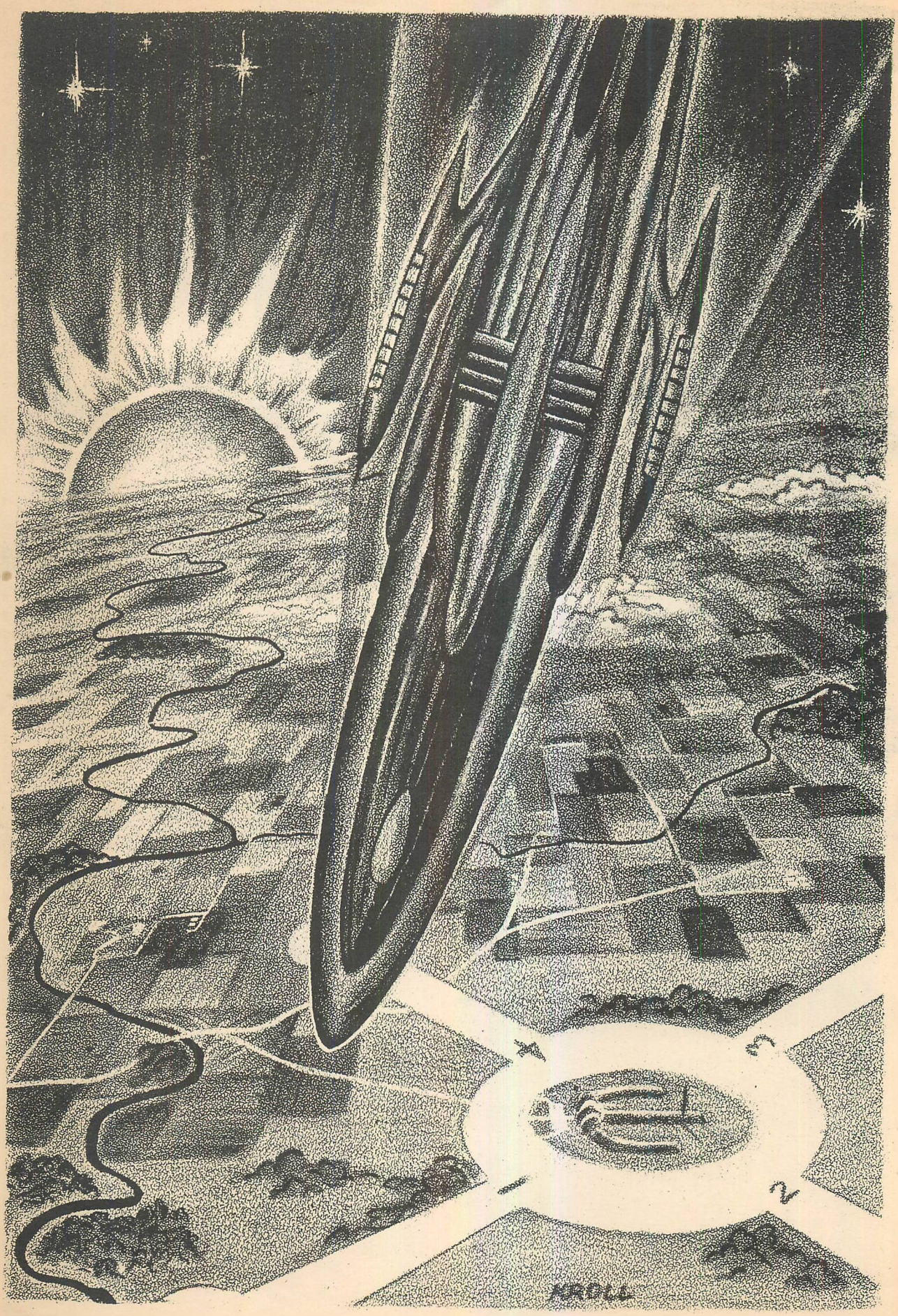
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NUMBER 5 1966

CONTENTS:

ART CREDITS:

Cover (from A Fan Artists Folio 1948)	by Bill Kroll	
Drawing	by Jack Gaughan	Page 11
Drawing	by Jon Arfstrom	Page 18

Electronic Stencils by Julius Postal

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RICHARD MATHESON: BANQUET

Ladies, gentlemen, door-pounders, bottle-smashers, and others. When I was asked to say something at this banquet I was told that I could make my speech long or short, so I'll make it short. I was told to perhaps say a few words on behalf of those Los Angeles science fiction writers who could not be present at the convention, or to say something else. Since I cannot regard myself as any fit kind of spokesman for such writers as Ray Bradbury, Henry Kuttner and Catherine Moore, William Campbell Gault, Frederic Brown, late of Los Angeles, Chad Oliver, and many others, I'll say something else.

It's this: I, like almost all of you, I imagine, am good and tired of having science fiction patronized. At a recent lecture, given in Los Angeles during a writers' convention, Catherine Moore said that someone asked her, "Has anything really good ever been written in science fiction?" She named a few books, like 1984, Brave New World, etc. The person said that he never really thought of such works as science fiction. Catherine Moore said, "Well, naturally, if you omit whatever is good in science fiction, then no, there's never really been anything good written in science fiction."

This seems to me to be the unenviable state in which science fiction exists today. As far as general criticism is concerned, anything literarily passable cannot possibly be considered as science fiction. This leaves Flash Gordon, death rays, and invaders who look like octopi. The trouble is that science fiction is, generally speaking, not considered beyond this primitive point. Critics in high places like to use it as their whipping boy. They like to treat it as the outbursts of village idiots, and in general they have one hell of a time thinking up very clever little insults for it.

The fallacy of this is that they rarely, if ever, seem to know what they're talking about. If they had read science fiction - I mean all of science fiction, or even any sizeable portion of it - they'd know that genuine literature is not only possible in the genre, but has been achieved time and again, by Arthur C. Clarke, Ward Moore, Ted Sturgeon, Ray Bradbury, Fritz Leiber, and many others.

Science fiction, however, is still out in the snow, not fit to blacken the doorway of literature. I think that this is a lousy situation. I think that maybe it's about time that science fiction writers, science fiction editors, science fiction readers, and science fiction fans put some sort of concerted effort into the attempt to convince the critics and the general reading public that science fiction is a valid and inherently fascinating form of literature. I say this with the full realization that many science fiction addicts may not care. They may even resent any attempt to advance the field into a position where it would be considered valuable literature.

I also realize that, as in the case of almost all public recognition of creative works, such an advance may be a matter of gradual evolution rather than revolution. But I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about that small portion of it which should be recognized as literature. As I say, no matter what we do, it may be that only time will bring about critical respectability to science fiction. But it seems to me that a little judicious effort on the part of all those interested in bringing that respectability wouldn't hurt at all. It might do a lot of good. Thank you.

