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3. This week we are featuring Kimiye Tipton's counter-review to Nigel's review of IN CONQUEST BORN. We also have the usual assortment of film and book reviews. Keep those cards and letters

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1. WARNING! If you have a percent sign following your name, this is the penultimate MT VOID you will get unless you renew now. We have even made it easy for you. Once again, all you need to do is rip off this top sheet, fold it with Mark's name and address on the outside, staple it, and drop it in your out-box. If you have a pound-sign following your name, we also need your PAN or Social Security number. [-ecl]

2. I forgot to include these when they were first announced, but the 1987 Nebula Award winners are:

Best Novel: Orson Scott Card, SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD
Best Novella: Lucius Shepard, "R&R" (IASFM)
Best Novelette: Kate Wilhelm, "The Girl Who Fell from the Sky" (IASFM)
Best Short Story: Greg Bear, "Tangents" (OMNI)

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THE MT VOID

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coming, folks! [-ecl]

4. Some of you may have noticed that an increasingly large proportion of the items on the first page of the notice are bearing that insidious notation "[-ecl]". I have been asked by a number of people what that funny symbol means. Everybody seems to notice that items with that symbol are not written to the same high standards. I have been asked if I put that symbol after items that I wrote on an off day. Maybe they are the items that I am less proud of, the ones that I felt I something went wrong when I wrote

them. Well, the truth is that I leave the notice in good shape and these pesky messages seem to creep in at some point afterwards. Right now the best explanation I have is that they are caused by some bug in the notice generating software. Apparently we are using the same disk segment as some mindless computer artificial intelligence program of the LISA-class. All I can warn you is if some of these pesky items show up in your notice, don't believe them. They seem to make sense about two thirds of the time but between a quarter and a third of the time they can be either incoherent or completely wrong. I think I may have discovered the cause of the bug and it may be fixed this week. But if not, be warned not to trust anything that ends "[-ecl]".

5. Actually, what often happens is that Mark finds he has more important things to do than write this Newsletter. This week, for example, he had to count the number of Equal packets remaining in the box. Last week he needed to see how many macadamia nuts it took to fill the mailbox. So sometimes I have to write some of the Newsletter. But at least you know he's doing something important. [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
MT 3E-433 957-5619
...mtgzz!leeper

IN CONQUEST BORN by C. S. Friedman

DAW, 1987.

A book review by Kimiye Tipton

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I_n_C_o_n_q_u_e_s_t B_o_r_n is an epic space war novel, with its emphasis on the sociological differences of scattered mankind. The Braxin are new Mongols, fueled by the legend of racial superiority (part genetically valid, part strict social code) and the religion of conquest. Their oligarchy of high-born Braxana sits atop a stratified social structure that relegates lesser men to servitude and most women into being little more than convenient receptacles for male relief. The Braxana are so rigid they never allow "inferiors" to see their naked hands, which are covered by their black and grey uniforms.

The Azeans, as white-haired as the Braxin are dark, chose a different route of science, sexual equality and the fostering of telepathic talent as the basis for their own bid for control of the human universe. Although their free society superficially appears more appealing, their people are just as subject to submission through the insidious politics of mind control.

The two factions have been at war for centuries, with the rest of humanity and a few true aliens gathering around the two poles. We watch two leaders rise from birth to an inevitable final encounter that encompasses life and death, male and female, conquest and surrender.

Most of the way through this long novel, I amused myself with speculation on the sex of C. S. Friedman. My reasoning was, either the author is a woman, or he is an excellent male writer, since the female characters are beautifully crafted. I found out the answer before I finished the book, but I won't spoil the riddle unless you ask me. I_n_C_o_n_q_u_e_s_t B_o_r_n is one of those rare first novels that may make the Hugo/Nebula nominations. Highly recommended.

INNERSPACE

(Spoiler Warning)

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: F_a_n_t_a_s_t_i_c_V_o_y_a_g_e crossed with F_o_u_l_P_l_a_y makes for another science fiction comedy cut from the same mold as B_a_c_k_t_o_t_h_e_F_u_t_u_r_e. I_n_n_e_r_S_p_a_c_e does not always make sense, but it is just about always fun.

(Spoiler warning: major elements of the plot are presented first as minor surprise plot twists. Read the following at your own risk.)

