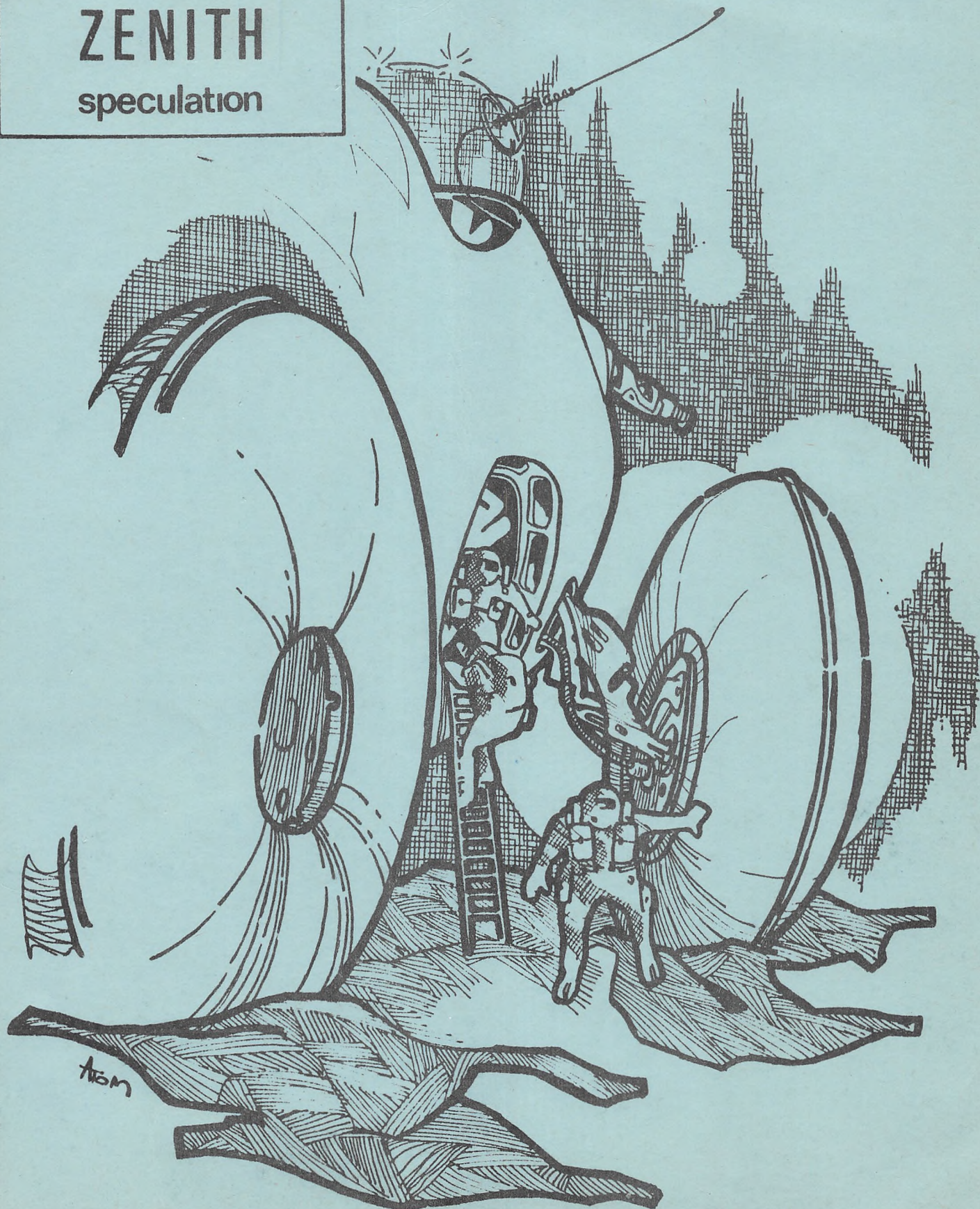


# ZENITH

speculation





M A R C H 1965

ISSUE No. 8.

# ZENITH

## speculation

### Articles

NEW WAVE --- PROZINES	9-11
Chris Priest	
THE WANDERER -- HOW & WHY	12-15
Fritz Leiber	
COMMENTS UPON THE 'STRAITJACKET'	
ARTICLE.	15
Robert Bloch	

### Departments

CONTENTS	1
BRICKBATS AND ROSES	3-5
Terry Jeeves	
FANORAMA	6-8
Walt Willis	
BOOK REVIEWS	16-20
Beryl Henley	
GUEST REVIEW	2
Archie Mercer	
LETTERS	21-32

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# GUEST REVIEW

by A R C H I E      M E R C E R .

EARTHWORKS: by Brian W Aldiss. Faber & Faber Ltd, 1965, 155 pages, 16/- (see Back Cover)

Knowle Noland, a semi-skilled captain of an 80,000 ton ship (waterborne variety) - and not so very semi-skilled at that -- suffers when under stress, from hallucinations. He also suffers from flashbacks. This at once raises the subsidiary question as to whether the flashbacks -- or some of them -- are also hallucinatory. It is, I think, easier to assume that they're not deliberately intended so to be -- and I am content to leave the matter there.

Which means that the flashbacks have to be considered as fictional reality.

Now the flashback tends to be featured very strongly in self-consciously contemporary fiction. The simple, straightforward telling of a story from beginning, through middle, to end, which finds most favour in my simple, orderly mind, is regarded as something of a quaint primitive survival, entirely unsuitable for these unsophisticated times, and the more temporally convoluted a story becomes, the greater the critical acclaim it can expect. And it's no use claiming at this point that the technique of flashbackery dates back to THE ODYSSEY if not earlier. It does not seem to be generally realised that THE ODYSSEY is not, primarily, the story of Odysseus' wanderings, but is rather the story of Odysseus' homecoming - an entirely different thing. In the Homeric poem, the narrative of the hero's wanderings, occupies, in flashback, a compact chapter or two, out of a lengthy work to the rest of which it bears in fact no particular relevance. All that it is strictly necessary for the reader (or listener) to know is that Odysseus has, due to circumstances beyond his control, been absent in foreign parts for a number of years. The element of flashback in THE ODYSSEY, therefore, far from being an example of a great mind millenia ahead of its time, is nothing more than a clumsiness of construction that is entirely pardonable in the circumstances.

THE ODYSSEY, certainly, has nothing on certain well-known instances of more recent literature when it comes to being achronological. And even the book now under consideration, EARTHWORKS, large sections of which are chronologically displaced, is a comparatively mild example. But it is an example, -- and goes, so far as I'm concerned, well out of its way to be.

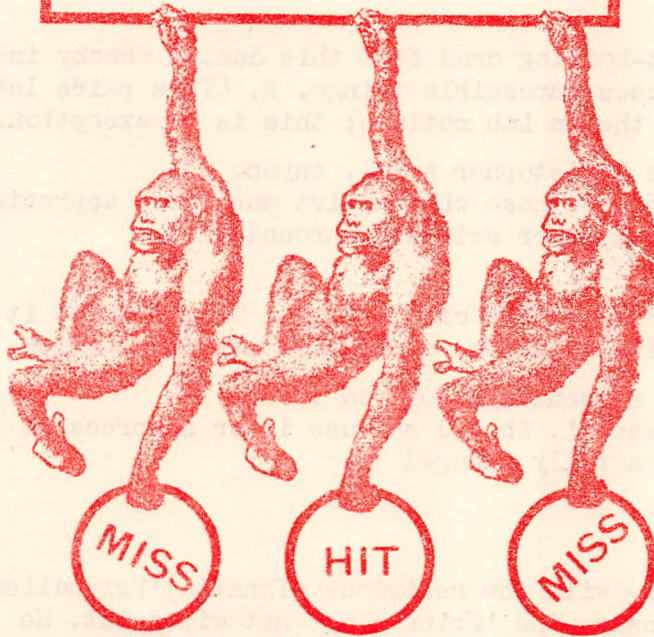
The book is essentially an expanded (or possibly an uncut) version of the short novel, SKELETON CREW, which appeared in one of the last Nova issues of SCIENCE FANTASY, decked out afresh with an obscure title that it does, eventually, get around to attempting, flimsily and unsatisfactorily, to justify. In the course of the narrative, we are afforded a panoramic view of the world as it might be some three or four hundred years in the future. The world we are shown thus is in something of a mess -- not that the one we know has anything much to shout about, but still. It's an interesting world, right enough -- though the presentation somehow lacks the vividness that would bring it really alive before us. This is, I think, very largely because of the copious doses of achronology aforementioned, -- though this is but one manifestation of a much wider syndrome whereby literary technique may often become its own worst enemy, and literature tends to become an end in itself instead of a means of saying something.

A couple more niggles. Brian Aldiss has the facility of thinking up the most wonderful names for his characters -- and then virtually wasting them. One of the minor characters in this book is called Alan Bator. A glance at the map of Outer Mongolia should convince anyone that Alan Bator is indeed a most excellent piece of indubitably unMongolian nomenclature. Having created this character however, the author almost literally throws him

**\*\*CONCLUDED ON PAGE 20\*\***



# Brickbats AND Roses



MAGAZINE REVIEWS BY  
**Terry Jeeves**

\* One point that should be \*  
\* cleared up before begin- \*  
\* ning; British fans will \*  
\* find that they probably \*  
\* haven't read the GALAXY- \*  
\* group of magazines. These \*  
\* are running about a year \*  
\* late in the U.K. --Terry \*  
\* has chosen to review the \*  
\* issues which are current \*  
\* for U.S. fans, and for a \*  
\* number of UK subscribers \*  
\* to these magazines. Other \*  
\* British fans may like to \*  
\* keep these reviews until \*  
\* they can obtain the iss- \*  
\* ues in question. We will \*  
\* be interested to hear of \*  
\* strong complaints about \*  
\* this policy . \*

I have to thank Mike Moorcock for bringing to my notice a point I had never realised before. Some people read primarily for plot, and the embroidery is secondary. Others read for the enjoyment of the imagery invoked, and to them the plot is secondary. Naturally, both types like to have both in a story, but they differ in their priorities. Now, very obviously, I'm a type who must have a (reasonably) logical plot on which to hang the best possible imagery. This is why I have hitherto com-

plained of Cordwainer Smith, J.G. Ballard, and others. They have marvelous word power to invoke an image, but (for me) they seem deficient in the plot logic line. Similarly, I must have a story with a clear-cut ending wherever possible, or I feel cheated. If you happen to be an image-first reader, then I'm afraid my reviews will not be your cup of tea, so I apologise in advance.... but I am grateful to Mike for bringing this important difference of outlook to my notice. The current crop of magazines will I think appeal to the image-first reader, as in my view they are largely deficient in plot-logic. See if you agree when you read them.

ANALOG December 1964. (with an excellent though inaccurate cover).

Sweet Dreams, Sweet Princes. (serial). by Mack Reynolds.

The world is divided into 4 power blocs, evenly balanced, and with a pact to use only pre-1900 weapons. Gladiatorial combats and trials by champions are the rule. Someone invents a weapon which threatens to unbalance everything. Combat, intrigue, and plottery mingle with action and espionage. Large dollops of pseudohistory are heavily ladled in disguised as conversational monologues, and the search for the inventor fades out into the discovery of the larger truth...the power blocs all have secret movements, and they are working together. Rating B.

Plague On Kryder II. by Murray Leinster. Calhoun, Murgatroyd, and the Med-ship meet and cure another (criminally induced) plague. D.

Shortstack. by W & L Richmond.

Yet another dollop of unadulterated pot-boiling crud from this duo. A whacky inventor plays around with bits and pieces and produces impossible things. E. (This pair's last 3 stories have been at or near the bottom of the An Lab ratings; this is no exception.)

Contrast. by Christopher Anvil (And who is Christopher Anvil, anyone ?)

Tough living on a death-filled planet makes those who survive much more appreciative of hardship in general. Usual Anvil plot with minor switching-around. C.

Rescue Operation. by Harry Harrison.

An alien spaceship cracks up in a backward corner of the Earth. What a shame it didn't happen nearer a civilised (Western ?) hospital, then we could have saved the alien. D

The Equaliser. By N. Spinrad (and there's a pseudonym for you !)

Israel has made the latest 'ultimate weapon'. Should she use it or suppress it ? End of story, supply your own answer. Plotwise a fully fledged E.

