

The



NEOLITHIC

Borogove in orbit No. 6, May, 1960: a monthly
"Oh, I gargle ink over a silk screen. How do you do yours?"

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This is NeoLithic, a monthly magazine. NeoL, with All Mimsy, will go to all who send contributions or letterofcomments (sent at the rate of four a year), five cents in postage (also sent four times a year), or who trade on an all-of-ours for all-of-yours basis. NeoL comes from the basement of Ruth Berman at 5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis 17, Minnesota.

Had a shock a few weeks back in French class. We had been assigned a short, very difficult poem by Stéphane Mallarmé, "Brise Marine". After drudging through it, I suddenly realized that it said exactly what I had been trying to say in "Magic Casements Opening," and said it better. Oh well. "Nothing new..." and all that, and, in any case, if I told M. Mallarmé what I thought "Brise Marine" meant, he might well say, "Ah, but it's not that at all. It really means..." One should never ask a poet to interpret his own work. He's too liable to read things into it that aren't there.

The poetry that I read for French class has an odd effect on me anyway. In English poetry, usually, I can see a basic feeling or idea whether it makes any impression on me or not. But French poetry is invariably a collection of pleasant, not very meaningful sounds, or else a statement of something that I've always thought, stated better, more frankly and more clearly than I ever could.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AD ASTRA

While I was idly scanning the paperback section in Perine's bookstore a few days back, I saw the title, Voyages to the Moon. My first reaction was, of course, Grab It. Having satisfied the primal urge, I turned to satisfying the second urge, What Is It. Quick examination told me that it was Voyages to the Moon by Marjorie Hope Nicolson, published in 1960 by Macmillan Paperbacks for \$1.75 (a price that made it possible to satisfy the third urge, Buy It), and it was a bibliographic history of science fiction. It occurred to me, while I was paying for the book, that a "Biblio ad astra" is hardly a new idea. There was a quick sketch by L. Sprague deCamp in F&SF, a few years ago, of science fiction's history. The grandfather of our historians is, of course, J. O. Bailey. In 1927 he did a study for his Master's degree called "The Scientific Novels of H. G. Wells." From this he began a wide survey of science fiction (which served as his doctoral study along the way) which was published as Pilgrims Through Space and Time by Argus Books, copyright 1947. Into Other Worlds, by Roger Lancelyn Green, was published in the year 1952, and there may be others which I don't know. To round out the theme neatly, the June, 1960 F&SF had come in the mail for me that same day with the review of Kingsley Amis's New Maps of Hell (Well, perhaps not the very same day, but very nearly so).

Miss Nicolson isn't quite so unaware of her fellow sf-historians as that paragraph might suggest; her book was first published in 1948, so she is only ignoring J. O. Bailey. This is quite an omission, especially as she is American and cannot plead that "unfamiliarity with the work done in the field by Americans," that one often finds in British works. Parenthetically, I suspect one of the reviewers of Voyages of being aware of other works in the field. "From Lucian to C. S. Lewis," begins the back cover blurb from a review by Donald A. Stauffer--- and the sub-title of Into Other Worlds is written down as: "Space-flight in fiction from Lucian to C. S. Lewis."

Still, Miss Nicolson may well have known Pilgrims in Space and Time. The bibliography says that she listed only the books used in preparing her own books. The books do not overlap entirely, and nearly all of the over-lap material could have been gotten at greater length in other places. The amount of over-lap in these books is curious. Their differences are almost symbolized by their different expressions for "science fiction". Bailey writes of scientific fiction, a phrase that seems almost archaic now. He begins with a chapter on the "pre-history" of scientific fiction, from our by-now old friend, Lucian, to the early 1800's, has a chapter on the first three-fourths of the 19th century, and then comes to the Jules Verne period, when

science fiction recognized itself as a separate form of literature. One chapter is given to the period going from Jules Verne to the first World War, and one chapter to the period from the first World War to the "present," that is, to about 1940 (Pilgrims is a "History and analysis of scientific fiction". The rest of the book traces main ideas in sf of any period). Bailey, then, sees science fiction as a form beginning in Classic times, with development in a few main periods of unequal length, and becoming a real form around 1870.

