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SITUATION VACANT: One (1) reviewer ready to cover British SF prozines. Experience desirable; nasty disposition and pungent turn of phrase necessary. Apply care of editor, SPECULATIVE REVIEW.

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SPECULATIVE REVIEW -- not to leave you in the dark about what this publication is-- is a production of the Washington Science Fiction Association, devoted to review and criticism of science-fiction and fantasy publications. This is Volume 3, Number 1, edited and published by Dick Eney as Operation Crifanac CLXXXVII. It is available for trade, letter of comment or dirty old money; exchange rate for the latter is 3/25¢ to the editor at 417 Ft. Hunt Road, Alexandria, Virginia, or 3 for 2/ to Archie Mercer, 434/4 Newark Road, North Hykeham, Linc., England.

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Everybody who's ever gotten mixed up with fan publishing knows what happens when time and cash are in very short supply for a while. It will save you a deal of patience and me a session of maudlin sentimentality if you'll be kind enough to assume that I've just printed and you've just read Excuse for Late Appearance 2, variant (d).

The prolonged silence hasn't made me any happier, though, about what is still the most repulsive feature of modern stf.

Forgive me if I curse a trifle here, but the least I can say is:

REVIEW

CONVERSATION PIECE 5

"Himmelkreisgeruberzakramentundblitzen!" swore Friedrich von Juntzt moodily, chucking a copy of aSF across the room.

"I", said I, "think it's encouraging. It means that science-fiction is due to take an upswing again."

Friedrich turned a basilisk eye on me and snorted.

"No doubt! Every time the Earth People begin to think we're roughly 50% sane comes along somebody like Campbell to disprove it. Due for an upswing, godsake?"

"Suuure", I drawled complacently. "Whenever the field totters, Roscoe raises up a savior for science-fiction. Our savior today will be Campbell..."

Friedrich snorted again.

"...Just as, last time, it was Ray Palmer."

Friedrich turned scarlet and made a gargling noise, then thought better of it. "If Campbell is saving anything," he said with venom, "it's our reputation for being a pack of irresponsible screwballs.

"Look," he went on, tears springing to each of his eyes, "think where we were back in 1950 when all this bullthrowing began. Palmer and his nutty Shaver Mystery had just been buried for good and Palmer himself had been fired from Ziff-Davis.

"Then, just when we were beginning to mention science-fiction without blushing, what happened? John W Campbell fell hook line sinker and float for the corniest stack of claptrap sprung on stf readers since Shaverism: this cause of Dianetics. And when Dianetics turned into Scientology and became so patent a hoax that even a man with the reputation Campbell used to have couldn't brazen it out any longer, he picked up on other equally blatant bits of sucker bait: Hieronymus machines, dowsing, even Highway hypnosis..."

"Don't mention that in the same breath with the others", I protested. "At least Highway Hypnosis is a real phenomenon. So's dowsing, for that matter; used to be able to do that myself, in Zoo--"

"By picking up elopic radiation with your psi faculties?" interjected Friedrich scornfully. "Sucker bait approaches can be used on real phenomena, after all; if JWC had honestly been trying to find out something about dowsing, rather than advertise himself the way Palmer used to, he'd've found out what was behind dowsing in next to no time -- and, for all I know, clarified some of the nonsense that's been spouted about it and other 'psi phenomena'. But no; he confined himself to advertising -- not reporting -- oddities to give himself talking points. Same trick he pulled with the Hieronymus machine; demanding that his claims be considered data, and refusing to lay solid facts on the line with names and dates and figures. And then, fergawdsake, he wondered why nobody paid any attention when he tried the same technique with the Dean Drive --"

"He didn't wonder, either; he swore it was scientific blindness."

Friedrich smiled sourly. "A fat obscenity lot of room he's got to talk about blindness! If he'd checked to see what really has been found out about dowsing --"

"Or Hieronymus machines?"

He shook his head. "The Hieronymus machine is just another type of dowsing device; it's a special case, not a different one. DeCamp proved that when he got those sticky-machine results from a copy of Time magazine; the Hieronymus gadget is a dowsing instrument in the sense Campbell used the expression -- a muscle-reading device, not necessarily a forked twig, looking for anything hidden or unknown, not necessarily underground springs."

"You mean that utilities company in Michigan could have used Hieronymus machines instead of dowsing rods...?"

"Why limit your mamedropping to utility companies?" asked Friedrich with a grin. "You can cite real conservative outfits that have used dowsing, like the British Army Corps of Engineers and the Indian Colonial Office, if you want to make the appeal to authority...but sure, why shouldn't they have used something besides dowsing rods? I think Hieronymus machines would be too clumsy, but there are other muscle-reading devices...what was that gadget you people used at GWU for fertilizing eggs?"

I gave him a look of disgust. "'Sexing' eggs means sorting them by sex, you kook! We used a Keller pendulum -- the little weight on a string you hold suspended over the object you're testing. It swings back and forth or circularly, depending on the reading you get...you know the thing? But do you really think that Campbell could have been satisfied -- even if he'd actually looked for an explanation -- with the idea that all these varieties of dowsing are what they seem to be: methods of using muscle-reading devices to objectify subconscious appraisals?"

"Of course not!" snapped Friedrich. "I don't for a moment believe that he would have been 'satisfied' with any explanation, any more than Palmer would have been 'satisfied' with an explanation for the Shaver Mystery. You're looking at it as if Campbell were really a scientific investigator, trying to get at the truth about these phenomena. You're wrong; those frantic blasts of his against the dirty hidebound scientists should have shown you better. He's not an investigator, he's an editor; he's not trying to get at truth, he's trying to pander to the boob market just the way RAP did!"

I hummed reflectively while Friedrich caught his breath.

"I didn't mean it quite that way", I offered; "you may be being too hard on John motivewise. He can't help it if he's come down with the Lindberg Syndrome."

"Motivewise is a Madison Avenue word," reproved Friedrich, "and what in hell is the Lindberg Syndrone?"

"The thing that moved Lindberg to write that book of his --" I snapped my fingers to invoke Memory --"Of Flight and Life; the rejection of the scientific solution by a man who once believed in it."

"The phenomenon is not exactly original with Lindberg", observed Friedrich mildly. "But I admit that Campbell's turning his back on sanity may have some such explanation as it had in Lindberg's case (the Lone Eagle was croggled by seeing the result of air bombing, if I remember rightly), though I think..."

"I was saying 'science'..."

"I changed it to 'sanity' for emphasis;" explained Friedrich calmly, "'Science is nothing but good sense and clear thinking'. Actually, though, I've gotten the impression that Campbell, about 1950, woke up to the fact that he was just the editor of one of these screwball Buck Rogers magazines instead of a recognized Somebody, and started trying to make up for lost time. Unhappily, it was eternally lost, and so he had to imagine a way out of his hole; or rather, to snatch at imaginary solutions provided by others. Especially solutions which would be revolutionary enough to demolish whole fields of study and let their originators in on the ground floor, level with everybody else.

