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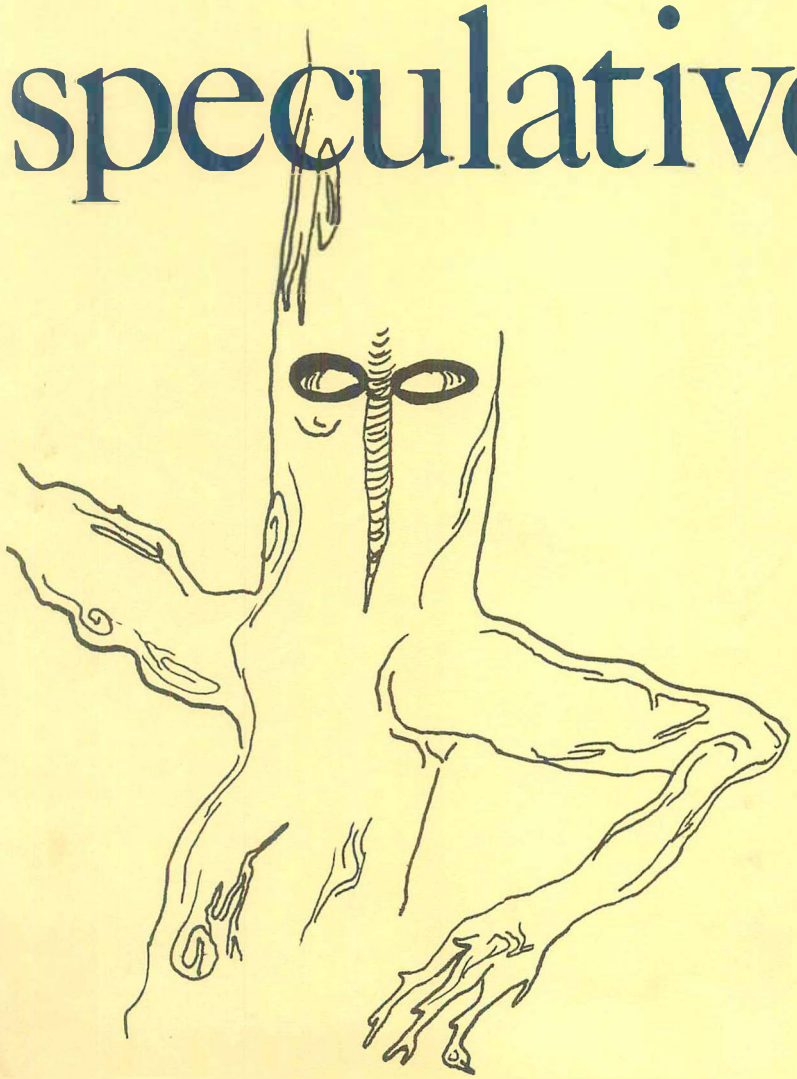
speculative review



SPECULATIVE

It was quite a paralyzing shock to me to find out that people really did pay subscription money to get fanzines, my own method being ////////// exchanging or writing letters of comment for all such as are interesting enough to want to keep getting. I had the idea that charging subscription money was something that you did to reduce the size of the mailing list; but now, plague take it, the mailing list is over three hundred long and I'm bound to publish those other issues or refund a stack of subscriptions. If you neither write nor exchange to get SPECULATIVE REVIEW, you're probably reading this because you're a writer whom we review. If your last sale to the proz was long enough ago to make that unlikely, then this copy -- Volume 2 Number 4, Operation Crifanac CLXXV -- implies an invitation to subscribe, at 25¢ for three issues, to the editor: Dick Eney, 417 Ft. Hunt Rd., Alexandria, Va. In the sterling area, 2/ to Archie Mercer, 434/4 Newark Rd., North Hykeham, Lincs.

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Speculative Review is a magazine of comment and criticism aimed at the current crop of science-fiction and fantasy, what there is of it. The collapse of the American prozine market remarked on last time has left the Big Five alone so far -- I keep a block of wood hanging on my typewriter nowadays for use after making such statements, though -- but still presents us with the problem of volume.

What I mean is this: a certain amount of stfsy must be <u>available</u> if people are to make reading it a regular thing. I haven't heard any indication that the death of the smaller prozines was accompanied by any great upsurge in the sales volume of the large ones; quite the reverse. Yet, addiction being impossible without pushers -- maybe I should have chosen a more elegant analogy, come to think of it -- the fantasy fandom of the future is likely to respond to a drop in quantity of readers (here I define "fandom" Palmer-style, as anybody who reads stfantasy regularly) by a drop in the number of regular readers, which -- feeding back to the editorial offices as a drop in sales volume -- will impel a drop in production, meaning a drop in quantity of readers, meaning a drop in the number of regular readers...well, we needn't follow the cycle to the point at which Horace Gold lies starving in the gutter between mimeographed issues of GALAXY.

However, there's no cosmic rule that stf and fantasy have to appear in magazine form; certainly there is a sufficient volume appearing in paperback form and, wonderful to relate, on television, to make up for the absence of prozines as far as the actual quantity of available stfsy goes. In fact, there've been a few efforts to combine the two latter methods of presentation; and by one of those odd coincidences that seem to occur around Ft. Hunt Road (after all, Groff Conklin <u>did</u> build a lot of the houses around here!) there are comments at hand on three such efforts...

Review

SPECULATIVE

Review ...I.(The Quatermass Experiment, by Nigel Kneale. Penguin 1421, Penguin Books, $.65)

Penguin's first book of science fiction -- which it categorizes, incidentally, not as F for Fiction but M for Miscellaneous, like the Daily Telegraph 6th Crossword -- is mediocre science fiction but an exciting book. First of three television serials written by Nigel Kneale for the British Broadcasting Corporation -- the others are Quatermass II and Quatermass and the Pit*-- The Quatermass Experiment was presented during July and August, 1953. The book is illustrated with eight inconspicuous pages of photographs of the television production.

Kneale, as the back-cover biography delightfully puts it, is a Manxman who "left school to study for the Manx Bar and got depressed about it." He turned to writing for radio, and later did many scripts for BBC Television. In this country, if Kneale is known at all, it is for his screenplays for John Osbourne's Look Back In Anger and The Entertainer.

The Quatermass Experiment is a six-part drama -- each installment would seem to have been a half-hour programme, as they say -- set in England in what has become the near past.

Professor Bernard Quatermass, head of the British Experimental Rocket Group, has arranged for the secret launching of a manned nuclear-powered rocket from a base in Western Australia. But when the satellite returns more than fifty-seven hours late -- and after going more than 900,000 miles too far out -- only one of the three-man crew is to be found within the sealed ship. And it looks, as the idiom has it, as if he isn't all there himself.

Well, what with the others' pressure suits empty but intact, the walls of the cabin filled with a jelly-like post-catabolic residuum, and the survivor answering questions about the rocket's gimbal system in German (which was spoken only by the missing Reichenheim), things soon point to the more sinister conclusion that he himself isn't all that's there. The action moves quickly to a powerful but logically weak climax as the fate of mankind hangs in the balance in Westminster Abbey.

Kneale gives no evidence of being overly familiar with anybody else's science fiction. He tells his story in an admirably realistic manner, but there are just too many questions left unanswered and inconsistencies glossed over. They can be explained by the resourceful reader, but I for one have better things to do with my native intelligence than rationalize for a lazy author.

Yet with all its cliches and bungholes, The Quatermass Experiment is an exciting evening's reading. The dialogue is smooth and natural, and the characters -- and there are, so help me, more than fifty of them -- are, if nothing more, skilfully sketched. The settings -- a London suburb, a Pimlico cinema, St. James' Park, and the Abbey -- are uniformly well-handled.

The Quatermass Experiment may be corn -- and there can be no argument on that point -- but it is mature (n.p.i.) professional corn. As science fiction, it is no great shakes. As that rare creature, the science-fiction play, it is a slick and interesting effort. And as a television science-fiction play, I think it compares favorably with our own uneven Twilight Zone. When one reflects that it was presented seven years ago in England, that itself is a comment on American television, and reason enough to read the book.

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* The former was published by Penguin (#1448, $.65) later. The same central character appears, it says here, but otherwise the stories are not connected.

II. (Zacherleys Midnight Snacks, by John Zacherley. Ballantine 370K, Ballantine Books, 1960, $0.35)

Zacherleys Midnight Snacks (no apostrophe) is a disappointing collection of horror stories edited by the generally droll New York television personality who shows old horror movies and comments on them. The snacks, however, are introduced by remarks like "I love snakes, all kinds and types, (they are particularly delicious in Mama Zach's Fondue)," that do little to improve matters.

Richard Matheson's "Sorry, Right Number" leads off the anthology. I'm sorry, but this whole thing embarrassed me. It's technically proficient, but just too pat and puerile*.

"Share Alike", by Jerome Bixby and Joe E. Dean, is a competent but unexciting vehicle about two men marooned in a lifeboat. One is perfectly happy eating the ample rations. They have different dietetic preferences, it turns out. "Talent", by Theodore Sturgeon, is a nothing about a kid with one. Has such an excellent writer ever turned out so many potboilers?

"Listen, Children, Listen", by Wallace West, is a hillbilly story about Maw, who had loose teeth, heard wagon wheels when there oughtn't to have been any, and finally disappeared altogether. William F. Temple's "The Whispering Gallery" is notable mainly for fine development of mood. The gallery is a narrow walk inside the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral.