Green's book takes Lucian as a starting point and flows along easily and chronologically till it comes to Jules Verne. At this point there are rocks too big for Green's boat. He gives very little space to authors of science-fiction-since-Jules Verne. In fact, he does not give any space to authors born in this century. Green uses the term "science fiction," meaning a form which began with the Greeks (so far as we know). But where Bailey writes of science fiction as coming to self-knowledge about the time of Jules Verne, Green seems to feel that it took a "wrong turning" about that time, and that few of its writers have managed to publish science fiction (He does not, for instance, like H. G. Wells much.) that is good since then.

I have not yet read New Maps of Hell, and Damon Knight's review does not say whether it is specifically concerned with sf bibliography. In any case, his ideas are far away from Mr. Green's. "Jazz and s.f., for Amis," writes Knight, "have a good deal in common. Both emerged as self-contained entities some time in the second or third decade of the century, underwent rapid internal change around 1940." Scientific fiction, Bailey. Science fiction, Green and Amis, showing a wide split between none-good-after-Verne and none-at-all-before-Verne: a split in attitude which, I think, is very widespread. And then still another view, the insider's view; Damon Knight writes reviews about s.f.

Miss Nicolson brings in a completely new term, by writing of "cosmic voyages." She loves cosmic voyages and discusses them gleefully...and at great length. A "cosmic voyage" is a story of a trip into outer space, a story of a trip to someplace that uses things characteristic of the space-trip, or any discussion of outer space that makes reference to traveling in space. It would be false to say that she loves any space-trip story, but she does love finding out about any space travel story and comparing it with others. Of course, no one book can encompass such a field, and she sets herself limitations (which she breaks when she pleases). She takes for her field only the cosmic voyages which are British or American, or which were known by the British public; those which were known by the public in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and, since the supernatural voyage was nearly dead then, only those

which are brought about by scientific means. It is this last point which brings Voyages to the Moon into the sf field.

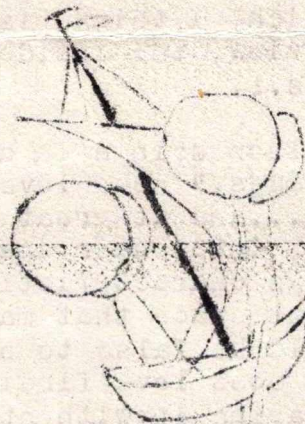
Each of these books has its own special good points (except New Maps, which undoubtedly has them, but I can't discuss them till I read it). Voyages to the Moon is an excellent reference book for science fiction of the 17th and 18th centuries (and, really, for the first part of the 19th) of England, and includes much of the science fiction from times before then and places outside there (plus some opinions of Jules-Verne-and-on writers. There are, however, no facts in the "Epilogue" section that would be unfamiliar to the sf reader). At the back is a fair index and a very good bibliography which lists a great many "cosmic voyage" books and a few books about "cosmic voyages". Miss Nicolson's main interest is aeronautics, not space travel, so her book shows (as none of the others I have read do) very closely the relationship between the development of aeronautics and the development of the space-travel story -- which, in the limits she gave herself, is science fiction.

Yet the desert-island-reading choice (quick, someone, a fannish equivalent of that) would certainly be Pilgrims Through Space and Time. First, of course, it is the only one to give an account of science fiction before and after Verne which is fairly balanced. Second, he strikes the fairest balance of things-desirable in a critical work. Green has the pleasantest style, while Nicolson sometimes is too entranced by an odd bit, and then tends to lose her main points while dwelling lovingly on small details. Nicolson not only shows the best use of aeronautical science, she has the best command of library science; Green has a short bibliography and no index. Bailey's style is better than Nicolson's, and he almost equals her library science. Third, in any case, who could resist that marvelous dust jacket with the wooden Pegasus flying across the moon?

Francesco Lana's
Flying Machine

from Bernard Zanagha

NAVIS AEREA



Redrawn from
Voyages to the Moon

WHAT IS TRI-CHESS?

Bob Pattrick

"Trajan Cosimo Black walked into his first-class cabin. Then, circled the small, pink-and-blue, bug-eyed monster that was playing on the floor...."

Faithful readers of ALL MIMSY will recognize the preceding as a quotation from Loy Pren and Blackie, by Arnason and Karg, in the November, 1959 issue. Regrettably, the authors do not explain "triplechess" further. The obvious fact, naturally, is that it is some form of three-dimensional chess. But, assuming that the authors really know (and aren't just making impressive noises), we are not told what form.