GALAXY October 1964.

Soldier Ask Not. by Gordon R Dickson.

The Dorsai mercenary are about to tangle with the religious (fanatic) 'Friendlies', and a war correspondent does his best to ensure the 'Friendlies' get wiped out. He finally discovers his error, and that there is good in even the worst of us. B.

The Tactful Saboteur. We MUST learn to UNDERSTAND each other. C

The Children Of The Night. by Fred Pohl. But why did we need the aliens here ? C

Be Of Good Cheer. Fritz Leiber. ho hum, robots are a nuisance. D

How The Old World Died. Harry Harrison. Highly improbable robot comforts. E.

The 1980 President. M.A.deFord. 'Let it all come about by secret alien intervention, getting us ready for Galactic membership.' E.

What's The Name Of That Town. R.A.Lafferty. Chicago ? What's that ? D

Maxwell's Monkey. Edgar Pangborn. D

Precious Artifact. Philip K Dick. An unsettling surprise ending for the hero. C

ANALOG January 1965.

A Matter Of Timing. Dempsey.

A while back, J.W.Campbell fostered a society for 'gentlemen amateurs' or some such. The idea being that maybe 'the degree man scientists don't know it all'. JWC has also pushed the theory that maybe there is hidden gold in them that hillbillies. This story was obviously written to fit Campbell's universe. Once again we meet Jeff O'Hara, head



of that improbable organisation, Inheritance Endowed, which aims to ferret out the odd scrap of truth in the mass of charlatanry, quackery, and dishonesty which makes up humanity. This time the fast paced yarn concerns the rescue of one of O'Hara's 'proteges' a quack doctor whose cheapjack cure actually works. (he is being sued for malpractice by a 'real' doctor) O'Hara gets him off the hook and out of the state. Carefully inflated from a short plot to a novelette, the story rates a C for smooth turning, though I doubt whether it would have got into any other magazine on its own merits.

A Nice Day For Screaming. by James H Schmitz.

A TV programme is to be put out from a Navy ship in hyperspace (permitted because the Navy is short of cash). While in hyperspace, their ship is 'attacked' and stuffed with most unusual objects. To say more would be to divulge the gimmick. A very much contrived yarn hacked into shape to fit the gimmick, but within these limits, quite enjoyable. C

Final Report. Sipes.

Printed in standard typewriter characters (which makes for hard going), this is ostensibly a straight field test evaluation report of a new type of radio. Nothing outstanding...another slanted story (story ?) D

The New Boccaccio. Chris Anvil.

Copycat competition is denuding the author market for a new magazine. They buy a new model computer to write top level material to order. Pretty soon, all the other mags catch up again...naturally, they've bought computers too. This is presumably a story...computer written itself, no doubt. Obviously an E grade computer.

Finnegans Knack. John T Phillifent

Once again, we're offered Galactic citizenship (without strings, for once) if we can surprise and impress the examiner. It is finally done by finding someone, although being a near-moron, who has a 'knack' for getting things done in an off-beat way. The examples demonstrating this knack are flanged up, and the story is another slanted at Campbell's belief in the common-man-who-may-have-hidden-powers angle. Well written cream puff. D.

GALAXY December 1964.

Cute, coy, or clettish, there's one thing about Galaxy-- it now contains sufficient material to give it variety, and as a result there comes the odd time when the editor allows a good issue to result. This issue is a prime example, and should be balm to the troubled souls of those who feel that Heinlein was luring us to the verge of war and militancy with Starship Troopers.

The Starsloggers. by Harry Harrison

This concerns the (mis)adventures, plausible and otherwise, of a country boy finagled into the Space Troopers. We follow his 'education' right through to its logical end, and though Harrison obviously had his tongue right in his cheek (and a weather eye on Heinlein) when he wrote this, the result is still a lovely piece of fun, satire, and commentary on the human animal. I enjoyed it immensely and rate it an 'A'.

A Man Of Renaissance. Guinn.

This is the glamorous side of the warfare coin, as a swashbuckling leader tries to unite the peoples of several floating islands in a defence against pirates. The scenery is beautifully set, and the semi-feudal setup well detailed. The floating islands and general atmosphere come through well, but the ending is a trifle indeterminate to weaken an otherwise excellent story. Nevertheless, B.

To Avenge Man. del Rey. Man kills himself off, in the final war, leaving behind a robot in a space station. The robot returns to Earth to avenge man. Rating C.



# FANORAMA

FANZINE  
REVIEWS

BY **Walt  
Willis**



Some while ago I wrote in an American fanzine about meeting the new English fandom in Peterborough, and poked fun at the discomfiture of us old has-BNFs. To my utter incredulity Ron Bennett reported to British fandom that I had been "snide". Naturally I was quite overwhelmed at the revelation of this new and unsuspected facet of my genius -- in 17 years of fandom nobody had ever called me snide before -- but after searching vainly for those hidden subtleties in what I actually wrote, I was forced to the reluctant conclusion that Ron's judgement revealed more about himself than about me. I remembered that a year or so ago he had said something else peculiar, something about Irish Fandom's "air of wry superiority". At the time we all thought this was one of his more obscure jokes, but it looks as if he actually meant it, and now I wouldn't be **surprised** to hear that he reads aloud everything I write with a sneering expression and a John Brunner accent. No wonder he gets the wrong impression, because anyone thinking of giving public readings from my works should do so in a rather diffident Belfast brogue, to a rhythmic accompaniment of knees knocking in a cold attic. It would never fill Carnegie Hall.

Faced with a communications breakdown as serious as this, it seems to me I had better say something about the purpose of this column, in this breathing space between new British fanzines.

One of the reasons Fanorama was disinterred from the vaults and given its present lease of weird creaking pseudolife is that it seemed to me at the time that there were emerging two standards of fanzine reviewing. There have always been two types of fanzine and there is room in fandom for both, but in England last year this looked like being forgotten. Proponents of type A were castigating fanzines of type B, not because they were bad type B fanzines, but because the editor had somehow stupidly failed to produce



a type A fanzine. Conversely the defenders of type B fanzines were praising them indiscriminately, whether they were good by type B standards or not. Before the situation got any worse I thought it would be a good thing if someone would try and review both sets of fanzines honestly and objectively, judging them only by the standards of what they set out to achieve. I thought that as someone who had published both types, I might make a go of it.

Now I'm beginning to wonder. It's easy to write reviews that are all kindness, if you don't mind wasting everyone's time; and it's easy to write honest reviews, if you don't care about people's feelings; but it's hard to be both honest and kind. Unfortunately I do care about people's feelings, and I have been brooding quite a bit recently about Beryl Henley, whose indignant letter you'll find elsewhere in this issue along with ghod knows how many more. (LETTERCOL; Fanorama) Despite the sleep I've lost over Beryl's letter I still can't think of any answer I could give her that wasn't in the original review. For instance, I explained that I analysed the passage in question ( not just two words ) because I thought it was unfair to criticise technique without giving an example, and that I chose that particular passage because I could be sure she thought it was funny. As for her second point, as I implied in the following review, nobody can give all the data about fanzines and still have space left to review them. Peter and I were offering an ordinary fanzine review column, not an advertising supplement. On the third point, Beryl's description of how she writes poetry -- inspiration, followed by revision and polishing, -- is exactly the way I suggest she should write humour. That's what I said.

I admire her simile about gold and buttercups -- I told you she could write when she tried -- but in fact I looked for no more than I look for in any field of fandom. And no less. If it's any comfort to her I would say that the type of fanzine she has chosen to publish is the most difficult of all, as well as the most rewarding. In a fanzine dealing with the social activities of fans, the background for the new reader has to be created by the writer, whereas in a fanzine dealing with science fiction, the background is already there. Anyone writing about his friends must resist the insidious illusion that they have prefabricated characterisation; unless they are very well known they must be treated as if they were fictional. (Which is why, incidentally, fannish fanzines have produced more professional writers than the other kind.) And he must learn to take with a pinch of salt the praise of intimates who have really enjoyed their recollection of events rather than the description.

I've offered Beryl a deal whereby we each promise to read Link 1 and its review eight months from now, and the one who admits he or she was wrong buys the other a drink, at the London WorldCon. If it's me I'll buy you one too. I hope by then I'll have progressed with Beryl to something like the status I had with Chuch Harris during our most violent altercations, when I used to sign my letters, "Your best friend and severest critic...alternately."

To change gear for a moment, I admit to Graham Hall that I may have been unfair to our Press. I acknowledge its fearless crusading zeal in the persecution of Royalty, the bereaved, civil servants, untitled sexual offenders, and others unable to answer back. I recognise its discreet respect for the privacy of other press lords, patent medicine manufacturers, and powerful millionaires. I will even concede that it may have reported an event with fairness and accuracy; all I say is that the event was not a science fiction convention.

That paragraph was dedicated to Ron Bennett.

One of the hardest arguments we sf fans have had to counter when urging the exploration of space is the simple word, "why ?" We just cannot say what physical benefit space flight will bring to humanity, any more than Columbus could promise the potato.



But we did offer a spiritual reward. We said that when man got into space he would see the world differently. He would see that his home was a planet, not a country, and his race mankind. If anyone thought that was visionary talk, let him read this;

Think of our world as it looks from that rocket heading toward Mars. It is like a child's globe, hanging in space, the continents stuck to its sides like coloured maps. We are all fellow passengers on a dot of earth. And each of us, in the span of time, has only a moment among his companions. How incredible it is that in this fragile existence we should hate and destroy one another.

That was from President Johnson's inaugural address, January, 1965. That is sciencefictional thinking, friends, and it is changing the world.

....Walt Willis, January, 1965

\*\*\*\*\*

BRICKBATS AND ROSES..Continued from Page 5.

The Rules Of The Road. Spinrad.

This concerns, not war, but an alien dome with a mysterious tunnel that arrives in America. Ten volunteers are lost before the right man is found to solve the problem. Poor ending to an otherwise reasonable yarn..Rating C.

The Monster And The Maiden. Zelazny.

A one-page short which would be ruined completely if I capsuled it. Otherwise a pleasing little account of an encounter. More suited to a fanzine...D.

Let Me Call Her Sweetcore. Bunch.

A pointless little thing about a man and his robot. The latter falls in love with another, but friendship (and a lover's quarrel) put things back to normal, where the man is once again happily working to support his robot in luxury. Rating E.

Maybe warfare and conflict loom rather large in this issue, but it is certainly one of the best for quite some time. Let's hope the quality of future issues is as high.

\*\*\*\*\*

To change pace for a moment; THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, a fannish classic by Walt Willis and Bob Shaw, is being reprinted in the summer. Illustrations by Arthur Thomson, Introduction by Walt Willis, all the usual trimmings such as electrostencils, card covers, etc. 3/6 each from the editor. Only 50 copies are planned so it might be as well to order soon. On the same tack there are two copies of the ART FOLIO left. Anyone want them at the same price as before, 2/6 each ?

WANTED by the Editor. Copies of New Frontiers; Space Diversions, The New Futurian (Issue No. 6), Speculative Review (all except Volume 2 No 4 & Vol. 3, Nos 1-3 are wanted.) We'll discuss terms if you have the magazines. Oh yes, and also wanted are copies of NEXUS 1&2.



# NEW WAVE -- PROZINES

## chris priest

Comments are invited, particularly from US readers of these magazines.

A new price, a new shape, and a new editor. Inject these into the bloodstream of a dying magazine, and what is the result? Does a new magazine emerge, like a phoenix from the corpse of the old; or does it produce an unhappy hybrid of rejuvenation and senility? A change will occur, conscious or otherwise, and after the metamorphosis an objective appraisal of the outcome will decide these questions.

In April 1964, the magazines published by Nova Publications ground to an anti-climactic halt. The circulation figures had been dwindling for years, with a parallel decrease in both quality and variety. The sale of the names of the magazines to another firm provided the opportunity for a fresh lease of life. Two new editors stepped in, and John Carnell, who had nursed the magazines from birth, graciously conceded the positions.

Mike Moorcock took over New Worlds. A writer of some competence, and an editor of some experience, he was a personal friend of Carnell's, and seemed best suited for the new job. Science Fantasy became the responsibility of Kyril Bonfiglioli, an Oxford antiquarian whose name and policies were virtually unknown in the science fiction world. Now, as both magazines return to a monthly schedule and seem to have found an equilibrium of content and style, the time has come to make a comprehensive re-appraisal of the early issues.