"The Piping Death" (Robert Moore Williams) is the inevitable Snake Story. (Or maybe it only seems that way.) A.E. vanVogt's "The Ghost " is the longest piece in the book, an unfathomable tale of an eccentric apparition and its ill-advised investigator. "One of the little ones' favorite spook stories," says Zacherley, bless their little cortices.

"Carillon of Skulls", by Phillip James, from the February 1941 UNKNOWN, is hack work, pure and simply dreadful. Which brings us to Henry Kuttner's F&SFish "Pile of Trouble" (actually from a 1948 THRILLING WONDER), easily the best thing in the book and the least appropriate. Dang it, but the gentile Kentucky family with the atomic pile in the henhouse just doesn't belong with the seriously self-conscious horrors of the rest of the book.

It would seem that the stories were chosen for the virtue of ready availability -- five of them are from BEYOND and FANTASTIC UNIVERSE for 1953 -- without recourse to any other considerations. The question inevitably arises whether Zacherley really edited the book. I regret to say that there is nothing, such as literary merit, to make one suspect that he didn't.

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III. (Stories from the Twilight Zone, by Rod Serling. New York, Bantam Books, 1960, $0.35)

Rod Serling, who was recently awarded an Emmy for The Twilight Zone, adapted six programs from the series for the printed page in a short short-story collection published last April by Bantam. None of the stories are remarkable for originality of plot: the man who goes back to his home town and meets himself as a boy, the aliens who Take Over by switching the electricity on and off, the man who has bought immortality only to be jailed for life -- these ideas were diverting on t.v. simply because they were fantasy or stf, but they are undistinguished in a medium where the same or similar things have been done so often before. Yet the book contains one very good story and one outstanding one, both redeemed largely by their presentation in this strangely uneven collection whose major weakness, at

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*Salutations to damon knight.

times, is the author's style.

All six shows were "scheduled for telecast" by last March, but one -- "The Mighty Casey" -- was not presented until June, and (in an admittedly spotty viewing record) I cannot remember seeing two others -- "Walking Distance" and "The Fewer" -- at all.

Judging from memory, most of the dialogue and much of the action has been lifted bodily from the t.v. versions, but one also finds references like:

> "'That's the New York Giants.' He spoke as if the name were synonymous with a social disease."

and:

> "Flora Gibbs, married to Franklin for twenty-two years, was angular, with mousy, stringy hair and chest measurements perhaps a quarter of an inch smaller than her husband's."

and, worst of all:

> "...red Mercedes-Benz..."
> "Brooks Bothers suit..."
> "'Winstons taste good like a cigarette should.'"

- that prove, if nothing else, that somebody isn't just paragraphing old scripts. And when the occasion demands, pages are liberally salted with vigorous, if strictly conventional, profanity.

Come now, you don't expect me to quote profanity for you.

Perhaps because he is writing in an unfamiliar genre, Serling leans heavily to a sticky cuteness not entirely absent from the t.v. programs:

> "'This humidity,' he said plaintively to Dr. Stillman who sat on the bench surveying him, 'is killing me. I've never felt such dampness -- I swear to God!'
>
> Stillman looked down at Mouth's feet. McGarry was standing with one foot in a bucket of water.
>
> 'Mr. McGarry', he pointed to the bucket.
>
> Mouth lifted up his foot sheepishly and shook it. Then he took out his bottle of pills again, popped two of them in his mouth, gulped them down and pointed apologetically to his stomach--"

the relevant organ, at least. Serling also shows hitherto unobservable signs of suffering from Campbell's Syndrome, or the intermittent inability to distinguish between a period and an exclamation point: quoting from "The Mighty Casey" again:

> "It all began this way. Once upon a time a most unusual event happened on the way over to the ballpark. This unusual event was a left-hander named Casey!"

Whatever changes have been wroght in the stories have been generally for the worse. Item: "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street"*, a story of the panic and violence engendered by the intermittent failure and operation of all power in a normal suburban neighborhood. Not only is the superfluous television ending retained (two e-t's discussing the success of their strategem on a nearby hilltop), but the following paragraph is added:

> "When the sun came up on the following morning Maple Street was silent. Most of the houses had been burned. There were a few bodies lying on sidewalks and draped over porch railings. But the silence was total. There simply was no more life. At four o'clock that afternoon there was no more world, or at least not the kind of world that had greeted the morning. And by Wednesday afternoon of the following week, a new set of residents had moved into Maple Street. They were

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*Tough luck, Bob Leman!

a handsome race of people. Their faces showed great character. Great character indeed. Great character and excellently shaped heads -- two to each new resident!"

- in which, besides a ludicrous disregard of what is and is not appropriate, are displayed both of Serling's worst characteristics: redundancy and labored cuteness.

Considering the remaining stories briefly, "The Mighty Casey" is the history of a last-place baseball team that acquired a mechanical southpaw. What was once a whimsically amusing tale has been transformed into a creaking farce, the least disciplined story in the book.

In "Escape Clause", an insufferable hypochondriac sells his soul to a "large, fat man" named Cadwallader in return for eternal life, and then culminates weeks of thrill-seeking by pushing his wife down a light-well in order to sample the pleasures of the electric chair. The denouement is no surprise, but the story on the whole is handled skilfully and well.

"Walking Distance" is an unentrancing trifle about an ad agency executive who suddenly drives to his home town in upper New York one weekend, and finds to his surprise that nothing has changed... It has elements of Bradbury in its description of the old-fashioned town, but the narrative is not strong enough to carry a listless plot.

"The Fever" is the story of Franklin Gibbs, a prim little Kansas Puritan, and his long-suffering wife, Flora, she of the quotation on the preceding page. When she won an all-expense-paid two-week trip to Las Vegas, Franklin reluctantly agreed that they should go to that hotbed of vice, where, as a genius copywriter put it, he "was seduced, robbed, and murdered by a slot machine". It is understandable, if unfortunate, that no story could ever live up to such a magnificent blurb.

"Where Is Everybody?", which starts off with what is surely the most hackneyed situation in the book, is also the most effective story of the bunch. A lone figure, ostensibly an amnesiac, wanders into a deserted town where a quarter-smoked cigar burns in an ashtray, and a movie projects itself in an empty theatre. A chillingly convincing evocation of an uncanny situation and a shocking new ending make it a tale any author might be proud to have written and any addict glad to read.

- - - Martin Levine

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Dick Eney ringing back in to remark that, despite what you may have concluded from Martin's reviews, it's hardly lack of quality that would be the main disqualifying objection to the idea of replacement of magazine stf by other forms. (If you'll take a look at the quality of the stuff that started fandom in tthe first place, back in the thirties, you'll see what I mean.) Rather, it's the irregularity of the supply and, if you will , the lack of continuity. Consider a moment: nobody doubts that, whatever may be the case in the late fifties and early sixties, the science-fiction of the forties was immensely superior to that of the thirties. How much of that improvement is due to a general upgrading in the quality of the average pulp magazine -- and how much to the fact that the scientifictionists had the advantage of familiarity with what had already been done in their field, plus knowledge of the criticisms levelled at it by interested readers? In a word, how much of the improvement was caused simply by increased sophistication, thanks to the continuity that had established the basics so firmly that they no longer had to be a main plot feature?

Whatever the cause of improvement may have been, it wasn't permanent, to judge by what Bill Evans has to say next...

SPECULATIVE Review | BILL EVANS pokes the prozines

Fantastic Science Fiction Stories, June 1960. The Mirror, by Alan E. Nourse. 31 p. The Earth outpost on Saturn Satellite was trying to make contact with the enemy from stellar space, who had landed four large ships on Saturn's surface, after attacking mankind. To attack them, men used Analogues - robots under mental control on Saturn's surface. They were having little success. The enemy are telepathic, apparently, and attack by mental disruption. Doric Kendall, psychologist, is aboard the outpost to prevent any such attack there - but one is successful, and paralyzes the whole operation. Finally she succeeds in a course of action that arouses the aliens, and overcomes them mentally by sending back human fears. This is quite well done, with a convincing approach and some good characterization. I liked it.

Side Effect, by Joseph D. Laven. 13 p. Dr. Kane had perfected a thought amplifier which the military wished to suppress. They arrange a secret showing for the top officials. After that, Kane suddenly discovers he doesn't need the machine any more; he is now homo superior. And the story ends on a question. This is a standard gadget story with esp thrown in. But it is better done than many. Kane seems possible to me.

Olaf Stapledon: Cosmic Philosopher, by Sam Moskowitz. 15 p.article. Sam continues his biographical/critical reviews, this time on one of my favorite idea men. Good.

The Fiftieth Year of April, by Arthur Porges 6 p. Imps, who inhabit men, and use them as playthings. One, Gri, has a healthy man. Another, M'lo, for insolence to his master demon, Belphegor, is sentenced to inhabit a lump of lead for a 1000 years. The lead is mined, cast into bullets, and the one carrying M'lo is used to kill the man Gri inhabits. Unusual treatment, and interestingly written. But rather obvious. Still, I enjoyed reading it.

Drive Out of Mind, by Dan Morgan. 21p. Testing a hyperdrive ship, after the first one - non-manned - came back and the next two manned ships didn't. this time, two are going as crew. In hyper drive they find that things seem to go crazy, with time and space all mixed up. The men lose control and fight. Well done, and rather logical, once the basic premise is granted. Adequate characterization. The writing carries the story. Another readable story.

