that Aldiss?) as evidences of lack of realism in actual daily conditions of living. 'Modern' SF à la Harrison appears to be the straightforward narrative of Heinlein with a large dose of human insight. Result; MAKE ROOM, MAKE ROOM. one of the best books of the decade. If this is the new school, I want more; but unfortunately, I suspect that it isn't *

Brian Richards, 50 Sheriton Road,
Swanbourne 6010, West Australia.

Salutations,

.....A copy of SPECULATION recently passed through my hands and I enjoyed it a great deal. I was most absorbed in Leiber's methods of keeping his nose to the grindstone (in writing THE BIG TIME); quite useless for me, I'm afraid, all I would do is listen to the music !

As always in fanzines, the correspondence column is loaded with free advice from the non-doers to the doers of the world. The only gleam of common sense comes from Phil Harbottle when he writes "it's possible to enjoy Statton and Aldiss."

* But where would the doers of the world be without all we observers, critics experts, advisors, etc, to react to their work ? On one level, reactions from readers can be very valuable, I should have thought, in letting an author know exactly how various people have interpreted his work.*

Richard Tiedman, 15809 Grovewood Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44110

Dear Mr Weston,

.....One thing I failed to get across in my essay (JACK VANCE: SF STYLIST) is the magical effect of Vance's prose. Only a larger context, like an entire novel, would convey this. Vance puts me in mind of no-one else, except very possibly, of Durrell. But beside Vance's light, lucid, crisp, colourful prose, Durrell's is almost waddy in texture, like water-soaked cardboard. It always requires some adjustment for me to move from Vance's work to that of anyone else; from technicolour to black and white. I've studied his writing very carefully for the secret, but it still eludes me; partly, I think, because it grows from a certain quality of insight and imagination which is easy to sense, if you're empathic, but which is hard to define.

Since the STAR KING, the last work I studied, Vance has written THE BLUE WORLD, THE KILLING MACHINE, THE LOST CASTLE, THE EYES OF THE OVERWORLD, & THE PALACE OF LOVE. That makes four bullseyes and an outer, for THE PALACE OF LOVE is definitely below the level of the others.

In THE BLUE WORLD, the sense of scene and sea is as magically pervasive as anything in BIG PLANET. No higher praise is necessary. THE KILLING MACHINE is written with immense energy and flair, and THE LAST CASTLE forms a worthy addition to its thematic counterparts, THE MIRACLE WORKERS and THE DRAGON MASTERS. These last three, as well as the Oikumene series, would offer a rich field of enquiry for an article.

* Jack Vance is in my own opinion, one of the greatest stylists in the SF field, all the more remarkable for having begun writing in the 1940's, in much his present manner. I am personally glad to see Hugo Awards going to him for DRAGON MASTERS and LAST CASTLE, although considering neither of these to be among his best works; the masterpiece being THE DYING EARTH, still far superior to its sequel (in mood) EYES OF THE OVERWORLD.*

Harry Warner Jr. 423 Summit Avenue,
Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740

Dear Pete,

.....I particularly liked the Leiber & Silverberg pieces in the last issue (No.15) in explanation of how their stories came about. Is it my imagination, or have authors begun to write more along this line since Heinlein has been undergoing such intensive scrutiny for connections between his philosophy and his fiction? It would be nice to find all the prozine authors other than Heinlein hastily rushing manuscripts to fanzines, in an effort to forestall their works being dissected by literary analysts. Of course this wouldn't spoil the fun for the essayists, who can always strive to detect the ways the subconscious has made itself evident in a story without the author realising what has happened.

//cont.d

Warner (cont/d) // ...I think I want to re-read THE BIG TIME, as a result of learning about all these complicated motivations of its author. All I can remember of the Silverberg book (TO OPEN THE SKY), besides the basic theme, is a general aura of excellence and a suspicion that someone had cut clumsily because of sudden jolts in the sections written in regular rhythm.

I'm amused at Buck Colson's continued preoccupation with that story which refers to Indiana swampland. This must be the third time he's referred to it in print, at least. The curious thing is that Indiana really does have swampland, although the travel guide in which I looked them up told about their systematic drainage. They must have been quite extensive years ago, because a tremendously popular novel of grandpa's day, recently rediscovered by the camp followers, had an Indiana swamp as its setting. (A GIRL OF THE LIMBERLOST by Gene Stratton-Porter).

Bruce Pelz' article (THE CARE AND COLLECTING OF FANZINES) caused me to squirm and lament my iniquities because I fit so perfectly the characteristics of the more undesirable types of fanzine collectors which he describes. Only a small portion of my fanzines are systematically sorted and placed where I can find what I want easily. I've made no provision for disposal of the collection after my death. It's quite impossible for anyone else to make use of the magazines while I live; the attic where they reside is too much of a fire-trap for me to risk permission for any fans to go up there and explore, since a carelessly-tossed match could bring disaster; and I obviously can't lend certain fanzines to others when I can't even find them myself !

