

made believable. *Dark Universe* is an intellectual thriller where even the most baffling and melodramatic happenings eventually have a rational and convincing explanation.' *New Statesman*.

'A favourite and often successful manoeuvre of sf is to posit some single but major change in our environment, and then proceed to deduce, by a sort of imaginative logic, what life would be like under the new conditions. In *Dark Universe* Daniel F. Galouye does as good a job on this basis as most people since Wells wrote *The Country of the Blind*. . . . The success of the book lies in the care with which the results (of the loss of the concepts of sight and of light) are visualized—auralized, rather. Knowledge can be obtained only through echoes. So while you can hear someone's facial expression simply by speaking to him, or even coughing, for more distant data you need your pair of click-stones. A public echocaster provides the main dwelling areas with sonation and there are portable ones for parties of travellers. . . . The hero, accompanied by a mutant girl who can see in the infra-red, finally leads his people up into the terrifying world of day. . . . This first novel is in many ways a notable performance.'

KINGSLEY AMIS, *Observer*.
Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s

Call to Order

A New Optional for December at 11s 6d,
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Spectrum II

Edited by Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest

THE first *Spectrum* anthology received praise and attention from a much wider readership than is usually reached by even the best sf. Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest did not share the view that the stories in the first *Spectrum* were exceptionally brilliant, and in this second anthology they have made a collection which more than proves their point. The imaginativeness, the variety, the freshness and power which distinguished the earlier book are all equally apparent in this one.

The authors, none of whom appeared in the first volume, include such famous names in sf as James Blish, Brian Aldiss, Philip K. Dick, Isaac Asimov, Mark Clifton and Henry Kuttner. And, as in *Spectrum I*, almost all the stories are published here in volume form for the first time. The editors have not played safe with accepted, run-of-the-mill successes, but have given an exciting representation of the scope and variety of sf, with stories ranging from the satirical to the horrifying, from manipulation of the human mind to the physical conditions of the planet Jupiter.

Reviewing *Spectrum I*, John Arlott said: 'I still find it hard to believe that the normal level of sf is quite so high. . . . These stories, the first of modern sf I have ever read, held me, and convinced me that my standoffish attitude had robbed me of much pleasure in the past. . . .' Members of SFBC were not surprised at the standard of the first *Spectrum*, but even they probably found it more enjoyable and more various than they expected, and the same will be true of this new anthology. It will delight all established enthusiasts and surprise newcomers to sf.

Now we must emphasize that the stock of *Spectrum II* is limited, and we shall only be able to meet the orders that reach us at once. We find that the demand for these Optional SFBC books often outstrips the supply, so we do urge you to send your own order to Letchworth immediately, remembering to give a note of your membership number or your usual source of supply.

Gollancz 18s; SFBC 11s 6d, post free

WANTED AND FOR SALE

MR C. C. A. ATKINS, of 9 Chumleigh Walk, Surbiton, Surrey, has a number of SFBC past Choices for sale.

MR J. L. Mann, of 40 Eltham Road, West Bridgford, Notts., would like to obtain one copy of the SFBC edition of Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Men*.

MR F. S. Harber, of 85 Farley Hill, Luton, Beds., wants to obtain a copy of Olaf Stapledon's *Odd John*.

Will anyone who may be able to help please get into touch with these three members direct.

THIS MONTH'S CHOICE IS

HOTHOUSE by Brian Aldiss

(Faber 15s; SFBC 6s)

NEXT MONTH'S CHOICE IS

DARK UNIVERSE by Daniel Galouye

(Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s)

NEXT MONTH'S EXTRA (OPTIONAL) IS

SPECTRUM II, edited by Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest

(Gollancz 18s; SFBC 11s 6d, post free)

science fiction news

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Selectors: Kingsley Amis, John Carnell, Dr J. G. Porter

Poetry Competition—Results

There were more than forty entries for this competition, adjudicated by Robert Conquest. He will be well known to all members of SFBC as joint editor with Kingsley Amis of the two 'Spectrum' anthologies; he has also contributed a great deal to contemporary sf through his own work as poet and novelist. In addition, he is a leading political journalist and literary critic. We have printed below his remarks on the poetry competition as a whole, and following them the three winning entries:

It is perhaps surprising that there has not been more poetry on the sf type of theme. Perhaps it is because the mood of modern poetry has turned in too many cases to one of exaggerated introspection—exaggerated, that is, by the standards of any other epoch. In the great periods of verse, poetry—English, foreign and classical—has been more outward-looking. It has been said that the *Odyssey* is, for its day and age, a great work of sf—*The Tempest* too: in fact, a leading sf film has been based on it. In Shakespeare's time, in fact, our culture looked outwards to the newly discovered and barely known lands beyond the ocean, with their endless potentialities. And poets, as well as philosophers, technicians and businessmen, had the same unknown worlds as excitements to their attention.

Perhaps we are in for a new epoch of extroversion—attention to the wonders, rather than organization of the trite, in the universe as it presents itself to us all, including poets. It is a good sign at least that some poets, although brought up in the popular tradition, are turning their gazes in such directions. The muscles of the imagination need more than one sort of exercise.

R. C.

And the Winning Poems . . .

CRACKPOT

by Douglas J. Livingstone

As a child he dreamed of flying,
walked to the top of the staircase,
stretched his arms—a fledgling trying—
fell the flight, fracturing both wrists.

A small boy, he made a large box-kite;
like the man with three eyes, he went up
in a near gale, before the night.
His inadequate anchor cupped
small-boy hands and shouted high, 'I'm
going home', and watched him braced, free,
somersaulting struts winding twine,
and did not stay longer to see
the fluttered, inclined, windblown crash
in whipped branches of a tree bent
thrashing away. Two ribs he smashed,
easily fixed; his holed throat wasn't.

Years later he burnt all his hair:
a hot-air balloon that never took
off flamed like a crimson pear,
collapsed, an incandescent rook.

In his tortured teens he almost
went off his pillow-damping head
through sleepless nights, his soul a ghost,
rigidly trying to levitate.

He got married and had a pair
of dully normal kids—no pranks
marred parenthood, no manager's
lightning frown his career in banks.

One day he built 9 tapered feet
of bamboo splint and light plastic
wingspread and went out to a steep
nearby hill; ran, wing jutting, fixed
from a complicated harness,
and was off, gliding gloriously
8 yards, jack-knifed by sudden stressed
wings, snapped up, down; uproariously
stopped by an antheap. Two linesmen
fixing a power cable, laughter-filled,
helped to brush him down, bruised and grinning;
the slim wing ruefully crushed, stilled.

He climbed the local swimming-bath
wall, closed for the night. Repaired, shorter,