David's Daddy, by Rosel George Brown. 11p. A telepathic school child saves the school from being blown up. Told from the point of view of the female teacher. This I felt was too forced to be really good. It reminded me of the LHJ or SEP type story. Well done, and all, but.... I still don't like it. First person narration, with the real "Had I But Known" spirit.

No End of Time. Phyllis Gotlieb. 23p. The far, far future and a far world, when all is rigidly controlled and machines do all the work. All society is divided into groups of 10, with each member responsible for a younger 10, etc. One member of a lower decad, more enterprising and nonconforming than most, decides to bring Socrates forward in time. This creates problems. Socrates wants to go home to Greece, hemlock and all, but the return cannot be made for months. And his presence is unauthorized in the future.

A nice depiction of a rather different civilization, with different outlooks on life. The characterization is vivid, and the writing is adequate, at least. There seems to be a feeling of extra length in many places, but not too strong. An average story, all in all. And a good issue.

Galaxy Magazine , June 1960. Drunkard's Walk, by Frederik Pohl. A first installment of 49 pages. The year is 2196 and the US (and probably the rest of the world) is overpopulated, with people crowded into cities. Only a few universities remain, but they are now immense, self-contained, and very exclusive, with only a small fraction of applicants being admitted in person, and the rest watching lectures on television, for credits. The faculty and resident students live on campus - a Town and Gown society. In one of the universities - it might be Berkeley, but I'm not sure - Cornut, a math professor, is gradually being driven to suicide by some compulsion that takes over when he is half-awake or very intent on some special thing, such as giving a lecture. He has managed to fail for some weeks, but the strain is showing. At the same time his house-master, Carl, is trying to use telepathy to influence photographic plates. A trip to pick up some descendents of WWII Japanese, who had been found on an isolated island, under the leadership of the University president, St. Cyr, provides Cornut with two more escapes; one when his plane - the one he is missed - blows up, the other another suicide attempt. After the return with several of the Japanese as subjects for the university to study, Cornut marries a student, so that there will be someone available during the dangerous periods of falling asleep and waking up. But, when she leaves for class, he suddenly finds himself taking sleeping pills instead of wake-up pills. The installment ends here, in the best Pearl White tradition.

It is hard to evaluate Pohl's story - especially with only half of it at hand. There are a large number of apparently side-issues, which will probably turn out to be basic to the plot. The background of the story is sketched in quite well - suggested, not stated, in many cases. But, in other places we find one of the things I'm not fond of in Pohl's writing - the shift from the personal to the impersonal, all-knowing author who describes his settings and beings. Take the opening page, for example:

"The man's name is Cornut, born in the year 2166 and now thirty. He is a teacher. Mathematics is his discipline. Number theory is his specialty. What he instructs is the mnemonics of number, a study which absorbs all his creative thought. But he also thinks about girls a lot.

"He is unmarried. He sleeps alone and that is not good.

"If you wonder around his small bedroom (it has lilac walls and a cream ceiling; those are the Math Tower colors), you will hear a whispering and a faint whirring sound. These are not the sounds of Cornut's breath, although he is sleeping peacefully. The whispering is a hardly audible <u>wheep, wheep</u> from an electric clock. (It was knocked to the floor once. A gear is slightly off axis; it rubs against a rivet.) The whir is another clock. If you look more carfully, you will find that there are more clocks."

And so on for another page - with good interest-catching hooks, to be sure - ending with:

"He is trying to kill himself. He has tried nine times in the past fifty days.

"If a picture on a wall can regret, you regret this. It is a terrible waste for this man to keep trying to kill himself, for he does not at all want to die."

And then, there is the abrupt transition to the personal:

"Cornut was uncomfortable in his sleep. He felt drowsily that he had worked himself into an awkward position, and besides, someone was calling his name. He mumbled, grimaced, opened his eyes.

"He was looking straight down, nearly two hundred feet."

For me, such a change of focus is disturbing. True, the opening is intriguing, until the change of focus occurs, but then I, at least, have lost

my interest and identification; I am no longer the author, watching his characters, but I am not the character, either. I'm just off to one side, mildly wondering why I should be interested in these goings-on. And I've lost identification for the rest of the story. The example I quoted above is the worst such example, but there are others throughout. Of the characters, only two have emerged as three-dimensional - Cornut and the girl he marries, Locille. The rest are only figures the author is moving around as he sees fit. In spite of his descriptive ability, they have made no impression on me; I find myself turning back to see just who some name is. The total impression of the story will depend upon the second part, this left me with two interests; what would happen to Cornut, and where will all the other elements fit into the story.

Upstarts, by L. J. Stecher. The table of contents so reads, but inside we learn he is Jr. 14 p. Earth, barred from normal sub-space star travel by a blockade, develops a time-space method, and sends an envoy to Vega to make arrangements for trade and such. This would make a nice Planet story, but on the way back a typical Galaxy twist occurs. The envoy goes far back, before life arose on Vega, and changes history slightly. Result - no Vegans. And they were the ones who had colonized the galaxy and helped other races along the way. A fairly good little story; nothing sensational, but readable. The characters were somewhat overdrawn stock types, though, I felt.

The Good Neigh bors. Edgar Pangborn. 7 p. A flying animal with a four-mile wingspan appears over the US. Finally, by accident, it is shot down over the New York area, causing widespread damage. Later, a space ship sends apologies for letting a pet escape. Understated, and for this reason more effective than the plot would imply.

For Your Information. Willey Ley. Herr Ley spends 12 pages discussing solid rocket fuels (quite well, too, from my knowledge of the field), the decrease of gravity with altitude, antiradiation drugs, 100000+ foot flight, mega and pico and other prefixes for magnitudes, gadolinium, and the number of hairs on the head of a woman. All in the usual Ley style.

The Dope On Mars, by Jack Sharkey. 14 p. The diary, or excerpts from the diary - of the observer on the first trip to Mars. They find Martians who are sweet people - literally. The Martians eat carbon, which they convert to sugar; their bodies are sugar, which melts at contact with water. And yet, they reproduce by dissolving in water, with lots of little Martians crystalizing out. (I have suspicions about the biochemistry involved, but....) When the ship returns to earth, a couple of Martians have stowed away, and cannot be captured. Thus, when the ship lands in the ocean, they escape into it - and out come hordes of hungry Martians. Things are bad - so bad that Man doesn't have a chance. Nor does the reader. This reminds me of something that might have appeared in a Gernsback Wonder, with a Paul cover, but there I would expect the biochemistry to be a little better. The writing would have been no worse, either.

Transstar. Raymond Z. Banks. 26p. The Saber were attacking the earth colony on Everready; they had destroyed two previous colonies and were threatening the third. Webster, the Transstar observer, was standing by, ready to throw the offensive power of the entire system into the fight, if it became more than a local action. Until then, he was officially powerless. In spite of the pleas of the colonists, he refuses to call for help, although he does join the fight personally. Finally, of course, he does call, and the Saber are wiped out.

Somehow I was never convinced of the action - the setup just didn't and doesn't seem real. It reminds me a little of Doc Smith's Grand Fleet actions in the Lensmen stories, but Banks is much less adept at handling the situation.

The earlier part of the story just doesn't develop in a reasonable manner. I feel something is missing, such as every other page. This just didn't click - the writing and characters are both unbelievable and cannot carry the plot.

Monkey on his Back, by Charles V. DeVet. 13 p. No, Galaxy isn't running stories of dope addicts. Not yet. The central character was undergoing psychiatric treatment to recover his memory. Under hypnosis various flashes of action come to him (action a la private eye or cloak and dagger) until finally he discovers he was a "professional" revolutionist, who just seemed to be around when revolutions needed organizing. He just had to help. Finally, he had hypnotised himself in an attempt to avoid it all. But the planet he is on is under a despot.... Unusual, and rather well done. But does it belong in a sf mag? It could be laid as well in South America.

Earthmen Bearing Gifts. Frederic Brown. 3 p. The last Martians - all 900 of them - are in their last city, awaiting the arrival of the first ship from earth, an unmanned trial to see if it can be done. They have learned about this from reading our minds, and are a waiting the manned ship to pass ontheir knowledge of the mind. The ship behaves quite well, striking only 1500 miles off target.... For three pages, this is good.

Idea Man, by John Rackham. 15 p. His job was to come up with ideas for tricks and novelties. Until he lost the touch. Then, he meets Penfold - who has invented a matter radio. So, our idea man gets the idea of using this to supply fuel to space ships. All is well until someone remembers the Heaviside layer. So, he sells out - to someone who has the idea of fueling cars and trucks and ships and planes, and who makes the big money. flip writing, but rather interesting, at that. I'd call it an average gadget story, with a light touch.

Inside John Barth, by William T. Stuart. 23p. The invaders/visitors to earth were small - so small that the whole spaceship was smaller than a buckshot, and a colony could settle inside John Barth. To keep him in good health - and thus his colony well - they cooperated with his body - often against his will, as with drinks - keeping him sober, industrious and well. All goes well until he meets the girl - who also has a colony. The two colonies cel brate, and release all controls on the two humans, who proceed to go out on a binge. In the processthe colonies are killed and so is the girl. An unusual twist on the miniature world and on the "take-over" story. I thought it was well handled. There are traces of the "Had I but known" school of mystery story writing, which irks me a little. However, I reread the story and enjoyed it. Which is more than I can say for any of the other complete stories in this issue.

Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, June, 1960. The Non-Humans, by Charles Henneberg, translated by Damon Knight. 18 p. A poetic explanation of the genius of Leonardo da Vinci, as told by a friend of his youth. A being from outer space, trapped in a human form by a magician, escapes into the young painter Leonardo, who has fallen in love with her for herself. This is really an unusual story, one that would have graced the pages of the old Weird Tales at its prime as an antidote for the gothic stories. I don't know how the original is; in translation, the story comes through very well, with vivid imagery and a rich style. The characters are full and realistic yet not mundane. This is the type of story I expect in F&SF; a few like this make up for the sludge one wades through.

Fireside Talk. H. F. Ellis. 5p. A haunting story, told from the point of view of the haunters - who don't realize they are dead. A wry little episode that I liked -- once I figured out the ending.

Cato the Martian, by Howard Fast. 11p. Remember the Cato who was always shouting "Carthage must be destroyed!"? This is the story of a Martian who kept shouting "Earth must be destroyed!" until he earned the name Cato from one of the Martian councilors who was a student of ancient Roman history. Finally, he persuades the council to act. First they send an atom bomb the US - hoping for a war with Russia but nothing happens. Then they bomb Russia with no results. But then the bombs start landing on Mars.... Trite plot, perhaps, but rather well treated, with more adequate writing than is usual for such stories. Worth reading, I feel, for the development, rather than for the basic plot.

Ed Lear Wasn't So Crazy! Hilbert Schenck, Jr. 1 page of verse. An updating of "The Owl and the Pussycat" into modern space terms. I thought it quite clever.

The Swamp Road, by Will Worthington. 14p. Another unusual story, with a strong punch at the end. It is laid in a small colony of post-atom survivors, who have set up an extremely puritanistic, communal state-city, in their efforts to survive, in a small oasis in a blasted desert. As a result of the bombs, there have arisen changelings, who have double eyelids and a craving for water. When discovered, they are driven out into the desert to keep the society pure. One such, Noah, is in love with another, Laura, and they meet secretly. One night she leaves the settlement; he follows and after crossing the desert they finally reach the ocean, their real home. The theme is familiar, I feel - remember Lovecraft's "Shadow over Innsmouth" with much the same theme, but with a totally different treatment. This is well done, with good development of the central character and adequate secondary ones. Parts of the writing are extremely well done, and the rest are good. In all, a good story, and one that stands up on rereading.

Slammy and the Bonneygott, by Mrs. Agate. 8 p. The young Slammy, complete with a tail with a purple light on the end three feet, makes a machine from 900+ sets of Tinker Toys which breaks the space-time barrier and he lands in Brooklyn. He and his Bonneygott, something like a dog, but with an appetite for gold. They cause a mild commotion, in a small way, but finally his father calls him home. Cute, but lightweight. I can see the LHJ taking this. No characters, and very "slick" writing.

The Sixth Season, by Avram Davidson. 11p. A strange world that has six season, all very distinct - snow, smog, rain, drought, flowers, and finally madness - and each lasting 33 days exactly. The second exploration group, settled for a year, last through the first five. A fascinating outworld - and one I can't quite believe. Still, I enjoyed the story - which is a puzzle story, really: What happened to the first team?

The Bug-Eyed Monster, by Isaac Asimov. 11p. The title comes from bev (billion electron volts). Here Ike discusses electron volts and energetic particles and Cerenkov radiation and faster-than-light particles. Interesting.

The Golden Bugs, by Clifford D. Simak. 34p. One of the oldest themes in Science Fiction - the invader from space, version 1, he is defeated. This time they're small golden bugs that landed in a big - 5 foot - agate boulder. At first they aren't too bad - they get rid of ants and wasps and such pests, and even clean the house. When a couple are captured, they turn out to be crystalline, not protoplasmic. Then they go wild, tearing the metal out of furniture, etc., and throwing it outside the house - telekinetics. Finally, they are overcome by making use of their crystallinity. A trite plot - but very neatly developed. No really memorable characters, but the standard ones are cut from well-padded cardboard. And the writing is - I guess unobtrusive would be a good expression.

Beyond Ganga Mata, by John Berry. 8 p. A ghost story of India. A ghost that saves a man from drowning in the Ganges. Standard and obvious, I felt. Unless you want the old-type Weird Tales story, the kind that filled out the issue.

Through Time and Space with Ferdinand Feghoot: XXVII. Grendel Briarton. 1p The pun is worse than usual.

Amazing Science Fiction Stories June 1960. ...And All the Stars a Stage, by James Blish. Pt 1 of 2 pt serial, 62p. [To be published in the fall by Signet Books as "Crab Nebula".] This starts off on some planet - where I don't know, although I suspect near the Crab Nebula - which is about to have its sun go nova in another 9 years. Jorn Birn has been selected for the first interstellar ship; during training, the nova effect is discovered, and all efforts are devoted to building star ships and training crews. Finally some thirty ships escape, after fighting off attacks by those left behind, and start out to locate new planets. Life settles into shipboard routine, still under the matriarchial society of the planet left behind. Then, a planetfall is announced by the captain, Artak - who happens to be a man, and is leader because he discovered the star-drive.

I like the first part of the story - and yet I don't feel it is a good story. It is certainly a conventional plot, with few of the Blish trademarks. There are long stretches of wordiness, setting the stage, or acting as a bridge between action. Thus the first 5 pages have less than two dozen lines of action. All is description, setting the stage for the story, building up the picture of the matriarchial society. Some writers - Heinlein, for example - would have built up the background while forwarding the action; Blish just puts in straight description. This occurs time after time. Not as in the stories, where the gadgets are minutely described, with the hero lecturing his co-worker or, very seldom, his girl, while the enemy attacks..., but describing the sociological setting. Birn is an interesting, if predictable character; none of the others seem to have real personalities - at least I didn't feel they have. Another thing that makes me wonder if this has been rewritten is the naming of objects and peoples: Dr. Chase-Huebner, Ailiss O'Kung for people; Javelin, Quarrel, Assigi, Boomerang, are all names for ships. These are all too close to our language - especially the ships' names, which come from a number of native tongues, and not just from English. Then there is a single large moon. The effect is that one feels this is earth, although no where is it stated that is true. This might have been done on purpose, to aid reader identification; I felt it worked the other way - on me, at least.

The Bald-Headed Mirage, by Robert Bloch. 15p. They landed on a plane on an asteroid that had stone heads on the ground - only the heads appeared and disappeared. On closer inspection they were there again - and with immense emeralds as eyes. But, on returning to the ship for tools to dig out the emeralds, they found it squeezed together, as if by gigantic stone hands. This is a strange life-form or strange planet story. As such, so-so.

If At First You Don't... by John Brudy. 18p. Bureaucrats versus popular sentiment. The question is the preservation of the early satellites when they become hazards to navigation. Somewhat overdone - on second reading it creaked and didn't ring true.

Step IV, by Josel George Brown. 13 p. He was a spacer who landed on a matriarchial world which was cut off from the rest of space - by choice. His job was to establish a communication base. Juba was to decoy him to destruction in the Rituals, but she fell in love with him, and decided to let him go - and take her with him. He agreed - but left her. An unusual atmosphere about this that makes it almost believable on reading. Juba is carefully drawn; the other characters have feel. I liked it.

Tulan, by C. C. MacApp. 20p. This reminds me very strongly of several stoires from the past; stories where Mars and the fifth planet - where the asteroids now are - are at war, back before Earth was inhabited. One is devastated, the other blown up, and a few survivors settle on Earth. The theme has been done before - and better. This is combined with the traditional admiral who is determined to ruin the enemy, even if his own world is ruined too. But in the end he saves the whole solar system, by preventing a Nova-type explosion that would have wrecked it. I didn't really feel any response to the story, except that I was glad it was rather short. The admiral, even though he is a stock character, becomes that - a character; no one else does, tho.

Astounding [Analog] Science Fact and Fiction, June 1960. Star Tiger, by Christopher Anvil. 35p. A problem story - laid outworld. General Wilforce has dumped in his lap the problem of what happened on Bemus III. The planet, very peaceful, apparently, has been settled for 10 years, and has also had a navy rest-camp. However, a destroyer crash-landed days before and found everything and everyone destroyed as if by large carnivorous animals - but no carnivores are known, or at least none of more than minor size. Wilforce and his task force investigate. After much work and various assorted troubles - finding space-mines around the planet, set to trigger if a ship leaves the planet - but so old they fail to fire are one such - they find the solution. The life on Bemus III has a very peculiar life cycle. The herbivores when killed resurrect as ferocious carnivores. These, when sated with food, turn into herbivores. And even pieces of the large herbivores - if not too small - turn into smaller carnivores. These small carnivores stow away on ships, and for the last ten years have been quietly spreading through the galaxy. The first problem, though, is to seal off the planet. Then they devise ways to trap the off-world ones. Feed them until they change into herbivores, then trap them, kill them, and simply chop up the carcasses so small that they cant change. This also provides a source of hides/furs, and the rest are fed to the fish.

A problem story, as I mentioned, which means little real development of character. The General is well delineated, though. The story develops logically, and the style carries the action along well. I liked it.

Charley de Milo, by Larry M. Harris. 23 p. Charley had been born without arms; he had learned to do things with his feet and made a good living in sideshows. But then he began to lose his popularity; a method had been developed - by an old doctor who had spent some time in the same show, as Professor Lightning - for regenerating lost limbs, and people were beginning to think he should have that done, rather than trade on their pity. So, Charley goes to see his old friend - only to learn that nothing can be done for him, as he never had the limbs to regenerate.