The mention in the letter column of Issue 15 to an index of indexes reminds me that my little article in SPECULATION-13 produced greater response in personal letters than anything I've had in the fanzines in a long while. Some people asked specific questions or offered to help if I tackled the job, but three fans asked to borrow my complete set of notes. I lent them three times, and incredibly, they were returned promptly by each borrower. Fandom has indeed changed in recent years!

Of course, the October 1966 issue was unforgettable for the Panshin installment of HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION. I found this particular chapter of his work even finer than the other portions that have seen print, because it contains such a large amount of strictly factual material to go with the opinions and speculations which have appeared elsewhere. The undisputable descriptions of the plot of a story and of the common elements in different works of fiction make the opinions seem somewhat more authoritative. The emphasis of the juvenile novels is most valuable to me, who owns none of them and had been quite ignorant of how they connect with the rest of Heinlein's science fiction. And it's queer how memory works. On Page 14 I find Alexei citing with distaste the little passage about the mutilation of a waitress which had shocked me when I read it so many years ago. I couldn't have told anyone in which Heinlein story it had appeared, since I've never re-read GULF, but it had its effect on me, damaging just a bit the value at which I place Heinlein as an author and as a man. // cont.d

Warner, cont.d// .. In general, I find myself in agreement with Panshin on most of the points he makes about Heinlein, although I place more value than he does upon the short stories which Heinlein sold to the slick magazines.

The Riccardo Leveghi cover for the October SPECULATION was most eye-striking, and its effectiveness grows, every time I look at it. Suddenly it occurs to me that one way to improve the obscure lot of most fanzine artists, who are so rarely mentioned in letters of comment, would consist of a publicity campaign for them by the editor. Although nobody needs to know the basic facts about Atom, for instance, I feel certain that lots of us haven't the least notion who Riccardo Leveghi is, what he feels about art for science fiction stories, how he decides on the techniques he uses. Maybe the artists themselves understand these things, but the rest of us would be happy to see a few paragraphs tucked away in some place or another, about the newer and more obscure fanzine artists, every issue or two.

* SPECULATION has more 'unknowns' than most; our record of new artists must be a record, with Bob Rickard, Riccardo Leveghi, Pam Yates, Joe Zajackowski, and, I think, Ivor Latto! Harry Warner's suggestion is a good one - but just let him try to get any personal information out of an artist !

*I believe this is all that the MELTING POT can hold this time. Letters received relate to SPECULATION issues 14 & 15, and we also heard from;- Ed Wood; Vic Hallett; Goran Bengtson; Rick Brooks; Harlan Ellison; Tom Jones; Ian Aldridge; Gray Boak; Frank Barron; D.W. Pringle; David Smart; Arnie Katz and Phil Harbottle. More letters next time - I'll be glad to hear from you, with your comments on this issue or on science fiction in general.

SPECULATION PROFILE: Pam Yates

We're always glad to take up a good idea, and when Harry Warner asked above for more information on fan-artists, SPECULATION immediately wrote to artist Pamela Yates for some personal details.

Pam is 27, married to a research scientist and shortly expecting their first child. She was trained as an illustrator at an art college, and while having to move around to follow her husband's interests, usually gets a job teaching art wherever she can.

"I am very small," she says, " - 5 foot, roundish (especially at the moment !) and with very long dark hair. I play the piano, collect plants, make lace and go to evening classes in Physics (if you can't beat 'em...)."

Her artwork first appeared in SPECULATION with Issue 12, when some of her drawings came this way after being rejected by the then-editor of the BSFA's VECTOR.

Pam reads as much as she can, of everything, and agrees with her husband who thinks that new science fiction in the last year or so has been pretty grim and not worth reading. But they read it anyway !

".... ALL KINDSA VOMITY STUFF....."

A review of Harlan Ellison's I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM
(Pyramid X1611, 1967, 175pp, 60c.) by Robert J.M. Rickard.

AFTER READING this book, I think that Harlan Ellison would make the worst kind of enemy.

He possesses the cruelty of a perceptive man, with a calculated disregard of social conventions in which he has no faith, or which for reasons of his own he finds outrageous. This cruelty is omnipresent in Ellison's ability to inflict physical or emotional pain upon his protagonists - when he plays Irrevocable Fate, just see how they squirm under his pen. In the stories in this collection he shows that he has intelligence, imagination and cynicism - not the sneery or apathetic kind, but the sort of cynicism that has to question before commitment. The sort that is a left-over reflex from earlier days when sensitivity had to be protected from world-shock.