"Look at the Dean Drive; isn't it the quintessense of all these screwball Sangreals Campbell's been puffing up? It's something devised by one heroic sinust working all alone in his garret /"Randy will clobber you!" I muttered/; it is despised and rejected of men -- that is, by the Established Authorities -- and most important, it, like the others, short-circuits a hard and lifelong job.

"Consider now: isn't that the essential feature of all these Great Ideas of Campbell's? Psychology is a fiendishly difficult science to learn, and its application is laborious and delicate; but Dianetics can be learned at home from one book...sorry, one Book...and applied successfully as a do-it-yourself handicraft. Chemistry is toilsome

and smelly and hard to master, but the Hieronymus machine will produce an analysis for you on anything in the world in a few minutes. And with this Dean Drive...you notice JWC started pooping it after the scare about Russia's lead in space? That fits in, too; rockets are expensive and slow in development, not to mention that the Dirty Reds are putting us one-down with them, and it's all because the Hidebound Conventional Scientists in Washington have ignored good ol' John and this marvellous device which would put us out in front in space in no time. Pardon me while I spit."

"You aren't allowing for the bias that takes over an apostate; don't you remember what eager-beaver proselytizers converts are supposed to be?"

"It isn't that I'm not allowing for it as that I'm not excusing it", said Friedrich something snappishly.

"Consider it from his point of view for a moment; or, if you like, from Lindberg's, as I was saying. Here he's given...how many years is it?...to stf, just as Lindberg did to aviation, and science turns out not to be able to recreate the world automatically and without effort; it even hurts people who get careless using it. Remember that rather revealing piece about Highway Hypnosis -- a long account of how helpless scientists were against it? And the paragraph at the end in which he mentioned the real reason for his feelings: his son had gotten killed while under its influence? I recall he went out and hunted up a text on hallucination, the next month, so he could do a book review on it and insert sneers about the silly clowns who dared to speak authoritively about anything when they couldn't deal with a phenomenon as simple as H.H.

"The other Causes aren't so frankly exposed as that, but I think they're equally responses to some hurt. Look, those atomic-doom stories aSF was so choked with in the late '40s were logical prelude to just this sort of thing. How do you think he'd react if he decided that, by common sense, we were frolicking along on the lip of a volcano /"Block that cliché!" groaned Friedrich/ and bound to land in a holocaust unless some miracle intervened? Well, wouldn't he start to produce a series of miraculous new approaches and gadgets that implied them...and, incidentally, start to run down the 'orthodox' folk by whose standards we were going to land in a lively imitation of hell before too long? That could easily explain every feature of Campbell's own descent into nescience and crackpot-pandering; just the will to force into acceptance a set of standards by which we weren't facing a desperate and difficult future."

Friedrich closed his eyes and shuddered. "Don't tell me you're going to absolve him on the grounds of 'sincerity'?" He got the last word out as if it were something with scales on it.

"Now who's using Madison Avenue words?" I inquired. "But hell no, I'm not allowing any such claim as that; his purpose may be good, but he's conscious of what he's really doing. Nobody could show JWC's skill at obfuscation unless he realized that there were features of his doctrines that didn't bear examination. That combination of blustering iconoclasm and blubbering self-pity is too familiar to anybody who's seem cultist minds in action. Sincere!" I produced a snort of my own. "If this mountebank is sincere, so was P.T. Barnum!"

Friedrich chuckled approvingly. "And you want him for a savior?"

I thought back and recaptured the thread of idea I'd been working on at first. "Consider what happened last time we had a real example of crackpottery in the prozines; the last time, I mean, it was presented with the demand we accept it for fact. Wasn't Palmer's idiocy set off by the Golden Age of the '40s? Now that Campbell's completed his pilgrimage from fictionalized science to burbling nescience, what'll be the reaction to that?

"Yes; now that JWC has hit rock bottom, by rights we should look to the pros to begin their next Golden Age. Now once again we have a Horrible Example for stf to live down. And I'd like to see what's going to be made of it...

"Matter of fact...I can hardly wait."

SPECULATIVE Review

BY THE DIM AND FLARING LAMPS

As a result of several suggestions (at least two), and because it is easier for me, I plan to limit the reviews this time to two magazines, with side looks at the others if something is good or bad enough to warrant comment. The two mags are those I feel are the best in the field today, and the two I maintain complete files of: ASTOUNDING, which has now changed completely into ANALOG, and THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. Too, it makes an interesting contrast, as the two magazines are so completely different; it is rare that a story slanted for one will appear in the other, something not true of lesser mags.

THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION (and that's the last time I'll call that by its full title; it will be F&SF) is usually thought of as being the most literate of the magazines in the field. In part this is due, I am sure, to the fantasy included in its pages; as heir to the WEIRD TALES tradition, it is trying to keep alive the idea that fantasy is more literary than that vulgar upstart, science-fiction. If a story is literate, then it must be fantasy. At the same time, F&SF is wooing the science fiction reader, who is more interested in the ideaof the story than in the slow unfolding of a beautifully written episode.

As a result, too often an issue of F&SF will be neither fantasy nor science fiction; it will contain attempts to please both the lovers of fantasy and the SF readers. When done by a writer who has a feel for bth media, this can be good. (I still remember with affection Clark Ashton Smith's tales in the old WONDER STORIES that were poetic science fiction -- stories like "The City of the Singing Flame" -- and many of CL Moore's both in WEIRD TALES and ASF; Northwest Smith is space opera, of course, but such space opera!) When the attempt to merge the two styles fails, the result is often horrible. Still, I feel that I will find at least one story in an issue I'll like, and probably several. After all, there are so many.

Which introduces a second comment. F&SF is fundamentally a short-story magazine. Where other magazines use novels and novelettes, with short stories to fill out the issue, here the reverse is true. Over a year, there will probably be no more than two serials (and even these will be cut; look at Starship Soldier!) a few long novellettes (also cut) and all the rest long and short short stories. This makes for variety, but leads to episodic or event stories with little space for development of background or story. (The "series" stories like "The People" are one attempt to overcome this limitation; with a group of related stories, the background can be gradually filled in and, in effect, a long story written.) This, I feel, is the major weakness of F&SF; short stories are nice to read, but the longer stories haveabetter chance to be remembered.

To turn from the general to the specific, here is one of the better efforts to fuse the fantasy writing with the science fiction story: Robert F Young's "Nikita Eisenhower Jones". (F&SF, Aug 60). A young Solomons Islander wants to visit the planets himself; wants to see the stars from the depth of space. Thwarted in his efforts to become a pilot, he becomes a cook -- reasoning that wherever men go they must eat -- he joins a group on a Uranian moon preparing a ship for a Pluto trip. He gets the pilot drunk and takes off in his place. The ship is damaged in landing; unable to return, he dies on Pluto -- happy that he has realized his dreams. A trite plot, but a well written, well developed, nicely paced story. It stood up nicely on rereading.