SPEECHES* : JOHN W. CAMPBELL JR.

You know, I genuinely feel I'm in a peculiar position here. I'm supposed to be the Guest of Honor. And that's rather unfair in many respects. I am front man for a team. I have not been filling any great space all by myself. I have been acting as the front man for a very powerful team. No one man, no one mind, could possibly supply the creative energies necessary to keep science fiction going ahead. Science fiction exists only as a frontier literature. I commented a while back, in the magazine, that whatever it is you like, in six months that will be what you don't want any more of. A frontier literature exists only by going ahead. As soon as the frontier has developed, it ceases to be a frontier. The requirements of originality and creativity that it takes to make science fiction continue to exist as science fiction is something that no human being could possibly produce.

And I haven't. I have acted simply as the front man for an extremely powerful team. A. E. Van Vogt, Doc Smith, Tony Boucher, Jack Williamson - a lot of the others who aren't here tonight - Isaac Asimov, Bob Heinlein, all of them have had a very powerful part in building science fiction to what it is. Because I happen to be the liason man between those fellows who are doing the work, and the general readership that was supporting it.

Well, daggone it, you talk into a telephone, and you hear a voice coming out of the telephone, but you know it's not the telephone that's talking to you. Well I'm the telephone line. Believe me, it's the gang that has been doing it. The great advantage I have had is in being at the crossroads and acting to help the others find out what one of the other fellows has thought up. There are a lot of ideas that some of the authors have thought I originated, and passed along for their consideration. Well, about half the time, an idea Poul Anderson down here may get, you can thank Isaac Asimov for some of them. They just passed through my hands.

A lot of you readers have written in ideas which have been passed along to the authors. Perhaps it hasn't looked like your idea when it came out. But that's standard. If I pass along an idea to an author and it comes out the way I passed it along, I know that that author hasn't gotten the point. I never want anybody to write up one of my ideas, I want to get him started thinking. What I want to do is to start a fight, and have him think up the other side of the problem. It's most effective when you can make the other fellow do the thinking. Because he's bound to have ideas that you hadn't thought of.

You know, it's occurred to me that when the colonists first came over to this continent, they were a mighty poor lot so far as physical possessions went. They were also pretty poor in the sense of knowledge of their environment. Knowledge of how to get along, and how to live. Well, let's consider the Puritans up there in New England to begin with. They didn't know how to live in that climate, they didn't know how to live on the wild, wild woods. They were a bunch of city slickers. How come these poor colonists succeeded in taking a continent away from an established people of great fighting prowess, the American Indian?

GUEST OF HONOR

*Presented at the SFCon I, the 12th World Science Fiction Convention, during the Banquet, on Saturday evening, September 4, 1954, in San Francisco, California.

Well, basically, I think it comes down to this: The Puritans were willing to say, "You know, I'm stupid, I'm ignorant, and I don't know." And the Amerindian was a proud man. You know, the Amerindian could never be enslaved. They were a very proud people. The poor, stupid, ignorant Puritan learned everything the Indian had to teach him. And the proud Indian didn't learn a thing from the Puritans. Well now, if you learn everything the other guy knows, and know a little something on your own too, of course, and he doesn't learn anything from you, what do you think is going to happen? It's no wonder the Amerindians lost the continent. The colonists learned everything they knew. But it didn't work the other way. As a matter of fact, about the only things the Indians seemed to have learned in the early days was - well, they did learn smallpox, and they learned whiskey. And they learned to use rifles. But they never bothered to learn how to make them or how to supply them, which is a very poor system. And they paid for it.

Well now, today, what science fiction is trying to do is to try to learn something from the other side. To take a different viewpoint on knowledge. I'm in a rather peculiar position tonight, by the way. There was a reporter from one of the San Francisco papers here asking for notes on my speech, or a copy of my speech, and since I speak extemporaneously, I didn't have any. But to help her out I told her what I was going to talk about. Now I'm stuck with it.

Anyway, one of the points I did want to bring up is the fact that we are about to learn that physical science has its limitations. In the last year or so I think you've noticed in Astounding there's been a trend towards the discussion on psionics, esp in the more general sense. There's a reason for that. It is not that military security is clamping down on new developments in science. Military security covers only engineering. It does not cover basic science. Basic science is still free, despite the impression that has been conveyed. The major factor in producing the impression that science is not being released from under security is the fact that there have been no major broad advances in science. They are perfecting their understanding of nuclear physics, yes, but that is not one of the broad advances.

I saw some graphs in the M.I.T. Technology Review a while back. They graphed inventions and discoveries versus years in different countries. I don't have a blackboard, but I can roughly indicate:

The curve for Germany went something like this: (Fig. A)

The curve for France and England went something like this: (Fig. B)

The curve for the United States went something like this: (Fig. C)

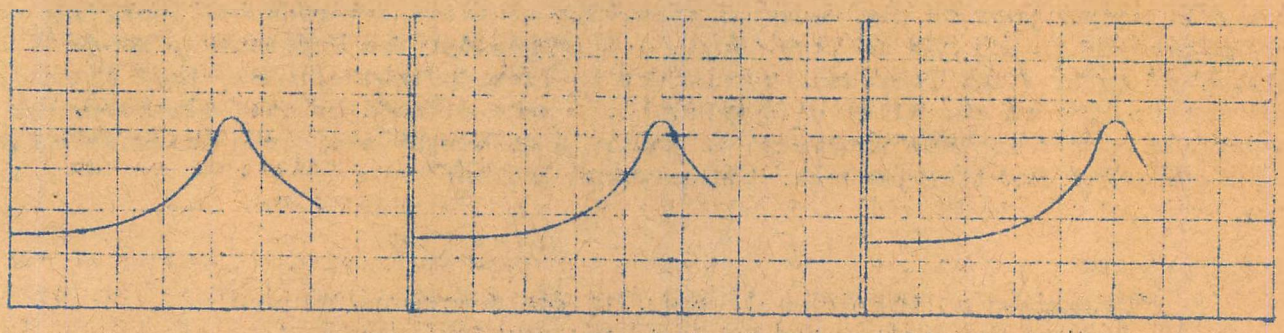
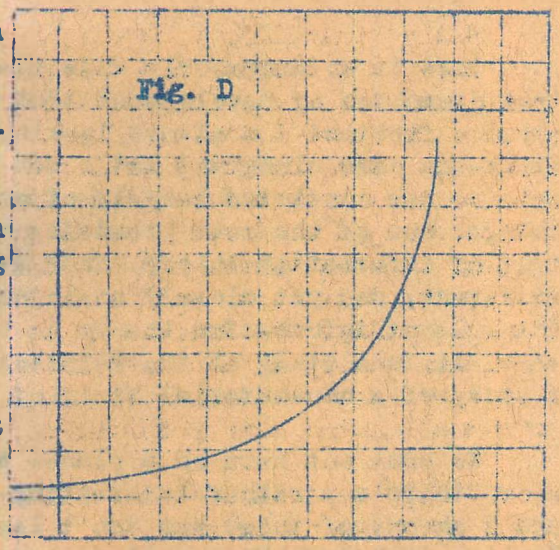


Fig. A Fig. B Fig. C

Each of them showed a rise to a peak, and each curve showed that it was beyond the peak and dropping. In Germany the curve had gone further, because Germany has been working on the problem longer. Now what I would very much like to see is a plot showing dollars invested per invention or discovery versus years. And I think if you had such a plot you would find that the curve went something like this: (Fig. D)



Lord Rutherford was the first man to measure the diameter of the nucleus of an atom. He did it with a protractor, a little fragment of fluorescent glass, a tiny scrap of gold leaf, less radium than you have on your wrist watch dial, and a hunk of lead with a hole drilled in it. With that he measured the diameter of the nucleus of an atom.

