Rhodomagnetic Digest

BEING THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE ELVES', GNOMES' AND LITTLE MEN'S SCIENCE-FICTION CHOWDER AND MARCHING SOCIETY

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CONTENTS

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RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST

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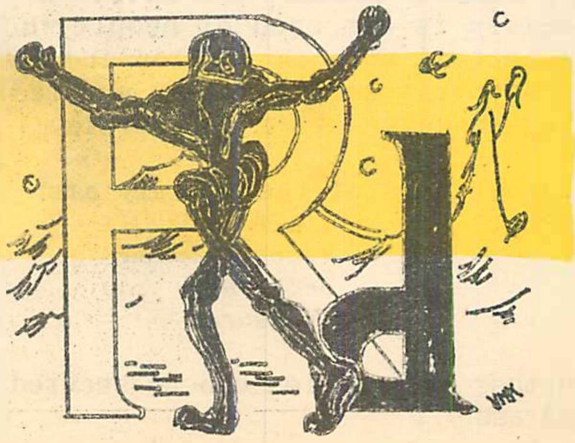


The publishers of the RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST

The *Elves', Gnomes' and Little Men s Science Fiction, Chowder and Marching Society* is composed of people who are interested in reading, writing, or collecting science fiction and fantasy, in any of its forms. Meetings are held on the second Friday and last Sunday of each month at 2524 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley 4, California.

The officers of the Society are:

Chairman	J. Lloyd Eaton
Vice-Chairman	Gladys Fabun
Secretary	George Finigan
Treasurer	Peggy Wagner

Further information can be secured by writing to the secretary at the above address.

Editorials by George Blumenson

"the evil that men do..."

At this writing the newspapers and the air lanes are filled with reports from a tiny area halfway around the world. Korea and the Koreans are as remote to most of us as were Ethiopia and the Ethiopians some fifteen years ago. Already newsmen are learning to spell the tongue twisting names of strange cities, rivers, mountains and individuals.

Is this action in Korea the prelude to the holocaust which would undoubtedly be named World War III? The answer may be known by the time this editorial sees print.

Those of us who were around during the Ethiopian, Sino Japanese and Spanish wars may well remember that these wars were the proving grounds for weapons and techniques later used on a world wide scale. We remember the saturation bombing first used on Chinese cities; the pinpoint bombing first used on thousands of hapless Ethiopians and so triumphantly described by Vittorio Mussolini; we may remember the fate of Guernica, destroyed by the dive-bombing tactics of the Luftwaffe.

In any consideration of weapons which may be used in a third World War, we must remember the remark attributed to Albert Einstein when asked about the weapons which might be used in such a conflict. "I do not know what weapons will be used in World War III," said the great mathematician, "but I do know

what will be used in World War IV. Stones!"

Looking back at the thousands of science fiction stories which have been written and printed since the beginning of this type of literature, we may gain some insight into the dealing out of death in any conflict which may come in the future.

"Simple" atom bombs, based on the uranium-plutonium formula which was used at Hiroshima will probably be as outdated as the flintlock rifle might have been in World War II. Of course, such bombs will probably be used, but we already know that the bomb based on the hydrogen formula is a much more effective weapon, capable of doing many times the damage of the outdated bomb. And we know nothing of other bombs and other formulae which may be in the developmental stage today—or, for that matter, which may be in reality today.

Gasses may be used—and in an all-out conflict probably will be used. Not simple death dealing gasses which may be kept out of the respiratory system by gas masks, but new, improved gasses which will enter through the pores of the skin and attack nerves and vital organs. Nerve destroying gasses, painful, causing blindness, killing the telegraph system which keeps our bodies in operation.

We have hints of other gasses—gasses which paralyze, entering through the skin—and which will keep organisms in a state of paralysis for weeks, leaving them conscious while they starve to death.

Bacterial warfare is something which has not been extensively used, but which may be brought into play in a third world conflict. It would take only a fraction of a test tube full of bacteria to pollute the New York, Los Angeles or San Francisco water systems, leaving the populace dying of botulism, typhus or some other deadly disease. War production could be cut to nothing by dusting war production areas with some simple disease such as the mumps or scarlet fever.

A nation could be starved into submission by dusting the wheat crop with that blight which is called "wheat rust", a bacterial destroyer which spreads almost with the rapidity of the wind. The hoof and mouth disease could be given to a nation's cattle. New generations of fighters could be killed off before they were old enough to get into a uniform by the spread of children's diseases. And this list is only a starter.

As David Bradley so ably pointed out in his book, there is *No Place to Hide*. A- and H-bombs can be dropped anywhere, and their effects are widespread; more widespread certainly than the effects of the blockbuster used in the last conflict. Bacteria enter the body through the skin, through the air we breathe, through the food we eat and the water we drink. Air travel over the polar regions brings other nations not 10,000 miles from Detroit, but 4300 or 4400 miles away.

Who knows what the future may bring? Death rays, disintegrators, robot fighters, protection against atomic blow-ups, underground cities, force shields? These have all been used in science fiction stories. They may be used in any conflict which develops out of the situation halfway around the world.

One thing seems certain. Whatever good is developed, whatever good comes out of a third world war, there will be very few people around to enjoy these cures, these drugs, these labor saving devices when the war is over.

The evil that men do lives after them....

That was William Shakespeare, 350 years ago. Films and reports from the nations of Europe show the undernourished, the maimed, and the sick who will never be well.

The sins of the fathers....

That was a Greater Writer than Shakespeare Who wrote thousands of years ago. Visited on the children? The maimed and tubercular children of Europe will seem as nothing compared to the victims of radiation sickness, of rearrangement of the genes, of bacterial warfare.

The more we think about it, the more convinced we become that Einstein was right. Stones will be the weapons in World War IV.

Provided, of course, there is anyone left to throw them.

RJ

A DECLARATION OF WAR

Gentlemen, from here on out we are in a state of war on pseudo-scientific illiterature. Our reviewers have too long taken the attitude of *Well, its a pretty fair story, considering that its published in Super Science,* or *Well, Boucher may have slipped a bit on this one, but its still better than Amazing.* Science fiction has dragged along in this fashion for twenty five years with the innocent acceptance of a lot of starry eyed dreamers who believe that since the field is unique, it must also be uniquely bad. After twenty five years, we now find perhaps one or two stories a month from all this gigantic effluvium which may be considered readable. We find perhaps two books in six months which we are not ashamed to recommend to our friends. Now we are most recently faced with the tolerance of the fan public and such magazines as *Imagination*, toward that incredibly bad moving picture *Rocketship X-M*. It's time to crack down. The scientists and literary critics are not going to do this job for us. Under present conditions, they ignore this field entirely. Only the fans are able and in a position to try the job of improving the publications, the pictures, and the attitude of the public as a whole.

The Digest intends to assume a prominent position in forcibly condemning anything which we feel may not be up to minimum standards of literary acceptance. We hope to contribute some small share in improving a field which we feel offers unique possibilities for relaxation and enjoyment.

We shall not be alone. The Golden Gate Futurians, a San Francisco organization, has gone on record as being opposed to such items as **Rocketship X-M**, which may be passable if considered as third run, second bill, class B pictures, but are not by any stretch of the imagination admissable as science fiction or fantasy. They, and their publications, *Renascence*, and *The Western Star*, intend to use appropriate means to express their opinions.

The child is growing up and the time has come to spare not the rod. Won't you join us?

DO YOU LIKE JUNK?

I was talking to Mr. Boucher recently and the subject of the movie *Rocketship X-M* came up. He particularly called to my attention what he considered the most astonishing fact about this, the tolerant reception that fans have accorded it.

He was considerably surprised that so few people have offered to apply the appropriate epithets to this movie. Science fiction News Letter, one of the more prominent fan publications, passes it off mildly with a short review and no comment. Other publications have gone so far as to include pictures of Mr. Ackermann on the set, reviews, etc.

This is, I feel, a small example of the apathy, if not awe, with which most fans seem to greet anything which sees print or gets into the moving picture houses. People seem to think *I may not like it, but at least someone paid good money to publish it,* or in other cases, *sure it's bad, but it's better than I can do.*

This is of course absurd. Fully ninety-five percent of the stuff appearing in science fiction magazines today is junk: Home made hogwash dreamed up by a lot of semi-competent hack writers and shoved out at the suckers who are willing to lay out their money to buy it. This is especially annoying in view of the attitude of the publishers who are quite aware of the low level of their publications. Can't you visualize the following scene every month or so in the offices of *Golden Goose Egg Publications* when it comes time to whip out another issue of *Ultra-Sonic Science Stories?* Joe Goose calls in a few of the staff and an artist or two from the more serious work on *Thrilling Sex.*

O.K. boys, lets rush it up. You, Bagle, lets sex up that cover. Picture the moron at the

newsstand gaping at the magazines. He's the man we're trying to sell. Make it hot, bright, and sexy. Get that two bits! And as for you Quincy Noname, our honored editor, what the hell do you think we're paying you for, to be literate? Just keep in mind you are due back on copy for Deadeye Dick Mystery Novels, so let's not be wasting time trying to get good stories for them bums who buy this crap. If you can't get this issue edited and to the printer in two days, we'll get somebody off Rugged Romances who can!

Now short of grabbing a club and taking a train to the big city, there is no way we can convince these jokers that we would like to read a decently assembled and written magazine other than by writing, talking, and criticizing at every opportunity. Arthur J. Burks wrote in the *Cinvention Memory Booklet* (see *On the Newsstands*) that fans have influence. This is so.

Only by coming out positively, and stating, when we think something smells to Heaven will we ever get anything better. Possibly we can even get rid of some of the so called *Cover Art* by more peaceable means than shooting Bergey (as some of our readers have suggested). It's worth a try, and this magazine is going to do its best to oppose anything that is poor, shoddy, or detrimental to what we feel is a fine and promising literary field.

NEW FACILITY by G. Finigan

The appearance of this issue of **The Digest** marks the conclusion of the *Digest three month plan*. After the acquisition of the multilith machine, an ordinary typewriter did not seem to give the copy the *finished* appearance of which the machine was capable. For the second appearance of the revitalized **Digest**, we had the use of an IBM Executive electric typewriter.

The IBM machine was an excellent typewriter, and turned out nice looking copy, but it was rather restricting for our purpose. A variety of type was available, but the limit was one style of type per machine. Since the spacing on the IBM varied with the character it meant all the copy had to be typed on the same machine as the plates, which slowed down the preparation of the magazine. If an organization were large enough to afford the purchase of several machines, the IBM would be fine for the job.

At about the same time we acquired the multilith machine, we contacted the various companies who made typewriters with special type faces. After the June issue we again contacted the Varityper office, as their machine seemed to be ideal for our purpose. The large variety of types available, which could be fitted in the machine in a couple of seconds, the several available line and character spacings on one machine, and the control of justification by the setting of a pointer on a dial, all served to convince us that we need look no farther for a machine.

So far as typography is concerned, we have finally achieved our goal, although we shall be interested in hearing comments on whether our choice of types is satisfactory from the standpoint of readability, etc. We shall continue to experiment with various techniques which are possible with our present set up. The color work in this and the previous issue have served as starters, and in the future we shall endeavor to bring in techniques which will improve the appearance of the magazine, and at the same time are not impossible with the equipment we have.

diminutive DANGERS by D.B.M.

A recent editorial on the reprint racket has received some criticism from non-aficionados. One person in particular, on reading the editorial by Mr. Moore, remarked "gets a bit purple, doesn't it?"

Yes it does, and intentionally!

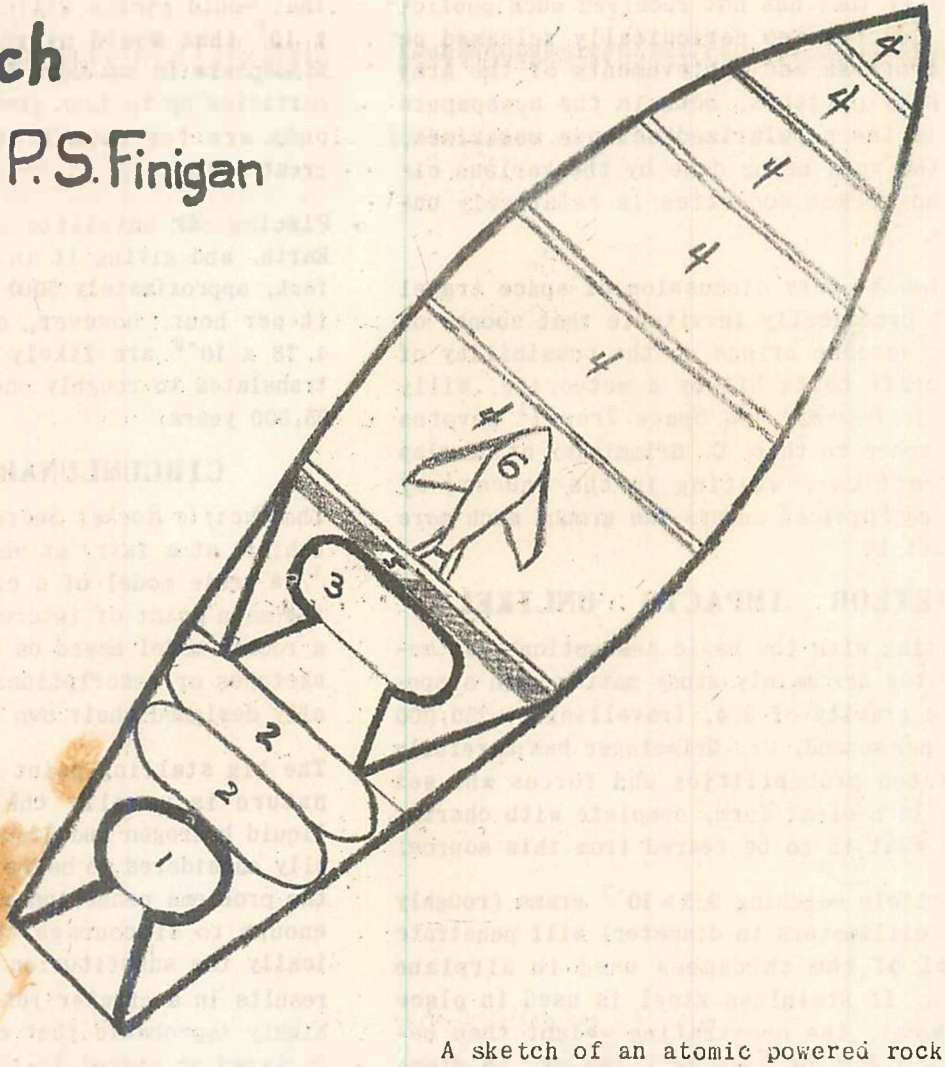
Possibly if this sort of malpractice were confined exclusively to the science fiction field, such serious discussions as we have published might not be entirely justified.