What have been the major changes? The obvious ones: a reduction in both price and size. And the less apparent: increasing circulations and higher rates to contributors. Pictorial covers and interior illustrations have re-appeared: Elric and Planetary Survey Teams have vanished. Gone is the transcendental and the sorcerous from Science Fantasy; New Worlds has lost its retrograde pot-boiling.

The editors of both magazines have made changes consciously and deliberately. Moorcock is bent on a better general-interest magazine, he features book-reviews, science fact, articles, and a regular letter-column. Bonfiglioli has confined his alterations to the fiction-content, constantly promising things to come; he has made no attempt to publish non-fiction on any considerable scale.

There is very little to distinguish between the fiction of the two magazines. Both drew on the resources of established authors for their early issues; the first New Worlds consisted of what looked like rejects from American magazines, the first Science Fantasy reading like an anthology of early Aldiss stories. This was only to be expected, however; a paucity of material inevitably results when a magazine's ownership and editorship is changed. As the magazines mature, a loose school of regular writers



will form around them, upon whom the editors may depend. It is a good sign that indications of this are already visible. Writers unheard-of in the days of Carnell's editorship have come to demonstrate a capability of producing a reasonable flow of publishable material. Names like Keith Roberts, Thom Heyes and Langdon Jones show unmistakable promise in not only style and idea, but quantity too.

Perhaps it is the work of these three authors that best acts as a signpost to the future of these magazines. It is inevitable that other writers will try to emulate the style of the often-accepted authors, and if it is these names that are going to support the magazines in times to come, then it may well be that their present type of work will become the norm. It is with this thought in mind that I'm going to make a close examination of their writing.

Lang Jones, a name well-known in fan circles, has appeared with encouraging frequency in the magazines. His first acceptance can be written-off as a trifle; reprinted from Lang's own fanzine Tensor; it was little more than good fan-fiction. It had an unoriginal idea, undeveloped plot and only barely-passable writing. His next acceptance, "I Remember, Anita", was the one which seems to set the style. Maybe editorial over-encouragement was a root-cause, but the sensationalism of this story overshadowed Lang's growing competence with fiction. This time the idea was logically developed, and the tale well told in an individual manner; a sensational approach to a stock sf theme and an ending that appeared terribly significant, yet meant nothing, were its only faults. Both of these were corrected in this third story, "The Empathy Machine", in Science Fantasy. Lang's writing has developed remarkably quickly; his handling of this story is almost perfect - let down only by weakness in plotting. The story could almost be split into two halves; the first, a utopian satire on advertising and ubiquitous vid-screens, much in the idiom of Kuttner's memorable "Year Day"; the second half, another look at the ruined-city-on-Mars story. The build-up of interest in this first utopia is maintained, then dropped. By the introduction of the Mars sequence, the reader's attention was distracted and the other-wise strong point of the story lost.

Lang Jones' potential as an sf writer is undoubted. Before his writing-exuberance carries him into other fields, I can't help feeling his overall contribution to the genre will be one of note.

Another story by a new writer featured sensation to make its point, although in this case it was warranted. The story was "Period of Gestation", the author Thom Keyes. This had an essentially strong plot, one that could so easily have collapsed into bawdiness and vulgarity, and yet the author said all he had to without pulling any punches. I expect that this story will be the most memorable of all the stories published to date, in either magazine. In a style not unlike that of Joseph Heller's, the story tells of the descent of a spaceship's crew into perversion, insanity and homosexuality, with the inevitable grisly outcome. This story contained all the impact that was lacking in "I Remember, Anita", with apparent effortlessness. Keyes confirmed all optimistic opinions of his work in his second acceptance, "Election Campaign". The stylistic craftsmanship that marked his first story is not so obvious this time, yet his boldness in plotting and idea was still there in force. While Keyes shows a distinct lack of care in which boundaries he crosses, his recklessness as a writer is beyond dispute. With discipline, his work could become much sought-after in years to come.

The third of the new contributors that seem to be setting the style and the pace of the magazines is Keith Roberts. His most obvious contribution so far has been the "Anita" stories, though they are hardly representative of his best work. Witchcraft should never find a place in an sf magazine, I feel, and the only justification for their inclusion here is a fleeting resemblance to Bradbury's "Uncle Einar" stories.



His most worthy contribution to sf to date (doubtless he will excel himself soon) was "Escapism" in Science Fantasy 67. In many ways it resembled some of John Wyndham's later stories, written in the same matter-of-fact style that is always so interesting. The story, time-travel and audience-participation rolled into one, was remarkable for evocative and colourful descriptions of historical battle-scenes. Roberts is also an artist of considerable merit, being featured on one of Science Fantasy's covers.

Of the three newcomers I have mentioned, Roberts is the most obviously talented, yet in the long run I expect Thom Keys and Lang Jones to outstrip him in both popularity and competence.

So much for the new authors. They will grow with the magazines, and only time will help them rid themselves of their weaknesses. But what of the regulars, the established authors? Strangely, their showing so far has been dimmed by this sudden burst of promising newcomers. Names like Aldiss, Harrison, Brunner, Ballard, have cropped up from time to time, yet nothing of real significance has appeared. Ballard had a two-part serial in the first issues of New Worlds, "Equinox". Perhaps my sense of definition of quality is becoming blurred, but I found very little of interest in this novel. Ballard, admittedly a creative writer within the field, seems to have reached the peak of his ability to find something really new. His concept of a crystalline universe seems wonderful on the face, yet under examination it becomes a tedious and wearying process. It takes Ballard approximately twice the number of words to describe something than would a less pretentious author, and yet the visual image at the end is still the same.

Mike Moorcock ran one of his own novels in New Worlds, "The Shores of Death". Previously, in Science Fiction Adventures, Moorcock had shown that he was at home with space-opera, in his novels of the Sundered Worlds; correspondingly, this new novel held promise. Probably written hastily to fill a shortage of good material, it turned out to a disappointment. A hazy idea, based on doubtful science; melodramatic characterisation, dialogue occasionally non sequitur ..... and a dissatisfying conclusion.

New Worlds is the better of the two at present. At least it shows some desire to become a proper magazine; Science Fantasy seems content to publish monthly collections of fiction. A magazine is in grave danger of becoming two-dimensional and characterless unless it is willing to give its readers something other than an editorial and stories. New Worlds, on the other hand, seems to be placing the emphasis on features; the fiction sacrifice is not great and the added interest given to its readership amply repays in the long run.

In these days of declining magazine markets, it shows great initiative to attempt to resurrect a dying publication, even more so a minority-interest one like science fiction. For this reason alone the publishers and editors should be strongly supported. But, more important, the fact that they are experimenting - with favourable results - should ensure that these "new-wave" prozines are not only encouraged through loyalty alone. Now that the reader gets what he pays his money for - good reading - their solid establishment seems almost certain.

FOR THE HUGO:: BEST SHORT STORY:: THE KRAGEN:: BY JACK VANCE::

FOR THE HUGO:: BEST NOVEL:: FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD:: BY ROBERT HEINLEIN.



# THE WANDERER

Fritz Leiber  
— how and why

I enjoyed W.T.Webb's review of THE WANDERER and am inclined to agree with some of the adverse points it makes, if I may say so without prejudice.

That last bit of legal jargon crept in because I've just been discovering the diverting and instructive novels of your Henry Cecil (leon); SETTLED OUT OF COURT, DAUGHTERS IN LAW, etc. Bill Mortlock (pseud.) is another of your writing barristers or solicitors I admire; his LAWYER, HEAL THYSELF is almost as good, and rather like, the best of Nigel Balchin. I'm delighted at the number of English professional men and civil servants who write skilful fiction in their spare time or have managed to switch from the one field into the other -- although I can sympathise with full-time writers irked by this increase in the competition. For a few, there's Fred Hoyle and Gray Walter (THE CURVE OF THE SNOWFLAKE ((FURTHER OUTLOOK)),) and C.P.Snow whom I think of as the Jane Austen of the Establishment; he tells men how to rise in the world and walk THE CORRIDORS OF POWER just as she told ladies how to get married properly; her propriety in avoiding the ruder aspects of life is matched by his discretion about official matters -- "We were speaking of the ----- system for delivering warheads" both are pompous yet humorous, especially in their descriptions of autocratic elderly ladies. Like Snow, Nigel Balchin -- my favourite current English novelist next to Robert Graves -- read in science and did some research; his THE SMALL BACK ROOM, MINE OWN EXECUTIONER, WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR ?, etc, aren't science fiction to be sure, but they are almost the best fiction about scientists yet written -- quite up to Well's short story A SLIP UNDER THE MICROSCOPE, and the scientists in Aldous Huxley's POINT COUNTERPOINT and Mitchell Wilson's LIVE WITH LIGHTNING.

As Webb points out, I used POINT's method of multiple viewpoints in the WANDERER. My first and decisive purpose here was to make Earth, moon, sun and the intrusive planet hang solidly and vividly in space for the reader. The best way I could think to do this was to spot around the world observers who would see the Wanderer in different parts of the sky and under different atmospheric conditions at the same time. I also wanted to depict, strongly, worldwide emotional reactions to the Wanderer. This meant having a large number of minor characters with whom I sympathised but to whom I couldn't devote a great deal of time, for there also had to be the major narratives of the adventures of the saucer students (a microcosm of humanity), of Paul and Tigerishka ( man and alien ), and of Don Merriam aboard his ship. So, to make the minor characters stick in the reader's memory from episode to episode, I involved them in sensational private events (bombings, other crimes, heart attacks, sex episodes,) gave them rather vivid costumes, names, and mannerisms, and even sometimes an exaggerated national character. (In the original draft, Fritz Scher says, "The moon in orbit around a planet from nowhere come ? H&h ! Here have we the moon down-nailed!" After consultation with my publishers that last got changed to "Here we have the moon nailed down." At the same time I wrote out of the story a group of rather fabulous gangsters bent on looting tide-ravaged New York City. Those were the only changes, though.)

The sex episodes in the book ? Well, they are simply part of the way I see and imagine life. Sometimes I think they're pretty good -- I like to biff the reader in the eye every once in a while (cf. the Porter in MACBETH and the poaching-out of Gloucester's eyes in LEAR); sometimes I agree with Webb that some of them sound like "the erotic



wishful thinking of a dirty old man." (Lately that last epithet has become a rather complimentary one in California -- again I speak without prejudice.) But it's very true that I like to try for the depths as well as the heights -- and no mere chance that Colonel Mab quotes THE DUCHESS OF MALFI just before her and General Spike's dirty horrendous perishing -- quite monstrous perverts in the urinal of a missile silo. It's still very tricky to write properly about sex. To break down the strong taboos in the reading world, authors had to go step by step and make some very odd compromises; today for instance, it's strange and touching to read the half-described sex episodes in Richard Aldington's excellent novel, ALL MEN ARE ENEMIES, while the metaphors and naughty half-evasions in James Branch Cabell's JURGEN have become quainter sounding than ever. Now, with the major taboos pretty well lifted, it's easy to go too far or still not far enough. Most lurid sex paperbacks and some hardcovers are notable for their cliches and naively wishful irrealisms in describing the sex act, their complete failure to describe it accurately, to probe its psychic adumbrations or conscious epiphenomena and especially its motivations. Certainly in the next novel I write I'll keep Webb's criticisms in mind, both by digging deeper into reality and by seeking a clearer statement of the things in which I trust.

I certainly didn't want THE WANDERER to leave "a nasty taste in the mouth". For me the "final statement" in the book came on Pages 309, 310, when the saucer students are watching the battle in the high sky between the Wanderer and the Stranger, a fight to the death between two artificial planets. A character nicknamed the Ramrod asks;

" But what must we understand from this ? Do hate and death rule the cosmos, even among the most high ?"

Rama Joan, her eyes on the sky as she pulled Ann along, called back to him in a swift, bell-like voice; "The gods spend the wealth the universe gathers, they scan the wonders and fling them to nothingness. That's why they're the gods ! I told you they were devils."

Ann said accusingly, "Oh Mommy."

Hixon said, "I don't know about devils, but I know now there'll always be war." He waved a hand at the zenith. "What more proof could you ask than that ?"