One of his co-workers, C. T. R. Wilson, took a standard Erlenmeyer flask, the rubber bulb off the old-fashioned honk-honk automobile horn, a half a bottle of india ink, and some water, and created the first Wilson cloud chamber. With that, and a very simple camera, they photographed the first artificial transmutation of elements. With this very simple aparatus they were making enormous penetrations into the new field of nuclear physics. They were doing it at a cost of peanuts. They were using the very simplest tools, plus of course the enormously powerful tool of the human mind.

At the present time at Brookhaven Laboratories there is a new Wilson cloud chamber. It involves a 75 ton magnet, four electrically-operated movie cameras - and incidentally the magnet takes so much power that the Long Island Power and Light Company refused to accept the load, and Brookhaven had to install their own power plant of 5 diesel-electric generators to handle the load of that magnet. All of this is for the purpose of getting a little more knowledge from the nucleus. The investment required to get one more fact is becoming so enormous that - well, the economists talk about the point of diminishing returns. Physical science is reaching the point of diminishing returns. It isn't that there isn't more to know, that there isn't more to learn. But that that is no longer the way to learn it. There must be some other approach, some other way of making advances.

I feel that it is a proper problem for science fiction to seek, to speculate on other ways of learning. Other approaches to greater understanding of the universe we live in. There was some discussion of frontiers here tonight, how far you can go out on the frontier. Human knowledge down through the last couple centuries has shown immense progress on two opposite frontiers, in two opposite directions. They have talked a lot about various dimensions, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and so forth, and they have mentioned time as a dimension. I'd like to propose another dimension, and I propose it very seriously. The dimension of scale, which is at right angles to all the known dimensions. You can travel in either of two directions on the dimension of scale. You can go into the microcosm or into the macrocosm.

If you check, you will notice that man's increase in knowledge has been on two frontiers, down into the atom, and outward into the galaxy. Each of these frontiers has been developed. There is an inward frontier, and an outward frontier. One of the frontiers that has been least explored is - well, we've done a lot on this outward frontier of objective science. But we've done darn little on the frontier inward, on subjective science.

That is an enormously wide field. It is another dimension of development. It is that dimension of development that I can suggest as one line of development for science fiction. I'm always looking for more, and if anybody else has got ideas by all means come along and let's see them. That's what makes for fun. Our physical science has consisted largely of an investigation of things, and the properties of things. One of the most promising recent developments in science has been the development of information theory. This is rather closely associated with the slightly different, and yet closely analogous development of game theory. The interesting thing about information theory is that it is one of the first sciences of non-material fact. It is a study of the relationship of facts, rather than facts themselves. It's a study of a non-material field of development.

We came out here on a plane. We were moving along some 350 miles an hour. You know, there's a rather interesting phenomena - many people who are afraid of heights, and I am one of those who don't like them, are not at all bothered by an airplane. You can look down from a plane and not be bothered at all, whereas if you look down over the edge of a building, it.....disturbs you. Why? The building is a good solid support. You look out of the plane and there is 50 tons - what's holding it up? You can't point to it. It is impossible to point to that reality which is supporting 50 tons of matter, in defiance of gravity. There is absolutely no thing that can be pointed to. The air is not supporting it. If you had a static universe, that plane would be unsupported. What is supporting the plane?

A Process! Not a thing, but a process. And you cannot point to that process and say, "See, this!" because it isn't there. The instant you try to take hold of it, it's not existent any more. What's supporting it is a process. Now there is a beautiful example of the fact that there are realities in this universe that can never be brought into a static laboratory. Dr. Rhine has tried to bring into the laboratory some sort of evidence for the existence of phenomen, which perhaps are processes. And not knowing what the processes are, let's see you bring an airplane into the laboratory.

You can't. We know enough to bring the wind tunnel into the laboratory, and it demonstrates some of the principals. Suppose Benjamin Franklin had been dealing with a race that was blind, and tried to explain to them that lightning existed. How many of them had experienced lightning? None! The only experience of lightning a man could have would be to be hit by it. And you would have no one around who had ever experienced lightning. Also, he would have a very fancy time if he was trying to argue with some scientist that lightning existed. "Nonsense. It is impossible. There is no way a thing like that could exist. It's contrary to all our theories. If you think this is real, bring it into the laboratory. Show us. Demonstrate it."

Well, it took considerably more than a century before the first beginnings of the ability to bring lightning into a laboratory existed. It took a lot of study of the processes of lightning before it could be brought into the laboratory. The spontaneous, natural occurence always preceeds the laboratory demonstration. Nobody has ever been able to demonstrate in a laboratory, under laboratory-controlled conditions, that such a thing as telepathy exists. This shows that it's nonsense. Doesn't it?

Any true, scientific understanding recognizes the necessity for direct physical evidence. And nobody's ever brought it into the laboratory and proved it. Willy Ley did a very fine piece on the business of the French Academy having a little trouble with a village that had reported the fall of a meteor. Of course it was reported as a falling star. The French Academy knew perfectly well that a star couldn't possibly fall to earth. They were much too remote and much too large to fall to earth. Therefore a little affidavit was entered on the record as an example of mass hysteria. It did not fit in their cosmology, therefore it must be delusion.