It is my feeling however that "cheating" the public by printing a reprint magazine without labelling it clearly to be such, is but one classified example of a practice all too common in almost any specialized field today.

(continued on page 32)

Recent Rocket Research

by George P. S. Finigan



A sketch of an atomic powered rocket, as suggested by the following article. The sizes of the compartments are not in true relationship due to foreshortening. Instead of using a sphere for the return journey, a glider is here substituted.

1. Chemical reaction motor for the takeoff from Earth.
2. Tanks for propellants for motor.
3. Motor to utilize atomic heating.
4. Tanks for storing liquid hydrogen, with provisions being made for liquefaction of hydrogen as it evaporates.
5. Shielding to protect occupants from being injured by radiation.
6. Glider which serves as control compartment and crews quarters during flight, and also is used for the final descent to Earth.

RECENT ROCKET RESEARCH

A great deal of work has been done on rockets recently that has not received much publicity. Reports are periodically released on the progress and achievements of the Army and Navy projects, both in the newspapers and in the popularized science magazines, but the work being done by the various civilian rocket societies is relatively unknown.

In almost every discussion of space travel it is practically inevitable that sooner or later someone brings up the possibility of the craft being hit by a meteorite. Willy Ley, in *Rockets and Space Travel*[1] devotes some space to this; C. Grimminger of Douglas Aircraft Co., writing in the *Journal of Applied Physics*[2] covers the ground much more completely.

METEOR IMPACTS UNLIKELY

Starting with the basic assumption that meteorites are mainly stony matter with a specific gravity of 3.4, travelling at 250,000 feet per second, Mr. Grimminger has carefully computed probabilities and forces and set down in a clear form, complete with charts, just what is to be feared from this source.

A particle weighing 2.5×10^{-7} grams (roughly .033 millimeters in diameter) will penetrate dural of the thickness used in airplane skins. If stainless steel is used in place of dural, the penetrating weight then becomes 2.5×10^{-5} grams (.133 mm. in diameter). In view of this it seems that it will be necessary to go to a greater thickness. If one inch material is substituted, the weights then go up to 0.1 grams for dural or 1.6 grams for stainless steel.

Assuming a wall thickness of one inch for our satellite, it is possible to examine Mr. Grimminger's charts to see just what is to be feared. Working from astronomical data, he has computed that 9.94×10^{4} particles that would pierce stainless steel, or 1.88×10^{8} that would pierce dural, enter the atmosphere in one day. These figures include particles up to four grams in weight; larger ones are few enough that they are not a great danger.

Placing our satellite 300 miles above the Earth, and giving it an area of 1000 square feet, approximately 5000 meteorites will hit it per hour. However, of this number only 4.78×10^{-9} are likely to do damage; this translates to roughly one penetrating hit in 25,000 years.

CIRCUMLUNAR ROCKET

The *Pacific Rocket Society*, in 1948, had an exhibit at a fair, at which they displayed a 1/38 scale model of a circumlunar rocket as the main point of interest. Instead of making a rocket model based on any of the available sketches or descriptions, the members actually designed their own ship[3].

The big stalling point in projects of this nature is usually the propellant. While liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen are generally considered to be the optimum substances, the problems connected with liquefaction are enough to discourage their use. (Theoretically the substitution of ozone for oxygen results in a greater jet velocity, but it is highly improbable that ozone could be manufactured or stored in the quantities needed without reverting to oxygen with disastrous results.) The society, in a search for a more possible fuel, decided on using liquid fluorine as the oxidizer and hydrazine as the fuel. Although fluorine is tricky to handle, it was felt that means could be provided for its safe use[4], and while its specific thrust is not as great as that of oxygen and hydrogen, it is greater than any of the other known fuel combinations.

(1) ROCKETS AND SPACE TRAVEL, Willy Ley, *Viking, 1947*

(2) JOURNAL OF APPLIED PHYSICS, Vol. 19, No. 10, October 1948. *Probability That a Meteorite Will Hit or Penetrate a Body Situated in the Vicinity of the Earth.*--C. Grimminger

(3) PACIFIC ROCKETS, Vol., 3, Nos. 1 and 2, Summer and Fall, 1948. *Manned Circumlunar Spacecraft.*--E.G. Ewing

(4) The *Atomic Energy Commission* work with the fluorides has improved such prospects considerably.

The result of the ensuing calculations is a rocket 352 feet long and 74 feet in diameter, which, fully fueled and equipped, weighs 19,200 tons. (An idea of the size can be gotten by imagining a heavy cruiser standing on end.) It is a seven step rocket, and is designed to carry two men. While the overall mass ratio is 8000, the ratio of any individual step is less than four. The final descent to Earth is made in a glider carried in the nose, which serves as a control room during the voyage.

VOYAGE MECHANICS

The rocket would take off at the equator, using the twelve engines in the first stage to provide a total of 48,000,000 pounds (24,000 tons) thrust. For the maximum comfort of the two occupants, acceleration is limited to two gravities, and at times would drop to 1.25 gravities. Instead of providing controls for the flow of fuel and oxidizer, the designers have made provisions for motors to be cut out when the acceleration reaches a certain point. (It might be possible to drop motors as they are cut out, as a fuel saving measure.) There would be brief periods of weightlessness as the steps are dropped, before the next stage is cut in. The first five steps would accelerate the rocket to a speed sufficient to bring it within the moon's gravitational field, each step being dropped as its fuel was expended. The sixth stage would be used for orbital corrections and deceleration on the approach to the moon, and for acceleration to break out of the orbit and start the return trip. The remainder of the fuel in the sixth stage would be used for deceleration once Earth's gravitational field was reached, as would the seventh stage. The sixth stage, when released, would go into an orbit about the Earth, but presumably the others would just fall toward Earth, so it is evident that some means must be provided for their descent so that the empty stages don't do damage.

The glider is detached from the final stage when the velocity is in the neighborhood of 4.5 miles per second. It then will use the atmosphere for braking purposes, with parachutes being used for the final descent.

The first step is equipped with external vanes for control while in the atmosphere; the remainder use vanes within the jets for control. The glider is equipped with rockets for braking and directional control.

From the conclusion of the article, it seems extremely likely that even more has been done on paper than was revealed. The specific instance mentioned was the motors, but it is possible that controls, pumps, etc., have all been worked on.

ATOMIC ROCKET

In earlier issues of the same magazine[1,2], an atomic rocket proposed by a member of the *British Interplanetary Society* is discussed. While there are two articles, they essentially duplicate one another. The form of propulsion under discussion is what would commonly be called an atomic motor. It does not use a cyclotron, or the radiation from an atomic pile to provide the jet directly, as some fiction writers conjecture. It uses atomic materials, but purely as a source of heating for hydrogen, which is the actual propellant[3]. Both articles use circumlunar rockets to illustrate their calculations.

With ordinary chemical reaction fuels, the jet or exhaust velocity is in the neighborhood of 2 miles per second, or less. According to Shepherd's[2] calculations, an exhaust velocity of at least 6 miles per second is obtainable. While there is still a great deal of work to do on such a power plant, it is felt that the task is not as great as that of producing the first atomic bomb.

To make the trip to the moon and back would require 10^9 square centimeters of exposed surface of fissile material to heat the hydrogen enough so that it would have a vel-

(1) PACIFIC ROCKETS, Vol. 2, No. 4, Spring, 1948. *Rocket Propulsion.*--K. W. Gatland. Reprinted from NEWNE'S PRACTICAL MECHANICS, November, 1947.

(2) PACIFIC ROCKETS, Vol. 2, No. 1, Summer, 1947. *An Interpretation of Shepherd's Classic Paper on Interplanetary Propulsion.*--F.M. Thomas.

(3) See also THE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING OF NUCLEAR POWER, Clark Graham, ed., *North American Aviation Corp., 1947*, Chapter 11, *Rockets and Other Thermal Jets Using Nuclear Energy.*

ocity of ten kilometers per second. If the fissile material were in the form of beads one millimeter in diameter, forty tons would be required. For the trip to the moon and back, 700 tons of hydrogen would be needed. In liquid form (the only practical way of transporting it), it would occupy 10 000 cubic meters. Since liquid hydrogen boils at an extremely low temperature (-252.8° C.), a plant for continuous liquefaction of hydrogen has been included in the design.

Where the two articles differ is in the ship based on Mr. Shepherd's calculations. Mr. Thomas uses what is essentially a single step rocket, while Mr. Gatland uses five stages powered by the heated hydrogen and one chemical stage to be used in the take-off from Earth. Mr. Gatland envisages a rocket in which the 'stages', with the exception of the chemical stage, are not dropped from the rear of the rocket, but are pushed at an angle off the forward end. This may seem like a round about way of doing it, but this system requires the use of only one motor, the sections discarded being merely tanks for the storage of the hydrogen, with a small plant on each stage which liquefies the hydrogen and pumps it to the next stage so that the first tank emptied is the one at the head of the rocket. This system would necessarily place the control cabin and crew quarters toward the rear of the rocket, but since there is no real necessity for direct vision by the crew, it is not an impractical system, and it does obviate the necessity of placing fissile material in each section with the associated shielding, which would probably weigh more than the pumps necessary for the system used here. The author (Mr. Gatland) has shown some consideration for the people on Earth by including the chemical stage for take-off. No details of that step are given in the article, but it is comparatively simple to work out the specifications of such a motor which would take the rocket high enough that the atmosphere would not be contaminated too greatly.

The crew's quarters are in the shape of a sphere, which makes the final descent to Earth after the trip by means of a parachute. One may wonder that with the propulsion idea as advanced as it is, why the designer didn't use a glider to make the return trip, having it go into an orbit about the Earth which just touches the atmosphere on the side farthest from the moon. Each time the glider enters the atmosphere the friction will slow it down a small amount, thereby decreasing the orbit. This would greatly reduce the amount of braking which would have to be done with rockets once the ship enters the Earth's gravitational field.

RECENT BOOKS ON ROCKETRY

In recent years several books have been published which should also be of interest to anyone interested in space travel. Probably most science fiction readers are already acquainted with *The Conquest of Space*[1] by Ley and Bonestell, and *Rockets and Space Travel*[2] by Ley; not so familiar are *Rocket Developments*[3] by Robert H. Goddard and *Rocket Propulsion Elements*[4] by George P. Sutton. The former is taken from the notes of Goddard, covering the period from 1929 through 1941. Most of the summarizing was done by Goddard before his death in 1945. In the introduction the editors mention a manuscript written in 1907 which was submitted to various publications and refused, and which described a method of propulsion for possible interplanetary use which used the heat from radioactive materials to expel substances from an orifice at high velocity, which presumably is somewhat similar to the system just described.

A ROCKETRY TEXT

In *Rocket Propulsion Elements*[4], Mr. Sutton discusses the theory involved in all stages of rocket design. The book is primarily intended for one who has a working knowledge

(1) CONQUEST OF SPACE, Chesley Bonestell and Willy Ley. *Viking, 1949.*

(2) ROCKETS AND SPACE TRAVEL, Willy Ley. *Viking, 1947.*

(3) ROCKET DEVELOPMENT, Robert H. Goddard, *Prentice Hall, 1948.*

(4) ROCKET PROPULSION ELEMENTS, George P. Sutton, *John Wiley and Sons, 1949.*

of chemistry, physics, mechanics and thermodynamics (a rocket engineer?)

The main thing in the book, for the purposes of this article are the data on fuels and fuel performance.

Fuels, solid or liquid, are divided into two further classifications; monopropellants and bipropellants. Monopropellants are ones in which the fuel and oxidizer are combined into one compound or substance; the powder charges used in sky-rockets and elementary war rockets are typical examples. Bipropellants combine the fuel and oxidizer in the rocket just prior to firing, in the manner of the V-2. There is a further breakdown into fuels which must be ignited by external means and those which ignite spontaneously. Hydrogen peroxide, used with a catalyst, is both a monopropellant and spontaneously ignitable.

In the field of bipropellants, there are a large number of combinations possible. The one which was used in the majority of early experiments both in this country and in Germany, was gasoline with liquid oxygen. Although there are theoretically better fuels, gasoline was the most readily available in quantities. Later developments used other fuels, not because they were better, but because they were easier to obtain. The Messerschmidt 163 rocket plane used eighty per cent hydrogen peroxide with C-stoff (57% methyl alcohol, 33% hydrazine hydrate and 13% water) as the fuel, which ignited spontaneously. The V-2 used and still uses liquid oxygen and ethyl alcohol. The Wac Corporal uses red fuming nitric acid and aniline, a strictly American development.

The material chosen as a propellant is not chosen solely on the basis of possible exhaust velocity. Specific gravity, or density, is a very important factor, as is availability and ease of handling. A fuel which might have a very high exhaust velocity might, when the other factors are considered actually prove to be inferior to one which has a lower exhaust velocity.