Mrs Hixon shouted cryptically from the cab (of the lorry): "Now you're talking sense, Bill, and what good is it ?"

The Ramrod gasped; "But when the highest.. and the wisest... is there no cure ?"

Young Harry McHeath's imagination took fire from the tragedy of that question, and for a moment he saw himself in an almost all-powerful, one-man spaceship poised midway between the Wanderer and the Stranger, turning back their bolts from each other, somehow healing their sanity.

The Littel Man said, not in a loud voice, almost as if to himself; "Maybe the cure always has to come from below. And keep coming from below. Forever."

But Wojtowicz heard him and without looking away from the sky asked; "How do you mean from below, Doddsy ? Not from us ?"

The Little Man looked at him. "Yes, Wojtowicz," he said with a chuckle at the ridiculousness of it all, "from little nothing guys like you and me."

Wojtowicz shook his head. "Wow," he laughed, "I'm punch drunk."

But that is only one very short section, and even there, there is Rama Joan's cosmos-image to balance that of the Little Man's. The taste of the universe can be pretty nasty, I think -- it takes getting used to, like green olives -- but I intend to go on sampling the mixture, seeking new savours, as long as I can.

The science-fiction references in the book ? Well, there are hundreds and thousands of serious science fiction readers in the world, millions of readers of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Mars series, and such, -- and even the Beats have just now come up with



William S. Burrough's NOVA EXPRESS. (A very different Burroughs, that second !) In writing THE WANDERER I simply kept this fact in mind. I firmly believe that if a new planet swam into the sky, many, many people would react with some equivalent of "My god, it's like a science fiction story!" Not to mention science fiction books in a broad-canvas, science fantasy set in the near future would be as unrealistic as saying, say, "There' shouldn't be plays about actors."

As for people interested in flying-saucers, there seem to be as many of those in the United States as devoted readers of science fiction. The two groups do not overlap much, I hasten to add. The "saucer people" range from the hopelessly credulous or self-interested "believers" to the intelligently skeptical. I fancied a mixed bag of such folk for my chief characters.

I could have made THE WANDERER considerably longer, and perhaps got away with it, but even as it stands it's almost twice as long as the novel I originally contracted to do for Ballantine. I was about two and a half years planning and writing it, amounting to a year, I'd judge, of solid work. It all began when Cele Lalli (then Goldsmith) asked me to do a cover novelette for Fantastic -- Robert Bloch had first been going to do it, but heavy television and cinema assignments had prevented. The picture showed three human faces looking up at a Luna which was beginning to crack apart, with chunks erupting outward. The first possible explanation which struck me was, "What if the Moon got inside Roche's limit?" The second was, "What if the Moon got inside the Roche's limit of a planet appearing suddenly near it out of hyperspace?" But these seemed ideas for a book, and I had only ten days and about that many thousand words to meet Cele's deadline. So I turned to an easier third explanation of alien beings setting off several titanic explosions deep in the moon, and the story "Deadly Moon" resulted -- it's reprinted in my Ace collection, SHIPS TO THE STARS. But even at that I'd had to read considerable astronomy for the job of describing huge explosions on the Moon visible from Earth, the ghostly explosion fronts expanding across the Moon's surface, the travel of some of the chunks to Earth, and the subsequent rain of meteorites large and small... all these things reawakened my interest in astronomy and sharpened my desire to tell a story in which amazing things in the sky were seen from all over Earth. I remember in particular an evening when I was travelling home down the hottish central valley of California from a chess tournament at Fresno, and the Moon lifted up in the East looking so bloody solid and marmoreal that I kept saying to myself as I drove, "I'll get you nailed down somehow." (My hopeful Briticisms aren't altogether meretricious: I've long been fascinated by your cities and countryside, my wife comes from London and Wales, and when I came to describe Richard Hillary tramping around in the Cotswolds and the Malvern Hills I often thought with a reverent sigh of H.G. Wells and THE WAR OF THE WORLDS as if I were trying to scrape up a posthumous acquaintance with him.)

At all events, I got started on THE WANDERER and for that I had to read up on the tides -- enough, at any rate, so that I was able to sell Science Digest an article, "The Mighty Tides". The book I found most helpful was Marmor's THE TIDES, a somewhat old American job, but good when supplimented with more recent theories. I must confess I made The Wanderer of Earth-mass to make it easier to calculate the orbits, but this symmetry came to seem fictionally right to me. As I got deeper into the book I had to make an hour-by-hour ephemeris of the Wanderer's changing faces (as it rotated) and of and of its, and of the sun's risings and settings, and meridian transits for several longitudes of Earth -- and parallel with the ephemeris of course, tide tables for a number of regions on Earth, which I selected in part for their tidal peculiarities; the extreme tides in the Bristol Charnel, especially at Avonmouth; the Severn and its bore; the Amazon and its bore, the Pororoca; the shallowness and unusual pnce-a-day tides of the Gulf of Tonkin off Vietnam; the mixed tides of my own California coast, with its alternating high highs and low highs; and so on. I also made a model of The Wanderer and



hung it by my desk, alongside a terrestrial globe and a styrofoam moon, so that I could turn them round and sight at them every once in a while to get things right. (Incidentally, my little diagrams of the Wanderer on pages 68 and 116 should be rotated each 90 degrees counterclockwise, and the diagram on page 127 a full 180 degrees. These corrections were duly made in galleys and page proofs, and were duly ignored by the printer! ) All in all, this part of the job made me feel pleasantly scientific, yet for the most I kept professional scientists out of THE WANDERER -- I wanted things seen through more naive eyes, like my own.

I truly did enjoy Webb's review, it was very perceptive -- and after all it's quite a boost to know you've fascinated and made a man finish a book, the mood and ideas of which he doesn't like; I think he's a damn good critic and more reviews from him should be welcome. It's time sf weren't reviewed as if it were an odd little genre (loathsome word) or private property or some sacred little treasure or anything privileged (or the opposite.)

- o.O.o.O.o -

ROBERT BLOCH

COMMENTS UPON LAST ISSUE'S 'STRAITJACKET' ARTICLE.

Dodd is correct when he speaks of the somewhat equivocal position of the writer of teleplay or screenplay; in most instances, once a script is delivered, the writer is utterly unable to control the treatment accorded it in actual filming. To be exact, the writer is in an equivocal position from the moment he begins a project. In American commercial television, the nature of a writer's script is influenced and determined by many factors, most of them arbitrary; his story is limited as to length.. the dramatic climaxes of that story are also limited by the necessity to divide the script into 'acts' which allow for commercial inserts... the exigencies of budget limit him as to the kind of visual effects he can employ, the type of background he can use, the number of actors, etc... then there is the need to satisfy the producer's ideas as to the 'style' of his show...to satisfy the demands of the star and/or leading players..to satisfy the network the sponsors, the censors. Granted he achieves all this without doing undue violence to his story-concept, he must then still turn his script over to the tender mercies of a director whom he may have never met and probably never will meet, a cameraman and crew with their own ideas and techniques, and a cast he doesn't know. Once his script has run this gauntlet, the resultant film is at the mercy of a film editor, sound engineers, musicians, etc. -- and unless he's extremely fortunate in having a meeting of the minds all along the route, his concept is apt to be vitally altered

In television, my most satisfactory experiences have come while working on the now-defunct THRILLER, which I don't believe has been shown in England. Here, in most instances I was accorded unusual liberties; my scripts were shot just as I wrote them, and often with the exact camera-angles I set up. I got to know the producer and several of the directors, and their contributions were additions to my own rather than deletions or changes made merely to superimpose their own concepts. I also sat in on cast-rehearsals and was thus able to answer actor's questions, make suggestions as to tempo, playing-style, etc. This hasn't been the case with my Hitchcock shows, but here at least I've had the pleasure of working on a close basis with producers who generally do their best to honour the spirit of the scripts. I must, however, rely on their efforts to protect the script from the tampering of the directors, technical crew and cast; sometimes they do, sometimes they cannot -- so the results vary somewhat.

Concluded on Page 32.



Please do not just ignore these reviews. Comment on them.. do they annoy you, please you, or what? There are some comments on last issue's reviews on Pp. 30-31.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Beryl Henley

THE WEIRD ONES. Introduced by H.L. Gold. Dobson S.F. 15/-. 173 pp.

Seven readable stories, and a preface, "My Word", by H. L. Gold. This briefly outlines how words like "jeep" and "hassle" became incorporated into the language, and points out the difficulties of sf writers who have to find names for their "inventions".

SMALL LORDS.: Frederick Pohl. Individual size versus sheer weight of numbers.

SENTIMENT INC. : Poul Anderson. A refinement of the electro-encephalograph makes for a painless and almost undetectable form of brain-washing. Put this machine into the hands of a psychiatrist with delusions of grandeur, and the scene is set for trouble. If, that is, he breaks the eleventh commandment. Unfortunately for him, he unwittingly robs a stubborn young man of his girl. And in this case, love doesn't so much find a way as bulldoze one. I tend to approve of Individual-Beats-Establishment stories, so I rather liked this.

NAME YOUR TIGER : Milton Lesser. A strangely compelling story of humanity versus the unknown - which includes his own mind.

IRON MAN : Eando Binder. A tragi-comic story of a small, meek man, Charley Becker, who identifies so completely with a robot that the psychiatrist called in by Mrs. Becker is baffled.

THE HUNTED ONES : Mack Reynolds. For me, this is the best in the book. Earth is at war with Deneb, and apparently the Geneva Convention has got lost on the way there. Denebian p.o.w.'s are tortured, and those who survive are turned loose to be hunted by so-called sportsmen. This idea revolted me, and I was therefore on the side of the aliens, as I think most readers will be. Blind arrogance leads to Man's eventual downfall. One cannot help feeling that it serves him right.

HAIL TO THE CHIEF : Sam Sackett. I found myself resenting this story and its implications. I don't know if this is what Mr. Sackett (is this a pseudonym?) intended, but the idea of a nation being secretly governed by the "intellectual elite" smacks of the "Mother-knows-best" attitude, and this irritates me. Professor Logan writes a perceptive book about J.S. Mill - he of the gigantic intellect - and as a result finds himself



being initiated into the clique of intelligentsia which really rules America. This carefully selected, thoroughly screened group, headed by "The Chief", has decided that only people with a high I.Q. have the right to govern. They set up "cardboard" Presidential candidates, and rig elections every which way. Prof. Logan at first finds this "benevolent despotism" very appealing to his own way of thought - particularly as he can have literally anything he wants in return for his loyalty and silence. But his dissatisfaction grows, especially when he realises that the Chief's emotional stability falls far short of his massive intelligence. The denouement is oddly unsatisfactory - has Logan's precipitate action made things better or worse? And for whom? And is there ever an exception to the rule that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."?

\* IMPRACTICAL JOKE : L. Sprague de Camp. This is well-written, as one might expect, and the alien terrain is vividly depicted. However, all that I can say is that I wouldn't take a trip to the end of the street with this lot! Didn't think much of this one.

A MAN OF DOUBLE DEED: Leonard Daventry. Gollancz, 15/- . 176 pp.

This is Mr. Daventry's first novel, and on that basis I label it "very promising". Its opening is prosaic, even hackneyed, but it gradually picks up speed and interest as it unfolds.

The year is 2090, nuclear war is 100 years in the past and the race has not only survived but is flourishing. Telepathy has finally emerged in a few people; these are the "keymen" who keep an eye on the doings of humanity-at-large and manipulate people and events when it seems necessary.

Claus Conan is a keyman. He maintains a successful and happy menage-a-trois with two women, in a world where the word "love" has apparently become just another four-letter word.

The keymen are worried by the increase in violence among young people. Senseless killings are taking place with growing frequency and the suicide rate is constantly climbing. Conan is delegated to approach a member of the World Council and explain the keymen's views on a project which might solve the problem of the violent ones.

It is in the interest of certain people that Conan should not be allowed to reach his objective. The man himself has quite a ball ..... Between suffering from the attentions of over-zealous policement, and fending off the attentions of a rich young man who fancies one of his (Conan's) two women, he manages to have a brief but somewhat lusty affair with Linnel, a female meant-to-be decoy who - er - lies down on the job .....

He also indulges in a bit of mayhem - aided by the amazing Deenan, a former spaceman who, following a ghastly accident in space, is now half-metal and half-man. And, apparently, half-mad.

