

DIFFERENT

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EDITORIAL by Sam Moskowitz

My lead article in this issue should not be dismissed as another rehash of the old "This is How Science Fiction Started" cant found in books, articles, essays on the origins of the genre. It establishes several pivotal points beyond cavil. The first, that there was an entire school of science fiction writers in the period just before Christ, some of their names are given and a capsule idea of what they were about. Lucian's works were written as a satire on that trend and he clearly states so and offers some of his own science fiction titles. Secondly, it establishes that modern science fiction is descended in a linear line from Lucian and reconciles the 1400-year-gap between the printing of his moon stories and the first of the utopias in the 16th century and the clear progression of new interplanetaries in the 17th century.

Fanciful Predictions of War is a short, fascinating article reprinted from Lippincott's Monthly Magazine for December, 1898. It is important because it establishes that the American literary scene was aware of the wave of future war stories that had swept England in particular and to a much lesser degree the United States. It has long been known that The Battle of Dorking created such a sensation when first published in England in Blackwood's Magazine for May, 1871. That short story was printed in book form in America as The German Conquest of England in 1875 by Porter & Coates, Philadelphia, so it was known here. Forgotten, though, is the fact that the short story The End of New York by Park Benjamin, published in Fiction for October 31, 1881 (mentioned in my Masterpieces of Science Fiction), excited the public to the point where we began to rebuild our navy. This Park Benjamin was the son of the Park Benjamin, the acting editor of New-England Magazine who had published many of Nathaniel Hawthorne's early pieces. The younger Benjamin was a successful patent attorney and had edited Appleton's Cyclopaedia of Applied Mechanics and would continue to do so for the next 10 years.

The parable titled The Destroyer by Paul R. Heyl published in the same issue as the war article, seems to symbolize elements of several later, famous works of science fiction.

THE MISSING LINK IN CONNECTING LUCIAN WITH A PROGRESSIVE PATTERN OF SCIENCE FICTION HISTORY

Excerpt from a lengthy work in progress

By Sam Moskowitz

The origins of science fiction can be found in mythology, the ancient travel tale, and early Greek literature. The transitional author that spanned the centuries to light the spark that would ignite a continuous tradition of science fiction up to the works we know today was a famed lecturer named Lucian, born about the year 120 A. D. in the town of Samosata, Syria. At the age of about 45, made wealthy by his rhetorical eloquence, he settled down for roughly 10 years as a full-time writer, penning, in Greek, a series of satirical works, some of them early science fiction and fantasy.

Though born of a working-class family he disdained training as a stone cutter and left his home. He wandered across the then civilized world, indoctrinated himself in Greek literature and through his pungently satirical phrases became a well-paid speaker. Two of his literary idols were Plato and Homer. From the former, he copied the method of presenting material in the form of a dialogue. From the latter, colorful and exotic narrative drive.

The two authors he admired represented two fundamental types of science fiction of the period. Plato, in Timaeus and Critias, had created the legend of Atlantis and laid the foundation of the later utopias. Homer, in The Odyssey, reached the high-water mark of the fantastic story, in fact that epic can seriously be called science fiction in terms of the knowledge of the times.

The Odyssey takes Ulysses and his crew to the land of the Lotus-Eaters, where narcotic blossoms impart to them a lethargy that almost kills their desire to leave (The concept has since been used effectively in The Lotus Eaters by Stanley G. Weinbaum, Astounding Stories, April, 1935; Stars by David R. Daniels, Astounding Stories, June, 1935; and The Lotos Eaters by Bolling Branham, Thrilling Wonder Stories, April, 1943). Extricating his crew from that trap, Ulysses lands on the island of Cyclops, where the tremendous giant with the single eye dwells. (The giant has become a very common character in science fiction since and quite precisely a Cyclops in The Cyclopeans by Richard S. Shaver, Amazing Stories, June, 1949). Leaving the island of Aeolus, Ulysses takes with him a huge bag of air which can be regulated to create wind to blow against the sails of his ships and keep them moving when the vessel is in doldrums (Cyrano de Bergerac, in Voyages to the Moon, 1650, has his moving cities propelled by wind from a giant bellows blown on their sails). The man-eating giants of Laestrygonia are scarcely a novelty in fiction, let alone science fiction. The experience of Ulysses' men on the island of Circe, where they are turned into swine by a drug is reverse in The Island of Dr. Moreau by H. G. Wells, published by William Heinemann, 1896, where, through surgery, animals are transformed into creatures resembling men. The lure the sirens held for Ulysses and his men can be approximated to modern hypnotism, but the theme of the power of a song to influence men's actions is utilized in Siren Song by Lester Barclay in Fantastic Adventures, February, 1940). The battle with the six-headed Scylla, though no dif-