Unusual - and well worked out. The character of Charley is well developed, with lots of insight into why he behaves as he does. Only at the end did it seem a little contrived. The writing, though, is pedestrian. Good, even so.

Vigorish, by Walter Bupp. 26p. The psi story for this issue - excluding the serial, of course. In a near future where the psi facility is developed and encouraged by an organization of psi people, psi-men are used in various roles, such as keeping gambling games honest. This is the story of one psi-man, a very capable telekinesis man, is given the problem of tracking down why a gambling establishment is having trouble with - apparently - an unregistered psi-gambler. He meets up with a hill-billy girl with precognition who attaches herself to him - she has seen he will marry her. Together they solve the problem. Good action, with some thought as to the implications of psi. The characters are adequate for the plot. And I liked it. Vigorish, by the way, is the 6, the house makes on the crap layout.

The Space-Drive Problem, by John W. Campbell, Jr. 24p. article. The description of the apparatus developed by Norman Dean for converting rotary motion into unidirectional motion. The pictures are interesting, and the description seems plausible, at first reading. However, I'm still wondering what has happened to Newton's laws. Of course, if these are invalid, then I'm afraid our airplanes can't fly, our cars won't steer, let alone run, and the solar system will fly apart. [Remember the story years ago in the Gernsback Wonder Stories where the US Congress repealed the Law of Gravity (or maybe it was the inverse square law) - and the US, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and all the ships at sea promptly fell out into space. That was admittedly a spoof....] I won't pass judgment on the machine; I've not the time to build one nor the equipment to test it. I have heard, though, that someone put it on a large undamped beam balance - no springs, honest weight - and after carefully balancing it, turned it on. And nothing happened - the balance still balanced. This I won't vouch for, and I'm not sure just where I heard it.

I would like to comment on a couple of things that Campbell has mentioned, that have nothing to do with Dean's machine. One is the matter of government indifference. I wonder how JWC would react if I rushed up and told him I had a wonderful new way to edit ASF, that would only take a week of his time - just before deadline - to look into. I'm pretty sure of the answer I'd get. Likewise, most government scientists these days are working under deadlines - as well I know - and don't feel they can take their time from something that will probably have positive results to investigate every crackpot idea that comes along - and there are a lot of these, I assure you. There are several groups in the various departments who have the job of sifting the crackpot ideas - and have come up with some good ideas. I wonder if Dean has tried these groups, which are not committed to certain tasks already?

I'm sure the orthodox scientist - at least the ones I've met - is as ready to look at a new idea as anyone else - and probably more so than the average man in the street. After all, if they don't have a open mind, they don't last too long in science. And, why are so many issues of MoF&SF and ASF sold to technicians; at a recent meeting I found that at least 5% of the attendees were readers (there was at least one ex-fan there, too). But, a nd this is the big but, they want to be convinced that the new is better than the old; they don't prefer to discard the old just because the new may be more glamourous. And the more radical the change, the more convincing the evidence must be. Newton's laws, for example, are pretty fundamental things; it will take a lot of evidence to disprove them.

As for the "solution" of the three-body problem. This all depends upon how you define solution. Campbell is here invoking the same trick of semantics he so often cries out against in his editorials. In the sense he is using it - to mean a closed, numerical value obtained without an infinite series of operations - he is right. But such a solution is trivial, in the practical sense. The exact solution can be obtained in terms of a group of differential equations. These equations give exactly the solutions, just as pi r^2 gives exactly the area of a circle. The problem is to solve these differential equations; this can be done just as well as pi can be evaluated - to any desired degree of precision, just by doing the successive approximation methods enough cycles. This is not a solution by Campbell's criteria, but it is a solution that will give the positions of the planets more precisely than we can measure them, forcast the eclipses of the moon for centuries to a fraction of a second. And could predict the Dean machine results, I'm sure. It is not sidestepping the problem, it is merely using one method of solving equations that cannot be handled otherwise.

I notice also that the ghost of Karl van Kampen is walking again. It sounds like a reprint from "The Irrelevant" back in a 1935 (or late 34?) Astounding Stories. Again John W. is ignoring those facts that make his arguments fail. If I had the time, I'd go back and dig up some of the Brass Tacks arguments. Campbell is a slippery fellow on this point, but has been pinned before, and could be pinned again.

I expect more comment on this in a couple of months - and probably at least one story on the effect.

Out Like a Light, by Mark Phillips. Pt 3 of a 3 part serial, 42p. Kenneth Malone locates the warehouse the psi-gang are hiding in. He investigates, meeting the girl Dorothea again, and is embroiled in a wild melee when the police raid it prematurely. However, he convinces Dorothea that she should help him; it is the best way to help her brother. Gradually he develops his latent psi powers and becomes a teleport and prescient, one who is better than the boys. He can prevent them from teleporting by holding a statis of the area. So, single handed he locates the spot of the next robbery and captures them. They are released to work at the psi research labs, with promise of later FBI or similar jobs. Malone, of course, gets the girl.

I've finally figured out what was causing the style to seem so familiar. Kenneth Malone is the son of John J. Malone, the detective-lawyer of Chicago (see Craig Rice's stories) and the same atmosphere prevades the story. The key is, of course, Malone's habit of cogitating in bars, just as JJMalone did. (I wonder which one of the many girls JJ was acquainted with was Kenneth's mother? This is an interesting subj ect for research.) In addition, Phillips has captured a good part of Craig Rice's style, the slightly bitter, slightly wacky, slightly off-color style that makes her stories distinctive. Now that I've realized why I was puzzled, I'm more content with the writing style. Especially as I like Craig Rice's style. My overall impression of the story is that I'm going to reread it someday - and enjoy it the second time as much as I did the first. Which I do with very few stories of recent vintage. Recommended, especially to Craig Rice fans.

Fantastic Science Fiction Stories, July 1960. The Covenant, by (hold your breath) Poul Anderson, Isaac Asimov, Robert Sheckley, Murray Leinster, and Robert Bloch. 41p. Yes that's right - five authors in a round robin. And as the editorial says, "we tried to choose five top s-f authors whose styles both of plotting and of writing are widely different. Then we commissioned artist Leo Summers to design a cover that had no seeming connection with anything. Then we tossed the cover to our writers and sounded the starting gun." The result, like most such round-robins, is interesting, and not completely successful. Even if the styles were not so dissimilar, it would still probably be only mildly successful. After all, the first two writers try to tie the story into as many knots as possible, leaving it to the last couple to untie them, if possible. As a result, plot goes by the board, changing from installment to installment. And this makes it hard to review it. Or even to describe it!

This is laid on some distant world in the middle of a group of suns, where man is decadent and dying in his glorious cities. The enemy, the Cloud People, who are able to control time rather than space, are threatening to exterminate them. So Ban sets forth to solve the problems Poul Anderson sets up for him. Asimov makes things worse, Sheckley throws in the rest of the galaxy, and Murray Leinster and Bob Bloch try to make sense out of the mess. Bloch finally brings Ban back safely to the girl he left behind. As I've indicated, the story is mixed up, naturally, but it is good fun. Writing varies, of course; you can recognize the various authors rather easily. I enjoyed it as a tour-de-force, but would prefer the five authors separately next time.

Karl Capek: The Man Who Invented Robots, by Sam Moskowitz. 12 p article. Much that was new to me about the man who put one of the standard words into the stf vocabulary - robot, from "R.U.R." I liked it.

Special Report, by Franklin H Davis, Jr. 17p. Maybe the Soviets are experimenting with mutations in men that fly. This is the story of the discovery of one - a Japanese prisoner of war - by a U.S. Army Medical Officer. Very underplayed, in the form of a report, and much more effective for that reason. The background is filled in very well - almost too well - but the characters do not come to life. In some respects the treatment is Lovecraftian - the slow build-up, with hints scattered throughout, but unappreciated by the characters at least. Fairly good.

There's Always a Way, by Rosel George Brown. 6 p. Another of the semi-slick stories by Miss (or Mrs?) [Or Mr!?] Brown. This time, the problem is how to keep a telepathic Martian doctor on earth in spite of the League of Pure Blood. Like, how to keep an Austrian doctor on the staff in spite of the DAR. Thank goodness, this is short.

The Crispin Affair, by Jack Sharkey. 55p part one of two. I was almost unable to wade through this; now that I have, I don't know why I did. Imagine - if you have strength enough - a plot that assumes that in 1983 we will have spaceships that cost only $2,000,000; that anyone can buy and operate one; that the ship can make the trip to Andromeda in under two weeks, using "the new Lectrolifts." Of course, to use one, you have to be completely non-magnetic - including "spraying the fillings on our teeth with a compound which could partially nullify the enormous "tug" of the forty yard electromagnet we'll be riding atop of." The Dental Research people downstairs certainly haven't done this yet; they're trying to get non-metallic fillings, not magnetic ones. And I'd like to see that spray; such a magnetic shield would be very nice in other places.

