

Laws of science have been rewritten

SIR,—Following Uri Geller's performances in the early 1970s, Simon Hoggart (last week) recalls, 'serious people predicted that scientists might soon need to rewrite the laws of physics'; but 'somehow it didn't happen.'

Oh, but it *has* happened—though no self-respecting physicist now talks about 'laws' in this context. On the new *models* of quantum mechanics, the eminent French physicist Costa de Beauregard claimed around the time of Geller's fame, ESP and psychokinesis were not irrational, but predictable. Ten years later they were demonstrated in test at the European Nuclear Research Centre

(CERN) in Switzerland, as Hoggart will find if he cares to read A. Aspect *et al* in 'Physical Review Letters,' 1982.

This development has been taken a step further by the Nobel Laureate Brian Josephson and his colleagues in Cambridge. Their paper at the 1985 Urbino conference on micro-physical reality, shortly to be published by Ridel, heralds the integration of parapsysics not just with physics, but with biology.

Hoggart is entitled to his views on 'flying telephones, bent cutlery and Mrs Doris Stokes'; but before he next jeers at the 'paranormalists,' I

suggest he pays a visit to R. G. Jahn, Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Science at Princeton, and learns about the research in progress in this field. I can reassure him: it is complicated, but far from 'incredibly dull.'

Brian Inglis,
NW3.

■ Simon Hoggart's splenetic attack on the paranormalists was a *tour de force*. One slight worry, though. When he says: 'They [the paranormalists] want *us* to rewrite the laws of time and space,' the question arises — *what* laws? At one end of the cosmic scale we find astronomer Fred Hoyle bluntly asserting: 'The idea of time as

a steady progression from past to future is wrong.' At the other end, the microcosmic level, the physicists probing the sub-atomic structure of our universe are equally insistent that common-sense ideas of time and space do not hold.

I do hope it isn't 'purblind nit-picking' to point out that in this area at any rate hard-nosed scientists are at one with dotty paranormalists. I'm all for not pulling your punches. But there's no future in trying to knock your opponent into the middle of next week where there can be no certainty that the middle of next week isn't where he already is.
Patrick Allen,
Cambridge.

O'Brien 27/7/86