In nearly 20 years of reading science-fiction, I have come onto a number of versions of 3-D chess. Perhaps the authors would be willing to say if "triplechess" is one of them, or yet another type.

CUBE: This is played in two versions - very hard and incredibly hard. The more difficult version involves, as do all 3-D chess games, 8 superimposed boards. More advanced players will carry the entire game in their minds. Non-Arisians should use glassine boards.

Each player commands 8 full sets of men, one set to a board. Each piece has its normal move, but has the option of making it either horizontally or vertically. Thus, for example, a King's Rook, at the beginning of a game, standing on the highest, or #1 board, may move up to eight squares directly forward, or to the right, or straight down. A Bishop moves diagonally across his own board or through the boards. (Always assuming, of course, that there is a clear path. The normal rules concerning obstructing or blocking pieces prevail here also.)

As will be readily seen, this gives fearsome power to the Queens and to the Knights.

A game is won by the player's checkmating the majority of his opponent's Kings.

The simpler version restricts the pawns to horizontal movement only, or horizontally and up. But never down. The major pieces move as before.

Other types of 3-D Chess severely limit the vertical movement of the pieces, but compensate by introducing new pieces specifically designed with this power.

SPACE CHESS: The invention of a New York mathematician named

Dr. Ervand Kogbetliantz. It received write-ups in several nation magazines, including LIFE, late in 1952. In this version the number of pieces to a side are reduced to 64. This number includes five new pieces: the fool, the favorite, the hippogriff, the archbishop, and the space knight.

TRI-CHESS: This game retains the full number of pieces and restricts them to their normal horizontal moves. For vertical moves, two new pieces are added per side: "The Pilot" - which functions like an unrestricted Queen, moving any direction horizontally or vertically; and "The Ranger" - moving 5 vertical and 3 horizontal spaces, or vice-versa, per move regardless of intervening pieces. Naturally, it must end the move on an unoccupied square or with a capture.

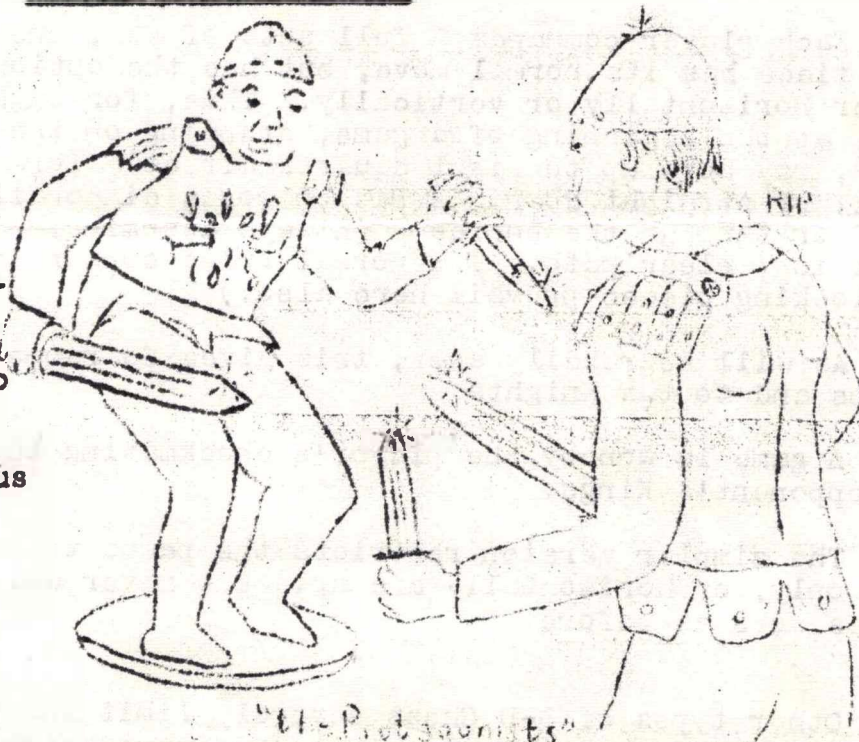
One other question arises, however: who the deuce was Loy Pren playing against? _____

aaa says that while she had not known the name, Loy Pren was playing Cube. As for his opponent, why you simply apply Holmes's dictum (eliminate the impossible, and so forth). This leads you to the conclusion that Pren could not have been playing chess with anyone, so you apply Derringer's (or Verner's) counter-dictum, and decide which you consider the most likely impossibility.