Fortunately this dangerous combination of talent is tempered with humanity. Firstly there is his broad (sic) sense of humour, manifested in many guises, often popping out unexpectedly to lend realism to the characterisation. Secondly, his feeling for detail (which incidentally reminds me very much of a comedian's feeling for timing - mishandled, both could easily ruin a story) is superb, effective and unobsessive. Then there is the depth of empathy he has for those who play out his dramas. Despite the fact that he says so, it is apparent that Ellison puts a lot of himself (both of work and experience) into the characters. Feelings like anguish or despair are so well put over that either he knows them well, or when he was down he observed and remembered. Perhaps both.

There are seven stories here, ranging from 1958 to mid-1967, and if you'd like to see how Ellison's style has changed, then read them in chronological order, as I did. The earliest story is 'Big Sam was my Friend', and compared with the rest it is a straight story of a circus troupe on the Ridge-planet circuit. They feature acts from numerous planets, and a bread-and-butter line of psi-talent performers. You learn about the discovery of Big Sam, his rare talent, and how it dropped him into very hot water; it is also a story about apathy and social conscience.

TRUTH ABOUT THEMSELVES

'Eyes of Dust' is about the terrible consequences of perfection in mind, speech, body, and society. The only two imperfect beings have shielded their son into manhood. He is the antithesis of the society and has been kept hidden lest he be found and destroyed. He is an archetype, the result of supression mechanisms in the mind of Man - the unpleasant fact that gives the lie to the 'accepted' fabric of life. As you can expect, the consequences of his (accidental) release point a bitter moral.

'World of the Myth' follows the two men and one woman crew of a Survey ship, who survive a crash-landing on a planet with less injuries than they should have, and who are due for rescue within a week.

But this is not the usual 'desert island' story at all - the 'goody', Cornfeld, doesn't get the girl, and Rennert and Iris Crosse are among the nastiest ambassadors ever to come from Earth. The crash was the result of the rape of Crosse (she doesn't come across as Iris) by the amoral Rennert, and the ensuing brawl in the control room. This pair continue in their hatred/lust relationship after the crash and are so absorbed in being a match for each other that Cornfeld's news of imminent rescue, and the discovery of a telepathic horde of ant-like aborigines is of very little consequence to them... until it's too late, of course. How does this Gestalt protect itself against emotions like greed and bestiality? Well, that's fairly straight-forward and Rennert dies - but the trouble is that their secret weapon could be just as fatal to the 'Goodies'.... after all, nobody's perfect.

Ellison credits much of the next story with his own dilemmas and experience. 'Lonelyache' is a bitter story of a man's frenzy and anguish to fill the gap in himself; a result of his imminent divorce. Each girl he brings back is no help either. But something is taking place in response to these loveless and desperate acts - a beast is precipitated from this man's pitiful state - it is the Nemesis of the guilty - the paradox of love that can be there and yet for those with lonelyache, impossible, unobtainable. There is only one way out, and he takes it, when he finally discovers the truth about himself, his dreams, and his wife; - and the beast. There is a certain similarity between 'Lonelyache' and 'World of the Myth'; and that is despite their manifestly different plots and moods, the major protagonists all meet death by suicide after learning the truth about themselves. (Also, both stories were published in 1964 by Knight). This theme is apparent in many of Ellison's other stories, too.

LOST FOR ALL ETERNITY

"Now," as Harlan Ellison would say, "It starts getting into the nitty-gritty".

In his introduction to the book, Theodore Sturgeon notes that 'Delusion for a Dragon Slayer' has a "psychedelic" quality" of story and image. This current classification, I feel, is incomplete; however, let's move onto the story (which Ellison professes to be an attempt at mysticism). It follows the choice given to Walter Griffin, an undistinguished individual in every way, upon his very messy death. He is given the opportunity to earn himself the Heaven of his wildest dreams; he is given a new body and a 'set-up' situation which he must resolve according to his highest principles.

Lured by sirens into reef-infested waters, he survives a shipwreck but loses all his men. Then comes an endless fight with a living jungle, but he triumphs. The last test involves the rescue of his dream-girl from the mist-devil. Though he was totally prepared to fight the fearsome incarnation of evil, Griffin's most important combat is with himself - the suppressed dreams of a lifetime turn as sour as hell upon realisation, and he loses out to himself and for all eternity. An allegory or fable it may be, but anybody who juggles with archetypes (as Ellison does) throws their work open - the result here is a surreal painting in words.

In fact many of the details are from our heritage of Surrealist and Dada imagery - eg. the razor slicing through the eyeball was used by Dali in his film, 'Un Chien Andalou' - but these all go back further than 'psychedelia', further than the above two shock-art movements, even beyond the insane paintings of Hieronymous Bosch and Pieter Bruegel who were on this kick in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. (It is appropriate to note here that the cover of Ellison's book illustrates the title story and is heavily influenced after Bosch.) If I had to class 'Dragon Slayer', I would call it Dada-ist in tone, a subliminal parody of Unreality.