Anyway, the plot - so far - is inane. Morgan Blane, millionaire playboy and a very pseudo Bertie Wooster, is persuaded by Lora Merrick to buy the spaceship to go to the planet Crispin (in Andromeda) and prevent lawyer Barton from stealing the copper deposits her grandfather had found there. Barton and his secretary, Flax Dompster, are off to Crispin to stake claim. So, off go Blane and Lora and Binky, the pilot, take off. They arrive, but crash (the immense deposits of copper on Crispin increase the magnetic field and burn out the ship's coils). Lora and Binky become separated from Blane, who ambles along through the jungle until he finds and loses Flax, and then is captured by savages while trying to rescue Lora and Binky. At this time they are all three tied up in a hut with a savage standing guard outside. And the writing style makes "Tarzan" seem like great literature. None of the characters are real; I feel they are very limp cardboard.

<u>If</u> [<u>Worlds of</u>] <u>Science Fiction</u>, July 1960. In a Body, by J. T. McIntosh. 33p. Vee, a Viginian, is the sole survivor of the explosion aboard the starship she was travelling on. She had managed to get to a lifeboat; Earth is within the limited range of the boat, so she lands here. On Earth, Ve hides her ship and learns English via radio and tv. Meanwhile she reshapes her body into a human female. Finally, when the transformation is complete, she steals clothes and money and heads for the large city. Here she rents an apartment, gets money by gambling, and sets out to find a "soul-mate" who is necessary to keep her alive. She meets Walter Rinker, who has been told he has only 6 months to live - cancer - and has broken with his girl, who still wants him. Vee cures him, and also seduces him. Finally, though, his former girl gets him back, leaving Ve almost dead because of lack of a soul-mate. Finally she finds another possibility - one that won't require stealing from another.

This is good, even if rather obvious. The character of Vee is well developed and the others, with smaller roles, are good. The action is well thought out. The writing is good, straightforward, and carries the action along well. I enjoyed it as I read it, and when I just reread it I liked it again. Talent, by Robert Bloch. 14p. Andrew Benson was an orphan. During his early years in the home he had been mute, but had shown a wonderful talent for pantomime. Then he saw his first movie - the Marx Brothers in Love Happy with Marilyn Monroe in her first role - he suddenly started to speak, perfectly and fluently - as Groucho Marx. His impressions of Groucho and all the others were perfect - "he even looked like Groucho." Then the Bensons adopted him at 12 years, because he looked so much like their dead son. He goes to school, is interested in dramatics - and sneaks into the horror movies. At this time there is a wave of horrible crimes in the area. Finally he becomes a man - his "parents" are killed, and then the lawyer controlling the estate is killed. At this time he is approached by a small producer who plans to star him in some B pics - "stf". Never having seen one, he goes to one. Returning to the director, he changes - into a 60 foot green monster that destroys Los Angeles.

This is good - even though I suspect Bloch of doing a clever parody on some of Lovecraft - the format is very similar to the one HPL used so often. Everything is after the fact, the statements that, in the light of what the reader knows, have added importance. The reader sees the pattern building up; the comments that, after the fact, assume added importance, with everything leading to the final line that is the climax of the whole story - remember "The Outsider," "Pickman's Model," and other HPL favorites which have that effect. Here we have "That was the night the monster destroyed Los Angeles." Well done, with a good picture built up of the central character. But, I still feel it is a parody.

Time Payment, by Sylvia Jacobs. 14p. Slick was going to use Dr. Porter's time machine to escape into the future. Of course, it wasn't a real time machine, but a machine that blocks out his mind for twenty years. The first part of the story is good, but there are a number of very confusing sequences in the last half. Things that aren't explained - such as what was the machine's actual effect? I still can't figure it out - and I get the feeling the author didn't know what to say, too. Writing, otherwise, is adequate. Character is weak because of the confusion of the last half.

The Last Trespasser, by Jim Harmon. 17p. The future, when everyone has become a superman through symbiosis with a "rider," a virus-like life form. Malloy is an exception; because he is a schizophrenic he cannot accept a rider, and as a riderless person he is a threat to the rider world. Freed from confinement, he joins an underground movement of non-riders, which is trying to eliminate the riders. He betrays them, hoping to be given a rider - and ends back in confinement, where he first learns the truth about himself. Not too bad, even though the background isn't developed enough to make the action logical. Malloy is a reasonably developed character, but the rest are only puppets.

The Martian in the Attic, by Frederik Pohl. 13p. Dunlop had traced down how LaFitte had attained his financial powers and where he had obtained his inventions. He wanted a share for not disclosing that LaFitte had a captive adult Martian hidden away, who had given him secrets of the supposedly extinct Martian civilization. But, unfortunately, Dunlop hadn't been careful enough and taken enough precautions, and he ends up feeding the Martian. Interesting, but not world shaking. A mundane plot, with captive Martian substituted for captive professor. Characters are very standard, as is the writing.

The Non-Electronic Bug, by E. Mittleman. 8 p. He found a telepath who could be used to win in card games. Until he and his ex-partner disagree, and the ex-partner disarranges things. Fair - an old idea and equally old writing and characterization.

Murder Beneath the Polar Ice, by Hayden Howard. 15p. [And doesn't that title remind you of the Clayton Astoundings?] An American sub beneath arctic ice is checking picket buoys - anti-missle - by small two-man subs. The small sub encounters a Russian team who are above the ice under cover; the Russian divers are apparently planting some sort of weapon. There is an encounter under water, one on each side is killed. Does this lead to war? There it ends. Too much flashback to build up the character of the central diver - so much so that there isn't much to the story - it becomes only a small episode. And I still didn't get the feeling of a person for him. Otherwise, a routine story; I was bored.

Amazing Science Fiction Stories, July 1960. Noble Redman, by J. F. Bone. 18 p. Space opera on Mars and around it, with some telepathy thrown in. Fair, standard stuff for Planet, with the telepathic remnants of mankind on a sealed-off radioactive earth trying to get into space against the ban of those who descended from the men who had escaped the last war. Of itskind, adequate.

"L" Is for Lash, by William F. Temple. 37 p. Lash Laroux, criminal extraordinary, was captured by his one-time friend, but escapes to Venus, where he died. But, 40 years later, he returns for vengeance on his ex-friend, now an alcoholic ex-cop, with an estranged daughter. Of course, he is finally killed, and father and daughter reunited, and the alcoholic an ex-alcoholic in good police standing again. Actually, it isn't Lash returned from the dead, but his son, with the help of some telepathic Venerians, who does all the dirty work.

An entertaining puzzle/chase story, but not up to some others of Temple 's stories. Fair.

Penance Day in Moderan, by David R. Bunch. 5p. More of this crud, which, like the ones before, deals with the metal-flesh period, and the off-beat writing - way off. The best part of the story is the last two words, "The End."

Membership Drive, by Murray F. Yaco. 10p. A visitor from space - an emissary from the Galactic Federation - asks for fuel and weapons like the samples he has left. Only, it turns out he is a pirate! But he departs, leaving Earth happily awaiting word from the Federation. Rather good, and not too long. Or maybe I like it because of the wish fulfillment. But, I don't believe that production can be quite as good as the author thinks. Someone has sold him on how quickly science can duplicate anything. 'Tain't so. It takes time to analyse, duplicate, and then set up production - more than just overnight. Otherwise, ok, but this does ruin the story for me.

A New Look At Space, by Arthur C. Clarke. 4p. An article on space problems.

...And All the Stars a Stage, by James Blish. A 52 p part two and last. At last one ship arrives at earth, after almost all of the original crew are gone. Before they do, the director dies, Jorn takes over. He manages to hold the ship together until it lands. This section has some much better writing - some of the scenes on the other planet that looked so nice - and wasn't, for example. And some very poor. The over-all effect is good, although the ending is very queer - I feel as if about half of the last 50 mss pages were left out.

To span the years, Blish uses too much diary and too little action. And yet, he makes the story and characters in this section more believable than in the first. The gradual degeneration of the ship and its crew/passengers is well done. I believe my verdict would be that this is another of the "new" Amazing's better efforts. But why not a couple of more pages at the end? And there is the mystery of the familiars that is never explained. More cutting?

Time Enough, by Damon Knight. 5p. Using real time travel instead of the couch in psychiatry. A neat little vignette - no great story, but well done.

Astounding (Analog) Science Fact & fiction, July 1960. And another of the typical ASF covers - the mixing of the two time eras. And this, as most of them, is taken from the story - almost. The High Crusade, by Poul Anderson. 29 p. part 1 of 3. Remember the old Planet stories that mixed spaceships and swords, just because it made for more conflict, and with no real reason? Well, here is the ASF version - with reason. The captain of an Earth space ship on a far planet is reading the translation of an ancient manuscript:

"Archbishop William, a most learned and holy prelate, having commanded me to put into English writing those great events to which I was a humble witness, I take up my Quill in the name of the Lord and my patron saint, trusting that they will aid my feeble powers of narrative for the sake of future generations who may with profit study the account of Sir Roger de Tourneville's campaign and learn thereby fervently to reverence the great God by Whom all things are brought to pass."

So begins the account by Brother Parvus, of the Franciscan order. In the year 1345 Sir Roger, Baron de Tourneville in northern Lincolnshire, was gathering a force of knights, archers, crossbowmen, pikemen, and Cavalry to join King Edward III in France. Then the Worsgor exploring ship lands near the town. Rather than fleeing when one of the Worsgor uses a blaster on a man, they attack -- and take the ship, with only one prisoner. Sir Roger then has his great idea. As the ship is big enough, why not take the whole town of Ansby aboard - cattle, horses, women, children, pigs, and all the comforts of home - and sail to the Holy Land to liberate it. The captive, Branithar, teaches the simple handling of the ship, and some 2000 strong, they embark. But Branithar tricks them and cuts in an automatic pilot that will take them to the nearest Worsgor planet, Tharixan. Arriving unexpectedly, they take one of the fortresses by surprise, and capture it with mailed cavalry and longbow. But in the crash landing of the ship, the navigational notes that would lead back to earth were lost; there is no way back home. Sir Roger decides that the only thing to do is to go forward - capture the rest of the world - and maybe somehow find a way back. With the world in hand, he might be able to make terms with the Worsgorix and get their help in locating earth. The next day the Worsgorix come for a parley.