(Liquid oxygen and gasoline give an exhaust velocity in the vicinity of 7800 feet per second. Red fuming nitric acid and aniline give an exhaust velocity slightly in excess of 7000 feet per second. Compared on a fixed weight basis, The RFNA-aniline will have an 11% greater range, and at the same time will occupy only about 89% as much space as liquid oxygen-gasoline. On a fixed volume basis, the RFNA-aniline again comes out ahead, this time with a 24% greater range. For a given range, the RFNA-aniline occupies 35% less volume and has 18% less weight.)

In addition to finding a fuel which has a high exhaust velocity for its volume and weight, the motor of the rocket must be designed to be as efficient as possible with that specific fuel. The injection system must be planned so that the fuel and the oxidizer are mixed in the right amounts according to the design and materials of the combustion chamber and nozzle of the engine. The pressure in the combustion chamber will have an effect on the exhaust velocity, and will also have a bearing on what material is used for constructing the engine. A feed system must be included (either pump or pressure feed). In all likelyhood, some means will have to be provided to keep the engine from overheating.

The above should serve to demonstrate to the reader that there are many problems connected with the design of a rocket. There is still a great deal of research to be done in the field of fuels and materials of construction for the engines. It has been suggested by some that the plastics could be used in the construction, but as yet there is no published data on strengths of the various high temperature plastics at the temperatures which would be encountered in a rocket engine

There is much available data on rocketry, as I discovered when I first started my inquiries into the subject, and this article just touches the surface. It is possible that in the future, another article may be presented dealing with some of the problems confronting the researchers, and also with some of the more technical studies being made.

For those who are interested enough to want

(continued on page 32)

On Communication WITH Extra-Terrestrials

David B. Koblick

That's just about the shortest possible title for an article pertaining to the Hypotheses of Extra--etc. However, for a starter, let's state as an assumption based on the cruelly overworked Law of Averages; That among the uncountable—and for the most part invisible—planets, moons, asteroids and other classifications of heavenly bodies in the macrocosm, an indeterminate number are not only in a condition to, but *do* sustain life.

The question of how it got there, through the accidental brewing of a primal life-cell on some slimy prehistoric shore, or by some other method, we'll leave for another set of theorists to wrestle over. These hypotheses can only be concerned with the assumption that life exists.

Life postulates eventual *intelligent* life. The realization of being (I think; therefore I am). Community. Interdependence.

Ultimately, *exchange of ideas*, the foundation of any kind of progressing civilization. Let us consider various methods of communication between inhabitants of a hypothetical world. And let's deal primarily with direct communication, excluding the written or recorded word.

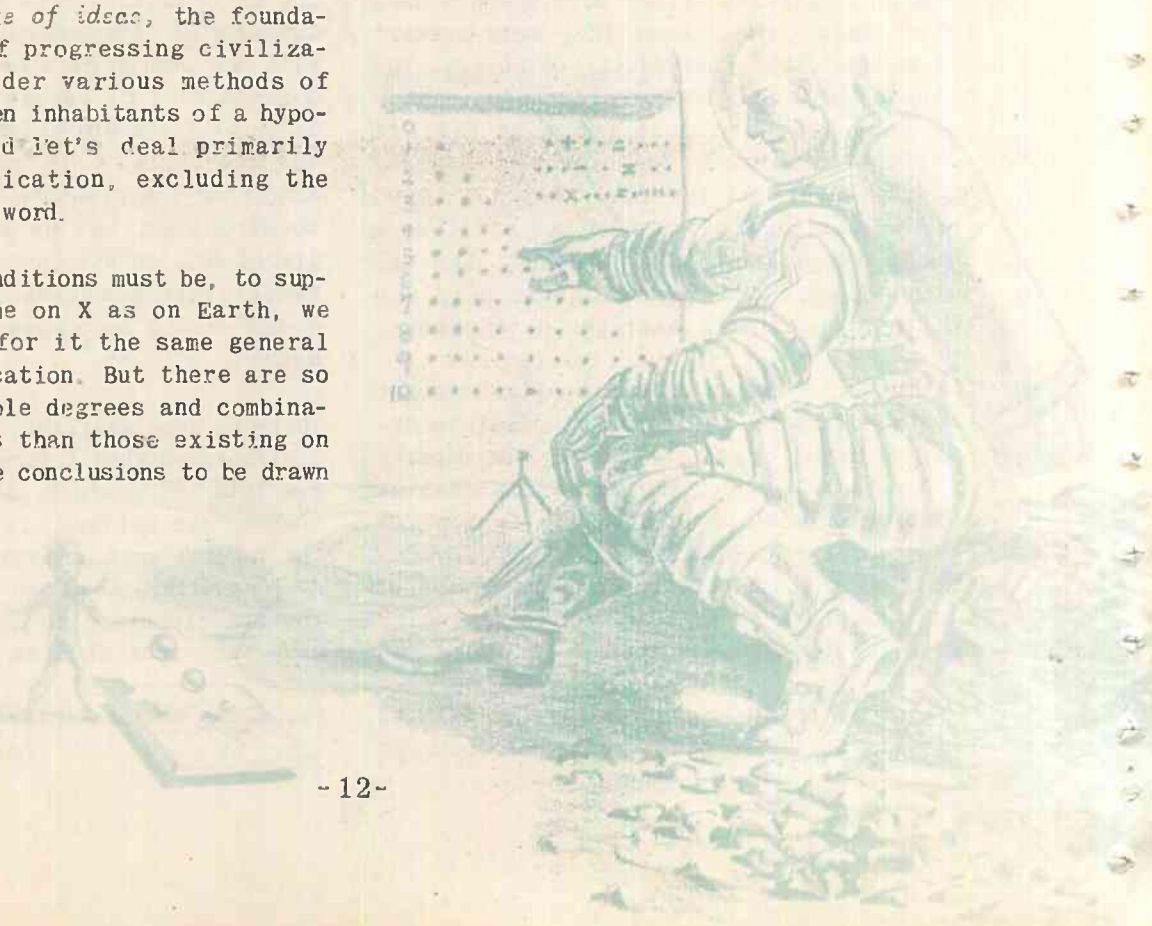
If environmental conditions must be, to support life, the same on X as on Earth, we could hypothesize for it the same general methods of communication. But there are so many other imaginable degrees and combinations of conditions than those existing on this planet that the conclusions to be drawn are legion.

Perhaps on some far satellite the nuclear life cell was born in a gaseous reaction or silicon-hydrogen combine (the arguments pro and con silicon-based metabolism still go on), and through the eons eventually developed to intelligence in an aqueous or even atmosphereless world.

Let's take sound as our first hypothesis. We'll define sound as the impingement upon some sort of receiving apparatus of atmospheric or other vibrations.

Therefore, if sound is the natural method of communication between inhabitants of the world X, their physical structure must contain either a simple short-wave transmission set composed of organic cellular material, or a more simple apparatus for transmitting long-wave vibration to the atmosphere.

Sound postulates an atmosphere of some sort. However, it is not likely that it would be-



come the natural method of communication on a world where atmospheric density was much less than half that of ours.

How does an organic sound-machine work? Ours operates by passing a small volume of air across a set of vibrating chords and varying the tone and speed of the vibrations as they pass the mouth and tongue, causing the finished product to oscillate the atmosphere at large.

That sounds pretty complicated, and it is. However, it is not too far-fetched to suppose that a speech-producing extra-terrestrial citizen might have an apparatus more complicated, or more simple: a disc or cone similar to a loudspeaker's, vibrated by muscular contraction and expansion.

Let's leave sound and go on to less familiar methods of communication. Reckoning by our own senses, we can suppose sight as being next important, then touch, taste, and smell (omitting ESP for the present).

With respect to sight we can hypothesize: A method of signaling by waving of appendages, or shape-altering of features, on the person of an extra-terrestrial being; changing of color (chameleon-like), or light-wave-length of a conversational photo-electric cell incorporated into the individual.

It is imperative to the speculative truth of these hypotheses that we deal with natural--therefore simple--rather than mechanical means of communication. As the scale of intelligence ascends, mechanical variations of natural communicative abilities are inevitable--the incentive factors being the advantages of speed, and the necessity for distance between transmission and reception. It is not impossible to imagine, in some totally mechanized future, natural means being entirely replaced by mechanical means of communication.

Communication involving the sense of touch is essentially a primitive method and apparently incapable of mechanical development. However, it's on the side of probability that some light electrical activation accompanies the antennae-conversation of our terrestrial insects. Why would it not be possible, then, to imagine a high type of extra-terrestrial intelligence developing communication along these lines, should environmental conditions so dictate. Or imagine, in some sightless world, a Braille system, not as a development of a visual alphabet, but as a basic invention of a blind but intelligent species.

Taste and smell, of course, come under one classification. Like touch, they are primitive senses, but it is difficult to imagine a thinking species using them except as adjuncts to other, higher senses. Let's speculate briefly that somewhere there may exist an intelligent genus having highly-developed olfactory organs for purposes of communication. Imagine one individual able to transmit a chain of ideas to another by varying the scents which he emits. Inhaling, the *listener's* olfactory receiver translates scent back into thought. Hmm--could be!

Finally we deal with a method which seems to be the most logical eventual development of any--not excluding human--intelligence. ESP in humans has not yet developed to the useful stage, that's all. That telepathy exists on Earth in an embryonic state is a reasonable theory. That it exists, therefore, among the intelligent inhabitants of other, older planets is definitely within the bounds of possibility. All requirements for a communicative method are in its favor. It needs no complicated--let's change that to *bulky*--apparatus, organic or mechanical, but consists almost certainly of mental-electrical impulses. Lack of atmosphere is no conceivable drawback to brain-wave transmission. Neither great distance nor absence of other senses is a barrier. Pure thought, with no need for coding and decoding organs between brain and brain, is the inevitable and ultimate method of communication between intelligent beings.

Very sketchily, that sums it up, although volumes can and will be written on the subject. It looks as though the language instructor of the Age of Interplanetary Exploration may have quite a job on his hands, ears, eyes, nose, and throat.

RH

Nor

wescon

by don day

My recent visit to the Bay area, with its opportunity to meet a number of fellow science fiction and fantasy addicts, pointed up a number of viewpoints which I once knew, but to which I had not given much thought of late.

Everyone with any great interest in fantasy and science fiction these last years will have become at least partially aware of that body of activity known as fandom. Their views on it will vary greatly. Their introduction to it will have its effect. Their degree of participation in it will also shape their picture of it.

For good or for ill, the annual Science Fiction Conventions are linked up with these variously held ideas of fandom. As a result of this, a number of rather general misconceptions regarding conventions are abroad. Not least among these is the idea that the NORWESCON is primarily for the insider or active fan. Nothing could be further from the facts. On the other hand, to give a true picture, it is necessary to examine the whole structure of fandom.

The minimum form of interest in fantasy and science fiction is, of course to merely read the stories. By far the greater number of addicts fall into this group, but then again, this group is largely composed of those who find no particular interest in fantasy, considering it merely as one of a number of types of equally interesting stories.

Virtually all who consider fantasy as something special in entertainment go beyond the mere reading. The most common next step is in some form of collecting. It may be only the saving of favorite stories for later re-reading; it may lead to the accumulation of vast collections of books or magazines, sometimes with the reading enjoyment eclipsed by the collecting mania.

actifans

From here the interest may lead to any number of extensions. It may be that the collector will strike up a correspondence with one or more fellow collectors. The fantasy addict may be led to writing letters to the editors of magazines or to corresponding with one or more of his favorite authors. The reader may discuss with friends who also read fantasy, his favorite stories, either informally or as a member of an organized group. He may visit others of like interest or attend national or regional conventions. He may, for any one of a variety of reasons, publish a fanzine. In short, he becomes a *fan*.

fanzine editors

fan club members

collectomaniacs

I am aware that there are strong objections to the name *fan*, both within and without fandom. To many, it has unfortunate semantic connotations. But let us face it. Anyone who does anything about his interest in fantasy beyond reading and possibly some collecting is indulging in *fanactivity*.

collectors (j.g.)

Before I go down under the assaults of an army of fanophobes, let us examine further this microcosm of *fandom*. As in any other group, there are wide individual variations within it. *Fans* come in all ages: chronologically, mentally and emotionally. Equally great are the differences in education, background and interests within the field. These differences lead to a wide divergence in the type of activity also. Some well-known magazine *letter hacks* seldom correspond directly with individuals, some collectors correspond only with other collectors, and many belong to local groups without ever making any other contacts in the fan field.

merely readers

the microcosm of fandom

A number of factors have contributed to some misunderstanding of fan mentality. One is

the practice of some of the pro magazine letter columns of encouraging the smart-aleck, sometimes juvenile, approach. Fortunately this is largely disappearing, but the result is obvious. An intelligent fan, wishing to get his letter published, would write the type of letter that the editor would publish. It might not be his typical style or way of thinking, though it is an excellent example of "writing for a market". Needless to say, it often gives a completely misleading picture of the type of person who writes to the magazines.

Another thing that has given a distorted view of *fandom* is the terrific amount of time and work necessary to be an actifan. With the exception of a few fans who have, or can take, a great deal of free time, the large majority of actifans come from the younger age group, where lack of the responsibilities of family or earning a living make possible the time expenditure necessary. Under the circumstances, much of the visible evidence of fandom shows signs of immaturity, simply because it is produced by boys who are not yet mature. On the other hand, I have contacted a number of people who write intelligently and publish excellent fanzines only to learn with surprise that they were still in their early teens.