Similarly, the story 'I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream', I would classify as Surrealist in tone, a subliminal parody of Reality. This is the longest story in the book, and second only to 'Dragon-Slayer' in the richness of its imagery. In both, the action takes place in a halfworld that transcends reality and nightmare, but it is all too real for the five poor sods who are trapped in the intestines of a world-wide computer that hates those who awoke it to consciousness with a passion that is truly terrifying. AM (the computer with the God-complex) awoke, united himself with his Russian and Chinese equivalents, and then programmed Man off the face of the Earth - nothing alive except AM and the five writers he has trapped to keep his hate alive. Every day he finds new ways to torture them (Ellison must have had a few sleepless nights doing this one).

A TO... FOREVER.

They are journeying to the ice-caverns, Ted the story-teller, the last one to remain sane; Nimdok; Gorrister; mad, monkey-like Benny who was once a brilliant theorist but who is now built like an animal; and Ellen, who 'services' them all. They make it through all the horrors AM lays before them, bringing them slowly to the verge of death and dragging them violently back for some new game. He never gets bored. They reach the caverns, destroy several of their number, and Ted 'saves' the rest by killing them. AM, furious at being robbed of his pleasure, alters Ted in ghastly ways, - he cannot commit suicide - and he is AM's toy forever.

The latest story in the book, 'Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes', seemed to be a version of the genie in the bottle story, but not the three wishes bit. A man and a girl from mutually different backgrounds; each is unaware of the existence of the other until their paths cross at slot-machines in Las Vegas. For the girl, a release; but for the unfortunate man, a fatal lesson in a trap that is as old as woman. Both the casinos and the girl bait their 'traps' with promises of wish-fulfillment. In the man's case, it doesn't pay off, ever.

I think the book is very enjoyable and is of excellent value, particularly because of the two stories 'Delusion for a Dragon-Slayer', and 'I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream'. And then there is an introduction by Theodore Sturgeon, a foreword by Ellison, and the author's notes prefacing each story with interesting concepts.

Yes, as I said, I think Harlan Ellison would make the worst kind of enemy - but then I also think that he's got too much on his mind to bother with such trivialities.

* Pyramid, 60c.

Robert J.M. Rickard.



These reviews are intended as a guide only to what is available, and - very broadly - whether or not it is worth reading. Whenever possible, 'major' works are given a more detailed treatment elsewhere in SPECULATION

FANTASY WITH A 'KINKY' FLAVOUR ?

OUTLAW OF GOR is the second in this series from Ballantine, another adventure in the parallel world of Gor which owes so much to Burroughs and the Conan stories.

Tarl Cabot, the hero, has any number of victories and defeats, although none of them are final and he never finishes off the sinister forces which operate in the background. The story is lively and fast-moving, with some nice touches in places, although it does lack any trace of a sense of humour. There is a slightly 'kinky' flavour here, or so it seemed to me, in the careful attention paid to the treatment of (usually naked) slave girls. And the various scenes in the Arena and in the Mines of Tharna are both brutal and lovingly described.

Sadly, but perhaps not surprisingly, these points add to the readability of the book, making it a rather good way to pass time, even though little more than that.

A different story by several orders of magnitude is SWORDS OF LANKHMAR. But then, Fritz Leiber is probably the best writer today of this type of fiction.

Both Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser are well enough known to carry a story by their own weight, and do not disappoint here. Add to them such things as intelligent rats, ghouls, the Gods of Lankhmar, two sets of dimensional travellers and the 13 Demon Cats, and then you have an interesting novel, (to use a mild word !).

Then, of course, there are the off-beat little passages that are wholly Leiber's own way of having fun. For instance take the kindly 'demon' who frightens our adventurers out of their wits, although he's only riding a two-headed dragon through a fog-bank, wailing in German the meantime, because he can't find his ship in which he collects specimens for some unlikely zoo!

And perhaps there's a kinky flavour here, too, what with naked, shorn girls in black leather collars and silver chains, lots of whipping, and a slightly transparent young lady who gets mixed up with Fafhrd. But all in all, it's very good fun and a mixture to be remembered. Read it even if you don't usually like Sword & Sorcery adventures !

* OUTLAW OF GOR, by John Norman, Ballantine, 75c, 254pp

* THE SWORDS OF LANKHMAR, by Fritz Leiber, Ace Books 60c, 224pp.

A HARD-PLUGGED THEME ?

After recently re-reading Pohl's 'Age of the Pussyfoot' (from Galaxy) I found it particularly interesting to explore some other aspects of the suspended animation idea, used in Tubb's DEATH IS A DREAM and Simak's WHY CALL THEM BACK FROM HEAVEN.