There's a lot of potential here: the breadth and depth of Mr. D's backdrop present a very interesting picture of the entire sociological set-up. With a little more exper-



ience and expertise, this could well have been another "Tiger Tiger" or "Demolished Man". He might make it yet. Recommended - especially for psi-addicts.

THE LOAFERS OF REFUGE. Joseph Green. Gollancz, 15/-. 176 pp.

Another "First" - though I remember Mr. Green as represented in some of John Carnell's "New Writings" series, with short stories. This is his first full-length novel. A psi-story with a difference, set on the newly-colonised world of Refuge, it concerns a human boy, Carey Sheldon, and his friend Timmy, a native of the planet. These furred, peaceful folk are the "Loafers" of the title. Their way of life is very different from that of the Colonists, employing mental power to control animals and, in a few cases, plant-life.

However, Carey proves that an Earthman can develop the same powers, and after successfully passing a difficult initiation, he and Timmy become a sort of trouble-shooting team, mediating where necessary between colonists and Loafers.

Carey's wilful young sister, Doreen, elects to study the very rare and complicated business of communicating with the strange "breshwahr" trees.

Mother Earth is desperately overcrowded and would send out many more colonists if it were possible. Unfortunately the matter-transmitter is incapable of sending people and animals to the many worlds that await them. They arrive, all right - but very, very dead.

With the help of a tree-friend, Doreen solves this problem, and unwittingly ruins her own happiness in the process.

This story lacks the impact of Leonard Daventry's rather violent book, but it is a gentle, pleasant story and the various characters are quite well-drawn. One also grasps the feeling of space, room to move and breathe, to grow and build on Refuge, as opposed to the stifling conditions on Earth. Again, it's a story for psi-addicts, but don't expect any fireworks!

SUNDOG: Brian Ball. Dennis Dobson, 16s. 216pp.

This author's name is new to me, and the book itself carries no information-supplying jacket, so I don't know if this is Mr Ball's first book, or first SF novel, or what. In this instance though, perhaps it really doesn't matter, because I simply couldn't put the book down until I'd finished it. Much of it is space-opera, but it is very well done.

It begins prosaically enough, with an uncomplicated, happy-in-his-work space pilot named Dod, doing a routine run -- his 71st -- from Pluto to the Moon. Routine, that is, until Dodd suddenly discovers that he has acquired a halo. After initial panic he decides that he's got a dose of the space-heebies, and takes a couple of pills, which have precisely no effect. He gets worried again, thinking he'll be chucked out of the Company he serves with near-fanatic loyalty. When he reaches his destination however, relief alternates with horror when he discovers that everybody else can see his halo, and therefore he hasn't gone bonkers after all.

The Psych tests start, and slowly Dod finds himself gaining access to strange memories he didn't know he had. He acquires help from an unexpected source, and finds, to his



astonishment, that he can kill without pity when he has to. He also acquires rapid promotion when the authorities decide that the halo is some sort of a sign from the mysterious, never-contacted Aliens, who have penned Man inside the Solar System for two centuries.

Slowly, Dod "rescues" his former self from under the layers of implanted false memories. But he can't find out why he was brainwashed. The action moves to The Games, to Europe, and finally out into space. It also moves inwards, into the depths of Dod's mind, as he struggles to free his mind from his body and thus contact the Aliens.

As I've outlined it, perhaps it doesn't sound very impressive, but Mr Ball's vivid descriptive writing, and vigorous style, carry the reader along at a cracking pace, and provide plenty of interest and excitement. His characters are skilfully delineated too, -- particularly well drawn are Scringouer the Psychman, and Gompertz, a crafty old schoner.

Dod himself is a fine study of a man both driven and driving himself. Fear, confusion, disillusion, frustration, rage, defiance, purposive energy -- all these and more Mr Ball uses, as an artist uses different-coloured paints, to bring his central characters to life. Highly recommended for those who like straightforward SF..esp-ecially when it's a little spiced.

NEW WRITINGS IN SF No. 3. ed John Carnell. Dobson, 16/-, 189 Pp.

This is by far the best collection yet issued by Mr Carnell in this series. Only one of the eight stories -- "The Fiend" by Frederik Pohl, has been published before, (in PLAYBOY) and, as the editor says, it "will not have been read before by many regular SF readers.

SUBWAYS OF TAZOO --a follow-up to the Cammis story, by Colin Kapp. It's a little obvious in places, but that doesn't distract from the fun.

THE FIEND by Frederik Pohl. If you were the captain and sole crew member of an inter-stellar ship carrying 700 frozen colonists on a 20 year trip -- wouldn't you feel like some pleasant feminine company after a few years? So you pick out one of the female colonists -- a young and pretty one, of course, -- and you wake her up out of deep freeze. And then...No. those dots don't represent anything erotic. They indicate a twist-ending which is as shocking as cold water thrown in your face. A very clever story.

MANIPULATION by John Kingston. All the superlatives for this one. Really first class psi story, told in monologue form, so you don't so much read it as live it.

TESTAMENT. John Baxter. A tragic and macabre story about the descendants of a spaceship crash, who fail to recognise rescue when it comes.

NIGHT WATCH. James Inglis. To quote Mr Carnell, "This is a little vignette from the pen of a new British writer, with all the nuances of a Stapledonian epic packed into its few thousand words. In this case, not even the Universe is the hero."

BOULTER'S CANARIES. Keith Roberts. A ghost story with a difference.

EMRETH. Dan Morgan. An extraterrestrial menace story.

SPACEMASTER by James H Schmitz. The ending is a stock one, and I saw it coming, but it's still an interesting story.

THE SEVENTH GALAXY READER. ed Frederik Pohl. Gollancz 18/-, 247 Pp.

Fifteen stories for every sort of reading mood. Space is short so obviously these cannot be reviewed separately here, or even listed. But a glance at the contents page will give some idea as to the quality of this collection. Budrys, Brown, delRey, Knight, Leiber, and many more. Perhaps not the best stories these authors have written, but mostly at least



of an average that is a way above most stories published today. The usual reservation has to be made, as it does for all "magazine" anthologies -if you don't like GALAXY you won't like this collection; if you've read the magazine for the past few years you'll not need the collection.

SPECTRUM IV. edited by Kingsley Amis & Robert Conquest. Gollancz. 320pp. 21/-

Much the same thing applies for this book as for the previous publication. It is perhaps slightly better in that the stories will not have been encountered quite so recently in their original form. There are fourteen items in this collection, ranging from poor to excellent. Little more need be said, except look through the book before buying.

TRADER TO THE STARS. Poul Anderson, Gollancz. 1965. 15/- 177 pp.

Not an anthology, but a collection of stories having the same central character:- Nicolas vanRijn, and the same background. The stories have a slight ring of sameness, though are all enjoyable. Gollancz are suffering with this book and the two former items, in that many of the stories will have been read before. In this case, the stories appeared in Astounding/Analog, during the past half-decade or so. I liked it, you should also.

SHIELD. Poul Anderson. Dennis Dobson. 16/-

To be reviewed at length in ZENITH 9. The story appeared in a shorter version in F&SF.

TELEPATHIST. John Brunner. Faber & Faber Ltd. 16/-.

Also to be reviewed in ZENITH 9, space permitting. A psi novel, as evidenced by the title.

THE DARKEST OF NIGHTS. Chas Eric Maine. Panther 3/6.

THE MARTIAN WAY, Isaac Asimov. Panther 3/6.

THE SILENT SPEAKERS. Arthur Sellings. Panther 3/6

AFTER DOOMSDAY. Poul Anderson. Panther. 3/6

Three of the above titles were reviewed in previous issues of ZENITH. Panther appear to be buying reprint rights to much of the current British hardcover SF. They are at present just about the leading publisher in PB SF, in both quantity, quality, and presentation standards. You'll see these books in your local bookshop; they're all very attractive and worth 3/6.

From SEVENTH GALAXY READER onwards, these reviews have been by the editor. The appearance of this page in large-size type is regretted, but was unavoidable; the alternative was a week-long delay in mailing.

Next issue we hope to have some changes in the review departments.

GUEST REVIEW -- EARTHWORKS -- CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 2.

away unused. There are other instances. Then the book ends where, to my mind, it should have begun. That's fair enough inasmuch as it concerns itself with "before" rather than with "after". Nevertheless, the story of what happened to the protagonist during the year or two immediately following the end of the book could have held my interest much more successfully.

This, then, I do not find to be an entirely satisfactory book. This is not to condemn it out of hand. If you have not already read SKELETON CREW you should find EARTHWORKS well worth a read. If you have read the magazine story, you can judge for yourself whether you want to cover the same ground again at not vastly greater length.



## LETTERS

A New Trick in ZENITH --- Letters in this issue are grouped in subjects, for easy reading. If this is unpopular, the other, more usual way of printing letters will be brought back. If this is popular then I may split letters up even further, and have letters on a particular department featured along with the current column. Thus, in this issue, Beryl's letter and others on the same tack would have been printed with FANORAMA. What do you think?

### COMMENTS ON FANORAMA:

Beryl Henley, 59, The Fearnings, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, Worcs. (to Walt Willis.)

When Pete told me that FANORAMA in ZENITH-7 dealt almost exclusively with LINK, I alternated between being terrified and elated. Well, I told myself, even if he pans it to hell-an'-gone, at least we'll get some clever and constructive criticism.

I was keenly disappointed. Not because you found LINK unfunny; a sense of humour, as you said, is a subjective thing, and very elusive of definition. In any case, as you will have observed from the LoC's in LINK-2, you are in a minority.

Not because you referred to LINK as; "an interesting lode which has just been dug up and left there in a heap." I accept that assessment without rancour....

No, my disappointment was three-fold.

1. A steam-hammer to crack a very small chestnut? Walt, it sounds more like a man digging for gold in a field of buttercups. Why search for hidden significances which were never intended to be there anyway?, I'm a Midlander. I speak with a Brummie accent And I wrote 'pore' because that's the way I pronounce the word. That's all, I assure you! It wasn't meant to be a 'very good pun'. Nearly a whole Z-page to analyse two words to death...what a waste of Willis!

2. Anyone who had not read LINK before reading FANORAMA would probably assume that the zine was a solo job. It wasn't. As editor, I cheerfully carry the cans and accept the brickbats, but if there is any praise going-- even the faint variety that is said to damn, I want it shared. I did not produce LINK alone. In fact, had it not been for the encouragement, and promises of help from Mary Reed, Anne Campbell, Archie Mercer, Doreen Parker, Mike Higgs and Ken Cheslin -- plus the concerted nagging of assorted Brummies, and Charles Platt! -- it's doubtful if I would have tackled a zine as yet.

3. No wonder serious poetry usually sends you into 'a sort of coma'; "...shows she can write very well when she works at it." But as far as poetry is concerned, I don't work at it. At least, not initially. I don't write poetry, it happens to me.

Anyway, thank you for the nice things you said. I stress that this is not intended as a letter of self-defence, I'm not protesting against your criticisms. It's just that I expected so much more from the doyen of zine reviewers. You're not quite as mute as if your soul were dead.. but this certainly isn't the kind of music I'd anticipated hearing from my position as a supplicant outside Tara's walls.

May I also take you up on a remark you made in your review of Chris Priest's CON? "The only thing one can be certain of in newspaper reports is that they have got their



facts wrong." Even if that statement was made tongue-in-cheek, and I hope it was ! - (a) it's a sweeping generalisation of the kind I dislike most, and (b) it's blatantly untrue. You are, I think, due to have Gray Hall at least, breathing brimstone all over your pet shamrock ! I have no personal peppercorn to grind here -- I packed up hacking for a newspaper in 1958 -- but I can assure you that any journalist who does get his facts wrong quickly finds himself between the Scylla of editorial wrath, and the Charybdis of the indignation of those who have been misrepresented. With, occasionally, the Damoclean sword of a threatened civil suit to add to his predicament.

/ There it is, Beryl's letter to Walt Willis, answered in this issue's FANORAMA (pp 6) no vitriol here, just a little misunderstanding on both sides (and I, for once, thank god, am out of it). But of course, there is always someone who must make sure that the maximum offense and ill-feeling is generated by any incident, however small. Read on. /

Charles Platt, 325, Westbourne Park Road, London, W.11.