Other items briefly: "The First Ingredient", by Jack Sharkey. Finally the heroine figures out what she's doing wrong, and all the old spells she'd tried since childhood take effect. ** "The Seeds of Murder", by John F Suter. Obviously influenced by the Bridey Murphy episode, but did Wallace "remember" the murder he's going to commit in ten

years, or was it merely his subconscious releasing repressions under hypnosis? **"Just A Suggestion", by Rosel George Brown: Visitors from outer space wreck civilization by turning Madison Avenue into not-selling. Too choppy. ** "Miracle on Main Street", by Robert Arthur. Danny, with a small boy's literalness, wishes that certain overheard gossip were true. Unknowingly, he has an amulet that will grant one unselfish wish. ** "The Revenant", by Raymond E Banks: Spaceship landing on a planet where all is illusion -- created by the characters in the illusion. A tour-de-force, I'd say, in bringing order from chaos. ** "The Sign of the Goose", by GC Edmondson. Flying saucers mix it with the Mexican civil service. ** Isaac Asimov discusses the planets as living space. ** "Callahan and the Wheelies", by Stephen Barr. The Mad Inventor's gadget gets away from him again.

The September issue opens with a story of Project OZMA by Winston P Sanders, "The Word to Space". The interstellar communication project contacts a world which turns out to be a theocracy, broadcasting only scripture. It appears to be a stagnant culture. Father James Moriarty (Baker Street Irregulars, attention!) succeeds in disrupting this culture by asking a few "simple" questions in theology, starting a violent Reformation. Very understated, and quite discursive; I liked it.

Other matters: "A Day in the Suburbs": Evelyn E Smith makes suburbia less believable than Oz. ** "Goodbye", by Burton Raffel: the plot eludes me, even after three readings; maybe you can figure it out. ** "Button, Button" by Gordon R Dickson. The boss of the Interplanetary Freight Handlers' Union has to make a trip to prove he should retain his membership. (Did anyone ever try this on John L Lewis?) ** "The Man on Top", by Reg Bretnor: What do you do when you've just climbed the previously unclimbed peak in the Himalayas -- and find the naked Holy Man waiting for you, 26,000 feet up. ** "The NRACP" by George P Elliott: The title gives you the plot, NRACP being National Relocation Authority: Colored People. The blurb promises "horrible realism", not mentioning that the first is the more applicable modifyer. ** "Two in Homage", by Kit Reed: Like so many "stories" in F&SF, it is not a story but an episode. Post-atomic tribesmen, for this one.

October, the 11th Anniversary All-Star Issue, opens with an 18 page novelet, "The Oath", by James Blish. The survivors of the atomic war are trying to keep civilization alive, but run across an uncommon aspect of the problem: shall the weak be kept alive to weaken the race? A lab technician decides the best way to survive after the bomb is to become a "doctor", treating the ill as best he can from an accumulation of drugs and books. Word seeps into one of the subterranean colonies, and an attept is made to recruit him; Blish uses the occasion for an argument between two three-dimensional straw men on the question above, and resolves it only partially. A good story, if mildly paced (action is not a characteristic of F&SF unless Heinlein is writing) which leaves some room for thought. I liked it.

Further: "Something", by Allen Drury: a short horror story, with the horror suggested but never fully depicted. WEIRD TALES would have loved it. ** "Inside the Comet", by Arthur C Clarke: "Gotta fix the spaceship". I liked the light touch in this, but I hope it doesn't give IBM heartburn -- or Mao ideas. ** "Welcome", by Poul Anderson: Nicely set up time travel story, overly dependent on the last line. ** "From Shadowed Places", by Richard Matheson. Peter Long is under a witch doctor's curse...ah, but Dr. Howell is an anthropologist who has studied in Africa with a witch doctor. Characters real; action beautifully detailed. ** "Interbalance", by Katherine MacLean: The little village is struggling along after the Bomb; the odd character is trying to teach his son "civilization". ** "The Sight of Eden", by Howard Fast: the seven in the star ship had found the perfect planet; apparently inhabited but deserted. Then they learned why they'd returned with false memories... ** "A Few Miles", by Philip José Farmer: for once, the unusual reproductive nature of an alien species is a minor part of the story -- although this is apparently only the first section of a novel, in which the theme may become important. (A serial by another name...) Br'er John Carmody goes through trials as he tries to get from his monastery to the space port...and why has he got an egg attached to his chest?

The November issue starts with a 3-page upbeat item, Vance Aandahl's "It's A Great Big Wonderful Universe". A real cool post-atom scene, man. Change a few names and it could be ~~1111~~ set in New York City, in today's world. ** "Romance in a Twenty-First Century Used Car Lot", by Robert F Young: Keller's "Revolt of the Pedestrians", jazzed up and sexed up but not improved thereby. ** "Who Dreams of Joy", by Will Worthington: the old "King of the Wood" religion updated into a modern society; well done, and, in view of what happened in Germany, rather believable. ** "Funk", by John W Vandercook: a standard weird story; the European doesn't believe in the witch doctor's curse. ** "Combat Unit", by Keith Laumer. Experiment reactivates the brain of a captured military robot; a highly successful robot story. ** "Yes We Have No Ritchard", by Bruce J Friedman: Mr Dolton, after death, is trying to find out where he is -- and so am I. A little too obscure to make sense.

Longest item in the issue is Mack Reynolds' "Russkies Go Home!" A cute solution to the cold war — or the period after the cold war, when Russia is booming and the Russians have become the world's tourists. Reynolds figures that them they will be ready for a religious movement. I like the idea-- and wish he had done a better job of developing it. There is too sudden a transition from idea to full-fledged Old Time Religion, well established in Russia...after just one year! This, of course, is necessary to allow boy to meet girl, lose girl, find girl while still able to appreciate girl; but it certainly seems a serious flaw in an otherwise good story. The opening is well done, and I liked the finale, with the American "priest" drinking vodka with the dictator and both worrying about the Chinese, who are becoming tourists to Russia. Except for the time scale, this would be excellent; as it is, it is good. (I wonder whether Mills has taken his scissors to the central part? This might explain some of the troubles.)

* * * * * *

Turning to the other of the "Big Two" we have ASTOUNDING (ANALOG) SCIENCE (FACT &) FICTION -- the science fiction magazine for most of the last 20 years. (Doesn't it make you shiver a little to realize that Campbell has been editing it for over two thirds of its total life?) There have peen periods when it -- i.e. Campbell -- went overboard for certain, ah, fads such as the recent and current one on psi, but in general the magazine has kept to a stable course of heavy science in its stories. These stories don't have the clever sparkle or deft touch of those in F&SF, but they do tend to be longer (about half the novelettes in F&SF would be called shorts in ASF) and accordingly are very often better rounded; stories rather than episodes.