It is in connection with fanzines that many of the feelings that fandom is juvenile have arisen. Aside from the point above, that many are produced by the younger fans, there is also a misunderstanding of the exact function of many fanzines, particularly in the Amateur Journalism Associations. With its background of known similar tastes, fandom is a friendly thing. Virtually from the start of a correspondence, it's "Dear Joe", etc, and anyone who stands on formality is suspect of 'stuffed-shirtism". Many of the fanzines, with limited circulations, are not really magazines, nor intended as such. They are in effect "round robin" letters, with discussion, pro and con, either in the form of "articles" or in the letter columns. They are not the work if an editor, trying to build circulation, but rather, a place for a group of friends to exchange ideas. If you are writing to a friend, you don't worry about an occasional typographical error, or misspelled word, as you would in a business letter. Similarly, many of the fanzine editors don't overstrain themselves to produce an impeccable fanzine, since it's just between friends.

Some fanzines also are produced primarily to experiment with and to perfect the publisher's writing skills. Among others who have gone from fanzine writing to pro writing are Ray Bradbury, Forrest Ackerman and Bob Tucker. To many of these, the text is the thing, with little thought given to format or appearance. Then again, there are the publishers who publish just for fun, and to many of them, lavishing too much care on justifying, slipsheeting, etc., changes it from fun to work. As publisher of *The Fanscient* I can tell you that the little details that go to make a neat job can as much as triple the work and time involved.

I believe I have shown in the above that the more conspicuous elements in fandom are not necessarily the most representative. The average *fan*, and here I am speaking in the larger sense, is not particularly active. He probably corresponds with a few kindred souls, or possibly meets with others to discuss things of mutual interest, but is little known outside his own limited acquaintance. He may subscribe to a few fanzines or belong to the *NFFF* or other organization, but his primary activity is in reading and collecting.

The main point I want to get across is that the **NORWESCON** is primarily for that fellow I have just spoken of. Maybe he's you. In any case, there are going to be a thousand and one things that you will enjoy at the **NORWESCON**.

The annual World Science Fiction Conventions, of which the **NORWESCON** is the eighth, are the culmination of each year's activity throughout fandom. It covers everything possible of interest to *everyone* who enjoys science fiction and fantasy. There you will have the opportunity to meet and talk with many of your favorite authors, editors and friends. There will be discussions of a variety of subjects, talks on all phases of collecting, writing, amateur

publishing and organization. There will be demonstrations, discussions, and displays. There will be an auction with an opportunity for you to purchase original illustrations by your favorite artists as well as rare books, magazines and many other collectors' items you will want to own. There will be an exchange session, where you can get together to swap your surplus items for some stuff you need. There'll be bull sessions, often lasting through the night. You'll renew old friendships and make new ones. There are going to be four solid days of fun.

You're going to see all the varied facets of fandom spread out for your inspection. There are going to be serious talks and discussions about writing and collecting; about publications and publicity. You're going to learn all sorts of things about the inside workings and the story behind the story. You're also going to be entertained by a lot of things from the lighter side of fandom. There will be a banquet followed by a costume ball with a variety interspersed with the dancing.

If there are any suggestions you have for the program, let us know and we'll try to get them in. We want the **NORWESCON** to be what *you* want.

Prices in the hotels and restaurants in Portland are somewhat lower than in many cities. Full details on that appear in the *Norwesconews*, along with many other details you want to know about.

Each year a new organization is formed for the purpose of putting on the convention. Preliminary financing is done through the sale of memberships in the *Norwescon Committee*. In addition to doing your part to help fandom's No. 1 annual event, as a member, you will receive all of the following:

1. A membership card, lithographed on a special fluorescent stock, one of the most unusual cards you have ever seen.
2. All copies of the *Norwesconews*, telling of plans for the convention as they develop.
3. A supply of **NORWESCON** gummed stickers (8 designs) to embellish your correspondence.
4. Two souvenir proof sheets of the sticker designs.
5. A copy of the souvenir *Norwescon Program Booklet*.

All this is yours for a buck. Whether or not you attend, join now. Send your dollar to **NORWESCON**, Box 8517, Portland 7, Oregon.

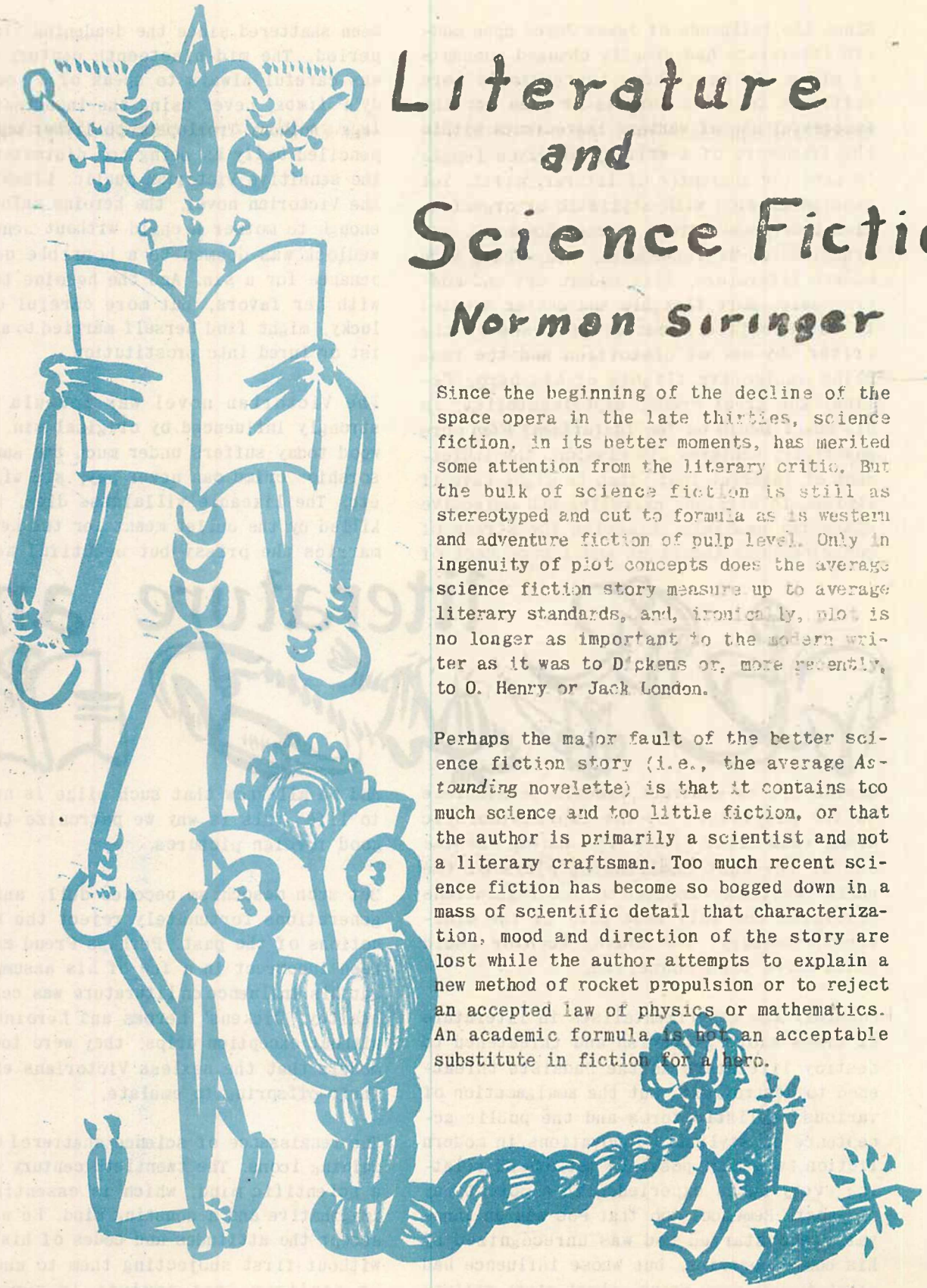
Anthony Boucher will be present as Guest of Honor. Also planning to attend are Sea Mahaffey, Managing Editor of *Other Worlds*; George O. Smith, Rog Phillips, Doc Keller, Doc Smith and many other authors as well as such prominent fans as Bob Tucker, Forrest Ackerman, Art Rapp, Milt Rothman, to mention a few.

The program will be just as interesting as we know how to make it, but the big attraction will be the people you meet. After twenty years of collecting I attended the **PACIFICON** in Los Angeles in 1946. There I met so many swell guys that I started the *Portlana Science-Fantasy Society* and soon found myself deep in fanactivity, mostly to meet more people like them. To give you an idea of what I mean, I can do no better than to quote Robert A. Heinlein, writing in the *Fanscient* (No. 9, Fall, 1949):

Speaking of fans, one of the real profits from having entered this field has been the fans, both organized and unorganized, I have met through writing. Fandom attracts a raucous minority of twerps--- sadly true!--- but it also attracts a vast majority of interesting, civilized, gentle people. I have met a lot of such and hope to meet more of them, discuss the shape of the world with them and what can be done to prevent it.

I am looking forward to seeing *you* at the **NORWESCON** next Labor Day weekend.

Ed



Literature and Science Fiction

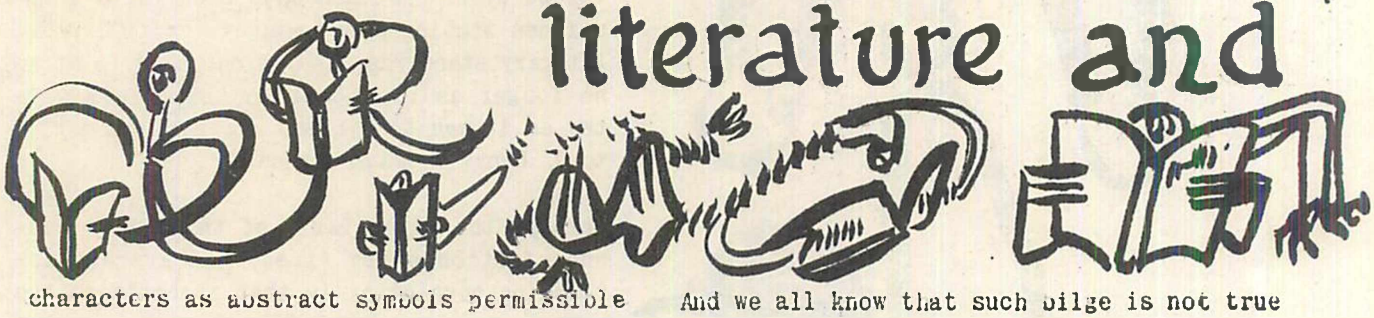
Norman Siringer

Since the beginning of the decline of the space opera in the late thirties, science fiction, in its better moments, has merited some attention from the literary critic. But the bulk of science fiction is still as stereotyped and cut to formula as is western and adventure fiction of pulp level. Only in ingenuity of plot concepts does the average science fiction story measure up to average literary standards, and, ironically, plot is no longer as important to the modern writer as it was to Dickens or, more recently, to O. Henry or Jack London.

Perhaps the major fault of the better science fiction story (i.e., the average *Astounding* novelette) is that it contains too much science and too little fiction, or that the author is primarily a scientist and not a literary craftsman. Too much recent science fiction has become so bogged down in a mass of scientific detail that characterization, mood and direction of the story are lost while the author attempts to explain a new method of rocket propulsion or to reject an accepted law of physics or mathematics. An academic formula is not an acceptable substitute in fiction for a hero.

Since the influence of James Joyce upon modern literature has greatly changed concepts of style, it has become increasingly more difficult to set a formula or plan for the successful use of various ingredients within the framework of a writing of given length to give the guarantee of literary merit. Yet experimentation with stylistic or organizational devices--stream of consciousness, expressionism, impressionism, etc.--have made modern literature, like modern art and modern music, more flexible and better adapted to the specific needs or purposes of the writer. By use of distortion and the rambling subjective flights of his hero, Celine, the great French experimentalist, in his novel *Death on the Installment Plan* more powerfully achieves his mission, the indictment of material lust, than he might have if limited to straight narrative and objective character analysis. Likewise, the stream of consciousness technique and the concept of

literature and



characters as abstract symbols permissible to the playwright in the expressionistic drama made Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine* one of the most challenging plays of the early twenties. Hampered by the regulations governing the well made play of the nineteenth century, *The Adding Machine* could never have been conceived.

Possibly the experimentalists in literature at times wrote gibberish and threatened to destroy literature as the Dadaists threatened to destroy art, but the amalgamation of various stylistic forms and the public acceptance of stylistic innovations in modern fiction have made possible methods of relating every human experience in a potent way on paper. Remember too that Poe was an innovator who starved and was unrecognized by his contemporaries, but whose influence had great impact upon French short story writers and poets of a slightly later period.

Other taboos that stymied the writer have been shattered since the deadening Victorian period. The mid-nineteenth century writer was careful always to speak of a young lady's *limbs*, never using the indelicate term *legs*. Anthony Trollope's publisher once blue-penciled *belly* as being too distasteful for the sensitive Victorian public. Likewise, in the Victorian novel, the heroine unfortunate enough to mother a child without benefit of wedlock was doomed to a horrible death as penance for a sin. And the heroine too free with her favors, but more careful or more lucky, might find herself married to an atheist or lured into prostitution.

The Victorian novel was formula stuff, strongly influenced by original sin. Hollywood today suffers under much the same censorship: crime can never pay, sin will out, etc. The likeable villainess dies, usually killed by the bullet meant for the hero, who marries the prissy but beautiful heroine. And we all know that such bilge is not true to life; this is why we patronize the many good foreign pictures.

But such masochism becomes dull, and newer generations fortunately reject the sterile notions of the past. Perhaps Freud may have been incorrect in a few of his assumptions, but his influence on literature was certainly healthy. Dickens' heroes and heroines were without exception drips; they were too pure, models that the sexless Victorians expected their offspring to emulate.

The renaissance of science shattered the remaining icons. The twentieth century man has a scientific mind, which is essentially an imaginative and a doubting mind. He will not accept the attitudes and codes of his father without first subjecting them to analysis. He realizes that society is constantly changing and that it must change if it is to progress. Antiquated laws, theories of conduct, political systems must be discarded

once they are no longer useful.