You know, there's one thing I'll have to disagree with Matheson on. Science fiction is not an accepted literature, that is true. You know I've been in this now for about 25 years. I think there are not a few of the people here in the hall tonight who haven't been in the world as long as that. I have been up against precisely the problem Matheson recognizes for that entire 25 year period. And believe me, Matheson, it was a heck of a lot worse when I started. But there is one aspect of that that's good. You know, so long as a man ignores you, he has no defense against you. So long as these formal literatures ignore us, we can go on spreading our ideas without their taking any really effective counter-action. The degree to which science fiction can communicate ideas, and do its speculation freely and without any control of orthodoxy, is directly related to the degree to which they ignore us, and say that we're of no importance anyway. If we are not important, they will not try to enforce any orthodoxy on us. Which leaves us completely free to speculate, to develop, and to explore new paths. No respectable scientist can consider such an idea. Thank you, for 25 years I have been disrespectable and loved it. Thank you. [Applause]

Thanks a lot, I do appreciate that. You know, it's daggone hard for me to get over to you the fact that I don't do this job. You, and the gang that's been working with me do it. The Analytical Laboratory is a very real thing. Your support, your telling me what you need, and what you want, and what you're striving for, is what makes it possible for me to get somewhere with this job. I'm one of those lucky people who succeeded in getting somebody to pay me for my hobby. And that's exactly what it's been. I've had a heck of a good time. I've enjoyed it, and I know the authors who do the best stories are the ones that enjoy working with it most. You can sweat blood over a story, but by God you get an awful lot of satisfaction when the gang outside shows they liked it.

That is the reward we're all working for. You can put it in one term that it's the 35¢ you lay down on the counter that supports it. But that's a very small part of it really. The support that really counts is just the sort of support you gave me tonight there in that applause. And it's for the whole gang that's been working for you. And take it for yourself too, because you're the ones that are giving me the direction in which to go. I mean that. Thanks. [Applause]

The graphs presented on Pages 4 and 5 represent the hand motions of the speaker at the time he gave this speech, and were drawn only for this publication.

STATION L U N A SPEAKING

The revival of a convention tradition had appeared to be taking shape, in far better form than it has had in its earlier appearances, with the publication of the Proceedings of Chicon III, and the latev Proceedings of the Discon. In fact, so unlike the past efforts as the Proceedings are, they could almost be considered a new institution.

The Convention 'Report' concept started as far back as the First World Convention when the expanded December 1939 issue of New Fandom, published by the same group, who sponsored the convention, carried a full record, including speeches, registration and auction lists, and reports of the Con.

Since then such publications have been issued only infrequently. The Torcon (1948) and Cinvention (1949) Committees each issued special publications similar to the one New Fandom produced. And the Solacon (1958) Committee produced a 'Final Report', which contained the Guest of Honor's speech, the Business Session and a Financial Report.

It remained for a convention committee to avail themselves to a complete recording of the entire convention before the production of the Proceedings were possible. And the zeal to carry through with the months of work involved in transcribing those tapes - the most difficult part of the task. This was the reason why it took so long to publish the Proceedings (also why the schedule for LUNA is so irregular). This appears to be where the publication of subsequent Proceedings has faltered, and this failure to carry on has jeopardized the whole project. Two conventions have been held since the Discon, without any mention of plans to publish their Proceedings (there are, of course, recordings of both of these conventions).

While other problems could exist, it would seem most likely to attribute the lack of further Proceedings to difficulties in transcribing the recordings. This task requires a dedication of purpose which is not uncommon in fandom. However, to the contrary, convention committees are in the position of having already achieved the purpose for which they were working, and history has shown that few remain intact longer than necessary after the convention. To expect them to immediately take on a new job as demanding as the Proceedings seems a sure way to court failure before the project has hardly got off the ground.

Meanwhile, LUNA will continue to present to you the best of the conventions: the many timeless and historic speeches of yesterday's conventions; the new and entertaining programs of today and tomorrow (excepting only those years when the Proceedings are published); together with the many which are presented frequently through the year at regional conferences.

These conference speeches, with which regular readers have already become familiar, are no less interesting and stimulating than those presented at the World Conventions. In addition, they are material which an even greater number of readers have not had the opportunity to hear in person.

Good reading.....

Frank

A Speech* by
RANDALL GARRETT

The subject will be science fiction. I thought this was a novel subject for a meeting like this. A lot of science fiction is being done on novel subjects these days. It never gets into the magazines, only in hard covers. Everybody has been complaining about the fall in quality in a lot of the magazines. John Boardman mutters in his beard about Analog, everybody mutters in their beard about Analog. I'm more capable of doing it than most, although I see a few of my fellow poganiphiles around. Poganiphile, that's a fancy word for beard-wearer.

But I notice that everybody reads Analog, in spite of the fact that they mumble about it. Now, if the quality is going down, there is something you can do about it. Something that fans used to do for 20 years, and for some reason in the past 10 have sort of given up doing. Have you ever read the letter columns in Analog? Heh, heh, heh heh. Everybody writes in and says, "John, my God, what an editorial!" or "John, you stupid.....What do you mean that slavery is better than being free?" Which he never said.

But look at the poor writer. Namely me. He's stuck. He sits up there, he feeds his brains out. He thinks - really it takes some thinking. He writes, and that's a hell of a lot harder. I know. There's a fan I was talking to at a party a few weeks ago. He had some stories he'd written. He was worried about how to sell them, who does he take them to? I said, "Well, look, I'll help you out. I don't mind. Another writer in the field isn't going to break me. I'll help you out. Let's see them."

"Oh, I haven't put them down on paper yet, but I have them all written up here." Ha! You know, they can't print brains. So anyway, the writer sits down and he finally does get it down on paper, he types the whole thing out. He brings it revrently to his editor. The editor reads it with somewhat less revrence, and revises it. A little later the author gets a check - well, sometimes a lot later. Then a lot later than that it gets into the magazine. He sits down and reads it. No matter what you may think, it never gets dull seeing your own name in print. Not only that, a story always looks better when it's set up in type than it did on that scratched-out, erased-over, fouled-up manuscript you sent in.

Which reminds me. A certain female writer, not one present - well, she made it fairly public, so I'll quote her name, it was Marion Zimmer Bradley - bought at a convention some years back a manuscript. This was a genuine, dyed-in-the-wool real manuscript that had been published. Now why Marion Zimmer Bradley wanted it I don't know. But some fans collect manuscripts; she was a fan who collects manuscripts. Fine. She wrote in to a - well, what I call a professional fanmag, because it is a fanmag written by professionals, called The Proceedings Of The Institute For 21st Century Studies, and Marion said, "I was absolutely horrified to see the condition this manuscript was in. There were strike-outs in it, and erasures. Now granted once in a while someone has to correct a manuscript, but these were corrected in pencil. I always correct mine neatly in black ink."

*Presented at the Seventh Annual Lunacon, held on Sunday, April 21, 1963, in New York City, sponsored by The Lunarians.

Well, I wrote. I don't know whether the letter was ever published or not. But I wrote a little letter explaining this to Miss Bradley. In the first place, all editors insist that you send in a manuscript double-spaced. That's because they want you to pay for their half of the paper. They own that space between the lines, and you're not supposed to mess with it. If you make your corrections in ink, and they don't like it, they can't erase the ink. Editors don't like that.

There's one other thing. If an editor gets a manuscript from an unknown that is absolutely perfect he immediately says, "Ah, ha. This guy's no professional. No professional has time to type a manuscript up that well." Unless he's a very wealthy author, in which case he can hire a secretary to type it up that well. But if that's the case, the editor will recognize the name. What this has to do with the subject I don't know, but I thought it was interesting.