Not long ago, and this you are welcome to print, I received a touching letter from good old Walt, saying how much he resented his reputation, how he enjoyed meeting neos at the Con who treated him as an equal, how he wished he could start over again under a pseudonym. Behind this falsest of false modesties, however, I see the man has pathetically blatant delusions of grandeur. The superior, talking-down, aren't-I-fabulous first paragraph of FANORAMA is simply nauseating. No one but a famous millionaire author can get away with pseudo-pseudo muck like this. In addition to being an Authority on fanzines ( a pretty microscopic field, but no doubt he's proud of it), Willis is an authority on Humour, it seems. Well, after all, many people in Britain and the USA -- perhaps even more than 500 -- know about the legendary wit of Willis. So I was on the edge of my chair during his brilliant dissection of the least important piece of Beryl's fanzine. With skill and scalding sarcasm that left me breathless (with fury,) Willis expertly tells us exactly what is wrong with an ad lib line mentioned by the way in a fannish description of a slapstick comedy. And then, with a casual inference, Willis uses this to damn Beryl, the whole magazine, and all the other contributions in it. Can the inane high-handedness of this inflated-headed bigot be believed Can yours, ?Ed / Willis admits his main defect in criticising LINK when he says, "I was so frustrated about the humorous part of this fanzine.." blatantly exposing the fact that because he couldn't find anything in it that appealed to him, or more important, lay within his own in-group, he labeled it 'bad'. It also implies, rightly I suspect, that he didn't read all of LINK by any means, thus missing the many other contributions from other people. He has written, in fact, a very bad review of the kind normally produced by newcomers to fandom who complain of the unfunny in-groupness and incomprehensibility of the average fanzine. One would expect him to exert more restraint -- at least to the point of saying that while LINK didn't appeal to him, no doubt it pleased the readership it was intended for immensely -- and one would also hope that, in the same way that writers of neofan reviews of this type get slapped down, the great Walt Willis gets trodden on. After all, he doesn't enjoy his reputation, you know....

/ There's definitely some doubt in my mind as to who needs treading on.... /

Archie Mercer, 70 Worrall Road, Bristol 8.

At first sight, Walt's meanderings around the subject of LINK seemed generally fair. At second sight I'm not so sure. For one thing, he seems to be taking something of a patronising air towards the whole female sex. When he made that "could-it-be-Dr-Johnson" quote I fully expected him to go on to quote the apparently genuine Johnsonism about the woman preaching in church - which, he claimed, resembled a dog walking on its hind legs in that it wasn't the quality of the performance that mattered but the fact that it was being done at all. I'd have been very interested to have seen how Walt would have treated LINK had Beryl been a man.



In any case, I think he's missing the main point about Beryl. This isn't, of course exactly his fault in that he hasn't had the pleasure of meeting her as yet, and doesn't ( I understand ) even correspond with her. But Beryl's crackpottery is of a very special kind that doesn't leave her disappointed when she finds that other people tend not to see things quite her way.

/ Yes, But... Beryl has just demonstrated (for the very first time ever) that she can be disappointed when someone (i.e. Walt) doesn't see things quite her way. Which only goes to show she's human..if she couldn't be disappointed she'd be a psychotic of some sort.(Megalomaniac ?).7

Chris Priest, 'Cornerways', Willow Close, Doddinghurst, BRENTWOOD, Essex.

Walt Willis was off-form this time. Despite protestations to the contrary, I can't help but feel that his self-parallelisation with Johnson is a case of cerebral enlargement of the worst variety. And how futile to judge a person's sense of humour on the strength of one off-the-cuff ad-lib !

Ivor Latto, 16 Merryton Ave, Glasgow W5.

....I enjoyed FANORAMA.... / That all, Ivor ? You sure ? No hidden meanings noted ?  
THANK YOU that man.7

/ Understandably, some correspondence has waxed between the principals in this Willis-Platt affair. While we can't print it all here, below is the latest Willis letter to Platt; which may give some insight into this business.7

Dear Charles...I've thought very carefully about what you say, but I still can't see how I could have expressed my opinions in any way which wouldn't have annoyed you.

In QUARK, for instance, I tried to convey the rather rueful amusement some of us older fans felt at suddenly becoming non-entities. This is quite compatible with the relief I personally felt at being able to attend a convention as an unknown fan. We all have mixed feelings about such things, being human. You for instance seem to regard older fans ambivalently -- scorning them at one moment as irrelevant and the next treating them as some sort of established authority which must be challenged.

I could reconcile myself to either type of hostility, but it seems rather unfair to be getting both. I started writing for ZENITH on the assumption that I could write in the new fandom like any other fan, and say what I thought freely, without the need to preface every sentence with "I think" or "In my humble opinion." But because you think I regard myself pompously, you read a pompous attitude into everything I say, which was certainly not there when I wrote it.

In the LINK review again, I expressed what you must admit to be a legitimate point of view, that here was a promising attempt at humour which failed in the writing, and tried to criticise it in a way that might be helpful. I have as it happens read and thought a great deal about the technique of writing humour, but I won't go into that because you would say I was showing-off again. I would just ask you this. Am I not as entitled as any fan to try my hand at literary criticism without having my character impugned ?

I would in all sincerity ask you to examine your own attitude with the intellectual honesty I believe you do possess. In particular I ask you to consider whether you might not be projecting your own feelings of hostility into what both of us write. Does it not seem even a little bit strange, for example, that when I attempt a documented analysis of a piece of writing, you feel I am being "bad-mannered and unkind"; but when you publicly say I have "pathetically false delusions of grandeur" (a statement which you have since admitted was not justified and which incidentally is libellous) you feel this is just your "sense of fun"?

One significant difference is that I criticised a piece of writing, while you criticised a person. Another is the implication that I have no feelings whereas Beryl has. There are others, and they all spring from subconscious assumptions of yours which might bear examination.

/ Dear Charles...ZENITH is not run, and FANORAMA is not written, for your benefit/  
Tom Perry, 4018 Laurel Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska.

....I particularly enjoyed FANORAMA and almost rather wished Willis didn't write a column for my fanzine so that he might sometime give it this critical treatment. But even without that, his reviews are the kind that cause a fan to see his own zine in a new light. Joe Pilati used to kid me last summer because I kept glancing through my slim little magazine as each new letter or review came in, but I couldn't help it; each new comment helped me analyse it differently. I can even get a kick out of reading over the mailing list, wondering just what each reader will think.

/ And they do think some peculiar things don't they ? Every issue of ZENITH seems to be loaded with hidden meanings that I certainly never notice when publishing.

Time to close shop now on FANORAMA. Any further comments of interest will have to be held over until the next issue. /

Comments on BRICKBATS AND ROSES.

Brian Aldiss, 24, Marston Street, Iffley Road, Oxford.

....Although you devote overmuch space to that arch lowbrow Heinlein, you more than recompense your readers by the thrilling spectacle of Moorcock and Jeeves bleeding and dying for their beliefs. The spectacle is the more thrilling since their attitudes are perfectly worthy in both cases. The division between them seems to come along the line that may be tentatively drawn between what we may call Sixties Science Fiction, the seeds of which were sown in earlier decades, and the Fifties Fiction. Moorcock is, or thinks he is, looking ahead; Jeeves is, but does not know he is, looking back. And there is nothing anyone can do but align himself on one side or other, or try and look at a larger picture that will embrace both these views.

I am sure that the present crisis in science fiction is epitomised by the simultaneous excitements and disappointments of Science Fantasy and New Worlds, since they escaped from the pulpy clutches of Nova, where we can see in a pure form the confusions caused by looking back and looking forward.

So for the first time we have a genuine controversy in science fiction that hinges on style rather than content. Good old science fiction, always years behind the times ! For the Jeeves-Moorcock shindig (and you know I diagnose without that essential Dead Sea Scroll Zenith 6) is an argument about form, Jeeves gives his high scores for the traditional story with the O.Henry type structure, i.e. buildup followed by punchline. Moorcock tends to delete points for this arrangement, and prefers slices of consciousness. (Gentlemen both, apologies for generalisations. )

Ballard's TERMINAL BEACH fails under the O.Henry rules. Come to it with a little modern sophistication and an understanding of what Jung and his popularisers have been talking about since before we were born, and it is a brilliant success. You are now expected to dig popularisations of Jung as you were expected to dig popularisations of Einstein two generations back. Come my next published story in Science Fantasy, 'Man In His Time', and I shall expect you all to dig Ouspensky too !

/ Science Fiction is remarkably conservative for a progressive form of literature; but 'Fifties' fans know what they do and don't like. The present complaints stem from the fact that no SF magazine today is giving us what we want. (Notice that 'we') /



Alex B Eisenstein, 3030, West Fargo Ave, Chicago, USA.

I, for one, wish you would give Terry Jeeves the book review column, and have him amplify his comments into longer critiques. I find his "opinions" more penetrating than reams from such as Michael Moorcock. If that man truly believes that Cordwainer Smith suffers "certain weaknesses of plot construction" only "from time to time", he is not only thick, but mad as well. "A Planet Named Shayol" is a story whose plot is not just weak, but absolutely inchoate. It took a determined effort of will, on my part, to finish the (you should pardon the jest) damn thing. I kept on thinking, "Well, gee, it is the same guy who wrote "The Game Of Rat and Dragon"; but alas, he is also the same guy who wrote "The Lady Who Sailed The Soul." But back to "Shayol"; talk about pointless happenings, page after page; talk about deus ex machina endings ! Hoo boy ! "Shayol" has all of 'em. God, what crud !

Hit 'em again, Terry! So say I, There are people out here who appreciate you, and who despise fuzzy, redundant, even automatic thinking.

Mike Deckinger, Apartment 10K, 25 Manor Drive, Newark, New Jersey.

It seems to me that no matter how the letter writers may try to get around it, Jeeves' opinions are his, and his alone, and there is no restriction to his reviewing a story as he deems it, assigning letter "grades" to denote his opinion. In essence, every reviewer is prefacing his review with "In my opinion". This qualification is unnecessary because its existence is assumed beforehand. For Mr Jeeves, or for anyone, to say that such-and-such is a bad book, is not so much an evaluation on the book as it is on the reviewer. He is first, stating that in his opinion the book is bad. It may be a perfectly marvelous book, but the reviewer has turned thumbs down on it. But, he of course must go further, telling why the book is bad and perhaps offering suggestions for improvement. Writers are certainly not immune to adverse criticism, no matter what genre they may inhabit. I would therefore urge that Mr Jeeves be given all the freedom he needs to state whatever he may care to, and then be allowed to back up his declarations if a defence is called for.

Ivor Latta, 16, Merryton Ave, Glasgow W5.

Terry Jeeves came in for a lot of hard words in the last Zenith, some of it perhaps deservedly. Certainly he has every right to express his own viewpoint, as we have every right to disagree with it; but his remarks on the Moorcock-Ballard-Cordwainer Smith stories go beyond that. If he considers the H.Beam Piper pot-boiler "Gunpowder God" to be superior to Moorcock's "Shores Of Death", then fair enough. What is not fair is his reaction to the work of these authors, which gives one the impression...which gave me the impression... that he is going beyond the bounds of fair comment and is verging on something much nastier.... something more akin to malevolence than criticism. Perhaps if he were to give more space to the stories he reviews, and gave us not only the fact that he didn't like it (who cares?), but why he didn't like it (that might be interesting). After all, of what use is a two-line crit to the effect that a story is "utter twaddle defying description". It means absolutely nothing to the reader, the author, anyone, apart from the fact that he does not like it. So ? If he thinks it is not worth reading he should give us stronger evidence for his own prejudice.

/ My opinions on this business; I consider Terry's opinions, as they are at present, to be just that. Terry has a right to these, as Mike Deckinger says. The differences arise from what you get out of these opinions. I enjoy them as they are, but a lot of people seem to want more reasoning. I give two explanations for the brevity of the opinions; (1) lack of space -- we usually try to review four magazines. (2) To pull a story to pieces at length, you have to assume that the readers have read it, and they usually have not; or you have to give the plot away to some extent, which we usually try not to do in Zenith. The danger is that a magazine review can grow into a mere synopsis column. /

Joe Patrizio, 22 Eaton Road, St Albans, Herts. (NB: Moving shortly.)