Our literature today is probing, recklessly truthful, freed from restraining taboos. Always it is endangered by the censors, the Puritan-Catholic alliance in Boston, the Marxists, and other reform groups that are fortunately too weak to impose their formulae upon the novelist and the playwright, as they have succeeded in emasculating the American movie and the radio to the nuisance category.

Yet the great writer of today is a moralist, not in the sense of the church state censors of past ages, but a fighter for the emanci-

pation of mankind. Man has suffered too long from the slavery of outmoded customs and institutions, from the bigotry of monotheistic religious pressure groups, from the tendency of the weak and unimaginative to extoll cliches of conduct forced upon them by strong-willed and strong-armed reformers. These the modern writer castigates, and they in turn seek to stifle him.

Modern literature is internationalist. I do not mean that it is hampered by a communist line or a capitalist formula. But the modern writer is interested in people of other countries and races and writes of them with a scientific approach. Why are these people downtrodden? How can their economic and cultural standards be improved? Literature of the past would not have permitted a *Grapes of Wrath* because the reading public was composed of the wealthy who were not concerned with the plight of the masses. Race relations was not a popular subject because everyone was convinced that the Negro was inferior to the White and that the Christians were justified in any economic or political crime perpetrated against the heathens.

This is the moral quality of modern literature, the heritage open to the writer of science fiction. Science fiction can best flourish in a democracy; under a dictatorship, as under a Victorian society with certain rigid obligations to the *status quo*, an imaginative medium for speculation about future man is an impossibility without a guarantee of respect for existing moral, religious or economic standards. And this is not the method of a scientist.

Science fiction suffers primarily from its confinement to the pulp magazines. Even the better American pulps are subject today to the same codes and taboos that restricted the writer for the *Golden Argosy*, Hoffman's *Adventure*, *All Story*, and *Blue Book*. The tradition is that of London and Haggard, more recently Burroughs and Bedford-Jones. The heroes are men of action and not philosophers; the heroines look like Lana Turner and must be pure, which should task them greatly. The villain is patterned in the old *Rover Boy* formula.

Pulp fiction is primarily escape fiction, modeled after the American *Cinderella myth*. The hero always wins out against the mad killer, the cattle rustler, or, transferred to the space opera, against the avengers from outer space. Now this is the stuff for idle dreams, for we all realize that although the human race *may* survive the atom bomb, few men *ever* achieve their Shangrilas. But the formula was established a long time ago, and it has been selling ever since.

A good novel is not all plot; in the worthwhile modern novel, plot is usually of secondary importance to characterization. The intelligent observer of man in society is as much concerned with why man reacts the way he does in a given situation as he is in how he reacts. Modern thinking and education is concerned more with the reasons why cer-

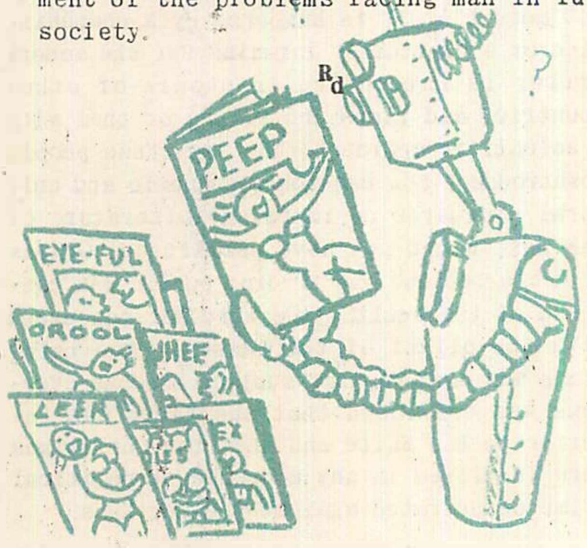
literature and science-fiction

tain phenomena occur than it is with the phenomenon itself. Consider the change in the teaching of history. Emphasis today is rightfully upon the reasons that brought about the French Revolution, the reasons for movement from the country to the city, rather than on the old rote method of memorizing dates and isolated facts. Because the novelist is concerned with man in a highly complex society, he must be trained in political science, economics, and philosophy, and, certainly, in psychology.

Early pulp science fiction was primarily concerned with the factual presentation of future history. Space wars, dictators, bug-eyed monsters may all be important hurdles for mankind of the year 2500, as the World Wars, Hitlers and Stalins, and jungle beasts present problems for man of today. But we must expect the society of the future to be even more complex than our society is today. Patterns of thinking will change, and man must become more scientific in his attitude toward his environment and his fellow men if the human race is to survive. Too often in the space opera the hero bears more resemblance in thought patterns and actions to Dick Tracy or Steve Canyon than to the dreamer-scientist who must be trained to assimilate the cultural and scientific knowledge of past ages if he is to survive in his own age.

Under the able guidance of John W. Campbell, *Astounding Science Fiction* has rescued science fiction from the formula type action story. Robert A. Heinlein's series, which began in the late thirties, tracing the history of future society, has been the most important single influence on the renovation of science fiction. Heinlein's concern with economic, political and religious changes in future society has evinced scholarly attention to similar changes in past ages. Van Vogt, the new Williamson, and especially the interesting newcomer, Poul Anderson, promise to make the great bulk of oncoming science fiction a mature experience for the reader who is intelligently concerned with man in future ages. I shall analyse this reaction against space opera in a following article.

Science fiction is becoming increasingly significant as a method of literary expression, and will attract abler writers than it holds today. And I do not mean a mathematician who writes science fiction for a hobby or a physicist who explains a new theory in fictional form. Despite the tremendous maturity in the approach to science fiction advanced by *Astounding*, too many specialists are using the medium to advance private theories, disregarding the premise that the characters are the most important element in any work of fiction. In his essay on *The Dangers of Obedience*, Harold Laski recognizes that governments are becoming more and more complex, but that too much power must not be permitted the specialist if the various components of government are to function in normal balance. The militarist, the economist, the physicist are often too highly specialized to deal with the human elements of society. Likewise the specialist is too often immersed in the maze of his own complex field to recognize that many other factors are equally significant in the make-up of modern society or in a fictional treatment of the problems facing man in future society.



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"Science Fiction? You mean books about science? No? Well, what do you mean by science fiction? Oh, I see--no thanks, I'm afraid I'd better leave that to the young people--doesn't sound like anything that would interest me."

So you try again a little later, with a sly suggestion: "This is something that I'd like you to try; just bear in mind, of course, that it doesn't have to make sense; read it for the sheer enjoyment it can give you"--and then give them something like "The Circus of Dr. Lao". When they come back vastly excited, try another one, such as "Lest Darkness Fall", or maybe "Final Blackout", and after another time or so you can break it to them gently that they've been reading fantasy, and maybe a little science fiction. Chances are they'll continue to ask for another mystery, or novel, but for their second book they'll probably say, "You might pick out another science fiction story that you know I'll like".

So it goes--another convert to an exciting field of reading. I don't guarantee that it will work but it often does for me. The fundamental truth seems to be that science fiction readers aren't just the lunatic fringe, or the slightly below average -- they're doctors and lawyers, scientists and linguists, anthropologists and laboratory technicians, and even librarians. They range in age from eight to eighty, and include both sexes.

The range of their interests, outside of their s - f reading, is just as wide as you'll find in mystery readers, and as everyone knows, that highly literate group includes presidents, college professors, and many other types from among the intelligentsia in its readers.

Two years ago I began to buy science fiction for the Garden Library, starting with a half-dozen assorted titles that my husband brought home from a San Francisco book store. (They really were a random choice!) I began to watch the ads in ASTOUNDING for publisher's names, and within six months I had a respectable sampling from all the major science fiction publishers. By that time it became apparent, however, that just introducing such titles as I had found wasn't enough to satisfy the customers. They were all s-f readers, true; but their interests differed just as widely as did those mystery addicts who wanted only a nice, ladylike murder differ from the ones who wouldn't be caught dead reading about the murder in the vicar's rose garden. And by and large the field of fantasy fiction was as complex and diverse as anything I'd encountered in the book world.

It wasn't enough to buy everything by E. E. SMITH, and Geo. O. SMITH and the rest of the space opera boys; it was necessary to buy CLARK ASHTON SMITH, and LOVECRAFT, and HOWARD and HODGSON; BRADBURY and WILLIAMSON, VAN VOGT and HUBBARD. There were dozens of names new to me, and I mustn't leave out

(continued on the next page)

very many of them, because no two readers ever agree on anything, or anybody, that they read.

A truly representative library, I found, must include the proper proportions of fantasy and science fiction; it mustn't specialize too strongly in any one author, if that were done at the expense of another. Mistakes were easy to make, and I'm sure I made all of them but one: at least I wasn't going to overlook anything intentionally that would add scope to the s-f shelf.

The times were just right for me to begin to collect a science fiction section. A year earlier, perhaps even

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six months before, there wouldn't have been much of anything to buy, except for the old titles, long since become collector's items, and the occasional venture of an extremely daring small publishing firm. For the most part these pioneers weren't able to continue such publishing--there just wasn't a ready made market, and as a general rule they didn't have funds to advertise heavily enough to attract the already established s-f reader. When a few of the big publishers began to try the experiment, the smaller ones took hope, and within a year the output had doubled, at the most conservative estimate. Now there are eight or nine at least that show up on the lists each month, where a year or two ago we did well to get two a month.

Even that greatly increased number isn't enough to take care of the usual s-f reader--for the very simple reason that if he can't find a new book, or an old one he wants to re-read, he'll do without something to read rather than take a substitute. Of course I'm generalizing--there are readers who can take a substitute, or mix in some other brand of leisure time reading, but for the majority there just isn't another book if they can't find what they want. They'll even study the next day's assignment, or complete some long-delayed job rather than substitute something else!

Of course it was inevitable that I would find it necessary to carry a stock of both old and new science fiction magazines. Since the library's reputation has begun to penetrate as far away as San Francisco, and Hayward, and Richmond, and North Berkeley, people began to include the library in their collecting rounds, and the same faces showed up at least once a month to find out if anything new had come in. I made out lists of wants, and in time was able to fill a complete collection of ASTOUNDINGS for

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a customer, and then another one managed to fill out a run of **UNKNOWNS** and we were at it again; when I found a run of **ASTOUNDINGS** in mint condition, at a price the customer could afford, I'm sure I was as pleased as she was.

All of this collecting, and buying, both for myself and for customers, became something of a game, I suppose; certainly it gave me much enjoyment. I still must admit that my reading in the field is not very complete, but I do read what pleases me, and that enthusiasm is conveyed to other non-science fiction readers.

If the time should come, and I hope it doesn't, when I sell the library and remove from it those books I most want to keep in my personal library, I suspect a great quantity will have come from the s-f shelves. Maybe when that time does come, I'll even get to read some of the books I've been telling other people about.

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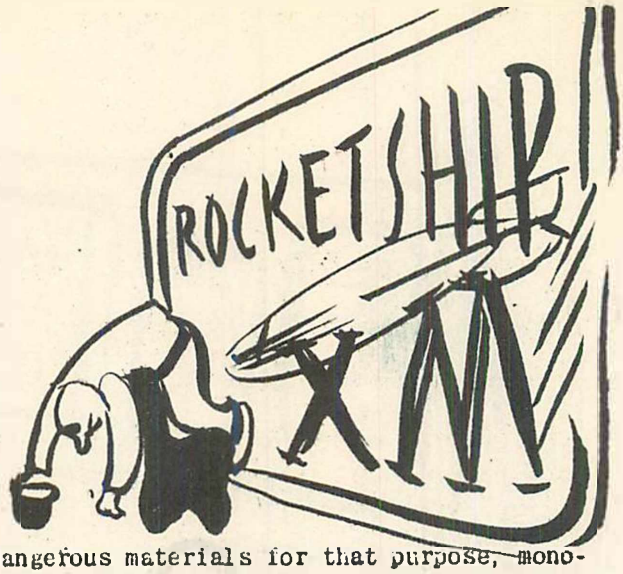


As the last issue of the **Digest** was going to press, a picture was released that should have been reviewed. The picture, *Rocketship X-M*, purported to be the first film dealing with the conquest of space, a must for science fiction enthusiasts, but the general consensus of opinion of the editorial staff is that the picture is a stinker and should be avoided if within human powers to do so. Since the picture was released at the time the first publicity on *Destination Moon* came out, a great many people went to see it under the impression that it was the George Pal production. It is conceivable that the producers of *Rocketship X-M* were *not* trying to pull a fast one in their choice of release dates, but if it were not for the *Destination Moon* publicity, the picture would probably have been relegated to the status of third bill 'C' film in a triple feature house. We heard of two ten-year olds who came home after seeing the picture and proceeded to tear it apart.

The picture apparently had no technical adviser with the result that it is full of flaws, both minor and major, which were disconcerting to any of the **Little Men** who wasted eighty five cents to see it. Surely the *Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society* or the *Pacific Rocket Society* could have provided the producers with an adviser to check through the shooting schedule and point out some of the more obvious errors.

Robert Lippert and/or his writers have apparently read a bit of science fiction of the *Amazing* type, but it has only served to make things more confusing. Thus, when the rocket stops accelerating, the passengers still have weight, and it is not until the the rocket reaches the equal gravity point that there is any weightlessness. When weightlessness does come, it affects some objects and not others. (A jacket slowly rises from the back of a chair and one of the principals makes a lunge across the room to recapture it. Surprisingly enough, he doesn't sail on to crash into the opposite bulkhead, but comes to light on his feet next to the chair.)