To get back to what fans can do: The manuscript goes in to the editor, the editor publishes it, you see it in print, you're very happy. And so you wait. Has anybody read it? Did anybody care? Did I write it for nothing? Alright, so I got the check, but that's just eating money. What I want is kudos. I want somebody to appreciate me. Nobody appreciates me. You sit and you scan the letter columns. Did somebody say it was a lousy story even? Any publicity is better than nothing at all. Even if they spell your name wrong, you've got a chance to write in and object to it, which gives you more publicity.

So there you have this large vacuum you're writing into. Now of course, being a science fiction author I suppose everybody thinks that vacuums are what you normally write into. But the word is 'ride' into a vacuum. When you sit down and write a story, and nobody says anything, either good or bad, where are you? What have you done? What do the fans want? Because it is the people who read the magazines that determines the magazines' policy. No editor is going to sit around publishing stories by Oswald Glutch, if every time a Glutch story appears, four thousand letters come in saying, "Why did you print Glutch's crud again?"

If the letter columns in Analog were as interesting today as they were 10 - 15 years ago, it would be worthwhile reading them. But I don't even read the letter columns in Analog myself much anymore; I skim through it to see if anybody mentioned my name. And like Ike Asimov I've got a pretty good eye for seeing my own name in print, even if it's very small. I can find my own name in the telephone book even. Now, what causes this? What's Happened?

I'm using Analog as an example, but it's true of a lot of other magazines. Galaxy of course is notorious for having a very dull letter column. I don't know whether If has one or not. I haven't picked up If - does it? If they discuss the stories I might even buy a copy of If and see what it's all about. But specifically Analog. Now I don't care how many people want to give Campbell his own kudos. I mean he doesn't want to write into a vacuum either. But here's the advantage Campbell has. Campbell does not write into a vacuum. He gets those letters, and he sees them whether they're printed or not. Somebody writes in to comment on his articles. He knows he's not writing into a vacuum.

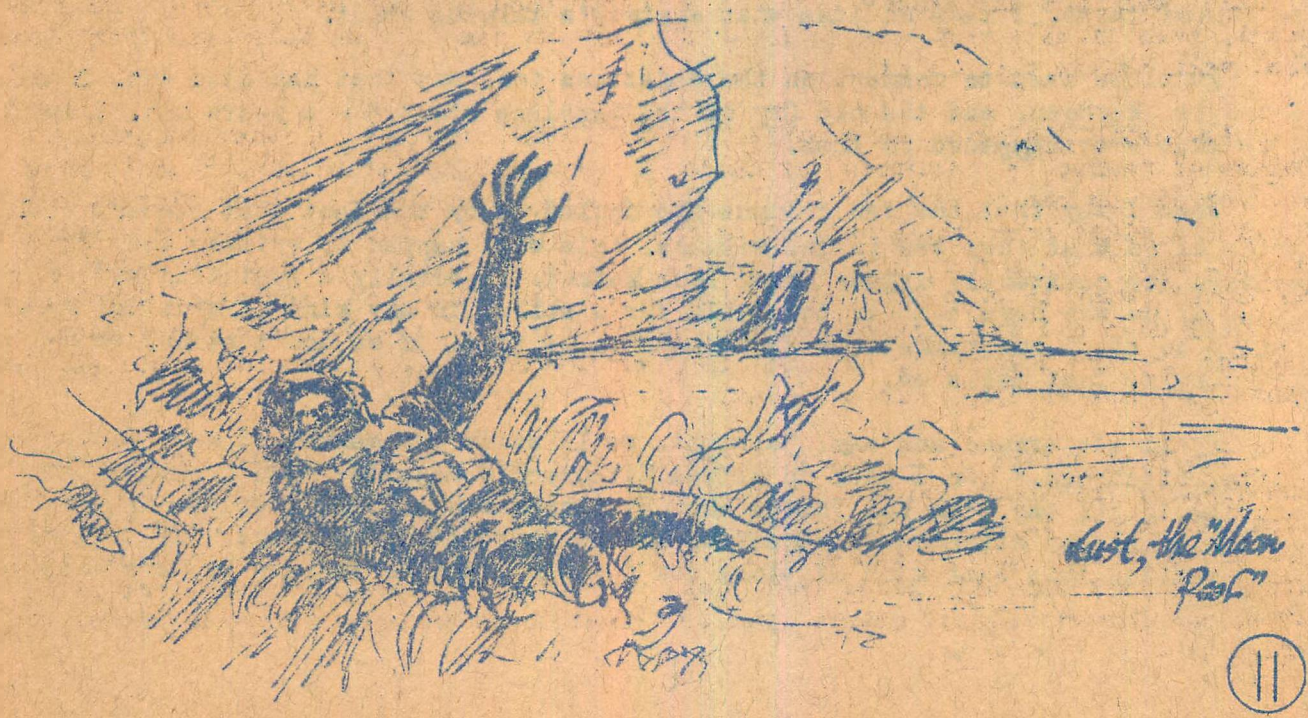
The poor author of the fiction doesn't. He waits, and he waits, and he waits, and finally the AnLab comes out. Where did he get all this data? Where did it come from? Who wrote in and said that Randall Garrett's story was the best in the issue? Who wrote in and said it was second - well, I don't know, I get the bonuses often enough so that somebody likes them. Yah, you vote for yourself first place five times and forget all the others, you see. That doesn't work. I know an author who tried it - it wasn't me.

Somewhere he gets that data. Well, I found out where it was. People do write in and comment on the stories. And they're usually, "Dear Mr. Campbell: About your editorial, you say that the Dean drive is capable of operation only when it is built with precision. Well, I built one, a jerry-built one, and just sort of hashed it together, and I will send you the blueprints of the thing I hashed together, and I'll tell you what I made it out of, it was balsa wood and matchsticks. But, you know you encourage us readers to experiment, so I experimented, and I connected it up - well, I didn't have a power saw, but I had a rubber band. And I connected the thing up, and set it off, and .. well, I'd like to show you the device, but it took off for Mars and I haven't seen it since. By the way, I rate the stories as follows: Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick."

Why did he rate the stories as follows? He doesn't say. Now what I would like to suggest is that you fans who are sitting around screaming about how bad Analog is, and how much you dislike it, or what you don't like about Campbell's editorials, don't write in and say you disagree with John about his editorials, write in and say what you liked about the fiction, or didn't like. John gets his kudos. He gets his check regularly. I get my check irregularly, and I get nothing.

Now this isn't just egoboo. To be serious for just a moment, it isn't just egoboo. There's plenty of egoboo in just seeing your name in print. And the fact that you get a bonus once in a while shows that people are reading the thing, and that they do like what you're writing. But 15 years ago, 20 years ago, people would write in and say, "What the hell did George O. Smith mean when he said that the velocity of this light ray was C squared? Because if you square C you don't get a velocity. He's wrong."