The 'criticism' argument has brought you in quite a lot of interesting letters, and I think Lloyd Biggle gets a bit nearer basics than the others. I personally think that where Terry has gone wrong is in the rating system. This rankles Bill, and other pros, because here we have Terry, a non-professional, hanging what looks suspiciously like an absolute value on one of their creations. I don't think anybody would say that Jeeves shouldn't say what he thought, but that rating is an irritant -- and I tend to think that way myself.

Chris Priest, 'Cornerways', Willow Close, Doddinghurst, Brentwood, Essex

If I may add my two-grandsworth to the Terry Jeeves kerfuffle, I'd like to say that his reviews, however biased or illiterate or immature or non-qualified, are just what reviews should be; that is, an opinion, for what it is worth. The advantage of this, is that the reader of the reviews has some kind of a yardstick; something which the review writer did not have.

Langdon Jones, 36, Winscombe Crescent, Ealing, London W5.

Terry Jeeves keeps insisting that his reviews are merely his opinions, and by definition this makes them completely worthless as far as anyone else is concerned. / Hold on, not so at all ! / I am sure that not many people are interested in Jeeves' opinions of stories, I'm not, at least. A review should not be just a casual opinion. The idea of any review is to give the reader some idea of the nature of the particular work, and to assess its merits and faults, as objectively as possible. If a review is not as objective as the writer can make it, then it's completely valueless to everyone except the person who wrote it. / I don't usually interrupt in mid-letter Lang, but I must disagree. Terry's reviews may be subjective, but they are not worthless. Even the most anti-Jeeves critic can read a Jeeves comment and immediately have some idea as to the nature of the story. Jeeves is reviewing the magazine stories in such a way that their nature is revealed, to the regular reader, by comparison with what we have come to know of Jeeves' own nature. I don't agree that a review has to be all that objective; such is the path to fence-sitting and neutrality. /

Jeeves' hurt and virtuous reply to Mike Moorcock has convinced me of his complete incapacity for any kind of objectivity at all. At one point he says the following; "Again, in my latest review, I did say that you had great ability..or words to that effect, my complaint being that you created pearls, but that they were isolated on their string, and did not form a co\_hesive whole..."

On the previous page is -- what I presume to be -- that very review. The phrase in question reads;--

"Despite the author's colourful imagery and description, they fail to be more than.. artificial jewels on a tawdry piece of string."

Any man, who, because of outside circumstances, unconsciously modifies his ideas in this way, obviously without realising it, is not fit to criticise - or set down his opinions on - anything.

Bill Temple.

Lloyd Biggle Jr puts his finger on the root cause of my quarrel with Terry; the irritating and redundant system of letter rating. I tend to explode about this from personal reasons. It's employed at the school which my children attended (Haberdasher's Aske's, if you're interested professionally, Terry.) The heads of this school seem to have a fat-headed idea that all kids are hubristic and need taking down a peg or two. No-one ever gets an 'A' -- that's just a carrot dangled in front of the donkey. Consequently, also, sensitive children trying their best and eager to please are continually disappointed and even discouraged by this lack of (literally) marked enthusiasm, I know my kids were.



True education means drawing out the potentialities of the pupils, not slapping them down. Creatively, kids (and authors too, believe me) need all the encouragement and reassurance they can get.

So instinctively I rebelled against Terry's deliberate low rating. Subsequently I've learned Terry is a school-teacher himself, which explains much. I hope he's not in the habit of employing this same misguided principle on his pupils. If he is, a reading of Hughes Mearns's Creative Power; The Education Of Youth In the Creative Arts might change his outlook.

Charlie Brown's letter from the Bronx (where the cheers come from, and if they're all like Charlie there I can imagine why) quotes me as saying something I've never even thought, let alone written, and gleefully relates how I was squelched by a reader as a result. No chapter or verse supplied. I guess he's confused me with another British author. John F Burke ? Charles Eric Maine ?

/ More comments on Brickbats & Roses next time, if there is anything worthwhile left to say. In the meantime, space is short so on to other subjects; /

#### Comments on FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD.

Bill Temple.

Al Lewis' review (much better balanced writing than Heinlein's own) of FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD only confirms my view that Heinlein's philosophy is wrong at heart and certainly in the head. I resent the word "weak" being coupled to "liberal idealist" as though it were symptomatic. There are strong liberal idealists (far too few, unfortunately) and if "realism" is to accept World War III as inevitable, then the word needs re-defining.

Peter White, 75, Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey.

Al Lewis' review of FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD would have been much better if only Lewis had seemed less ignorant of the specific symptoms of fascist thought Heinlein displays in his writing.

When Auden and Isherwood wrote THE DOG BENEATH THE SKIN, they saw two kinds of fascism in the world; the hypocritical 'gentlemanly' fascism of Portugal, and the more overtly depraved fascism of the Third Reich. A third variety has appeared in the USA. It is the belief that freedom means freedom for a self-styled bourgeois elite to defend their barren culture from the dregs and ordure of society; atheists, queers, socialists, and blacks. Basically this is the philosophy of Goldwater and of Heinlein too. It has transformed the USA into the greatest threat to civilisation that exists today. It is the feeling that lies behind the present criticism of the Welfare State, and almost gave us another term of Tory office.

/ Whew ! Somebody comment; I don't trust myself. /

Alex B Eisenstein, 3030 West Fargo Ave, Chicago.

Al Lewis, in his critique of FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD, says that "Duke is never allowed to present an effective case ((for his liberalism, etc)) -- by means of a weak and spoiled character he is immediately cast in the role of the loser." I think that is a succinct expression of one of the major weaknesses of the book. The other is the deus ex machina ending, which Al also points out. There are other faults, but they are of minor influence on the book-as-a-whole.

I must fault Al on two minor points of his own; however. As I recall, there was no incest, nor talk of it, between Karen and Hugh Farnham; and Grace's relations with Duke were so far from being sexual as to make her totally indifferent to the fact of Duke's castration. All she wanted was to have her little boy with her again, apparently.

All in all, I think Al's "assessment" has been the fairest and most complete that I have yet seen. (Applause !)

John Boston, 816 South First Street, Mayfield, Kentucky.

Al Lewis has by far the best comments I've yet seen on FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD. I would be most interested in seeing the article from Quark, although I have seen the one in DYNATRON. One thing though -- Al has not gone off the deep end on Heinlein's racial comments, as I fear all too many liberal fans will. The whole thing appears to be a deliberately contrived slap in the face to some of the more fatuous liberal ideas. I doubt that very many actually feel that, given "equality", all Negroes will become paragons of virtue, but that is the impression one gets from some writings on the subject. And the idea of the inadequacy of Farnham's own liberalism will probably set quite a bit of hair on end out there.

Comparing the hardcover edition of the book with the serial version makes me want to assassinate Frederik Pohl-- but, on the other hand, I take my hat off to him for skillful cutting. In places he left out whole scenes and grafted the beginning of one onto the end of another! Still, I'd rather read Heinlein's FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD than Pohl's. Mustn't be too hard on Pohl, though; he's about the only SF editor who has shown any improvement over the past few years at all. Now that F&SF has ditched Davidson, though, they're publishing some excellent material. But back to FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD. For some reason, although fandom claims to be openminded, when something like this or STARSHIP TROOPERS comes out, it's condemned because no one agrees with it. That sort of thing is arseant balderdash; anyone who expects SF to adhere to any "partyvline" of any sort should take up reading detective stories or THE DAILY WORKER. I nominated DAVY for the Hugo, and having now read the longer version of FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD, stand by my choice. DAVY is just in my opinion a better book. But this judgement has nothing to do with the fact that I agree with Pangborn and disagree with Heinlein; I think STARSHIP TROOPERS is a much better book than DAVY; FF falls down mainly because of its episodic quality, and also because the future society is not developed so fully as in, say, BEYOND THIS HORIZON. We just get a view of an isolated part of the world, and learn almost nothing about the worldwide operations of the culture. However, perhaps that was inevitable, considering Farnham's position. I wouldn't go so far to say, though, that all of Heinlein's plots are weak; go back to SILENT COLUMB, THE PUPPET MASTERS, MUTHUSELAHS CHILDREN. Or, better, GULF: there's enough plot to that for a story six times its length. On the whole, I'd say that FF is Heinlein's best since STARSHIP TROOPERS.

Tom Perry, 4018, Laurel Avenue, Omaha, Neb.

I'm glad Al has been able to convince himself that FF is a "good" book in a moral sense, and almost rather sorry he didn't convince me. But it seems to me there are several flaws in his way of looking at the story. The two major ones are found in his statements that Farnham's return to the twentieth century by timetravel and the introduction of parallel timetracks are unnecessary.

Al says of the first that it is "inexcusable"..completely out of place..unprepared..unbelievable..there by auctorial fiat." This just isn't so. Timetravel had already been introduced in the story when an atomic blast sent the shelter careening a couple of thousand years into the future. Al can be excused, I suppose, for not thinking of travel forward in time as timetravel, since that's the usual direction; but there it is, and if it were the only instance of timetravel in the book it would stand unexplained and unjustified, merely a deus ex machina to get the characters out of a scrape and into the future world. The second, controlled use of timetravel, and the brief but plausible explanation given for it, seem to me to establish a necessary aesthetic unity.



And since Al says that the return to the twentieth century is unnecessary to the themes he finds in the book, (freedom, self-reliance, and survival) I would have to suggest that he doesn't understand the true themes. The return to the near future establishes the story firmly as, not a story of a far-future age, but as a parable for our own.

As for the parallel-worlds theme, which Al finds "tossed in" for "no good reason at all", it seems to me that this is also necessary; without it the story would have to end on a note of despair, for no matter what Hugh and Barbara did, in 2000 years they would be forgotten by the corrupt and tyrannical future they have managed to escape. But the suggestion that their coming back to the twentieth century can change the future makes it possible for Hugh to say "Maybe Ponce will never get a chance to have teen-age girls for dinner! I'm damn well going to make a try to see that he doesn't!"

It's what he does to change the future that can be seen as the moral lesson Heinlein wants to teach our time. What Hugh does is to set up a trading post and restaurant bar that practices extreme discrimination -- the customer can be killed, rather than merely refused service. As I've said elsewhere, this might be necessary to a storekeeper in a rugged post-atomic age, but Heinlein is not really writing about such an age; he is writing a morality play for ours, and the lesson must be taken in the context of our time. As such it's easy to see that Farnham's store is a repudiation of the Civil Rights Act's anti-discrimination measures that make most restaurants accessible to all. The book must have been written while the law was under consideration; it was published in '64 after its passage and before an election that amounted to a nationwide referendum on it.

As for this question of the racial issue, it would be pleasant to think that Heinlein was merely showing us the other side of the coin, with whites discriminated against and blacks as the masters. But again, it isn't so. The white planter society of the American South had some good qualities, I believe, while Heinlein's black aristocracy has none. Despite incredibly advanced science and technology (so that Ponce's scientists can solve the problem of timetravel in months) the black society is rotten clear through with tyranny, cruelty, nepotism, slavery, cannibalism. The blacks even poison each other for power as a matter of routine, necessitating a set-up of white food tasters. The chattel slavery system once practiced in America was no admirable thing, certainly, but it did not include castration and cannibalism as accepted routine practice. One might ignore the context of the story, and claim that these blacks were corrupt because their society was decadent, not because they are Negroes. But this argument falters, I think, with the depiction of the youth from the twentieth century who adopts the corrupt society of Ponce because it gives him power and a chance for revenge, and abuses Farnham for suggesting he try to escape it. It is very well to make the point "that Negroes can be bad, too", as Al says, but there isn't a single good Negro in the book; Farnham confines his admiration for one future person who manages to repress his natural sadism and that person is a white slave.

I suspect some people may think I am accusing Heinlein of being a racist. I don't know, of course, but I don't think he is. I do think he decided to exploit racism in FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD as Goldwater propaganda, and I think it quite possible he deceived himself as to what its true message was; the book's symbolism seems to run wild, suggesting that Heinlein told himself it "really" meant something else. But as Al says, this sport of psychoanalysing authors by their books is dangerous, nowhere so much so as in science fiction. I also wish to make clear I'm not condemning Heinlein for being a conservative, or whatever he calls his version of it; but I think arguments even for conservatism can be made honestly, and I don't think the attacks on liberalism in FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD are.