ferent than an encounter with any of science fiction's interminable monsters, inspired Scylla's Daughter by Fritz Leiber, Fantastic, May, 1961, in which German zoologists explore the past in a time machine to add Scylla to their exhibits. The episode where Ulysses first is offered and then denied immortality by the nymph Calypso has its counterpart in Ross Rocklynne's The Immortal in Comet, March, 1941, a poignant mood piece where aging stops for a spaceman while living for 20 years in an idyllic situation with a woman thousands of years old.

If The Odyssey was not indeed science fiction, it certainly was one of the most influential works on science fiction writers ever written. The pervasiveness of its elements in the works of science fiction authors since its appearance make it literally impossible to ignore. As to Homer, it is questioned as to whether or not there ever was such a man, or that whether his epic travel poems, the Iliad and The Odyssey, are composite works completed by a number of poets. Even the precise date of the writing or completion of The Odyssey have never been established, dates being estimated as from 850 to 1200 B. C.

The travel tale was the most popular form of fiction extant in the Mediterranean basin during the period in which Lucian lived. A large part of those tales were, the purest sense, what we today would term as science fiction. The world outside the Mediterranean basin was unexplored. The extent of the continents and the oceans were unknown. All an author had to do to create the atmosphere for imaginative romance was to embark by ocean or trek by land just a few hundred miles beyond the boundaries of the cradle of civilization and anything was possible. Apparently one of the most avid fans of the travel tale was the Emperor Tiberius of Rome (42 B. C.-27 A. D.). Edgar Saltus in his popular work Imperial Purple states not only that fact but gives a fascinating list of authors and titles of such works, which included Hecataeus, who told of a land where people lived forever and killed themselves because of boredom; an author named Theopompus told of a continent discovered across the oceans and the stupendous cities there; quite imaginative was Iambulus who found island where there were men with "elastic bones, bifurcated tongues," who, when aged, committed euthanasia in a perfumed grass; Evhermerus survives with a title called Sacred History, of an island where a somewhat communistic society was set up; Arimaspi told of a race that fought griffons in the dark; Isogonus knew of another wild tribe of men whose feet turned inwards instead of outwards; and Saltus lists many other titles to indicate that the quantity of such narratives must have been considerable. It should be noted that there was a publishing industry at that time, where scribes, many of them slaves, copied works on scrolls for as many people who demanded them. Libraries existed and it was possible for certain titles to have "wide" circulation.

The foregoing titles with brief descriptions, confirm the two basic types of science fiction produced at the time. One was straight fantastic adventure. The other utopian.

With so vast the surface of the earth unexplored, leaving the face of our planet was completely extraneous when it came to the exercise of human imagination. There may have been a number of stories about trips to the moon before Lucian's day, but record of only one has been found. That one is said to have been included in a collection of travel stories by the Greek philosopher Antonius Diogenes (written some-

times between 412 and 323 B. C.)--yes, the very famed searcher with the lamp for an honest man--and was titled Of Wonderful Things Beyond Thule. The trip to the moon in that account was accomplished by walking north until it was reached. It is this very walk that points up the fact that the later interplanetary stories were merely an imaginative extension of the travel tale, with another globe instead of an unexplored area of sea or land as the locale. In this sense, ancestry of the interplanetary story makes it one of the oldest of all literary themes!