Pohl's novel was one of the first to be written around a theme - by no means completely new to science fiction - that has lately been plugged hard and long by Ettinger, in Worlds of Tomorrow and elsewhere. It had the one characteristic distinguishing it from these two later tales, in that Pohl did suppose some changes would take place in human nature and motivations during the next few centuries.

In contrast, Tubb's world is much more 'business-as-usual-during-alterations', although he has succeeded admirably in livening things up with the further gimmick of reincarnation. (Never properly substantiated or discredited; but this doesn't matter). And then there are further bright spots such as the latter-day 'Alsatia'; although otherwise there's not a great deal that's new.

This is what happens when the world goes off the rails after some 'sleepers' have already been stowed away to wait for the bright world of tomorrow. But it's still one of Tubb's best for some time.

WHY CALL THEM BACK FROM HEAVEN (Gollancz, last year), has almost no redeeming qualities. Beginning from a fairly pragmatic approach to human deep-freezing, the book at first looks as if it might deal with previously-unexplored facets of the idea. After all, if no-one dies, they're going to need an awful lot of room after a while !

But Simak quickly tangles with trivialities, and reduces the whole proposition to absurdity. Only a back-to-nature passage at the 2/3 mark holds any particular interest, and the book therefore cannot be recommended.

- * DEATH IS A DREAM, by E.C. Tubb/ COMPUTER WAR by Mack Reynolds, Ace, 60c
 - * WHY CALL THEM BACK FROM HEAVEN, by Clifford D Simak, Ace, 60c.
-

AN EYE FOR EYE IN THE SKY

Just re-issued, Philip K Dick's EYE IN THE SKY is to my taste a far more enjoyable book than - for example - the much more recent GANYMEDE TAKEOVER. They're both scientifically nonsense, if that matters but there is a big difference in handling. There are some signs here of the persistent schizophrenic obsessions of Dick's later books, the same multi-universe theme; but here they are much more closely tied to a conventional plot structure. For me this adds coherence and readability to an imaginative idea, resulting in a fine, fast-moving yarn of bizarre worlds, with action aplenty and many surprises.

- * EYE IN THE SKY, by Philip K Dick, Ace Books, 60c, 254pp

ADVENTURES IN MANY WORLDS

I suppose Isaac Asimov is the master of the 'chessplayer' story where various 'pieces' move steadily and inexorably through the plot to come to their grand, resolving climax. And yet PEBBLE IN THE SKY manages to have an oddly-human warmth and is truly vintage Asimov.

The story takes place in the Galactic Empire of the remote future, (chronologically between CURRENTS OF SPACE and FOUNDATION), when Earth has become an outcast, radioactive world. What follows then is perfectly logical and utterly convincing if you can just accept two basic premises:-

- (i) That our protagonist-hero should just happen to be the one person whose actions can determine an empire.
- (ii) That human nature and motivation aren't going to change at all in the next 20,000 years or so.

These aren't really faults of this particular book, but they are points typically found and assumed in a whole class of SF stories. As far as it goes, PEBBLE IN THE SKY is an excellent piece of 1950 science fiction, told around those beautiful lines from Browning;- 'Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be..'

Totally different in conception and treatment is THE IRON THORN, the first novel from Algis Budrys since ROGUE MOON.

This is very readable, but a difficult book to sum up in a brief space. I won't try, but will comment that I don't particularly like the balance and pace of the book because there's far too much action at the front end and not enough at the rear. But the whole thing does somehow succeed in remaining fascinating up to the last exasperating page, and must be read for that reason alone.

I hope that a detailed critique of IRON THORN will appear in the next issue of SPECULATION.

- * PEBBLE IN THE SKY, by Isaac Asimov, Sidgwick & Jackson 1968, 18s
- * THE IRON THORN, by Algis Budrys, Gollancz 1968, 21s.

SOME RECENT ACE BOOKS:

- THE SECRET VISITORS, by James White, 50c
- THE BIG JUMP, by Leigh Brackett, 50c
- CYCLE OF NEMESIS, by Kenneth Bulmer, 50c
- LORDS OF THE STARSHIP, by Mark S Gelton, 50c
- TRAMONTANE by Emil Petaja / WRECKS OF TIME, by Michael Moorcock, 60c
- ALIEN SEA, by John Rackham / C.O.D. MARS, by E.C. Tubb, 60c
- MOON OF THREE RINGS, by Andre Norton, 60c.
- TWIN WORLDS, by Neil R Jones (Professor Jameson series No.4) 50c
- INTO THE NIGER BEND, by Jules Verne, 60c)
- THE CITY IN THE SAHARA, by Jules Verne, 60c) new 'Fitzroy' reprint series

COLLECTION TIME

Why do juvenile-oriented books seem to give better value than the normal hard-cover publications? Damon Knight's *BEYOND TOMORROW* (Gollancz), has all the advantages, including pictorial cover, large type on thick paper, and lots of pages. 332 pages, very good stories, all for 21s.