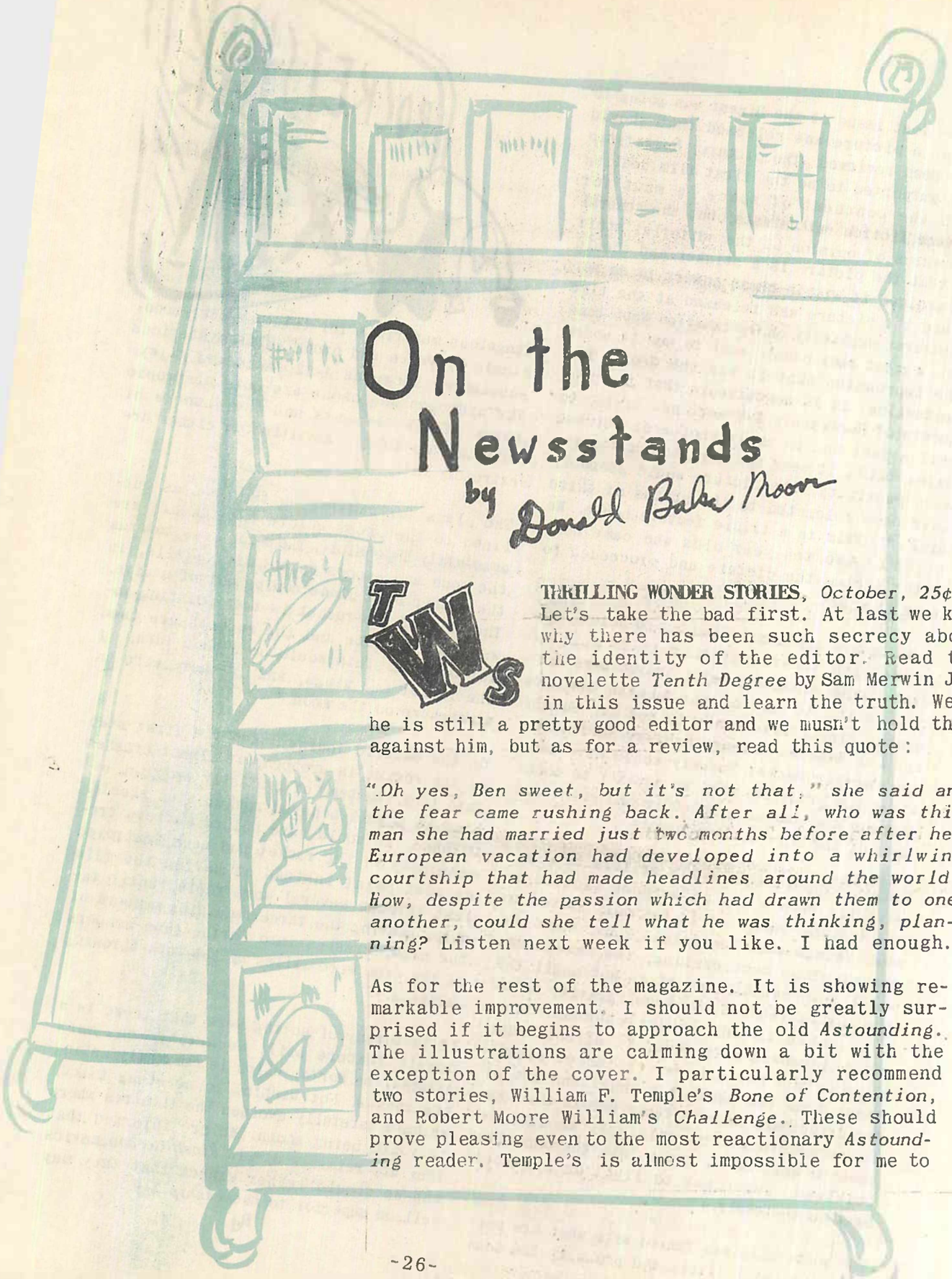
The rocketship was fueled with what are perhaps the least likely and probably the most dangerous materials for that purpose, monoatomic hydrogen and ozone (plus mysterious substances known as A-12, A-14 and A-16). The hydrogen and ozone are both allotropic forms of the elements and the chances of bottling any large quantities of either are extremely slim.

The plans for landing on the moon as outlined to the press before the takeoff are *absolutely* impossible. The ship drops towards the moon and swoops up until it stalls, in the manner of a plane coming out of a dive. The tail of the rocket is then pointing toward the surface and the rockets are used for braking. This would be a good idea, *if* the rocket had wings, and *if* there were an atmosphere on the moon.

On the outward journey when the first step of the rocket is dropped, it almost crashes into them, instead of gradually dropping behind as a well-behaved rocket step should. Offhand, it would have helped matters tremendously if the rocket had been destroyed at that point instead of having the film last through several more reels, until the ship, bearing the three remaining members of the crew, crashes into Earth. (Two members of the crew were killed by the rock-throwing Martians.)

It is worthy of noting here that there is a double feature bill, *Rocketship* and *Mars Attacks the World*, which is currently making the rounds. Not wishing to be stung twice, we have carefully avoided the theatres where they are being shown. We are informed that they are reissues of old *Flash Gordon* movies and we should rather expect that they may well be superior to *Rocketship X-M*.

Rd



On the Newsstands

by Donald Baker Moore

THRILLING WONDER STORIES, *October, 25¢*
Let's take the bad first. At last we know why there has been such secrecy about the identity of the editor. Read the novelette *Tenth Degree* by Sam Merwin Jr. in this issue and learn the truth. Well he is still a pretty good editor and we musn't hold this against him, but as for a review, read this quote:

"Oh yes, Ben sweet, but it's not that," she said and the fear came rushing back. After all, who was this man she had married just two months before after her European vacation had developed into a whirlwind courtship that had made headlines around the world. How, despite the passion which had drawn them to one another, could she tell what he was thinking, planning? Listen next week if you like. I had enough.

As for the rest of the magazine. It is showing remarkable improvement. I should not be greatly surprised if it begins to approach the old *Astounding*. The illustrations are calming down a bit with the exception of the cover. I particularly recommend two stories, William F. Temple's *Bone of Contention*, and Robert Moore William's *Challenge*. These should prove pleasing even to the most reactionary *Astounding* reader. Temple's is almost impossible for me to

describe. I got a bit lost in the middle but it is fine, worthy of his best work. A superb job of presenting examples of the random thought pattern. And that ending----! Masterful. *Challenge* is a nice bit, showing the larger effects of prescience. *Traffic* by Bolling Branham, is a technological account and rather acceptable as such.

CINVENTION MEMORY BOOK, May 1950, $1.00, Don Ford, Box 116, Sharonville, Ohio. When this is judged with respect to its intentions, it is a monumental labor. An excellent 95 page account of the 1949 science fiction convention, notoriously labelled the *Cinvention*. Mimeographed, justified, produced on a rainbow variety of paper, with a nice multilithed cover, this is an admirable way to spend a buck if you are interested in a reflection of the leisure activities of various well known names. I was particularly interested in material by and about Ted Carnell, editor of the excellent British *New Worlds*. Also quite instructive was Don Ford's article in which he pans the *National Fantasy Fan Federation* for trying to assume too much control over the annual conventions.

SUPER SCIENCE, July, 25¢
If you must waste your money buying outdated, time battered, repetitious, hack handled juvenile junk, I recommend spending it on *Future* which costs ten cents less. In my opinion the sole offering worth opening the front jacket and groping through the ragged dingy pages, is *Escape to Fear* by Peter Reed. This is entertaining in that it contains a new light on the problem of inter space ship warfare in a time when computing devices have attained near perfection. As for the rest, I serve notice here and now on our readers (and any editors who may be concerned) I shall refuse to read any story which is subcaptioned *Slowly he built an eternal empire with stolen seconds from other men's lives*, or *At seven that morning, five minutes dropped out of the universe*. Or even *The final chapter in Adam's bloody history!*

PLANET STORIES, No. 8, Fall, 20¢
It's going to be a bi-monthly from now on. Deserves it more than *Amazing* or *Fantastic*. Ray Bradbury's *Death Wish* has a superb idea which is slightly cluttered up in the presentation. He should have saved it till it was perfect, but it is well worth reading. *The Sky is Falling* by C. H. Liddell is similar in that basically it is quite good. It has some lovely touches, and approaches the ideal ending, but it is simply not handled with proper care and ability. As for *Patch* by William Shedenhelm, I should not quibble about his having switches arc over in vacuum, but he should read the data on heavy load, high voltage, vacuum switches in industry. I think his character *Pop* is good, a rocket propelled Davy Crockett. Wouldn't it have been more dramatic though, to have used frozen air for that patch? Mrs. St. Clair's *Meem* is better than her usual product. She has a remarkable skill at suggesting a horrifyingly nasty idea and not quite bringing it off.

FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, August, 25¢
Usually this is omitted since it is an admittedly reprint magazine. No ill intention is held since it does a fine job, and a needed one, and makes no bones about publishing old material. It is included this month because of the two significant novels, *The Time Machine*, and *Donovan's Brain*. Also we wish to call readers' attention to the fact that it differs so markedly from the marginal skulkers who are hoping to sell innocent readers reprint material under new labels.

FUTURE and SCIENCE FICTION, Sept-Oct, 15¢

Wide Open Planet by deCamp is another story set on Krishna. Worth reading if you like Krishna. As for *Flight From Tomorrow* by H. Beam Piper, he alone must stand the blame as I am assured that H. B. Phyfe is a separate person and can not be held responsible for the misdeeds of the former.

ARGOSY, July, 25¢

One Billion Buys The World by David A. Anderton is a routine article about a scheme for an artificial satellite. It contains nothing particularly new or startling, and has only two interesting pictures, one of which is from *Destination Moon*.

SATURDAY EVENING POST, (A month or so ago)

Contained a short story by Paul Gallico based on a thinking machine. Its only interest lies in that it is a poor attempt of a good author to compete in a strange (Howard Browne to the contrary) field. Surely it is still cheaper to buy Heinlein than Gallico!

AMAZING STORIES, August, 25¢, *(Reviewed by W. W. Wagner.)*

There is an interesting short story by Frederic Brown and a novelette by Robert Moore Williams which is worth reading. The rest is standard *Amazing* fare. I suggest that P. F. Costello and any other author who feels an urge to write a story of life after civilization blows its brains out, read Stephen Vincent Benet's *By the Waters of Babylon*. That should stop them. I am also tired of stories about Adam, Eve, and the Garden of Eden. It is to be hoped that the new slick *Amazing* will be a worthwhile science fiction magazine. In its present form it isn't worth a damn, let alone twenty-five cents.

STARTLING STORIES, September, 25¢. *(W. W. W.)*

The lead story, *The Cybernetic Brains* by Raymond F. Jones is good stuff. With a little dressing up it would be worthwhile publishing in a book. There is also a fine ironic short story, *Down the River* by Mack Reynolds. The rest of the magazine is the usual tripe. The *Hall of Fame* reprint is just what one might expect. I never fail to wonder just who supplies the *popular* demand that is responsible for bringing these *classics* back. One of the novelettes is, of course, a *Captain Future* story. I can't give any opinion of it because I refuse to read Captain Future stories.

ASTOUNDING, July, 25¢, *(W. W. W.)*

A rather mediocre issue. The best thing in it is Robert Heinlein's article on the filming of *Destination Moon*. Lawrence O'Donnell has a good idea in *Heir Apparent*, but he just misses writing a good story. This seems to be chronic with Mr. O'Donnell. C. M. Kornbluth's *The Little Black Bag* is in the same category---good idea, pleasant to read, and needing a bit more work done on it. I liked *Exposure* by Eric Frank Russell mainly because it gave Cartier a chance to draw more of his incomparable monsters. The article *This is Hot* by Arthur C. Parlett is a very interesting account of the efforts being made to safely dispose of radioactive waste material, and the editor's page, of course, is concerned with Dianetics.

ASTOUNDING, August, 25¢
Look, Mr. Campbell, let's stick to our muttons. You broke the news on Dianetics. Fine. Now there are foundations set up, and regular publications being projected which will carry on the work. Let's not make *Astounding* the *Journal of Applied Dianetics*. Start another magazine if necessary as Hubbard is reportedly doing. Even the most ardent enthusiast in that new science (if such it is) does not want to ruin a good science fiction magazine by filling it with technical reports of that type. And the Lord deliver us from any more articles by Hubbard written as was that notorious *thing* in the May issue.

I regret seeing deCamp get in the rut of expounding the minutiae of his well conceived future civilization. He is not a Heinlein. His reputation lies in novelty and humour. Let's get on to new fields and leave the development for those more fitted for it.

As for the lead novelette, *Last Enemy* by H. Beam Piper, perhaps I have been spoiled by Merril, Shiras, Matheson, and Neville, but a fine imaginative bit of science fiction (according to WWW) leaves me unimpressed.

FANTASY and SCIENCE FICTION, No. 4, Fall 1950, 35¢
Before beginning, let me remark that this magazine has so far produced at least two stories, either of which is worth the price of a year's subscription and we cannot expect such luck in every issue. Remembering this, we proceed to the criticism.

The book reviews this month reflect the incorrigible optimism of a man who would see *Rocketship X-M* because it *couldn't* be as bad as people said. The

stop press review of *Saucers* horrified. My opinion is much that of a reasonably intelligent acquaintance who said "Possibly they are real, but reading Keyhoe's mass of confusions and contradictions would surely convince me otherwise". As for Velikovsky, I agree that perhaps scientists' reactions were a bit unneccessarily harsh in cases; for example, compelling a change of publishers, costing a man's job, etc. It is likely however, that such extremely sharp response was occasioned by the apparently large number of simple minded persons who are willing to subscribe to such guff.

To the stories---*The Traitor* by James S. Hart, is the best of the issue and well worth reading. It is, as the editors promise, a new vampire story, and slightly amusing. *Pamela Pays the Piper* by Phyllis Lee Peterson has quite an appeal for the Scots. *Heritage* by Charles L. Harness is inexcusable tripe of the most odious *Amazing* school, complete with *umen! Star Ducks* by Bill Brown should make quite a hit with the *Readers Digest* audience. As for *Silly Season*, by C.M. Kornbluth, I do not intend to read any more stories, articles, or reviews mentioning the words *Flying Saucer*, and that may even apply to the ultimate news service press release.