A wonderful idea - and Poul is doing it justice. The mixing of the 14th century feudal society with the spaceship age is well done. I feel that that period's people might take such a mixing very matter-of-factly, as he depicts, secure in their faith that permitted no doubts. Only the nobles and the clergy have any questions. The main characters are deftly drawn - the meek little Paryus, interpreter and recorder, who tells the story, Sir Roger, Lady Catherine, his wife, John Hameward, the red-haired giant who leads the bowmen, Branithar, and the others, all are characterized by their actions and words more than by lengthy descriptions. You can see them and th whole scene - peasants camped inside the spaceship, with their cooking fires on the metal decks; cavalry charging down the spaceship landing ramps; longbows against aircraft, with the aircraft losing.

The touches of 14th century logic and naivete about the scientific marvels - as when Brother Parvus complains because the beautifully detailed maps of the Worsgor "showed lack of culture by omitting pictures of mermaids, the four winds, hippogriffs, and similar ornamentation" - all make the contrast more noticable. The action moves, of course, but it never gets out of hand. I feel this is good, and look forward to the other sections.

The Troublemaker, by Christopher Anvil 15 p. A spaceship with a troublemaker aboard gets rid of him legally and logically, and yet gets its revenge. I liked the idea - it is new, I feel, and yet logical. If the gadgetry would work. The writing is clear, the characters familiar, but still believable. I liked this little story.

The Brotherhood of Keepers, by Dean McLaughlin. 43 p.. Xi Scorpii has an experiment station for testing the natives. Suddenly - after a thousand years - a mutation appears and continues to appear that is intelligent. The conflict arises between two groups of earthmen. One is in favor of helping all the natives, the other of letting them develop naturally. The resolution, of course, is the latter. The plot is simple, but the execution of it is quite well done, with interesting characters - somewhat black and white, it is true, but still entities. The action, though, is very slow; much of the space is taken up with discussions of the pros and cons. Still, a good thought-provoking story, but not a great one.

Beyond the Phyla, by Isaac Asimov. 23p article. This continues "The March of the Phyla," and Asimov discusses the development within two major phyla - Arthropoda and Chordata. Interesting, with some purty pictures, that add little to the article.

Subspace Survivors, by Edward E. Smith. 31 p. First Officer Doston, of the subspace liner Procyon, meets Barbara Warner on board, they fall in love, and get married immediately. He is psi - although latent - and so is she. Something goes wrong with the engines and the ship becomes radioactive. Warned by his "hunch" they escape in a lifeboat with two other survivors, one crewman and one theoretician, the learned Dr Adams, with only 8 earned doctorates. One other lifeboat escapes, with Second Officer Jones and his wife; they were warned by their psi powers. They have three passengers, a "financier" who looks like a racketeer, and his bodyguard of two men. The Procyon and the lifeboats come to rest in normal space, completely lost. So, they reboard it, decontaminate it, and head for the nearest star at only 1 g - but evidently passing the speed of light on the way.

Dr Adams starts investigating to find out why the ship went bad and why no sub-radio messages can be sent. The rest police the ship. The gangster, the disgruntled crewman, and the two hoods plan to kill the officers and take over the girls. Warned by their psi, the four turn the tables and kill the rebels. Then they finally make planetfall, fix the radio, and call for a tow. And all ends well.

Doc Smith has written a standard shipwreck - "got to fix the spaceship" - story, complete with the unnecessary villains - who add nothing to the story, in this case, but length. The writing is smooth - too smooth? - with lots of short dialogue; it reads easily. The characters are very standard, with little to distinguish one from the other - the two heros are interchangable. None of them are alive as was "Blackie" DuQuesne in "Skylark of Space" where he alone had any real personality. The women are no better than the earlier girls - but no worse, either. This is lightweight Smith; it reads easily while saying nothing and will be quickly forgotten. The reason may be, I feel, because there is no sense of conflict, no tension built up in the development. Everything is solved so easily that my reaction was "Ho hum!"

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, July 1960. Oh I'll Take the High Road, by Stephen Barr. 16 p. Time travel by mental effort. John Dougal and his wife Joan travel thusly - but are separated; John's search in the far future for his wife is the main story. A very poetically written story with the fantasy aspect of time travel. Some very purple prose, very well handled. The writing creates the mood the author wants. I liked this one.

The Simian Problem, by Hollis Alpert. 8 p. The aftermath of the nuclear testing is the retrogression of man towards an ape-type, which seems to doom mankind. But there is a discovery that counters this; the gorillas are becoming manlike. A wry little bit, very underplayed but well done. (And let us hope it remains a story.) The handling as a scientific report is very typical; this is the way the sun's approaching novahood would be handled. (Remember that story in ASF some years back, on this theme?). Worth reading.

The Burning, by Theodore Cogswell. 5 p. New York after the war, with only small matriarchal bands of semi-savages. Not enough space to detail the background so that it makes no real sense. If there had been more development it might have been moreeffective; as it is it is just two little truants from school, or maybe an episode from "Tom Sawyer" in a new setting.

Things, by Zenna Henderson. 7 p. The arrival of the Earthmen on a strange planet and their effect on the natives; told from the native point of view. Similar stories have been written about the Indians or the Chinese or .... Rather over-purple writing. Too many coined words per paragraph to help the reading; they are undefined and when I hit one I stop short. Sections such as:

"For the devi in our coveti, we could buy their sky craft."

lose their meaning because I don't know how or what devis are and what they are good for. This is not one of her best efforts.

It Is Not My Fault, by A. H. Z. Carr. 11p. God, glancing to earth, notes a man dying in great misery. This angers him, and he directs his most intelligent angel, Sandolphon, to investigate, find the cause, and report so that the one who is responsible may be punished. After much investigation, Sandolphon finally concludes that only one can be held responisble - God Himself. He reports back - only to find, with relief, that God has fallen asleep again.

This is well written. But it isn't really a story. It is a sociological essay in disguise. I enjoyed it - but not as a story. Characters - none. Writing - good. Story - minor. But, food for thought if you really dig into it.

Through Time & Space with Ferdinand Feghoot SSVIII (that's what the title page - table of contents, I mean - says. The story is listed as XXIX) by Grendel Brutnor. 1 p. This one is no better than the last; in fact, it is a little off-color. (And now watch the rush to read it!).

All in Good Time, by Miriam Allen de Ford. 8 p. A law case of the future - bigamy via time travel. Rather dry, but adequate, if you don't mind no action and a straight lecture. I felt it could have been worse.

The Last Dream, by Gordon R. Dickson. 7 p. The dreams of a dying old man as he dreams of a "judgment" after death. A very nice little fantasy. With good writing and deftly and lightly handled. Very little of the mawkish. Just long enough. I liked it.

Beyond Pluto, by Isaac Asimov. 11p. article. Here our biochemist friend discourses on a trans-Plutonian planet. Even out of his field he is interesting.

Fair Trade, by Avram Davidson. 8 p. An alien visits a small, snowbound Idaho town - with unexpected results. But I'm sure a number of the younger readers won't get the punch line. Amusing.

To the Tombaugh Station, by Wilson Tucker. 44 p. A detective story plus space opera. And well done. A female insurance investigator travels to Pluto in the spaceship - two-man - of the man who is suspected of killing one of his two partners. Simple plot. But I liked the handling of it; as to be expected in a Tucker story, the obvious isn't there. This is one of the few stories in the last 10 years, at least, that have discussed the discomforts of space travel with more than a few casual mentions of "increased weight" or "lack-of-weight" problems. Here, it is a part of the plot; in fact, it is essential. And don't let the fact that you have a boy-girl situation mislead you. Boy does not get girl, although he tries. Unfortunately, I believe the story has been drastically cut; this accounts for several rough spots and for some unexplained allusions. In spite of this (and I'm looking forward to pocket book publication, uncut, I hope) the characters are built up into real people, and the action is logical, although not the usual story logic. I liked this; in fact, it is the best in the issue.

-30-

Bill

SPECULATIVE Review

CLASSIFIED CORRESPONDENCE

I. STILL RIDING THAT OMNIBUS:

HARRY WARNER speculates: "The lead review of this Speculative Review makes me wonder if anyone has tried a scientific experiment: an attempt to purchase a copy of The Fantastic Universe Omnibus. It would be interesting to determine if the publishers really did have any left over to sell, after giving away all those copies. I trustingly reviewed it in the summer Horizons, and by the time that gets distributed, fans are going to be wishing that they'd never heard of the book, assuming that reviews contine to appear at the present pace...Our reactions to the collection jibe after a fashion, although I'm not as opposed as you (and Evans elsewhere in this SR) to feminine-viewpoint stories. Doggoneit, that's the sort of thing women are interested in, and writers are supposed to write about matters of which they have close personal knowledge and in which they feel real interest. Maybe it's a streak of femininity in me, but I don't mind it in moderate quantities, until it gets to the point at which the author is describing exactly how the food was prepared or the contents of the heroine's wardrobe." (Hagerstown, Md.)