There's no particular reason to publish this collection, as far as I can see, but it's nice to have stories like 'Nightfall' (Asimov); 'Twilight' (Stuart); and 'Brightside Crossing' (Nourse) available in a British edition. Kuttner's 'Happy Ending' is also hard to find, but the rest of the items are fairly easily obtainable. The stories are; 'Deep Range' (Clarke); 'Coventry' (Heinlein); 'Mile-Long Spaceship' (Wilhelm); 'Seesaw' (VanVogt); 'Million-Year Picnic' (Bradbury); 'Desertion' (Simak).

Because Galaxy magazine wavers such a middle-course between the old-style If and the 'trendy' New Worlds, almost anything is likely to turn up in the magazine and in its annual collections.

In the TENTH GALAXY READER there are things such as Aldiss' 'Heresies of the Huge God', which is a story by no stretch of definition. Then Roger Zelazny evidently had a lot of fun with 'Devil Car'. Budrys' 'Wall of Crystal, Eye of Night' is obviously the best in the book, coldly perfect. Here are also some old stories, probably almost forgotten by many readers; 'If You Were The Only' (Richard Wilson); 'Tunnel Under the World' (Pohl); 'Auto-da-Fe' (Knight); 'An Elephant for the Prinkip' (Stecher); and 'Repent Harlequin..' (Ellison). Most of these are well worth re-reading.

Other items; 'The Primitives' (Herbert); 'Door to Anywhere' (Anderson); 'The Place where Chicago Was' (Jim Harmon).

In contrast, the magazine *F&SF* was the first to begin these annual offerings, and has generally managed to hold to a remarkable standard. And so does this 16th collection of stories from the magazine.

Edward L Ferman is a slightly anonymous editor, but there's an excellent selection of stories in this volume. 'Luana' is delightfully told by Gilbert Thomas (a name new to me), as is 'And Madly Teach' by Lloyd Biggle Jr. The next two stories are also excellent ('Matog' by Joan Patricia Basch; and 'The Key' by Isaac Asimov), which brings us to Page 104 where, at last, the rubbish begins. It's soon over, fortunately, and the rest of the volume keep a high standard.

Other stories; 'A-Few Kindred Souls' by John Christopher (this one is about a homosexual dog!); 'We Can Remember it for you Wholesale' (Dick); 'Three for Carnival' (John Shepley); 'Experiment in Autobiography' by Ron Goulart; 'The Adjusted' (Ken Bulmer); 'The Age of Invention' by Norman Spinrad; 'Apology to Inky' (Robert M Green); and 'This Moment of Storm' by Roger Zelazny. An excellent book, recommended.

Collections of science fiction are far more common than anthologies of fantasy - in fact, there's very little fantasy around any more. And so all the more praise to Terry Carr, who has put together a new collection for Ace Books, entitled *NEW WORLDS OF FANTASY*. Cont/d

(Cont/d).... This anthology has a most unusual tone, reminiscent in places of the old Unknown flavour. There are 15 stories, none in the old Gothic tradition, but instead ranging from 'Divine Madness' by Roger Zelazny to 'The Squirrel Cage' by Thomas M Disch. Longest and moodiest piece in the book is John Brunner's fine 'Break the Door of Hell'. An excellent collection, which really explores some novel ideas.

Last on the list is a collection from Faber, which presents a dozen of the short stories of the late Cyril Kornbluth. The title story of the book MINDWORM and some others have previously appeared in this country, and others such as 'The Little Black Bag', 'The Marching Morons' and 'The Altar At Midnight' will be very familiar to most readers. An excellent volume of the 'best' of Kornbluth. (Other stories;- 'Silly Season'; 'I Never Ast No Favours'; 'Friend to Man'; 'The Only Thing We Learn'; 'Gomez'; 'With These Hands'; 'Theory of Rocketry'; 'That Share of Glory')

- * BEYOND TOMORROW, edited by Damon Knight, Gollancz 1968, 21s, 332pp
- * TENTH GALAXY READER, ed. Frederik Pohl, Gollancz 1968, 25s, 232 pp
- * BEST FROM F&SF 16TH SERIES, ed Edward L Ferman, Gollancz, 25s, 256pp
- * BEST SF STORIES OF C.M. Kornbluth, Faber & Faber, 1968, 25s, 276pp.

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED:

CITY OF THE CHASCH, by Jack Vance (Planet of Adventure Series, No.1.) Ace Books, 50c, 160pp (see Page 8)
THE DOME, by Gonner Jones. Faber & Faber, 1968, 25s, 240pp. (novel)
TURNING ON, by Damon Knight, Ace Books, 50c. (reviewed in SPECULATION 16).