In a science fiction story today you could write in and say that osmium was a liquid at room temperature, and nobody would open their mouth. You used to be able to not make one little mistake. If you made one little mistake fourty thousand readers would write in and say, "Hey, you're stupid. You didn't research. You're wrong." Somebody else would write in and say, "Wait a minute, wait a minute. There is something wrong with your plot here. If he did this, and he did that, why did she do this when she could have done that, which would have been the logical thing to do?"



The writer learns this way. And what he learns is to write a better story the next time. On the other hand, if you write in and say, "Hey! This was a good story. I liked it. This is the kind of story I like." If that's the kind of story the reader likes, that's the kind of story he'll get. But of course this can be overdone. There have been authors who were told, "This is the kind of story I like," and their brain immediately froze in place, and that's the only story they ever wrote from then on. Which is why criticism is necessary.

Question: Have you ever asked Campbell if he would publish such literary-type letters, as opposed to his pseudo-science type letters, if he got them?

Randall Garrett: Yea. He would, sure. Here's what happens now. It isn't entirely John's fault. John runs a letter column. Granted there is a little bit of egoboo on John's part, to be able to point to all these lovely letters that people write in about his editorials. But the reader, of any magazine, will get in the habit of writing the kind of letter he sees in the fan column. That's the kind of letters you write to Galaxy, isn't it? How many of you have written to Galaxy lately, on any subject whatever? Nobody does. There are a lot more people that write to Fantastic and Amazing.

Now, one of the traps that any letter column can get into in the prozines is the fan feud bit. John Jones writes in and says, "I disagree with Robert Silverberg's latest story, on these grounds: ....." And somebody else writes in, Bill Smith, and says, "John Jones is out of his head, because ....." And a third person writes in and says, "Bill Smith doesn't know what he's talking about." And there's Silverberg saying, "What did I start here?"

Which adds the further complication that unless you read the magazine constantly, steadily and readily, you've forgotten what the fan column argument was about. The same thing happens to me when I pick up a fanzine, by the way. There are a series of fanzines going around which are sort of round-robin letters, you know. They're really not magazines at all. All they are is a letter to all your friends. And you mimeograph it up, and you call it Limbo Number 2, and send it around to all your friends. And then when I tell people I would like to see a fanzine, they send me one of these. I have no idea what anybody's talking about.

Fanzines used to comment on the magazines too, and that has died out. There are a couple, Warhoon, and the old Cry of the Nameless about 5 - 6 years ago. I don't know what ever happened to them.

When I say that the fan columns are fouled up by the fact that readers will write in on what they see in the columns, this will happen to writers too. We writers are constantly urged: Study Your Market. Especially a beginning writer. Those of us who have been in the field for a while, in any kind of writing, know enough to study our market. Or don't have to be told. If we don't study, we don't get checks. That tells us.

We'll sit around and say, "Alright, we'll study our market. I want to write for Alfred Hitchcock." So I pick up Alfred Hitchcock's magazine, and I read all the stories in it; say, "Ah ha! That's what Hitchcock wants." So I write one for the editor of Alfred Hitchcock's magazine. And he picks it up and says, "My God. We've been getting this same kind of story for 6 months, why do we have to have another one?"

Because editors run across dry periods, when all they get, either from the agents or in the slush pile - well, some of the manuscripts - well, there was a rejection slip that has become famous. The editor sent the manuscript back and said, "We thank you for the offer of this paper during the wartime shortage, but we are returning it to you because someone's written all over it."

An editor will sit down and reject, and reject, and reject. And all of a sudden he walks over to his files. It's now June and he's ready to set up the September issue. And he walks over to his files, and he finds exactly two stories in it. They are the only things he's been able to buy for the last six months that were any good. "God, we've got to fill the September issue!" Go over the slush pile and pick out the three best of a bad lot. Now he has five stories to go in that issue. But what's he going to do for the next issue? Pray that another story comes in. So he turns out two bad issues before the good stuff starts flowing in. Meanwhile, the writers are busily studying their market. And they study those two issues.

So don't think that fans who write for the letter columns are different than writers who write for the body of the magazine. Fans say, "I want to get my letter printed. I like to see my name in print just like the guy that gets paid for it." This is stupid, but it works. So they sit down and they say, "Well, what kind of letter does Campbell print? I will write that kind of letter. All the letters that Campbell prints are on his editorial. I will comment on his editorial." This has been going on for 7 years now.

Look! I don't know when I'm going to have another story coming up in Analog. Do me a favor. All of you. Sit down and read it. I don't care whether you like it or don't like it. If you can find holes in the math in it - and it's kinda loaded up with it a little bit too. I think I made one mistake anyhow, see if you can find it. If you find holes on the math, if you find something wrong with the story itself - well, for that matter, anybody else's story. No author cares if you write in and poke a hole in it. Really! He may write back a letter saying, "Now wait a minute. What do you mean?"

Like George O. Smith did; said, "What do you mean you can't square the speed of light? Einstein's formula then doesn't work, E = MC squared, therefore the atomic bomb didn't go off." Somebody wrote back and said, "George, nobody said you couldn't square the speed of light. What they said was when you square it you don't get a velocity." So you can have these lovely little arguments. George enjoyed it. I enjoy it. This will do one thing. I'm certain of it. It will improve the quality of the stories. If the author feels that he is writing for nobody but the editor, and the editor doesn't know what the readers want except, well, the magazine sells, "so what I'm printing must be what they want." You get in a rut.

You get to writing the same kind of story, the editor gets to publishing the same kind of stories. And, alright, the sales go along nicely. Until, all of a sudden, everybody suddenly gets bored. "I have been reading the same kind of stories in this magazine for the past 3 years. I won't buy this issue." And as most of you know, if you buy a magazine steadily, and then suddenly say, "Aw, I won't buy this issue," you've broken a habit.

Nobody buys anymore. The sales start dropping. The editor says, "What happened?" Well, what happened was that he wasn't getting any response except that half a buck. Now that half a buck is useful, just like my check is useful when they pay me for a story. But it's only useful for that particular story, it doesn't tell me what to do next.

So I'm getting sort of tired of hearing all the fans gripe. I'm also getting tired of - oh, again, 15 years ago, fans thought they were pretty important. That what they had to say was an influence on the magazines. I think the first dissenting voice in this was Howard Browne, who was at that time editor of Amazing and Fantastic. Now Howard Browne is one hell of a nice guy. Howard Browne has one fault. He hates science fiction. And what convention was that where he stood up and declared that "the fans, constituting less than one percent of the total sales, mean nothing." He was at Cleveland, yah.

