

This month, I begin a new system of story ratings. In stead of my usual long-winded discussion of each story in point, I shall make a short statement about each story and give it my special rating. Now, the ratings will go like this : -

A equals : - Excellent

B equals : - Very good

C equals : - Good

D equals : - Fair

E equals : - Poor (which of course is the lowest anyone could decently rate a story without going into a fit of individual psychosis) Of course it may be that you prefer my "long winded discussions". If that be so you have only to write and tell me and I shall return to that system. However, until that time, the present system, inaugurated at this time, will remain.

Now, in the following lists, you will find not only science fiction magazines, but also science fiction fan magazines. I do not review magazines such as Operative No. (5), Terrance X. O'Leary's Tar Birds and the various horror magazines because I do not consider them science fiction, although I do read Terrance's adventures each month religiously. As far as science-fiction goes, only three magazines publish it and they are Astounding Stories, Amazing Stories and Wonder Stories. And now for those ratings : -

ASTOUNDING STORIES

"The Einstein Express" by J. George Frederick. This first episode has the strange quality of holding one in suspense - - - a quality too uncommon in science fiction today. I liked its human appeal, too.

Rating : - B

"The Blue Earthman" by F. B. Long, Jr. Continuing his series of scientific adventures of men far advanced in the earth's old age, Long presents here one of those stories with the human interest ending. The only fault I can find with it outside of its threadbare plot is its vagueness. When I read a story I like to know all about it. Long leaves much to the imagination and subsequently, the frustration of the reader. Rating : - C

"Tripæ Geared" by Stanton A. Coblentz. Merely another of his satiric series on our present day civilization. He manages

to impress the reader with ironic seriousness through his stories which is delightful in its compelling force. Of course, his stories are as alike in plot as two SFL chapters, and just about as enthusiastic. His satire is brilliant and penetrating but he should vary his theme once in a while. Rating D

"The Lotus Eaters" by Stanley G. Weinbaum. I am surprised at the pooriness of this story by the well-known author of the "Tweel" stories. It is positively weird and the writing style is what you could glean from any average STF story. I am sorry to say that Weinbaum has definitely lost that delightfully ironic humour which he injected in his "Tweel" tales. Rating : - D

"Prowler of the Wastelands" by Earl Vincent. Now here is a little gem of a story the like of which appears only once a year or thereabouts. Vincent manages to impress you with a sense of utter familiarity with the scene of his tale before launching into its essentials details. The science of the story is definitely psychological. The plot is entirely new as far as science fiction plots go and he has departed radically from the usual conventional endings in this story. I enjoyed it immensely. Rating : - B

"The Mightiest Machine" by John W. Campbell. I can hardly see fit mentioning this story as I really consider it beneath any self-respecting STF fan's notice. As the STF editor of the Brooklyn Reporter naively puts it, "the same old stuff". No matter how much he tries, Campbell never seems to be able to go Smith one better. The story is too utterly fantastic, even for science fiction. Rating : - D

"The Life Current" by Donald Wandrei, impresses me as one of those tales which the author sometimes considers his best. Like Vincent's "Prowler", this tale has somewhat of a new idea, though only in plot. Wandrei's tiresome style continues throughout. One of those tagiyarns. "The 32nd of May" by Paul Ernst. This story as far as I am concerned might never have been written. It reminds me somewhat of C. A. Smith's earlier efforts in Wonder Stories in which the perpetual sensation was "floating on a cloud". Only Smith managed to inject something of interest in his stories. Ernst simply