BOOK REVIEWS ~ Some Comments.

Ivor Latto, 16 Merryton Ave, Glasgow, W5.

Beryl Henley's reviews may seem to be somewhat superficial at times, but she does give the impression that, given the opportunity she could become an excellent critic. Her review of THE ETHICAL ENGINEER was first rate, as far as it went. But here we have a novel which is written round just as distasteful a premise as was STARSHIP TROOPERS ...but doesn't touch on the fact that the book is based on a theme which is as questionable as anything Heinlein has ever done.

I haven't the energy to find which Campbell editorial this came from, or on Al Lewis' point, which Campbell editorial developed from it..reading JWC's thoughts is bad enough the first time around, I've chickened out of sampling them again. But there must be one, he wouldn't have let slip such a juicy, "realist" subject as this one, which basically is that one should conform to whatever society, any society, dictates; whether right or wrong, one conforms, for the thesis of the book is that there is no such thing as an abstract, universal right or wrong. Whatever the norm in that society..one conducts oneself so as not to offend it; whatever lies outside the norm..that is to be abhorred.

Harrison presents this idea in the old pamphleteering manner as a moral tale, entertaining enough to sugar the pill of the objectionable message. That it is propaganda is shown by the way the characters are presented; Jason, the hero, the sensible, reasonable, competent engineer is contrasted with Mikah, the buffoon of the piece, who is described as a puritanical, humourless stickler upon his standards of what is right and just..a suicidal fanatic in fact, whose conduct is meant to alienate the reader, and does. Indeed, one wonders how he ever came to live long enough to take part in this saga. Mikah is the type to declare (stridently and priggishly of course, Harrison sees to that) "Better to die free than to live in chains", while Jason, showing commendable patience with this nonsense, grunts, "Better to live in chains and learn how to get rid of them" All very reasonable, you see.

Except that it means accepting the standards of whatever society in which one finds oneself (until one can lead a revolution, overturn the existing order, and make Deneb 4 free for Democracy,..you can do that sort of thing in Space Opera.) So it is perfectly right and proper to accept human sacrifice, torture, cannibalism, slavery, anything a society dictates, and to do nothing to alter it, so long as Number One is OK. (Jason; "There are only two slaves that need freeing here, you and I. These people seem nicely adjusted to the status quo and I see no reason to change it.") You see the argument? "They are happier now than they could possibly be if they were,...emancipated from slavery/given the vote/taught how to read/forced to abandon eating their dead/...insert what you prefer.

This argument, that you accept the status quo, no matter what it implies, because a single individual has no power and no right to kick against a structure erected and supported by his fellow citizens, is the apology for the people who watched the cattle trucks on their way to Dachau and Buchenwald, and who shrugged their shoulders because "there's nothing I can do about it". The philosophy of Look After Number One may be "realistic", "sensible","responsible", but is hardly what has raised Man above the animals, nor does it exactly encourage social reform.

I'm sure Campbell must have written about it.

/I refuse to comment; possibly Harry Harrison meant the book as an exercise in a philosophy in which he personally doesn't believe? Remember, "it is a dangerous sport to psychoanalyse authors from their books". Anybody else have any comments.?



Archie Mercer, 70, Worrall Road, Bristol 8.

Comparing your reviews with Beryl's, I find something of significance. You deal straightforwardly with the story under review. Beryl, on the other hand, deals somewhat cursorily with the story and then takes off into subjects raised by the story. This, at somewhat greater length, is a higher type of criticism than the straightforward no-messing type -- but can only be appreciated to the full by someone who has also read the book in question. Whereas your type of review is frankly intended as a guide to those who have not read it. Inasmuch as I have myself read very few of the works under consideration by either of you, I find your style far more to my personal point, you may be interested to know.

One book I do happen to have read is THE WANDERER -- and although I know that books can hardly be allocated according to the pre-set taste of the reviewer every time, I find myself rather wishing that such a work could have been entrusted to someone capable of deriving more from it than Webb seems to have done.

I don't think many people have yet read it -- at any rate over here, and I think they should have a chance to do so. The fact that I hadn't encountered it at second hand by way of the fanzines meant that it burst upon my horizon as an unexpectedly delightful experience. Once most of Z's readers have had a chance to read the thing for themselves, then is the time to start dissecting it. While they probably haven't, I would suggest that all they need to know about it is that so long as they have a sense of wonder and a mind of normal fannish breadth, I would expect them to enjoy it. If they have a love of good writing for its own sake, they'll probably enjoy it even more.

It's at last sinking in that reading reviews before    read   ; the books being reviewed actually tends to diminish the enjoyment I get from reading the books, if and when I ever get round to them. This applies particularly to the sort of review that is written from the book outwards, as it were. STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND is the classic example of this, of course. -- I'd seen it practically chewed to death    years, before a copy ever came my way. However, there are a few books on the go now that I'd rather like to read, but which may very well come in a similar category. So I'm becoming very chary as to what reviews I read, as a consequence.

Comments on RELATIVE & ABSOLUTE: The Novels Of Edgar Pangborn.

Mike Deckinger, Apartment 10-k, 25, Manor Drive, Newark, New Jersey, USA.

The essay concerning Edgar Pangborn is well-handled, though unfortunately limited in depth. It's true that Pangborn has had a very limited output in the entire writing field, and this is more the reason that his non-sf entries should receive some mention. Pangborn is also the author of an unusual, complex, and sensitive courtroom trial mystery titled THE TRIAL OF CALLISTA BLAKE, published in 1961 by St Martin's Press, in New York. It provides a more rounded insight into the character and talent of Pangborn and is an outstanding book under any circumstances. Boston is woefully right about the tragic PB conditions today, contrasted with the immeasurably fine books that are overlooked in favour of some assembly hackwork ground out to beat a deadline and cash a cheque. DAVY, incidentally, was recently published in PB edition by Ballantine, for 75¢, and it's worth every cent. And let's for a moment overlook the gargantuan struggle being waged throughout A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS (albeit silently with little cognisance by humanity) and examine Pangborn's marvelous gift of creating a believable and sympathetic example of alien psychology. The Martian who narrates the book is a warm, vital, intensely real being, developed with unceasing skill. This is truly the measure of a brilliant writer. It's unfortunate that Pangborn writes so little. Walter Tevis' THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH came close to duplicating Pangborn's proficiency with alien insight, but not quite close enough.

Robert Bloch. (Concluded)

In films, all of the above contingencies apply, but the great problem is one of budget. Budget is the villain; it cuts the length of shooting time, and thus mitigates against taking time for elaborate but often necessary camera set-ups which help so much to maintain proper mood and atmosphere, and give a film the right pace and mounting. Budget determines whether or not a film will be properly cast, and whether or not a director can take the extra hours -- or days, or even weeks, -- necessary to get the right response from his actors. Hitchcock told me that he spent two full weeks filming and cutting the first murder sequence in PSYCHO, which runs exactly 45 seconds on the screen. He could do so, but most film-makers cannot; the 'front-office' won't allow it -- at least not on this type of film.

Castle has been accused, as Alan Dodd accuses him in his comments, of hammy heavy-handedness; again, this derives from years and years of working on extremely limited budgets -- under these circumstances a director is forced to find a 'gimmick' or an obvious visual 'shocker' that doesn't take too much time to set up. And even on a more generous allowance of time and money, it's hard to get out of the habit. Nonetheless, as Dodd also mentions, Castle's handling of the axe-murders in STRAITJACKET do work, and work effectively.

I sat in on the filming, all the way through, from pre-production planning, casting, rehearsals, etc., to the final editing. I did the same with NIGHT-WALKER. And I think it shows, in contrast to THE CABINET OF CALIGARI, which was taken out of my hands, paraphrased and distorted by a man who wanted to produce, direct, and take writing-credit (which he didn't get). But the writer's ability to control filming is, as I trust I've explained, very limited indeed... unless he moves into producing and directing himself, as a defensive measure. Some day I might, though I dread the added work. Until then, I suppose I'll have to be grateful -- and I am grateful -- for even a partial realisation of my basic concepts. And for the thoughtful consideration of Dodd and others who try to analyse the quite measurable gap between concept and execution.

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/ This brings to mind the filming of DESTINATION MOON back in 1950, <sup>in</sup> which Robert Heinlein took a large part ~~in~~ the direction & producing. This was written up in one of the 1950 issues of Astounding, and was very interesting. /

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Comments on FROM VELVET ALLEY TO STRAIT JACKET

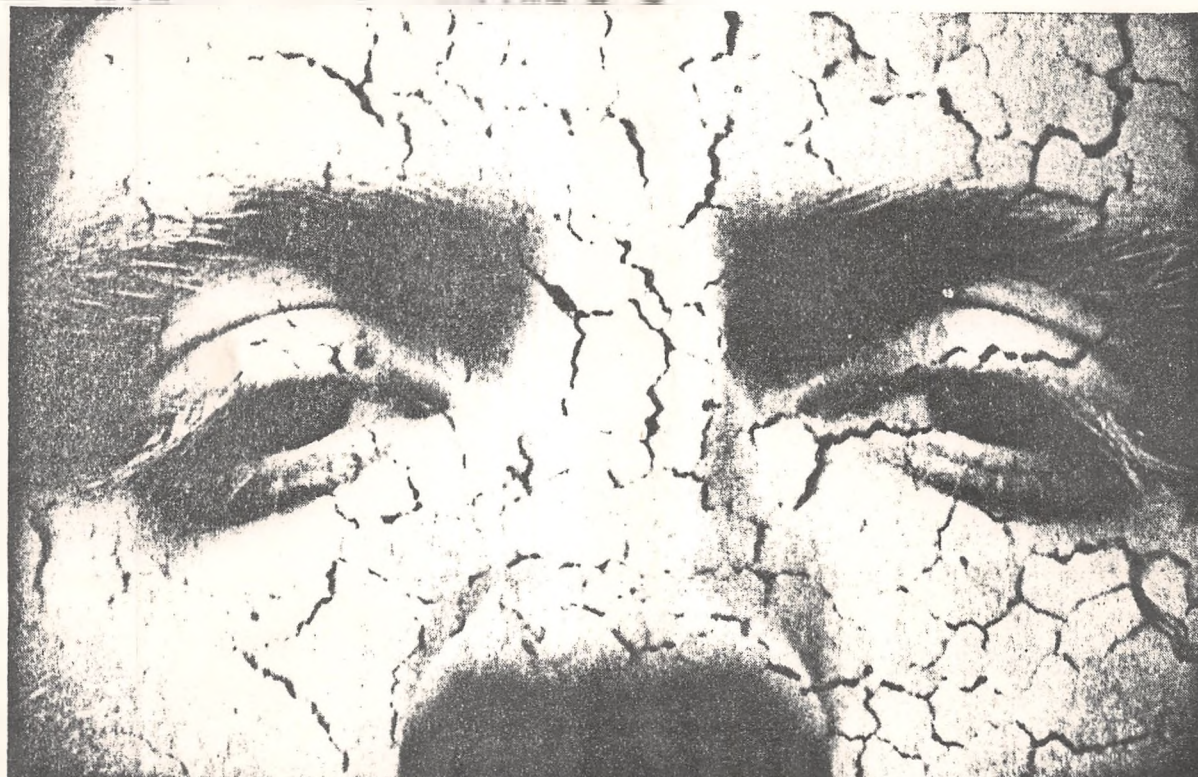
Mike Deckinger

I am almost diametrically opposed to Alan Dodd's opinions concerning the relative merits of Bloch's fiction vs his films. Of the books cited, only the original Arkham collection of fantasies deserves any commendation as an outstanding volume. The others were poorly handled and not nearly close to Bloch's potential. PSYCHO was, however. Further, I found Stefano's screenplay of the latter to be reasonably improved over Bloch's original novel. Hitchcock was producing a film to entertain the customers, and found it wise to dispose of the concept of multiple psychotic personalities within the schizo, and concentrate on the unnatural relationship between Bates and his "mother" self. The murders within were broadened for a touch of sensationalism, but were treated with skill and artistry by Hitchcock. He wasn't just relying on a bloodbath to draw the crowds, he created the scenes carefully and thoughtfully. William Castle doesn't even come close to Hitchcock in directorial know-how.

/ No more room; A lot of letters have not been printed, but will be used as much as is possible in the next issue. /



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