WHY SLAYEST THOU
DRAGONS?
a Comet Tale by
Comet Firestone

I've been reading my red-white-and-blue grimoire, and I noticed particularly the chapter on how to destroy dragons. It describes them as "ferocious and vicious beasts, doing all manner of damage with their fiery breathe, and terrorizing the men of the towne; a beast that we can do well without." Gross libel.

I happen to be keeping a medium-sized dragon on a long leash in the corner of our basement where I am accustomed to grind out Comet Tales on a small portable typewriter. Now the dragon that



I have happens to be a rather tame, docile, harmless animal. fact he was quite helpful once, when our furnace went out. He relit it for us. I have trained him to light cigarettes for people and he only lights the last inch and a half instead of last three inches as he did before I bought him a pair of glasses. I shall have to cut this charming story short as I must go now to see pencils to get money for the fire insurance, and besides, Smoke-eater has wandered over to see what I am doing, and the bottom row of the typewriter is starting to melt. I am wearing my asbestos gloves, however.

CLAY TABLETS

from REDD BOGGS, April 12, 1960

Neol #5: The report on your trip to Florida is certainly an improvement on the usual schoolroom "theme" on the subject, inasmuch as you were selective in describing it and didn't try to tell us everything that happened. But I'd prefer a somewhat meatier and more finished report. I suppose that opening line is from A Study in Scarlet [Yup.] I read that once or twice -- in part. I always skipped the chapters about Utah, though. I presume Baker Street Irregulars read them dutifully. [Well, no. Good BSI hold that the Utah chapters were interpolations by a Doctor Arthur Conan Doyle, so we don't have to read them dutifully.] "Penicillin." "Armadillos." Tut. Modesty is fine, but as long as you're telling us, you might've said exactly how you qualified for the honors in the National Merit Scholarship program and the mathematics contest. And you might've at least told us the title of the article in the "latest" Baker Street Journal -- whatever that is. OO of the BSI? [What's the OO? The BSJ is more or less the focal point of the BSI. Aside from some small magazines, like the Cormorant's Ring, it's the only outlet for Sherlockian activity, nationally.] Anyway, congratulations on all these achievements.

[Hmmm. Well, the Merits is a series of standardized tests and standardized forms. I don't doubt that all finalists are above-average in intelligence, but it does give people like me, who've almost grown up with standardized tests, an unfair advantage. See Arv Underman in PSI-PHI 5 for a nice condemnation of the Merits. The math contest is also standardized, but since math is taught as a standardized subject almost till the college-graduate level, it is better. Also, the math contest is much harder and much less pretentious than the Merits. You're right, I think; I should have said a little more. To finish rounding up the little more, you remember that it "A Scandal in Bohemia" Holmes finds Irene Adler's biography stuck between a Rabb's and a staff-commander's? I identified the Rabbi, analyzing Holmes's method of indexing on the way. It was fun, and I had a devil of a time getting all my arguments to dove-tail.]

from MIKE DECKINGER, April 21, 1960

Always is fun to listen to late night radio shows, and amazing what odd ones you can pick up. There is the Long John show, originating in New York, where John Nebel interviews strange persons, such as the guy who's building a rocket to the moon, and things like that. The only thing I can't stand are those 6 hour shows or recorded music running all through the night. If anything is designed to put a driver to sleep, and keep him that way until he hits something, they are. Ever go driving on a lonely road about midnight with some soft comforting music playing? If you have the tendency to feel drowsy, this will only increase it.

Incidentally, as to the title of your zine, NEOLITHIC, I suppose I could make a deplorable pun and say a neolith is the type of machine a neofan recently purchased to put his first zine out on, but I won't. Why not change it to something like MERETRITIOUS and wait for all the mail to flow in?

Neolithic
5620 Edgewater Boulevard
Minneapolis 17, Minnesota

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Mr. Dick Schultz
19159 Helen
Detroit 34,
Michigan