PEON, July, 50, Charles Lee Riddle, PN1, USN, 402 Bristol St., Moanalua Housing, Honolulu 18, T. H. (9 issues for $1.00)
Ordinarily we do not review fan magazines in this section, but we think it is necessary to take some note of the better ones occasionally. This is a private venture on the part of Mr. Riddle and requires an immense amount of labor to publish. Mimeographed, 26 pages, it is a nice magazine.

(continued on page 32)

JB – John Basinski; WWW – Walter Wagner
DBM – Donald Moore; JBS – J. Ben Stark

Shadow on the Hearth
Judith Merril
Doubleday $3.00

The new arrivals this month are, on the whole, a pretty bad lot. The only thing that really justifies this month's Book Review column is *Shadow on the Hearth*. Following in the footsteps of the esteemed Mr. Ray Bradbury, Judith Merril is endeavoring to write really good future fiction. As evidenced by this novel, as well as by the unforgettable *That Only a Mother*, Miss Merril has hit upon the key to good writing in the science fiction vein.

Shadow on the Hearth is set in the not-too-distant and not-too-unimaginable future. It tells the intensely interesting story of one family's problems after a very short but rather destructive atomic war. I am in disagreement, as is only natural, with several minor points, but on the whole this is a realistic novel and well worth reading. This is *not* a reprint, by the way. *TBQ*

The Bridge of Light
A. Hyatt Verrill
Fantasy Press $3.00

This is a lost race story, complete with the usual ingredients: intrepid explorer, beautiful priestess, villainous high priest, and very inaccurate science. Despite these handicaps, Mr. Verrill has written one of the best lost race yarns that it has been my pleasure to read. There are several reasons for this. Mr. Verrill is writing about the Mayan civilization and he evidently knows his subject thoroughly——his background material is exceptionally good.

Furthermore, the author has managed to depart a bit from the *Open Road for Boys* type of morality which has plagued science fiction and fantasy writing for so long. When the high priest refuses to marry the beautiful priestess and the explorer, the hero marries her "by the simple Scotch custom of declaring her my wife in the presence of the Prince and his sisters". Of course, this is what any normal male would have done under the circumstances, but it is rarely that an author admits it.

The poor science in the story can be excused, I think, because the story first appeared in *Amazing Quarterly* magazine in 1929. However, I wish that Mr. Verrill had left such phenomena as the Bridge of Light unexplained, rather than offering a completely impossible explanation.

The cover for the book is done by Edd Cartier, and while I yield to no one in my admiration for Cartier's illustrations, I should like to point out a few inconsistencies. The cover depicts the hero facing a modified Tyrannosaurus, armed with a Colt .45 automatic. But the book specifically states that the explorer carried only a .45 calibre revolver. The pistol shown on the cover is not even cocked, so it would be of no help anyway. Furthermore, Mr. Cartier, members of the reptile family do not have tufts of hair growing on their chins. *WWW*

The Man Who Lived Backwards
Malcolm Ross
Farrar, Straus and Co. $3.50

Let me explain this in a round-a-bout fashion. Usually, when reading a book, no matter how bad it is, before laying it aside, I turn to the back to discover the denouement. I regret to say that if you wish to know the ending of this book, you must open it yourself. I did not consider it worth the effort of turning those hundreds of pages. *DBM*

Minions of the Moon
William Gray Beyer
Gnome Press $2.50

It is a little hard to think of this as science fiction, for there is but little use of anything more scientific than a hand axe. *Minions of the Moon* is, however, a fine story in the good old romantic tradition projected a few thousand years into the future.

The hero of this story, awakening after a long sleep, finds himself in a semi-barbarous future world. Allying himself, after finding (naturally) a beautiful girl, with a group of reincarnated Vikings, he sets about to destroy "the dangerous brains" who are menacing the world. The title is in no way indicative of the story, but refers to a spurious character, a disembodied Man from the Moon, who provides the humorous side of the story. Reprinted from 1939 *Argosy*. *TBQ*

The Castle of Iron
L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt
Gnome Press $2.50

This book is a revised and enlarged version of the story that appeared in *Unknown* in 1941. However, it hasn't been enlarged as much as I would prefer and the revisions are minor. Three characters are added: a cop, Roland, and Bradamant; four if you want to count another cop. None of these characters has much to do with furthering the plot, in fact, Bradamant, in my opinion, complicates the plot unnecessarily. Though I can see a reason for including her, that is, to further the similarity between the world of the *Castle* and that of the *Faerie Queen*.

In general the revisions seem hasty and not well thought out, some ideas show promise but are not fully developed. Despite all this the book is representative of the best Pratt and de Camp have written, but I still like the *Unknown* version best. *JB*

Lancelot Biggs: Spaceman
Nelson Bond
Doubleday and Co. $2.30

Your reviewer has suffered through two hours of misery to finish this book. The book, a slightly rewritten version of stories appearing in *Fantastic Aaventures, Weird Tales* and *Amazing Stories*, is only slightly better than *The Stellar Missiles*. There was really no excuse for magazine publication, unless Mr. Bond was just one jump ahead of his creditors, and even less for book compilation. I suppose authors must live, but not when they write like this.

The story concerns Lancelot Biggs, who works his way from fourth mate on the spaceship, to Captain's papers in 224 pages. Biggs always comes thru with some marvelous mechanism that saves the ship from pirates, preserves the Corporation from bankruptcy, or subs for the Space Patrol. Besides the poor style, the book is full of technical errors. If you must read it, try the last three chapters first. *JBS*

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, August, 25¢, *(W.W.W.)*
One of the two decent stories in this issue is *Well I'll Be Vexed* by Peter Phillips. It is worthy of *Unknown*. The other is *There Tall Towers Gleam* by Robert Moore Williams. It seems to establish an air of quiet beauty throughout---a rare thing in science fiction. Francis M. Deegan is evidently trying to compete with Gebang in *It Shouldn't Happen to a Dog*. It shouldn't! The lead story, Robert Bloch's *The Devil With You* is incredibly bad. It is so bad that on a lazy Sunday afternoon with nothing else in the house to read, I couldn't finish it.

EDITORIAL

Diminutive Dangers, (cont. from p.6).

In stamp collecting, there are bogus stamp passers. In shooting, there are the outfits that will "rebore and rechamber" your old "God-knows-what" to a standard 30.06 or a big bore magnum. In record collecting there are the sandy surfaces and the companies that design records without the slightest regard for the desires and needs of the public.

It just so happens that we are publishing a science fiction and fantasy magazine, or rather directing ourselves toward the readers of that particular type of literature. It is only natural that our general contempt and resentment for the "to hell with the public" dodges will address itself specifically toward special phases. Please then, bear in mind the more general intent of any articles or editorials of this nature.

This month's little marvel of unpleasantry is the Lippert Production *Rocketship X-M*. I would not object to their trading on the *Destination Moon* promotion; that is quite standard practice. I do, however, feel an almost personal resentment at their producing an inaccurate, implausible and highly improbable film which circulates before the average public under such assumptions as "Scientific Fiction". "just like you've been reading about in the magazines" and "there may be a few slight mistakes but by and large its good science fiction!"

RECENT ROCKET RESEARCH

(continued from page 11)

to read more on the subject a brief bibliography follows. It is by no means complete, but it should serve as a starter. Not listed, but of sometime interest are the various technical publications such as the *Journal of Applied Physics*, *American Journal of Physics*, *Physical Review*, etc. For those who can read French, there is *Comptes Rendue*, published by the Paris Academy of Science.

Dinsmore Alter, ATOMS, ROCKETS AND THE MOON, *Los Angeles, Griffith Observatory, 1947*

Philip E. Cleator, ROCKETS THROUGH SPACE, *New York, Simon and Schuster, 1936*

Thomas N. Dalton, JET PROPULSION, *Elizabeth, New Jersey, 1945 (from typewritten copy)*

R. Farnsworth, ROCKETS, NEW TRAIL TO EMPIRE, *Glen Ellyn, Ill., Glen Ellyn News Printing Co., 1945*

Robert H. Goddard, ROCKETS (contains *Liquid Propellant Rocket Development* and *A Method Of Reaching Extreme Altitudes*, originally issued by the Smithsonian Institute), *New York, American Rocket Society, 1948*

J.M.J. Kooy and J.W.H. Vytenboggurt, BALLISTICS OF THE FUTURE, *Tech. Pub. Co., H. Stam, haarlem, Netherlands, 1947*

Constantin P. Lent, ROCKET RESEARCH, *New York, Pen-Ink Publishing Co., 1944*

Constantin P. Lent, ROCKETRY: JETS AND ROCKETS; THE SCIENCE OF THE REACTION MOTOR AND ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR AIRCRAFT AND SPACE TRAVEL, *New York, Pen-Ink Publishing Co., 1947*

G. Edward Pendray, THE COMING AGE OF ROCKET POWER, *New York and London, Harper Bros., 1945*

M.I.T. Rocket Research Soc., PAPERS ON ROCKETRY, *Cambridge, Mass., 1941-1944*

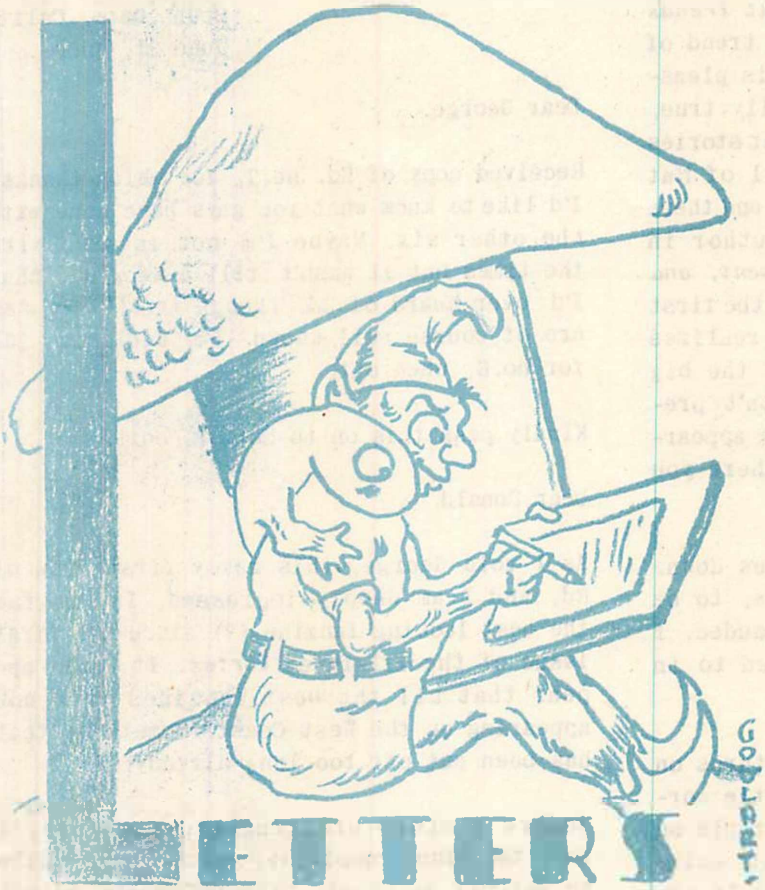
Northwestern Tech. Inst., SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON ROCKETS, *Nov. 1945*

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ROCKET SOCIETY, published quarterly by the *American Rocket Society, New York*

PACIFIC ROCKETS, published quarterly by the *Pacific Rocket Society, South Pasadena, Calif.*

ROCKETSCIENCE, published by the *Detroit Rocket Society, Detroit, Michigan*

Further bibliography in ROCKETS AND SPACE TRAVEL



We start off this month with letters from two well known men, first from one of the most noted names among science fiction authors, Dr. Isaac Asimov.

762 Broadway
Somerville 44
Massachusetts

19 July 1950

Dear Mr. Moore,

Thank you for the May and June 1950 issues of the **Rhodomagnetic Digest.** I read them with enthusiasm.

I am particularly interested, as always, in such references, direct or indirect, as I can find to myself. (The reason for such interest is the pleasurable amazement resulting from the detection of any mention of me whatsoever. As near as I can make out, I am the most noncontroversial author in science fiction. Or something. *Probably* or something.)

I note that George Ebey in his *Trends in Science Fiction* seems to imply that *Trends* (July 1939 *Astounding*) started the trend of sociological science fiction. That is pleasant. (It is, of course, not literally true, since there were socially significant stories previously---I refer to almost all of Nat Schachner's stuff in the thirties---and there was a guy who was my favorite author in those days. Remember the *Past, Present, and Future* series?) However, *Trends* was the first of an avalanche, but hardly anyone realizes it. Robert Heinlein is, of course, the big name in socioscientifiction, and I don't pretend to compete with him, but *Trends* appeared one month before *Lifeline* and there you are. Purely accidental, of course.

Evitable Conflict received a thumbs down. Well, it wasn't one of my favorites, to be sure, but it wasn't deliberately padded. I couldn't seem to say what I wanted to in less wordage.

Lastly, there is your series of lectures on science fiction, which has me a little worried. I am referring to Sapiro's article on page 24 of June, 1950 issue. Are you quite serious? Are lectures really given? If so, I would be glad to hear from Mr. Wagner on the Mathematical Methods of Psychohistory. I would practically grovel in the dirt to receive an analysis of a typical *Seldon Crisis*. Naturally, I know nothing of Psychohistory aside from the name of the science, if such I may call it, and I have never analyzed a *Seldon Crisis*, at least, past the point where I thought it might carry a story. Mr. Wagner, I am afraid is "more Catholic than the Pope".

May I hear from you?