SAM MOSKOWITZ growls: "While I cannot hope to change the opinion of the reviewer in regard to the quality of my story "The Golden Pyramid"...I think it is legitimate to question the validity of the scientific criticism.

"First...it was never definitely established that 'The Golden Pyramid' Was of metallic gold; 'golden' is used as an identifying color. The pyramid is not valued because it might be metallic gold but because the finders believe it to be a Martian artifact -- the first evidence that there was once intelligent life on Mars. /"A hit, a very palpable hit"/

"Secondly, I am frankly curious to know what scientific report you have read that states conclusively that the brain subjected to high radioactivity might not suffer some damage. I naturally like to be well informed and if radioactivity can in no ways injure the tissues of the brain I would like to stand corrected. Can you give me any reference at all that states reliably that radioactivity cannot injure the brain?

"...I felt if excess ultraviolet from the sun can cause sunstroke -- and I believe it has been reputably reported (though it may be only an old wives tale) that people out in the sun too long frequently have been known to act irrationally; excessive radioactivity might be at least that damaging..."/Fie! And you with an MD in the house to tell you that sunstroke is a result of heat & dehydration, while hard radiation does its damage by ionizing the bits of tissue it passes thru...;/ (Newark, NJ).

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Klaatu Borada Nikto

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II. CRITICISM OF CRITICISM

SID COLEMAN confesses: "I had a harder time finishing the last SPEC REV than I did with the new Sharkey serial. I think there is a strategic fallacy at work, rather than any overwhelming weakness on Evans' part: the vast majority of sf shorts published in these days are dull, trivial, and basically similar; trying to review them individually is as difficult a task as trying to review one of Bennett Cerf's compediums joke by joke; the reviews acquire the characteristics of the objects reviewed... The successful prozine-reviewers like

at length
Pemberton and Atheling restricted themselves to talking/about a few stories of interest, or to discussing interesting editorial or auctorial trends, rather than trying to publish annotated tables of contents.

"DK partially resolved a similar problem -- a gleet of second rate books during the Great Boom -- by transformation, treating each bad book as an occasion not for a review but for a humorous essay. But this requires a special sort of talent, and, in addiation, tends to take you ever farther from criticism. (See DK's review of Point Ultimate, which represents a fairly late stage of this development, and has almost as little to do with the critical process as Perelman's article on Captain Future.)" (Santa Monica, Cal.)

HARRY WARNER cavils: "I think that you people should do something about the main body of SR. I was intensely interested in these magazine reviews, but I leafed ahead a couple of times to determine how many pages remained in the issue. This is exactly the way I used to run reviews in Horizons, and I can see now why they didn't get much comment in the FAPA reviews in those years. I don't know what precise suggestions I should make, unless they would consist of a reminder that there's really no need to say something about every story in every issue, and a hint that the repetitive pattern could be broken up here and there by considering all the stories by one prolific author in one section, or devoting a couple of pages to all the stories on the same general subject matter during the period under consideration." (Hagerstown, Md.)

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"John Thomas Cross is the name they lick me by"

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III. STARMEN'S WAR

PEGGY SEXTON dives "...with all jets blasting, into the Starship Soldier brawl. "Something which upset me very much was reading in Schuyler Miller's Analog column that the thing was on the feud level: rather than 'I wouldn't want to live in the kind of society Heinlein described', the sentiment was, 'Heinlein is a fascist!' I don't know what Heinlein's personal politics are, but it sounds as tho a lot of people are hitting below the belt...I wouldn't want to live in a veteran-run society; witness the McCarthyistic idiocies of the American Legion and DAR. But this is not intended to slander all military people as a class; I'm against any one special interest group running a country -- Buddhists, bankers, or s-f fans." (Devine, Texas)

JAMES GROVES agrees: "The best comment I've seen is that of PS Miller in ASF to the effect that perhaps Heinlein was just taking a set of unpopular postulates and following them through to their logical conclusion. Myself I think it was more than that -- if that was the case he would have put more story in it and turned it into an exercise in writing. I think myself that he's pointed out in all seriousness the one major flaw in the 'ban the bomb' and 'no more war' campaigns: that it won't work as long as there is someone who doesn't agree. He points out the same thing that he pointed out in The Puppet Masters: that we've had a hard ruthless fight to get up to our present position so why do we expect it to be soft going from now on?

"Another thing I deplore about this recent outcry is that it's directed at Heinlein personally. When Pohl and Kornbluth wrote Gladiator-at-Law and The Space Merchants they weren't accused of being 'filthy capitalists' or like that. Just because the future postulated in this instance does not agree with you is no reason

for heaping abuse on the author. From the volume of invective flying over this story I'd hazard a guess that it has hit pretty close to the truth -- uncomfortably close...I don't like the solution, or war, but that doesn't stop me from realizing that war is a workable way of gaining your ends (some of them, anyway) and that if you're going to use it you might as well use it properly.

"The other point about this story is that he actually suggests that citizenship should be earned instead of being a gift! What an odd notion -- and what a horrible thought for our present 'something for nothing' populace. I am intrigued by the notion that only those who are willing to work, and if necessary die, for their society deserve to have a say in how it is run. Freedom belongs to those who have the guts to fight to defend it. If you're not prepared to fight any 'ism' that attempts to deprive you of your freedom, then you not only don't deserve to have it, but you very soon won't. In my opinion Heinlein has rammed home some very bitter home truths and has used an extreme case to do it with.

"Dismounts from soapbox." (East Ham, London)

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"He wished he were two people -- or at least a Velantian"

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IV. WHAT'S WRONG WITH SCIENCE FICTION

MIKE DECKINGER chuckles: "For the past few months, I've devised a kind of game I play when reading the current prozines. It's called 'Spot the Analog Rejects' and, as the title implies, its main purpose is to spot stories which were on the brink of being bought by Campbell, but for some reason were rejected. I've come across several likely candidates for this post, but probably the biggest contender is Poul Anderson's "The Apprentice Wobbler" from the first (and only) issue of Fred Pohl's Star SF Mag. It is so typica lly Campbell that it seems out of place in this mag... The Wobbly described in the story is an obvious extension of a Heironymous machine, which not only indicates the presence of latent psi fields, but helps focus and direct the psi of man's mind into a useful tool. It's a little more than a tool, for a tool is useless without someone using it, but this Wobbly conditioned the mind, till eventually the main character could levitate without its help. Now why would Campbell ever turn thumbs down on a story like this, which so definitively put forth a principle whoch he's been trying to make for a long while -- and does it in an entertaining, or painless, way? ...Perhaps Fred Pohl got cocky and used it in an effort to show Campbell that there were others who will go along with the psionics nonsense.

DICK GEIS grotches: "For some reason (I'd hate to dig too deep into my psyche) I bought a copy of that typographer's nightmare ASTOUNDSCIENCE Fact & Fiction a few weeks ago. Maybe I just wanted to check on Herr Campbell after a few years.

"Frankly, I found the stories unreadable. All I had to do with 'The High Crusade' was read the gimmick introduction and that was it. I could practically 'see' the rest of the story. Why read it?

"I suppose I'm 'tagged' in fandom as a sex maniac /no...just a trifle eccentric -- RE/, but I do resent the lack of realistic human relationships in sf. And I think this lack invalidates the genre from serious consideration as literature. I keep coming back to the conviction that you cannot claim validity or stature for a story about a future society unless you treat realistically with its people, and that must include sex behavior and attitudes. These should be evident in incidental behavior, speech, personality, etc.

"I don't mean sf should be spiced up with sex. I do mean you cannot ignore a basic human drive and expect to be taken seriously.

"I suppose there have been stories published which (blare of trumpets!) did courageously state that men like to ***** women. But since Farmer , who?

"Sf is aimed at juveniles and idealists and scientists, which small group doesn't want its reading messed up with basic man-woman relationships. None of that sex goop getting in the way of the pure extrapolations, please!

"So, okay. Sf is peopled with de-sexed puppets. But don't wonder, for God's sake, why it isn't popular or why it's in a slump. The genre has a built-in exclusiveness.

"As an added note: isn't it significant that sf juveniles by Heinlein are unquestioningly accepted by the readership as perfectly okay? Novels written simon-pure and simple (but with a detailed background) are gulped down without a murmur by adults and college students.

"But what sf magazine would have published even PART of Limbo?" (Venice,Cal.)

/Oh gawd, another equation of realism with sex! Myself, I seldom object to stories which, being truly realistic, recognize that there exist other human drives than sex and that, things being how they are, these drives pretty well have to occupy most of our attention and time...in fact, that they do, and take up larger slices of life as we get above the level of Neanderthal Man and other Hemingway characters. "The intellect is a passion too", as GBS said, and one capable of far more elaboration than, ah, Venusian chess. After all, the printable variations on boy-and-girl are pretty limited. -- REJ

* * * * * * *

Joe Patrizio (72 Glenvarloch Crescent, Edinburgh 9, Scotland) would like to get a copy of the AMAZING STORIES containing "Transient". He's willing to exchange British prozines, fanzines, or what have you.

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SPECULATIVE

Review

from
Dick Eney
417 Ft. Hunt Rd.
Alexandria, Va.
USA

Printed Matter
no commercial value

Norman Weedall
20 Palmerston Dr.
Liverpool 21,
ENGLAND