I prefer this, personally. (After all, I cut my teeth on the big AMAZING and WONDER QUARTERLIES, where the lead story actually was book length. Things like "The Moon Conquerors" and "Islands of Space" and "The Blue Barbarians" and "Master Mind of Mars" and "The Scarlet Planet" /it's hard to remember that this was denounced as too sexy when it came out!/ and "The White Lily", for example.) But the stories are also much more obviously influenced by the editor's ideas, as is shown by the current wave of psi stories. This is not necessarily bad; in general, I think it has been good.

But let's take a look at the recent issues. August features a short novel -- 55 pages -- by Mack Reynolds, "Adaptation". Here Reynolds has enough length to develop his thesis well; but even so he compresses his time scale impossibly. A thousand years before, man seeded the galaxy -- sending small groups, from 100 to, to some 100,000 planets, to survive if possible. The ones that prospered were becoming e ready for civilization, the Industrial al Revolution, and eventual membership in the Galactic Commonwealth. A team of 16 specialists are on their way to operate on the two planets of Rigel; they are split into two groups with different philosophies on operation. One favors the dictatorial leadership from above; the other, operating as the guiding but never-seen power behind the throne. Finally, they decide to have a contest. The first picks a culture similar to the Aztec (before the white man); the others, a culture like that of 13th-Century Italy. They meet to compare results every 25 years. In both cultures, things get out of hand; at the end

of 50 years, each culture has achieved space travel and the two planets have taken over their own destiny.

I'm not happy about the time schedule, as I mentioned above. Again, I feel Reynolds has compressed the time in which events can take place. Compare, for example, the progress Martin Padway makes in de Camp's Lest Darkness Fall; though he is working alone and without a spaceship and its contents to draw on. I feel the changes depicted would take far longer; but I'm no sociologist, and can't be sure. (Anyone want to contribute an essay on the subject?) The gradual decay of the Earthmen is well and logically handled, and the length of the story allows adequate exposition of the theme. Recommended, with the noted reservation.

Otherwise, Joseph P Martino has a well-done and convincing story about a missile-killer pilot, "Pushbutton War"; John Brunner spends 3 pages "On the Nature of the Lunar Surface" trying to convince us that the moon is made of green (and odoriferous) cheese. ** "Needed: One Aphrodite Project" is RS Richardson's up-to-date report on Venus from one who is doing the work. ** "The Formation of the Elements": Alastair Cameron discusses stellar nuclear reactions. **"A Taste of Poison", by Christopher Anvil. Invasion from the stars -- but the advance party catches a man to interrogate, to determine whether the Earth is suitable for them, and the Crafty Earthman Outwits Stupid Aliens. ** Another installment of Poul Anderson's The High Crusade; lots of fun, well worked out, as the hardy English yeomen set out to take over the galaxy.

September sees the ASTOUNDING fading fast from the cover. Inside, JWC discusses the Dean Drive and government...and guess what David Gordon't "By Proxy" is about? An inventor who had been prosecuted and jailed for building a "rocket" without government permission. He claimed it wasn't a rocket, but an anti-gravity ship, operating on a new principle, and got laughed into jail for three years. Released, he tries again and succeeds. Sound familiar? Unfortunately, the writing is only adequate, and the plot is no more than the outline above. Perry Mason fans may note that the Drake detective agency is still going strong in L.A. in 1981.

In contrast, the conclusion of Anderson's The High Crusade moved along, with believable characters and plenty of logically developing action. Brother Parvus, by suggestion, becomes a very interesting character -- a meek little friar who is pushed into things beyond him. Sir Roger is a man torn between what he feels is his duty to all his people and his own desires. Sir Owain, who loves Sir Roger's wife Lady Catherine, is no mere traitor, but a man who feels he is doing what he should do for the best results for all -- at least, until the possible power goes to his head. Thus there is trouble within the ranks as the English and their allies go on world after world, setting up their feudal system...until finally Earth discovers the star drive some 1000 years later -- and finds a massive feudal empire, with interstellar technology and medieval customs. Some of the features of this empire have the insane logic made famous by deCamp; for instance, bows and arros against spaceships, in space. I enjoyed this as good clean fun and a very superior example of space opera. Enjoyed rereading it, too.

In "A Transmutation of Muddles", by H.B. Fyfe, we gotta rescue the spaceship...but the natives have turned it into a temple, and Peace and Friendship must be maintained. ** "Barnacle Bull", by Winston P Sanders: gotta fix the spaceship again; silicate-eating asteroid critturs have coated the hull with metal, conking out radio and radar. How to get back across the Asteroid Belt before everybody dies of radiation poisoning? ** "Alarm Clock", by Everett B Cole: if you don't breathe right, you go to prison-training school. The hero who flunked Stellar Guard Academy kicks over the traces and finds that that's just what they wanted him to do, by golly, because it's all a gimmick to select independent-minded people for the Special Corps of Investigators.

The October issue is the first to drop the ASTOUNDING completely -- heading, title page, running heads, publisher's statement. Thus ends 27 years -- to the month -- of Street & Smith's ASTOUNDING STORIES. I can still remember the day, back in September '33, when I spied the first of the new S&S ASTOUNDINGs on the newsstand, after having looked for the Clayton magazine in vain for months. (This was back before I knew about fandom

and Science Fiction Times.) Even if there were a number of weird type stories, the few sf were a welcome addition to the sparse fare of thet imes. And now, 324 issues later, the old name is gone. Let us weep.

Sloshing, like Alice, out of the pool of tears, we come to the contents of the October ANALOG. The lead story, "The Lost Kafoozalum", by Pauline Ashwell, is a "short novel", and one I liked. When the super-light drive was discovers 300-400 years ago, and mankind spread to the stars, all the little splinter groups picked and settled their own planets. Unfortunately, one planet with two major land masses was settled by two such groups; they discovered each other only after space travel had been forgotten, and centuries of friction had led to a cold war about to break into a shooting war. Drastic measures were called for. Professor M'Clure -- Cultural Engineering -- of Russett College, Earth, collects a group of senior students and goes out to stop the war /dig that crazy class project!/ The group plus at least one of the military decide the best way to calm the threat is to produce a threat from outside: an alien spaceship crashing in one of the polar regions. With a few little problems, that's what they do.

Part of the charm was in the unconventional writing; the narrator, Lysistrata Lee, is a colonist from Excenus 23, whose native tongue is a variant of English. This dialect is annoying at first, but later on becomes natural -- a sign of skilfull handling. The plot, in general, follows logically from the given premises, although there are a few spots I'm uncertain about. For one thing, the life aboard the spaceship follows no normal spaceship life; there seems to be no crew except the Captain...at least, they never appear. And the business -- so necessary for the plot -- of having the students do the actual planting of the ship (rather than trained spacemen) looks odd. Wonder whether the author is more familiar with campus than shipboard life?