It's not true. Fans are important. And editors, they may say, "Oh, who pays any attention to letters to the editor?" No individual letter to the editor is paid any attention to. But believe you me, when an editor gets letters from all over the United States, or even from any broad area of it, from fans who are obviously not in collusion - of course if all the members of the Framishawn Fan Society all write in letters that sound very much alike, then the editor gets suspicious that there is some sort of collusion here. That happened about three years ago. A whole bunch of fans got together, and at one of their meetings they voted on the stories from Analog. And they all voted a certain one in first place, a certain one in second place, a certain one in third place, and they all wrote identical letters in to the editor to vote for this story.

Which is sort of like the story about the fellow who was counting the ballots in the southern town right after election: "Democrat, democrat, democrat, democrat, democrat, democrat, d....republican! Democrat, democrat, democrat, democrat, democrat, democrat, republican? Throw 'em out. Sonofabitch voted twice."

But if the editor does get all these letters in, "I didn't like this kind of story." "I do not like this author." "I would prefer to see such and such a kind of story." "Whatever happened to E. E. Smith?" Something like that will bring a response. It has to. Now the average reader of any magazine does not make his wishes felt. But the science fiction fan is just an average reader who likes to make himself heard about science fiction. And they aren't doing it. You're all lazy. You scream at us because we're not improving what you want. Well, we don't know what the hell you want.

Maybe you don't. Like the fellow who said - remember the old saying about, "I don't know anything about modern art, but I know what I like." Some of these people who like modern art don't even know what they like. You run across the same thing with readers, they don't like a story, and they don't know why. But the average science fiction fan has got a rather higher I.Q. than average. The average I.Q., I think, of science fiction fans runs somewhere around 120 - 125. Most of you are pretty literate people. You're able to write prose that's readable and makes sense.

I'm not saying that all of you do. I'm averaging. I've read fanzines too. So, if you want an improvement in the field, if you want better stories, write in and ask for them. Write in and argue about what was wrong with the story you didn't like. Don't just write in and say, "I didn't like so-and-so's story because it was sloppy." or "I just didn't like the last story by such-and-such." That doesn't tell the author a thing. What you want to do is all sort of become junior Damon Knights. Sit down and criticize. And write the letters in. You'll get your name in print. You'll get your egoboo. Now are there any questions on this subject?

Hans Stefan Santesson: I want to make a contributory remark here. I know many of you spend half your lives in trying to convince yourselves that nobody in prodom pays any attention to you. This is foolish. I know this. I've been in this field for quite a number of years by now. This is not why I have grey hair and a few things, but it has helped. I know that I did not have a letter column. Quite bluntly, I did not personally believe in a letter column. But I read letters. No editor can afford to ignore comments from readers. And I assure you that if by some stroke of bad luck your publisher gets a letter roasting something that has been your pride and joy, and he comes raving in there and saying, "How the hell did you pick a story like this? I mean this reader in Siltstown, Ohio, says it stinks." "Well," you say, "Um... ...um.....well....."

Randall Garrett: And you hope you can whip out six letters that said it was good.

Hans Stefan Santesson: That's right. Because publishers, the people who gamble those thousands of dollars on the fact that this issue is going to sell, publishers take very seriously readers' opinions. And it is a mighty frustrating thing, I'll tell you, to come through the end of a month and realize that nobody has even said, as one Philadelphia Science Fiction Society member used to say to me occasionally, "Hey, Hans. When are you going to stop publishing that crap?" It's rather frustrating when nobody even says boo to you.

Question from Ed Meskys: When the editor gets letters commenting on stories and he does not publish them, does he let the author see them?

Randall Garrett: Yes, if it's a full letter. If it's just a postcard with the ranks of the stories on it, no, there's no point in it. Or if it's a letter addressed mainly on his editorial, no, he doesn't see it.

Ed Meskys: Let's take it were a three page letter, one page on the editorial, a half a page on each of the stories. What would happen then?

Randall Garrett: The author probably would not see it then. Because it would be primarily addressed to the editor. Then it's not addressed to any particular author. I have gotten letters from various fans which were entirely on one of my stories. This is rare.

Question: You're talking about writing in about the stories, not the editorials. Who was it that wrote in a couple months ago about the editorial?

Randall Garrett: Well, I can't write in about the stories. And I had something to say. And remember that for me that is a labor of love because I don't get paid for those letters.

Question: In the last issue of Analog there was a letter column. At least that was supposed to be one. Unfortunately it was about 4 pages of Norman Dean spouting off some more Dean drive. How can a fan get a letter printed when Campbell is printing things that he even probably paid for, it seems like?

Randall Garrett: He didn't pay for that. That was a stroke of luck on Campbell's part. What he got was an article, free.

Question: I have an idea that 90 percent of the people who read the magazines feel that their letters will just be thrown in the wastebasket, and not even read by either the editor or the author. What can be done to tell them different?

(Concluded on Page 18)

SCIENCE FICTION, THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH

A Speech* by

FRANK R. PAUL

GUEST OF HONOR

Fellow Science Fiction Fans: I am mighty glad to be here among as fine a crowd of live-wires and go-getters that has even assembled under one roof. I always pictured you Science Fans just as you are. Always ready for any adventure and argue any question at the drop of a hat.

In every age there have been people whose natural inclination and curiosity urged them on to decipher and analyze the riddles of the universe, notwithstanding the sneers and jeers of the less active-minded. You see, in a well ordered society you are supposed to think only the thoughts approved by contemporary authorities.

When the earth was considered flat, it was folly to think it otherwise, and to suggest that by some chance it might be round, was nothing less than blasphemy. And since the majority was of the "flat" opinion, inspired by the leading minds of the time, it was much easier and less dangerous to be on the jeering side than to profess rebellious ideas.

However, there were devil-may-care free thinkers who had the audacity to question accepted "Facts."

After many of these nebulous "Facts" had been proven humbugs, people began to feel more and more tolerant of the rebels, and thanks to that tolerance, the world has seen more progress in research of all branches of science and utilization of findings for the good of all mankind in the last 50 years than during the preceeding 5,000 years.

Two thousand years ago, a meeting such as this, with all these rebellious, adventurous minds would have been looked upon as a very serious psychological phenomenon, and the leaders would have been put in chains or at least burned at the stake. But today it may well be considered the healthiest sign of youthful, wide-awake minds -- to discuss subjects far beyond the range of the average provincial mind.

The Science Fiction Fan may well be called the advance guard of progress. We are the fellows who are willing to give every new idea a chance for a tryout, without ridicule. We did not mind in the least to be called Nuts and Hams in the early days of radio, when we were literally relegated to the doghouse with our home-made squealing and yowling sets -- but, oh boy, what a thrill when we got a few dots and dashes! We are the ones who popularized the new Radio vocabulary.

*Presented Sunday afternoon, July 2, 1939 at the NYCon, the First World Science Fiction Convention, held in New York, N.Y., reprinted from the December 1939 issue of New Fandom.