Two years ago Steven Spielberg's production company had a big hit with a light science fiction comedy, B_a_c_k_t_o_t_h_e_F_u_t_u_r_e. Success is not something that Hollywood takes lightly. so presumably it was not long before Spielberg had a second film, cut of much the same cloth, on the drawing boards. Well, I_n_n_e_r_S_p_a_c_e is out and very probably it will be a hit of equal or almost equal strength.

I_n_n_e_r_S_p_a_c_e, directed by Joe Dante, is a light-hearted film which can easily be taken as a prequel to F_a_n_t_a_s_t_i_c_V_o_y_a_g_e. Tuck Pendleton (played by Dennis Quaid) is a "right-stuff" sort of pilot who feels he never got the recognition that astronauts have gotten, so he volunteers to be the first human to be miniaturized and injected into another creature--in this case, a rabbit. Through an absurd chain of events he is instead injected into neurotic grocery clerk Jack Putter (played by Martin Short) who happens to be in the wrong shopping mall at the wrong time. Pendleton must make contact with Putter and together they race against time to stop a weird assortment of freelance spies who want to steal the secret of miniaturization and sell it to the highest bidder. One, we are told, has already made a fortune by selling the secret of Velcro to the Persian Gulf.

Pendleton's abilities to enhance Putter's own powers start impressive and eventually get absurd, while the characters are really only superficially developed and at times are totally absurd. At one point, Putter takes time out from a race against time to do a little

jive dancing around Pendleton's apartment. The film sometimes relies too much on slapstick scenes and goofy chases, but at other times it makes very clever use of its premise to create some exciting action scenes. And the script does leave room for the Spielberg trademark (malfunctioning mechanical arms) and some Dante trademarks (cameo roles by Dick Miller and Kenneth Tobey). The film is packed. It has science fiction, comedy, chases, really weird situations, and really weird characters, and it just keeps delivering. After the film has already run long, it rolls the end credits before its story is even finished. Not a great film, but good light entertainment; it gets a low +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

CUT STONES AND CROSSROADS by Ronald Wright
Penguin, 1984, \$7.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
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Penguin Books has begun a series of books collectively labeled the "Penguin Travel Library." (One assumes that they will eventually have one on travel to Antarctica that will discuss their symbol in its natural habitat.) I love travel books, particularly those on places to which I have been, so when I saw this, I bought it immediately.

Ronald Wright traveled throughout Peru, seeing what remains of Inca civilization: the ruins of yesterday and the people of today. In spite of the protestations of many that he encountered, who would have him believe that there are no Runa left in Peru, the Peru of today is heavily influenced by the Runa of half a millenium ago. ("Runa" is a more accurate term for the people as a whole, "Inca" being reserved for the nobility.)

It is difficult to describe this book. If you know what Peru is like, then all I can say is that this book is accurate. Wright is working, it seems, for an anthropological perspective, so he spends a lot of time talking about the Runa people and the Runasimi language (also known as Quechua) in addition to his writings about the usual touristy aspects: cities, scenery, and ruins. His spelling seems idiosyncratic at times, until you realize that he has a definite

political view on the Runa and their heritage. He is constantly asking the people that he meets about why no one speaks Runasimi, even though it was at the time (and perhaps still is) an official language of Peru. That he is met with astonishment at such a naive question does not deter him from pursuing it. If you haven't been to Peru, this book may give you some feel of what the country is like. As travel books go, it is excellent, so let your opinion of travel books be your guide.

THE CLOUD FOREST by Peter Matthiessen
Penguin, 1987 (1961c), \$8.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
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This is another volume of the "Penguin Travel Library" and is the description of the author's travels over a period of seven months throughout South America (or at least the middle and southern sections--the northern third seems to have been skipped). Much of it describes his quest through the jungle for a fossilized jawbone of an unknown species of crocodile. Some is interesting, but I found the lengthy story of his jungle trek tedious after a while. For that matter, he found the actual trek the same and was honest enough to admit in print how ill-conceived it was.

This book is far more nature-oriented than C_u_t_S_t_o_n_e_s_a_n_d
C_r_o_s_s_r_o_a_d_s. Tierra del Fuego, for example, is less notable for its
culture than its rugged scenery. There were descriptions of jungle
towns and larger cities, but on the whole this book would probably
appeal more to the naturalist than to the anthropologist.