H.B. Fyfe's "Satellite System" requires the hero, tossed out of a spaceship in his trusty vacuum suit, to get back aboard, overcome the trio who are after his knowledge, and store them safely away. Before his air runs out. ** "The Self-Repairing Robot" is a 20-page article on crystal-growing by Campbell, complete with pictures -- two of which (the second one on page 84 and the one on page 85) are transposed. ** "Psicopath", by Darrel T. Langert, is the expected psi story. The experimenter can't believe his results and thus influences them unknowingly, until a psiman comes along. ** Asimov, with "Thiotimoline and the Space Age", prevents a disastrous flood -- which the thiotimoline battery was causing. Not as good as the original.

Like the Reynolds story in F&SF before mentioned, "Combat", a 50-page novellette, is probably based on a recent trip to Russia. Again, it concerns the Cold War situation in the immediate future. Reynolds has given us the possible underground movement and religious movement: this time, emissaries from the Galactic Confederation have landed to help the world -- landed in the courtyard of the Kremlin. The Russians make propaganda hay from this, trying to convince all that Russia is <u>the</u> country, as far as the Galactics are concerned. Since they are carefully keeping all Western nationals away from them, we send in a tourist -- who makes contact, with unexpected results.

This story is in marked contrast with the one in F&SF and, I felt, a better, tighter piece. The other was marred by a lightness which seems in line with F&SF policy; here, the light touches fit in, rather than intrude. There is no vodka drinking with the dictator, but a sober realization of the state of affairs, with a lot of discussion, pro and con, on Russia as contrasted with the US, is included. Yet this never stops the story; it is a part of the well-managed characterization of the various central figures. In fact, this is one of the better sociological SF stories for some time; it has some of the tension and feeling of urgency that such stories as "Solution Unsatisfactory" had. I'd say this was the best story -- or at least the one that made the strongest impact on me -- in this entire quarter. It certainly is one that I will reread at leisure -- before elections. I'll bet, though, that it isn't voted #1 in the AnaLab...

The November issue starts a four-part serial about the FBI psiman, Malone: <u>Occasion for Disaster</u>, by Mark Phillips. Like his father (JJ Malone, the Chicago lawyer) Malone has shed his lady-love of the last case, and is searching for new. Meanwhile, he has the

problem of finding out why all the computers that serve Congress as office help have gone erratic, without apparent cause. Full report next time (or the time after): as yet, the plot hasn't developed -- except to indicate that there will be some sort of psi problem and at least one girl, young, beautiful, and reasonably willing.

"The Crackpot", by Theodore L. Thomas, appears to be another story inspired by the Dean Drive; problem, how to patent a prospective secret gadget without Having the Government Take Over. A little far-fetched -- and yet I've heard various faculty members discuss, and cuss, similar problems. ** "The Piebald Horse", by Ted Tubb: How do we get secret information, carried by a person with eidetic memory, off a planet that uses telepathic customs inspectors? And a neat solution, too, although I think it could be too easily foiled. ** "The Electric Field Rocket", by HC Dudley, PHD, is an article on using static charges to start a rocket; interesting. /George Scithers offered the left-handed praise that it's sufficiently clear and detailed for the mistakes to be found -- which is more than can be said for the next item:/ ** "Instrumentation for the Dean Device" JWC offering pretty fuzzy pictures and pretty, fuzzy "details" -- certainly not definitive. ** "Sun Spot" by Hal Clement: this time, instead of a screwball planet, we have a screwball spaceship: to get a closeup of the sun, the ship is imbedded in the ice nucleus of a comet. A few little things go wrong and we gotta fix the spaceship. Well constructed, with lots of good detail; in this type of story, who cares about the characters? ** "Oomphel in the Sky", by H Beam Piper: what to do with the natives when a catastrophe is due. One of those oddball planets with two suns and an eccentric orbit, such that every couple of generations the big sun gets too close and almost everything burns up. But since last time the Earthmen have arrived and convince the natives that everybody is going to the best of all possible worlds -- and if that's so, claim the natives, why prepare to survive?

* * * * * *

Turning now to the other mags for a few highlights:

GALAXY for August has a couple of interesting items, but the real reason for including this is that I can say "For Your Information" to the erudite Herr Ley. In this issue's column he reviews an old "science fiction" book, The Conquest of the Moon by Andre Laurie (Selene Company, Ltd, 1894). I'm probably one of the few present-day fans who have read this in magazine form: under the title "A Month in the Moon" it ran for eight months, starting with the February 1897 issue of ARGOSY. The magazine version has the horrible mistakes, too.

On to the recent fiction. "Mind Partner", by Christopher Anvil, is a complex story confusing on first reading: Jim Calder is hired to investigate a mysterious house that is supposedly the headquarters of a dope ring (at least, the victims all come from there) and finds that the drug gives him remarkably vivid dreams of many lives. A castaway from a spaceship is doing the illusion making -- unless that is one of the illusions. The writing is simple but good; once unscrambled, the story moves along its various paths nicely.

"Sordman, The Protector" by Tom Purdom, is the other complete story that's worth noting: a very unusual treatment of the psionic superman, who is involved as a detective but doesn't detect, as such; he tries to contact the criminal mentally. The development of the central superman is one of the few I can remember that gives a feeling of differentness in kind, rather than in degree. A very different treatment of the theme; not as well developed as some that have appeared in the past /stop looking smug, Bester.../ it is still a very interesting treatment.

And then we have the second, concluding part of Fredrick Pohl's Drunkard's Walk. Last time, Cornut was about to commit suicide (again) by taking sleeping pills; he's saved by an unexpected visit. Meanwhile, Master Carl, who is investigating a problem of population ages, is murdered. The truth comes out: the suicide-urges are coming from a band of immortals, who fear Cornut -- a young immortal who could supplant them. The Japanese descendants have been imported to decimate the world with smallpox, which has been so eliminated that no treatment is available; this plague will enable the immortals to run things their

way better. Cornut is able to locate their hideout and lead the police there when he discovers that he cannot b e influenced mentally -- nor can others -- when slightly crocked; hence the title. Thus All Ends Well, with Cornut and wife (who is also immortal) ready to Live Happily.

Before I discuss my feelings about this I'd like to quote Gold, in his Forecast in this issue:

> *You know, people living in a Golden Age never are aware that they are, except in retrospect, and then only by contrast. Maybe those contrasts shouldn't happen to a dog, but they don't last forever, and it takes a spell of them, it seems, to make the superlative the highest man can attain, not the least one will settle for. What topples Golden Ages? More than anything else, perhaps, it's the hopeless job of trying to greaten greatest, into greatester, greatestest, and on from there. Cases in point are such masterworks as* Gravy Planet. *No, Virginia, they didn't win instant acclaim. Instant yelps and welts is what they raised. When the howling ceased -- the things were unfamiliar, you see, and had to be lived with a while to lose their dangerous aspects, the danger being new ideas -- then they emerged as masterpieces.* Gravy Planet *is chosen as the prize example because Fredrick Pohl's* Drunkard's walk *is sure to be compared unfavorably with it by at least one terribly tired, terribly disenchanted reviewer, though Pohl's mastery is far more mature, sure, complete, than in the earlier story.*
>
> *For we are at the beginning of another Golden Age, in which Pohl and other gladly welcomed old masters welcome as gladly as we do the appearance of vital, vigorous new talents to the 1960s.*
>
> (Thus spake H.L. Gold!)