To my mind, a Science Fiction Fan is intensely interested in everything going on around him, differing radically from his critic. His critic is hemmed in by a small provincial horizon of accepted orthodox and humdrum realities, and either does not dare or is too lazy to reach beyond that horizon. The Science Fiction Fan, on the other hand, has a horizon as big as the universe itself, and has been known to peek even beyond that, a fascinating hobby sharpening the imagination and incidentally absorbing a lot of knowledge, and familiarizes him with Scientific terms, which so mystifies his critics.

You have often heard them proudly proclaim: "Don't expect me to know any of that stuff" or "I don't want to know anything like that." Of course we have no quarrel with that kind of individual but it would be rather interesting to find out by what mental process he arrives at the conclusion that it's smart to be stupid.

The Science Fiction Fan is alive to every new development in every branch of Science by hungrily reading everything printed about it. You cannot easily fool him on any subject. I am sure no Fan was fooled when they pulled the Martian Invasion stunt over the Radio.

To say that by reading Science Fiction you become a believer in all sorts of Supernatural things is like saying that by frequenting the movies you are bound to become a criminal or what have you.

Once in a while we also find eminent Scientists throwing cold water on our enthusiasm, for instance Dr. Robert A. Millikan the other day said we should stop dreaming about Atomic Power and Solar Power. Well, as much as we love the doctor as one of our foremost scientists of the day, because he cannot see its realization or gets tired of research, is no reason for us to give up hope that some Scientist of the future might not attack the problem and ride it. What seems utterly impossible today may be commonplace tomorrow. I need not cite just such examples as you know them possibly better than I do.

But I do want to illustrate just what I mean. Just suppose for a moment that any of you could by some machine method return, say only about 200 years and visit one of the great minature Portrait Painters and watch them work. You would naturally ask him how many of these exquisite portraits he can turn out a day, you would be told that 4 or 5 is the absolute limit, providing the light is right, etc.

Now if you should tell one of these speed masters that you, without being an artist, could produce a portrait, guaranteed likeness in every way, and not only of one person, but two, three, or a whole group of people in 1/25th part of a second, you would no doubt not only be laughed at, but very likely be hustled off to the 18th Century insane asylum.

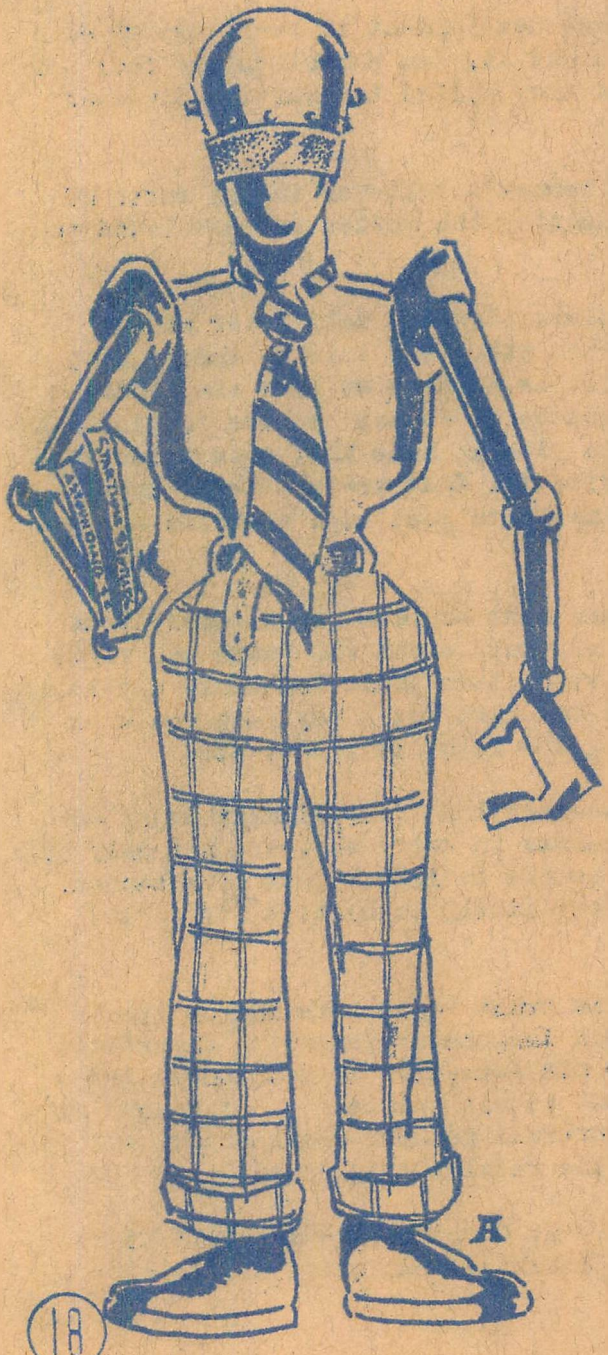
The Master would tell you that to pick up his brush would take longer than that, and he is quite right, the only way he could imagine of producing a portrait was the way he knew how. You can readily imagine his amazement if you showed him a photograph and he would tell you -- "Yes, but that is not painted" -- Of course not, but it's a portrait and more accurate than any portrait painter could paint. And so it is with most discoveries and invention, it's the results that count.

The Science Fiction Fan's ideal is Dr. Arthur H. Campton, who sees all kinds of forces in nature with exciting and thrilling possibilities, which are waiting for discovery and exploration.

Science Fiction is the spirit of youth, ever ready to plunge into the unknown for new adventure.

Impossible? That word has absurdly limited meaning for youth and Science Fiction. Just try to convince a Fan that life on other worlds is impossible and you'd find yourself under a cataract of "Shy's."

Science Fiction is growing up. More and more people are becoming Science conscious by seeing scientific marvels in their daily life, and they can no longer ignore or scoff.



It gives me a lot of satisfaction and pride to be identified with the development of this thrilling and informative kind of reading.

During the past 20 years, which marks the beginning of Science Fiction in America, my work has been familiar to a great many of you and I want to thank all of you for taking the lively interest in it which you have shown. I also want to thank you for the kind letters you have sent me and the editors. There have been bouquets and brickbats a-plenty.

Of course, to please everybody is one of the few things that even a science fiction fan will admit is quite impossible. I have always tried to interpret what the author had in mind, but you'll admit I have never tried to scare you with the purely grotesque.

I conclude with the conviction that in the future we will have bigger and better Science Fiction, with the accent on the Science.

A Speech by Randall Garrett (Conclusion)

Randall Garrett: Not true, I'll tell you one thing about writing in to John Campbell. And that is that you will occasionally, and more than occasionally, you will often get a personal letter back. Even if he does not print it, you will get an answer back from him.

I'm sorry, that's all the time we've got. Thank you much, ladies and gentlemen, and fans. [Applause]