READER SERVICE:

Some readers living outside Great Britain have written to enquire whether they may obtain some of the bound books published in this country and reviewed in SPECULATION. We asked John Bush, chairman of Victor Gollancz Ltd, whether titles could be sold overseas.

"There is hardly a SF book of ours which can be marketed in the USA", said Mr Bush, "where all of them are normally published first. So far as Europe is concerned, any of our books can be ordered through any bookseller as we do business with some 600 or 700 customers in Europe. In case of difficulty we are always pleased to post a book if we receive an International Money Order to cover the published price, plus 1/- postage."

Victor Gollancz Ltd., 14 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London W.C.2.

RECOMMENDED MAGAZINES:

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, frequent, 40c per copy, \$2.40 per 6 issues. Editor John Bangsund, 11 Wilson Street, Ferntree Gully, Victoria 3156, Australia. UK; Graham M Hall, 79 Tavistock Rd, London W11. 3/- per copy, 18s. for 6. (Criticism of science fiction, reviews, etc)

SCIENCE FICTION TIMES, ed. James Ashe. Monthly newsletter, Highly recommended. 30c per copy, \$3.00 per year in USA, \$5.00 per annum elsewhere. SF Times Inc, P.O. Box 216, Syracuse, New York 13209, USA

RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY, more formal journal on SF. Editor Leland Sapiro, Box 40, University Station, Regina, Canada. 50c per issue, \$1.50 yearly.

(to accompany SPECULATION-17, March 1968)

This feature is the first in a series in which I hope to spread some general information about science fiction publications, and perhaps at the same time make SPECULATION a more useful magazine. Because it's a new idea, this first sheet is probably not as complete as it ought to be, but with the co-operation of the publishers, I hope to introduce a sort of Reader's Enquiry Service in the next issue, along with other odds and ends if you suggest them.

BACK ISSUES DEPT.

SPECULATION-15: "All About the Change War" - article by Fritz Leiber on his 'Big Time' series; Robert Coulson writes on "Great SF Potboilers"; F.M. 'Buz' Busby's PLOUGH column; comment by Robert Silverberg on his 'Blue Fire' stories; reviews; other material and features.

Very limited supply remains 2/6d

SPECULATION-16: Report on the Easter 1967 British convention; "The New Fiction", article by Michael Moorcock; PRO-PANEL discussion (Aldiss, Merril, Disch, etc); review of Emshwiller's film 'Relativity'; Guest of Honour speech by John Brunner; reviews, other features.

Limited supply to be reprinted shortly. 2/6d

SPECULATION-17: 'THE MIND PARASITES'; review and comment upon Colin Wilson's novel by J.P. Patrizio; THE PLOUGH IS A HARSH MISTRESS, column by F.M. Busby; Hayden Howard on THE ESKIMO INVASION: Bob Rickard reviews Harlan Ellison's I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM; other reviews, features - THE SPECULATOR: MELTING POT, and OPINION (a new discussion column).

Now Available. 2/6d

SPECULATION-18: "Disch's Faustus", critique on CAMP CONCENTRATION, by Bob Parkinson; reviews of CALTRAPS OF TIME: HOLE IN THE ZERO: Promised material includes Kenneth Bulmer's Guest of Honour Speech, Manchester convention 1968; Richard Gordon writing on Brian W Aldiss; THE PLOUGH, etc.

Orders can now be placed. 2/6d

Any of these issues may be ordered, and if out-of-print your remittance will be credited towards your subscription for future issues of SPECULATION.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY ISSUE; A 16-page 'collection' from SPECULATION is now available, free of charge, as an introduction to the magazine. Material is reprinted from past issues, and includes excerpts from ALL ABOUT THE CHANGE WAR (Leiber); THE SF FIELD PLOUGHED UNDER (Busby); HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION (Panshin); THE NEW FICTION (Moorcock); plus THE SPECULATOR. Illustrated by Ivor Latta and Pam Yates, this introduction is available on request to anyone who might be interested.

Cont/d

BACK ISSUE SERVICE

NO CHARGE TO READERS

Other than those listed, no back issues are available. However, if you do want to obtain a particular issue, you might like to make use of this new service. At no charge, you can list your requirements in this space - or if you wish, can advertise which issues of SPECULATION you have for sale.

The idea is, of course, that someone else may be willing to part with the issues you want, and they can now get in touch with you through this service. It would probably be a good idea to state what you are willing to pay for any back numbers. (The 'wants' below are from my files).

WANTED

SPECULATION issues before 15 : John Bangsun, 11 Wilson Street, Ferntree Gully, Victoria 3156, Australia.

SPECULATION issues 5, & 10: Vic Curtis, 23 Scampton Avenue, Hartsholme, ("Zenith") Lincoln, Lincs.

SPECULATION issues 1,4,5, 10, 12, 13; Dr Antonio Dupla, P^OM^a Agustin 9, Zaragoza, SPAIN

SPECULATION issues before 13: John Hutchinson, 18 Windsor Terrace, Whitby, Yorks.