Well, I'm tired -- it's been a long day at the office. And I guess I'm disenchanted -- I've been reading bilge both at the office, officially, and at home, fannishly. So, as a reviewer who has been reading sf at least as long as HLG has, I feel this should be answered. I haven't reread Gravy Planet since it appeared in GALAXY, but I felt at the time, and still feel, that it was a good story, spoiled by too many twists. Every time I got things straightened out, they would flip again, like The Magic Flute between Acts I and II.

The same is true of Drunkard's Walk. Pohl has a trick of suddenly moving the various elements of the story into a new pattern which doesn't necessarily follow from the old. This has the effect of making you suddenly revise all your ideas and start over. If well done, this makes a fine climax, but Pohl does this more than once. In addition, he introduces extraneous material, not for the story development or for necessary background, but, I feel, just because it was interesting to write. Thus, in this installment there are 3 pages devoted to a visit with Locille's parents in Texas, plus about 8 pages in several places later devoted to the death of her brother, which have no real reason for being in the story. They confuse the issue, hide the basic story, and are yet not developed enough to make good asides in the Victorian manner.

I don't say, as Gold says I might, that this is worse than Gravy Planet; I think it hangs together better, and has fewer of the sudden dislocations that seem to be a Pohl trademark. I can't be sure about the omnipotent, omniscient author effects, going by memory at this late date; I expect GP had plenty, too.

In this half of DW only one more character becomes three-dimensional -- the police officer. Locille seems to fade into the background; apparently once she was married her purpose was served. Or maybe it was to introduce sex into the story. I feel that the characterization of the immortals was poorly done; they never seemed real people, either immortal or not. In general, the characterization is the weak part of the story; much of it is so poor that the story loses much of its impact.

I don't say that I don't like the story; I did. But I don't think it is a classic; it is a good story that should have been a lot better.

The October GALAXY is one of those issues that leaves no impression after reading. Nothing is very good; nothing very bad. The lead novelet, "World in a Bottle", has a number of ligical shortcomings, and a lot of gushy writing. "The Stentorri Luggage" is one of the standard problem stories about aliens in a house, or planet, or ship, or -- this time -- a hotel; very light weight. "The Immortals" is a standard time travel story, less well developed than a lot. The shorts are no more inspiring. Matter of fact, Willy Ley is the best item in the issue.

IF, the poor man's Galaxy, for September is no better than its big brother. "Kangaroo Court" (Galouye) is a detective story laid on a telepathic world. Problem: how do you frame an innocent man for murder? The answer doesn't really hang together. There's also a weird novelet, "The Six Fingers of Time" (Lafferty), which uses the old theme of the sup er accelerator drug or gadget, but this time it's all done by faith or something never explained. Leinster used to do it much better, years ago, in STARTLING and TWS. The rest...rejects from Galaxy?

I won't spend much time on the Ziff-Davis mags; I've missed a couple somehow, so will have to catch up later. I might remark that "The Crispin Affair" concludes in the August FANTASTIC, and makes everything else in the issue seem like great literature. Bloch has a pretty good parallel-worlds story, "The World-Timer", and Lieber a three-page short, "The Rats of Limbo", that defies classification. This time Sam Moskowitz discusses Shiel and Heard. Off trail, and interesting in a typical Moskowitz style.

September has a long story, "The Man Who Wasn't Home", by Lloyd Biggle jr, that is space opera -- similar to a good PLANET story, but lacking the dash that was part of (for example) a Brackett story. Moskowitz turns to Philip Wylie, this time; the rest are undistinguished.

The August AMAZING was one I missed, so I can't really comment on Sheckley's "Omega". It could be good. September has a long conclusion to it, plus three shorts that are negligible, plus Moskowitz -- again -- with Gernsback.

Next time I'll take up the Ziff-Davis twins at length -- if I can fill in the gaps -- plus the latest Big Two issues, and a longer look at Galaxy.

* * * * * * * * * *

Another matter is at hand: I goofed last issue. Pure carelessness; I should know better, as Doc Smith pointed out in a letter which Eney passed on. In discussing "Subspace Survivors" I slipped and remarked "so they head for the nearest star at only one g -- but evidently passing the speed of light on the way."

Of course, I should have known better. When such a careful writer as Doc has his character use the slip stick to calculate the time required for a trip, I should do the same. I've done so, and find the maximum velocity about $\frac{1}{2}$c. I'm sorry, Doc. I'll try not to do it again.

I might remark, though, that I fell into this trap because of past conditioning -- going back some 32 years. One of the early stories I remember vividly was <u>The Skylark of Space</u> by Doc Smith. In this, we have ships taking off at high accelerations -- enough to crush the passengers to the sprung floors, though not to injure them -- and in less than three days travelling some 235 light years. Similar stories by other writers in later years have likewise suggested that at even a relatively low acceleration, the ship would "soon" reach super-c velocities. I just never bothered to do the actual calculations. (Incidentally, that acceleration in <u>Skylark of Space</u> runs somewhere about 120,000 g, unless I've dropped a p ower of ten or so. Which is an acceleration of 750 miles/sec^2.)

As a PS, I read "Subspace Survivors" three times; I noted the calculation each time, but so thorough was the conditioning that I never stopped to check. Or maybe it's because I like the Smith writing.

Bill Evans

SPECULATIVE Review

CLASSIFIED CORRESPONDENCE

I. FOR THE PENGUINS

P SCHUYLER MILLER Thanks "Martin Levine for tipping me off to the Quatermass pbs -- something my bookselling friends hereabouts certainly hadn't done. Penguin now has all three: #1421, The Quatermass Experiment; #1448, Quatermass II; #1449, Quatermass and the Pit. ::: I see that Quatermass was played /on TV/ by a different actor each time. No cheap series characters for BBC!" (Pittsburgh, Penna.)