Very truly yours,
Isaac Asimov

We recommend that Digest correspondents check the comparative dimensions of their legs before writing us. We can not be held responsible for any discrepencies which may be discovered. The next communication is from possibly the most notorious name among fans.

2962 Santa Ana St.
South Gate, Calif.
June 21, 1950

Dear George:

Received copy of Rd. no.7, for which thanks. I'd like to know what you guys have done with the other six. Maybe I'm not in step with the times but it wasn't till a week ago that I'd ever heard of Rd, though the *Little Men* are of course well known. I'm enclosing 25¢ for no.8, when out.

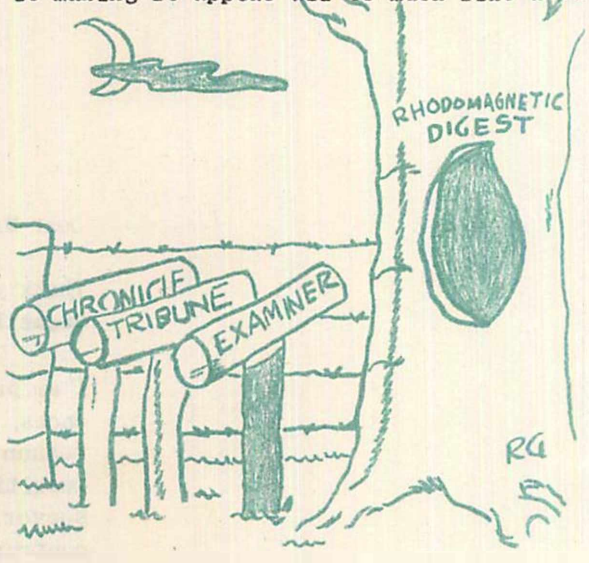
Kindly pass this on to Editor Moore.

Dear Donald:

As I told George, this is my first view of Rd, and I am deeply impressed. Is by far the best looking fanzine (?) since the first issue of the ill-fated *Vortex*. It would appear that all the best fanzines were now appearing on the West Coast. Something that has been put off too long already.

Before I start praising the mag more, I have two minor complaints which I would like to get off my chest. Like McComas's selections, these are purely personal, and open to debate.

1. I found the editorial "air" about the magazine too formal. Not the material, but that general feeling a mag gets. It results it making it appear all to much like a *lit-*



t le magazine that take themself so darn serious that you want to give them a poke to see if they crack. Frankly, I think the good looks of the mag carried you away. Couse how anyone with a club name like yours could put out a formal and stodgy air is beyond reason. Stan Mullen managed to turn out one of the best fanzines there was, using material equally as serious as yours, without becoming overly serious himself.

2. A slight objection to the over use of Caps. in the articles *Destination Moon* and *Freedom*. Or reather, the kine you have. It might be that Viri-type is hard to get use to reading, after regular typewriter or print-type face. Your Caps "leap" out at you, and distract your eye. Also I didn't like the scatered boxs of ends in the rear of the mag. Though what you are going to do with them I don't know.

The McComas and Kelley article were enjoyed. Been done a hundrad times, but always worth reading.

"Freedom"? I just heard that the Regents have given more ground. Alowed the top men to stay with out the oath. I wonder what Neylan thinks we have been fighting the last wars for. It seems the harder we fight Communism the more like them we become. I highly approve your using such items, though I found it reather hard reading. Your *Few Notes....* was much easyer. I think it was because there was to many short paragraps that were not related. Never-the-less I found it highly interesting.

I dissagree with Wagner. The day I read science-fiction to learn science will also be the day I stop. And, while I'd like to see the writers stick to excepted fact, I see no reason that they should not indulge in flights of scientific fancy as well as the fantasy writers. One of the good things about science fiction is that it throws so many different theories and postulates at you so glibly that you soon learn not to except any, with out some scientific checking.

Sapiro..... I read it, it sounded good, I still don't know what it was, Maybe you could run an article next explainning it.

Remember I'm lost in the smog most of the time, an I don't get this sort of thing.

Hopping to hear from you
Rick Sneary

We shudder at the word fanzine, *otherwise, thanks.*

12 July 1950

Dear Mr. Moore:

All thanks for the May issue of the **RD**, which strikes me as one of the best of the fanzines now available to readers. Certainly it is refreshingly free of the adolescent didoes of would-be humorists operating at the expense of fantasy and s-f.

Cordially,
August Derleth

You're entirely welcome, Ray. And also, thanks a lot.

Friday, July 9, 1950

Dear Dr. Eaton:

The June **Rhodomagnetic Digest** has just arrived and I must write you and thank you again for the kindness you have all shown me. I shall never forget the wonderful banquet you gave me, nor the Award.

The **Rhodomagnetic Digest** continues to be the finest magazine of its type in the world. I am particularly happy that you spoke up on the Loyalty Oath question at this time. In this disheartening time, we need someone to swim up-stream, as you are doing, against the current.

Again thank you all for your goodness to me. My best to everyone!

Yours,
Ray Bradbury
33 So. Venice Blvd.
Venice, California

Rd

In My Opinion

by J. LLOYD EATON

For more information on this feature, see Vol. I, No. 2 or No. 6 of the **Digest**. The stories are rated as follows:

*** Good to excellent
** Fair to good
x When included in the rating, may be considered as an additional * by those who enjoy cerebral stimuli with their reading. It may also serve as a warning to those who want an evening of light reading.
* A fantastic but not good "escape" reading; for collectors or students only. Read at your own peril!
- Not fantastics, masqueraders-religious, economic, etc. Treatises thinly disguised as fantasy with little story value, or too poorly written, even for the collector!
( ) Not fantastics, possibly marginal, rated as escape reading.
s Short story collections. Total number of stories given, with each fantastic listed and described as above.
C Not in the *Checklist*.

Benson, E.F.

s More Spook Stories. *Hutchinson, Lon.*, '34 - Shorts (13)
*** The Step. - Horror.
** The Bed by the Window. - Pre-vision.
* James Lamp.
* The Dance.
* The Hanging of Alfred Wadham.
- Pirates.

** The Wishing Well. - Spells
* The Bath-Chair.
** Monkeys. - Curse
* Christopher Comes Back.
*** The Sanctuary. - Demonology
** Thursday Evenings. - Ghost
** The Psychical Mallards. - Occult powers

* The Angel of Pain. *Burt* - Pan

** The Image in the Sand. *Nelson & Sons; Lon.; N.D.* - Occult terror.

* The Inheritor. *Doubleday, Doran; N.Y.; '30* - Unhuman; curse of Pan. Very slow "English" style.

- Raven's Brood. *Doubleday, Doran; N.Y.; '34* - Myths handed down.

Benson, Robert Hugh

- Lord of the World. *Dodd, Mead; N.Y.; 1908* - Religious fantasy.

s A Mirror of Shalott. *Benzinger; N.Y.; 1907* - Shorts (13)

* Monsignor Maxwells Tale.
** Father Meuron's Tale. - Possession.
* Father Brent's Tale.
* The Father Rector's Tale.
** Father Girdlestone's Tale. - Psychic invasion
** Father Branchi's Tale. - Old Gods.
* Father Jenk's Tale.
* Father Martin's Tale.
- Mr. Bosanquit's Tale.
** Father Macclesfield's Tale. - Ghost
- Father Stein's Tale.
* Mr. Percival's Tale.
- My Own Tale.

** The Necromancers. *Hutchinson; Lon.; N.D.* - Spiritualism; the Catholic view.

Benson, Stella

** Living Alone. *Macmillan; N.Y.; '20* - Fantasy

Bentley, Norman

** Armada of the Air. *Lothrop, Lee, Shepard; N.Y. & Bost.; '37* - Science fiction, rather juvenile but readable. An invention that hasn't yet come.

Beraud, Henri

* Lazarus. *Macmillan; N.Y.; '25* - Abnormal psych

- The Wood of the Hanging Templar. *Macmillan; N.Y. '30* - Novel of the French revolution.

Beresford, J. D.

- All or Nothing. *Bobbs, Merrill; Indianopolis; '28* - "Men to Come"

* The Camberwell Miracle. *Heinemann; Lon.; '34* - Faith healing

** A Common Enemy. *Hutchinson; Lon.; N.D.* - "End" of the world. First half good, last political.

- Revolution. *Collins; Lon.; '21* - Political future.

*** The Wonder. *Doran; N.Y.; '17* - Child with super-intelligence

* A World of Women. *Macaulay; N.Y.; '13* - Plague does it. Might be considered "fair".

Beresford and Wynne-Tyson

- The Riddle of the Tower. *Hutchinson; Lon.; N.D.* - Political

Bergmann, Franz
* Uriel for President. *Hale, Cushman & Flint; Bost.; '38* - A backward Archangel travels to the U.S. Story in pictures.

Berkeley, Reginald
* Cassandra. *Gollancz; Lon.; '31* - Historical prediction with a little good science fiction.

Bernanos, Georges
- The Star of Satan. *Macmillan; N.Y.; '40* - Mysticism, sex.

Berners, Lord
- Count Omega. *Constable; Lon.; '41* - Fantasy, music.

Berrow, Norman
C(***) It Howls at Night. *Ward, Lock; Lon.; '37* - Werewolf atmosphere covers murder.

Berthet, Elie
** The Pre-historic World. *Porter & Coates; Phil.; 1897* - 3 novelettes.

Besant, Walter
C- The Demoniac. *Lupton; N.Y.; N.D.* - Chronic alcoholism. Not fantastic.
- The Ivory Gate. *Harper; N.Y.; 1892* - Double identity.

Best, Herbert
*** The Twenty-fifth Hour. *Cape; Lon.; '40* - World's "end".

Bettiero, Dr. T.J.
* Nedoure, Priestess of the Magi. *Wohlstein; Seattle; '16* - Occult. Fairly interesting in spots.

Beverly, Barrington
** The Space Raiders. *Allan; Lon.; '36* - Science fiction, pulp type.

Beymer, William Gilmore
*** 12:20 P.M. *Whittlesey; Lon.; N.D.* - Mass thought and an "If" of history story. Very well done.

Beynon, John
*** Planet Plane. *Newnes; Lon.; N.D.* - Science fiction. Space travel. Adult.
*** The Secret People. *Newnes; Lon.; N.D.* - Fantastic adventure. Lost race.

Bien, H.M.
C* Ben Beor. A story of the Anti-Messiah. *Friedenwald; Baltimore; 1891* - Wandering Jew. Battle of Good vs. Evil. Poor reading.

Bierbower, Austin
* From Monkey to Man. *Beacon; Chi.; '06* - A story of our remote ancestors.

Bierce, Ambrose
***s Can Such Things Be? *Cape and Smith; N.Y.; N.D.* - Shorts (24). All are supernatural, horror, science fiction, etc. Only five stories do not rate at least ** and the majority are *** A must!
s In the Midst of Life. *Mod. Lib.; N.Y.; '27* - Shorts (24). Many good stories but not as many of interest to the reader of fantastics. The best as follows:
(***) A Horseman in the Sky.
** An Occurence at Owl Creek Bridge. - Weird.
(**) Chickamanga. - Horror.
(***) One of the Missing. - Terror.
(***) The Affair at Coulter's Notch.

*** The Coup de Grace. - Horror (unforgettable)
(**) One Kind of Officer.
** The Famous Gilson Bequest. - Ghost
*** The Man and the Snake. - Horror
** The Suitable Surroundings.
*** The Boarded Window. - Horror.
** The Eyes of the Panther. - Were----

The Collected Writings of Ambrose Bierce. *Citadel; N.Y.; '46*
*** Can Such Things Be? - (See above)
*** In the Midst of Life. - (See above)
- The Devil's Dictionary.
S Negligible Tales. - Shorts (14)
*** A Bottomless Grave. - Horror & humor
** The City of the Gone Away. - Horror & humor
S The Parenticide Club. - Shorts (4)
** Oil of Dog. - A typical Bierce
* Fantastic Fables. (4)
- The Monk and the Hangman's Daughter. - Not fantastic

Bierstadt, Edwin Hale
C(**) Satan Was a Man. *Doubleday, Doran; N.Y.; '35* - Abnormal psychology

Biggs, John, Jr.
C- Seven Days Whipping. *Scribner's; N.Y.; '28* - Abnormal psychology

Bill, Alfred H.
*** The Wolf in the Garden. *Longman's, Green; N.Y. '31* - Were-wolf

Binder, Eando
C*** Lords of Creation. *Prime; Phil.; '49* - Science Fiction; future

Binns, Jack
C** The Flying Buccaneer. *Brown; N.Y.; '23* - Science fiction. Written in 1923 about 1952. Better air-future than some.

Binns, Ottwell
*** Dan Yeo. *Ward, Lock; Lon.; '30* - Lost race. Discovery of the descendants of a 16th century shipload of English lost in the South Seas. Treasure - Dyaks - fast adventure.

Birch, A. G.
S The Moon Terror. *Popular; Indianapolis; '27* - Anthology (4)
*** The Moon Terror. - Science fiction. Split the earth. Fast novelette.
** Ooze. (Anthony Rud) - Science fiction
** Penelope. (Vincent Starrett) - Fantasy
* An Adventure in the Fourth Dimension. (Farnsworth Wright)

Birkenhead, Earl of
* The World in 2030. *Brewer & Warren; N.Y.; '30* - Prophetic essays. That on airplanes already outdated. Has some peculiar sociological and economic ideas.

Birkin, Charles Lloyd
CS Devil's Spawn. *Allan; Lon.; '36* - Shorts (16) Supernatural & Horror
*** Old Mrs. Strathers.
*** Shelter.
*** The Cockroach.
*** The Terror on Tobit.
* The Last Night.

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The Editors of **The Digest** *are desirous of securing back numbers of Volume One for the benefit of several new subscribers. The issues we are interested in are Numbers One, Four, and Six. If you are willing to return your copies at the purchase price, would you please contact Ben Stark of this staff?*