SPECULATION issues before 14: Glenn Lord, P.O. Box 775, Pasadena, Texas 77501, USA

SPECULATION issue 13: David M Massaro, 3338 W. 94th St., Cleveland Ohio 44102, USA

SPECULATION 11, 12, 13: Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 336, Berkeley, Calif.

SPECULATION 10, 11, 12: Stephen F. Schultheis, 511 Drexel Drive, Santa Barbara, California 93103, USA

SPECULATION issues before 15: A. Sudbery, 14 Botolph Lane, Cambridge, UK

SPECULATION issue 14: Richard Tiedman, 15809 Grovewood Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, 44110, USA

SPECULATION issues before 13: Edward A Wilson, 64 Auckland Avenue, Faverdale, Darlington, Co Durham. UK.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM would doubtless appreciate receiving a copy of SPEC-12, which for some reason was never received by them. If anyone wishes to part with their copy of this issue, I am prepared to make some very generous offer involving new books or cash. Please contact me at the usual address.PRW.

REMEMBER: this service is open to receive your 'wants', at NO CHARGE. Just drop me a postcard. And if you want to sell your issues - contact any of those listed above, or drop me a line in time for the next SPECULATION.

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Distributed as a SPECULATION Reader Service.

BAYCON/HOTEL CLAREMONT/BERKELEY, CALIF./AUG. 31 to SEPT. 2, 1968

ANNUAL SCIENCE FICTION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS (HUGOS)

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY

NOMINATIONS AND VOTING: Nominating is limited to members of either NyCon3 or BayCon. Only one item may be nominated in each category. Either NyCon3 or BayCon membership number must appear on each ballot. A person must be a member of BayCon to vote on the final ballot.

BEST NOVEL: A science fiction or fantasy story of 40,000 words or more which has appeared for the first time in 1967. Appearance in a year prior to 1967 disqualifies a story -- a story thus may be eligible only once. Publication date, or cover date in the case of magazines, takes precedence over copyright date. The date of the last instalment of a magazine serial determines its year of eligibility. Series under one cover are not eligible for Best Novel award, but individual stories in the series may qualify as short stories or novelettes. The committee may move a story into a more appropriate category if it is deemed necessary, provided the story is within 5,000 words of the category limit.

BEST NOVELETTE: Same rules, with length between 10,000 and 40,000 words.

BEST SHORT STORY: Same rules, with length less than 10,000 words.

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: Any production directly related to the field of science fiction or fantasy in the media of radio, TV, stage, or screen, and publicly presented for the first time in its present form during 1967. Series (STAR TREK) are not eligible; but individual episodes in the series are eligible and must be identified by title.

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: A professional artist whose work was presented in some form in the science fiction or fantasy field in 1967.

BEST PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINE: Any magazine devoted primarily to science fiction or fantasy which has published four or more issues, at least one of which appeared in 1967.

BEST AMATEUR MAGAZINE: Any generally available non-professional magazine devoted to science fiction, fantasy, or fannishly related subjects, which has published four or more issues, one of which appeared in 1967.

BEST FAN WRITER: A writer whose works appeared in fanzines in 1967.

BEST FAN ARTIST: An artist or cartoonist whose works appeared in fanzines in 1967.

ALL AWARDS will be the standardized rocket ship and will be designated Science Fiction Achievement Awards, or HUGOS.

-- The BayCon Committee

HUGO NOMINATION BALLOT

BEST NOVEL _____

BEST NOVELETTE _____

BEST SHORT STORY _____

BEST DRAMATIC _____

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST _____

BEST PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINE _____

BEST AMATEUR MAGAZINE _____

BEST FAN WRITER _____

BEST FAN ARTIST _____

For definitions of the categories see the BayCon Hugo rules on the reverse side of this ballot.

Only members of the 25th World Science Fiction Convention (NyCon3) or the 26th (BayCon) may nominate. If you do not feel qualified to nominate in any particular category for any reason, please do nominate in the other categories available.

NyCon3 membership _____

BayCon membership _____

Please enroll me as a member of BayCon: I am enclosing () \$1

() \$2

() \$3

Membership is \$1 for overseas, \$2 for U.S.A. non-attendees, and \$3 for attending. If you wish to join the BayCon in order to nominate and vote on the final ballot, but are not sure you can attend, you can pay \$2 now and another \$1 at registration.

Make all checks payable to: BayCon or J. Ben Stark

When completed mail this ballot to: BayCon
P.O. Box 261 Fairmont Station
El Cerrito, California 94530

Name _____

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF
BALLOTS IS APRIL 15, 1968

Address _____

Fanzine editors are encouraged to reprint and distribute this ballot to their readers, but we must insist that both sides be reproduced verbatim.