HARRY WARNER doesn't "understand your reference to The Quatermass Experiment as Penguin's first book of science fiction. I...know there have been scores, maybe hundreds, of stf. titles on the British lists during the past quarter-century and I'm positive that lots of them were released for sale in this country. Whoops, that's Martin Levine's reference, I see, if there is such a person as Martin Levine. The reviews published under that name are very well done." (Hagerstown, Md.) /Martin Levine is real enough; NYfen vouch for his reality, at least./

PETE MABEY is interested "to see from Martin Levine's comments on The Quatermass Experiment that it's Penguin's first SF published in the US, and not even classed as fiction, at that! Over here the SF comes out in the regular orange covers just like the respectable fiction, such as Lady Chatterley, and has been doing so for many years. If I remember rightly, their first SF was no less than Last and First Men, which came out in 1939 or thereabouts for the absurd sum of 6d (then about a dime)!... I didn't see any of the serials myself, but am told that they were much better than the usual BBC SF -- what little there is of it. I've just seen in an article in Radio Times a description of the way in which the 'musique concrete' background music was constructed for a production of 'Dune Roller' -- but I know nothing else of it: whether it's radio or TV -- or even if it's a past production, which I've missed, or a forthcoming one! If they put as much effort into the rest of the production as into the background music, it should be excellent." (Cheltenham, Gloucestershire)

DOC WEIR protests: "The Quatermass Experiment is NOT by any manner of means Penguin's 'first' book of Science Fiction, and it's something of an insult to Penguin to say that it is. Here is Penguin's list of S-F up to date, and I think you'll admit that it is an honourable one:

Olaf Stapledon: Last and First Men, No. A3 in the Pelican Library -- and, incidentally, the only work of fiction in that otherwise strictly factual assembly, which goes to show how highly they thought of it!

J.J. Connington: Nordenholt's Million Penguin 582. This book, first published in hard covers in 1924, has the same plot as John Christopher's Death of Grass (US edition No Blade of Grass) but much better done, and against a far wider and more impressive background.

John Wyndham (otherwise our old friend John Beynon Harris!)
- The Day of the Triffids 993
- The Kraken Wakes (US edition Out of the Deeps) 1075
- The Chrysalids (US edition Re-Birth) 1308
- The Midwich Cuckoos (filmed as Village of the Damned) 1440 /and now out in a US pb, same title as the film — RE/
- The Seeds of Time (short story anthology) 1385

"So don't tell me that Quatermass is the 'first' S-F Penguin; though, of course, I won't swear that all of these are available in the US Penguin editions -- some of them may not be owing to previous arrangements by the original hard-cover publishers with other p/b publishers. /Right; Wyndham's books are out from Ballantine in this country -- RE/ But, anyway, you can't say that Penguin don't publish S-F!" (Westonbirt, Glos.)

II. BILL EVANS FIT DE BATTLE (3)

ED GORMAN "liked the cover; it was different. The best in the issue, though, was Evans on magazines...I'd think that he could devise some sort of rating system, horny tho they may be, to cut the length of his reviews. Anyway, most of magazine stf is crud, everybody knows it, and I don't think that too many people like drifting thru page after page of review, hearing someone talk about rotten-type stories, when the reader knows what to expect anyway. But besides this, I like Evans' opinions, and I like his honesty. He seems to have avoided successfully the usual critic's habit of either griping for griping's sake, or giving good reviews to junk just because it's action and hints at a Sense of Wonder. This is amazing, after reading so many vociferous criticisms of various books and anthologies. No matter what anybody says, keep Evans, and keep his reviews, just shorten them down a bit..." (Cedar Rapids, Ia.)

SID COLEMAN ponders "What does Evans think we need plot summaries for? If we're going to read the stories we don't want them, if we've already read them we don't need them, and if we're not going to read them why read any review?" (Pasadena)

ALVA ROGERS gives "A sophisticatedly superior sneer at Bill Evans for not spotting Kenneth Malone's paternity right off the bat. I was pleased to see an honored detectival name perpetuated and I'm sure Craig would be delighted also. I had the pleasure of knowing Craig personally, and believe me, she was just as delightfully wacky as Jake and Helen Justus and the incomparable John J Malone ever were. Someday you must hear the story of her run in with the Ensenada (Mex.) police — a riotous episode right out of one of her books -- and the wind-up when I put her on a plane in San Diego. Humanity lost one of its blithest spirits when she died...

"I'm afraid I must agree with some of your correspondents anent the completeness of Bill Evans' reviews of the promags. Both Sid Coleman and Harry Warner have points worth considering in their letters. Why not have Evans review in detain either the feature story, serial, or what he considers the best story per issue, and then give a comprehensive opinion of the magazine as a total unit? I would also like to see more book reviews, both hard and soft cover." (Castro Valley, Cal.)

DAMON KNIGHT sends "one of those sticky quarters. I like Bill Evans' reviews; there may not be any huge critical discoveries in them, but they are thorough and clear, and make me feel after reading them that I know what's going on in the prozines. Keep up the good work." (Milford, Penna.)

TOM PURDOM likes "the idea of doing reviews. I think there should be more comment on the contents of the SF magazines in the fan press. It's good for the writers, it's good for the serious readers, and it's good for science fiction. But I don't think the present system is the way to do the job.

"The reviews are the kind of thing the newspapers do on movies. They tell us if the reviewer liked it and what the piece was about. But such reviews are useful only in guiding the reader's choice to work he might have missed. They're of no use appearing two or three months after the magazine is off the stands.

"What we need is criticism of science fiction, damning the bad and praising the good and telling us how the critic arrives at his judgements. Most stories could be passed over with a general comment on the magazine's quality. One or two stories, at

most, in each issue deserve extended comment; usually the good ones, but often perfect examples of what the critic thinks is wrong with science fiction. Nor is there any need for a capsule summary of the plot. The critic should assume the reader has read the story and go on from there. All higher criticism assumes the reader has read the work; its subject is the critic's reaction to the work and a detailed attempt to explain why the work either pleased or failed to please him.

"As it stands now, your reviews, with a few pleasing exceptions, are of interest to (1) the author of the story and (2) persons searching the stands in September for magazines published in June." (Ft Benning, Ga.)

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BILL EVANS replies specifically to Purdom but in passing to others:

"This is quite a challenge, but I feel that Purdom has missed at least part of what I'm trying to do. (Or maybe he hasn't but doesn't think it worth doing.) I've been trying to do a coup le of things at once; this is hard, and I've probably not done as good a job on either as I might be able to.

"But I've tried to give a brief review of the contents of the magazines, as a guide to the reader who doesn't want to read everything but does want to get the high spots. This may be like a movie critic two months late, but there are people who get the mags and read them later. (I've had a couple remark they were going to have to look into some of the stories I'd mentioned, they sounded so interesting.) I'm not trying to be a guide to the current news-stand issues.

"I'm also trying to give my reactions so that some of the authors may be able to get an idea of what at least one reader likes and dislikes, and why. And I can't start off assuming everyone knows what I'm talking about; I know a lot of fans haven't read the stories. Sure, criticism of Dickens or Shakespeare can start that way, but how about a review of a classic detective story, such as Milville Davisson Post's Naboth's Vineyard? Suppose I discussed the impact when Uncle Abner calls Judge Simon Kilrail to step down from the bench, and appeals to the electors to stand up. This is one of the most powerful scenes in detective fiction -- and yet, if you hadn't read the story, it would be absolutely meaningless unless it were described first. So, a brief outline of the story, indicating something of the major plot developments...?

"This time, I've devoted more space to fewer stories, with longer discussions; maybe that will satisfy Purdom a little." (Mt Rainier, Md)

* *

III. SEX AND SCIENCE FICTION MIX IT

ALVA ROGERS thinks "that Dick Geis has missed the significance of the maturation of science fiction. As you /Dick Eney/ point out, the equation of realism with sex (particularly in science fiction) is wholly unrealistic. Compare the relation of the sexes in, say, The Skylark of Space, et seq., with any good present day story and then say the modern author doesn't deal with sex realistically, if you will. The introduction of SEX into a science fiction story for no valid reason certainly is not realism -- it's panderism (sic?) Farmer wrote a fine story in The Lovers and treated his sex intelligently and with taste, but his recent stuff for Beacon.....this is intelligent, realistic science fiction? I'll take Henry Miller any day to Farmer for sex realism."

TOM PURDOM agrees "with both sides in the sex in SF conflict. There are many passions besides sex and the stuff shouldn't be dragged in without reason -- but neither should it be ignored when it obviously belongs among the hero's concerns. Space opera usually makes the first mistake -- the heroine is a stowaway on the spaceship, etc.

Serious science fiction makes the second mistake -- omitting sex and the opportunity to make a hero seem more real and add warmth and passion to an intellectual adventure."

IV. THE DERN DRIVE

ROY TACKETT recalls: "Mr Dean gave a demonstration of his device on the 'Today' program on TV last May. It was interesting, as were his comments. The device was already set up on the scales when the camera picked it up. The scale dial registered somewhere in the neighborhood of 15 pounds. Mr Dean started his device, revved it up, and the dial dropped to zero. Obviously something had taken place but what is open for speculation. Perhaps the Dean device will do what it claimed; however, I recall JWC's enthusiasm over Dianetics... Campbell states that there are photographs of models of the Dean device that lifted themselves. His arguments would be more convincing if he were to publish these. Inasmuch as all things are relative I'm ready to agree that the laws of motion don't hold true. I'll agree, that is, if there is proof..." (Laurel Bay)

"Now look here", grundles GEORGE SCITHERS, "there are a few misconceptions that are being fostered upon us, and it's time a few were cleared up.

"In the first place, strain guages are not for measuring forces. They are for measuring strains, which by the engineers' definition are the deformations -- the stretchings and squashings -- that materials undergo when they have forces or stresses applied to them. The proper way to measure forces is with a stress guage, the most reliable of which is a beam balance.

"What about oscillating forces? If what you want is the net effect, integrated over many cycles, rather than the instantaneous force at any instant, then the best device is -- again -- the beam balance. It will integrate quite linearly -- provided there are no dash-pots or other swing damping devices present. And it has the advantage of simplicity.

"The trouble with the whole mass of words on the Dean Drive is that the basic virtue of simplicity has been lost. Many of the Drive's opponents have shown that the drive can't work on various physical principles. Unfortunately, this has just laid them open to objections by Campbell that if the device works, the physical principles must be invalid. The simple point that has been overlooked is that if Dean is willing to provide a 'working' model, then recourse to theory is unnecessary -- a direct test is all we need.

"It has been admitted by Campbell that the Dean Drive on't persuade a beam balance that anything is going on. The balance was of the simplest sort, and the admission was forced out of John. To me, this is conclusive, and no number of amplifiers, strain guages or cathode ray tube photographs will persuade me otherwise. This is why: Murphy's law states that if anything can go wrong, it will. The more things there are in a measuring system, therefore, the more potential trouble there is. This is particularly true of electronic devices. On the other hand, it is very difficult for a simple beam balance -- or pulley and weight arrangement -- to get out of order to the extent that it won't detect a weight change of 16 pounds. And if the Dean Machine can't persuade a set of weights and a pulley its weight has changed, when the motive power is coming from a wall socket, a self-contained, self-propelled machine simply isn't going to get off the ground.

"As for the reports of 'A big electronics company...' and 'A West Coast aircraft company...', I'm afraid we'll have to class these with Dianetics and the Deroes. The report along this line that I particularly disbelieve is, 'one of the very large corporations...find that Dean's mathematical structure is perfectly valid; their math-physics department agrees, after giving it a run-through on a large electronic computer...' This is ridiculous. Theories aren't tested on 'large electronic computers'; they are tested by mathematicians with paper and pencils, or with blackboards and chalk. 'Large electronic computers' are all very well in their place, which place is doing simple arithmetic very rapidly. No number of 'large electronic computers' could ever prove or disprove

Newton's Laws of Motion or Maxwell's Electromagnetic Equations, and bringing 'large electronic computers' into a discusssion of the Dean Drive is a mark of somebody who is trying to impress people he thinks don't know any better. Shame on you, John W Campbell, jr." (Arlington, Va.)

V. SCIENCE FICTION IS GOING TO HELL DEPT.

RORY FAULKNER observes: "Anent your remarks about the drop in quantity of the prozines: you fail to mention the drop in quality and the rise in price of the Big Three as being a possible deterrent to quantity reader purchase. I myself no longer buy Galaxy or F&SF, as I can't see paying top prices for the trivia these mags contain. Since Boucher left F&SF its quality has depreciated, and as for Galaxy, I never cared for Gold's editorial policy or the selection of stories he used. I still subscribe to ASF, in spite of the new name and price rise, but as for the rest, I have used the money I saved to purchase hard-cover s-f books of quality, and only get If, Amazing and Fantastic to swap with a friend in England for the British mags. I find the latter to be quite superior. It seems the Britons still write s-f and not that slick, mediocre stuff." ((Westminster, Cal.)

ALVA ROGERS thought my "speculation of a feedback cycle influencing the decrease in magazine stf and readers sounds depressingly logical; however, there have been periods in the past where a large number of science fiction magazines have suddenly been reduced to a few and then subsequently increased in number. I hope such will be the case again, but I must confess I have my doubts. I wonder if you've noticed that there seems to have been a considerable slowing up of paperback book publication of sf in the last few months. It used to be here in the Bay Area that every Thursday, the major newsstand distribution day, that there would be at least two sf titles — now it seems to be more like two a month..."

PETE MABEY sourly notes "in passing that on reading 'Beyond Ganga Mata' /by John Berry/ in June F&SF my reaction was, 'Mighod, what's come over the Goon?' -- until I read the little note at the front and discovered that it was some other Berry. I think that this is the first time that one of these notes has been any use at all."

(Further progress of the Hell-Bound Vein
will b e covered next issue, due out shortly.)

SPECULATIVE
Review

FROM
DICK ENEY
417 FT HUNT RD
ALEXANDRIA VA

TO