This also underscores the dramatic departure of Lucian from the old travel story. He wrote two interplanetary pieces, one entitled The True History and the other Icaro-Menippus. His methods of reaching the moon were far more believable than that of Diogenes. In The True History, a whirl-wind seizes a ship and blows it to the moon. In his second tale, Icaro-Menippus, his character flies to the moon and later to other worlds with wings cut off an eagle and a vulture. The True History was a deliberate take-off on the wild exaggerations of the travel tales, but also aimed at the philosophers whom Lucian believed hypocritical because what they wrote and how they lived were widely disparate. When read in a modern translation, such as that of Lionel Casson in 1962, it is still funny and displays narrative verve. Casson's translation also contains erotic passages generally deleted from earlier English translations. The True History is a farce, yet it contains certain devices of later science fiction, such as giant ants; man-carrying birds; dog-faced men (the first issue of Frank Reade Weekly Magazine, dated October 31, 1902 featured Frank Reade, Jr.'s "White Cruiser" of the Clouds; or, The Search for the Dog-Faced Men by the famed science fiction dime novel writer Luis P. Senarens writing as "Noname"); moonmen who are all one sex, male (hitting at the proclivity for homosexuality among the Greeks of his time); and a variety of creatures from other planets entering into war on the moon.

James Alexander Ken Thomson in The Classical Background of English Literature (London, 1948) states he believes that Lucian specifically had Diogenes' book in mind when he wrote The True History. In his introduction to The True History, Lucian makes the point: "Ctesias of Chidus, the son of Ctesiochus, has written things about India and the Indians that he neither saw himself nor heard from anyone who had any respect for the truth. Iambulus has written a lot of unbelievable stuff about the ocean; everyone knows he made it all up, yet, for all that he has put together an amusing account. Lots of other writers have shown a preference for the same technique: under the guise of reporting their travels abroad they spin yarns of huge monsters, savage tribes, and strange ways of life. The arch-exponent of, and model for, this sort of tomfoolery is Homer's Odysseus telling the court of Alcinous about a bag with the winds in it, one-eyed giants, cannibals, savages, even many-headed monsters and magic drugs that change shipmates into swine--with one such story after another had had those simple-minded Phaenicians goggle-eyed.

"Now, I've read all the practitioners of this art and I've never been very hard on them for not telling the truth--not when I see how common this failing is even among those who profess to be writing philosophy. What I have wondered at, though, is the way they're convinced they can write pure fable and get away with it. Since I am vain enough myself to want to leave something behind to posterity and

since I have nothing true to record--I never had any experiences worth talking about--in order not to be the only writer without a stake in the right to make up tall tales, I, too, have turned to lying--but much more honest lying than all the others. The one and only truth you'll hear from me is that I am lying; by frankly admitting that there isn't a word of truth in what I say, I feel I'm avoiding the possibility of attack from any quarter.

"Well, then, I'm writing about things I neither saw nor heard of from another soul, things which don't exist and couldn't possibly exist. So all readers beware: don't believe any of it."

The foregoing disposes of any possibility that Lucian was an isolated writer who didn't know he was writing science fiction. He was one of a school of science fiction writers, of which the greatest was Homer. In his introduction he said it was his intention to write science fiction "tall tales." He was the first to take his characters to another world by a means more imaginative than walking or dreaming, and he wrote more than a single interplanetary story. The second story, Icaro-Menippus, derives its lead character and title from that of a Syrian philosopher named Menippus, famed for his cutting remarks concerning neighbors and his highly cynical philosophies. He had risen from slave to rich money-lender and feared philosopher, and killed himself when tricked out of his wealth.

Icaro-Menippus is written in dialogue and is noteworthy inasmuch as it discusses the failure of Daedalus to successfully fly and the measures taken to correct his errors. The early experiments in flight, before the big launch to the moon, are convincing, even though the point of the piece is an attack on philosophers.

Readers and critics of science fiction tend to chaff impatiently when Lucian is mentioned as an early exponent of the moon voyage. "What has he got to do with today's science fiction?" they ask. "Isn't there a gap of 1400 years between his stories and the earliest British and French interplanetaries?"

The answer is that there is and there isn't. Christian philosophy for a good deal of the period from its formation to the 17th century was opposed to the concept of life on other worlds, because it conflicted with the doctrine that heaven was in the skies. The writings of Thomas Aquinas succeeded in changing the attitude of the church on this point in the 13th century, but old ideas die hard and there was scarcely any science fiction let alone interplanetary stories in the centuries that followed.

The church ban was ironical, because it was the savage satirical attacks by Lucian on ancient religions that helped destroy them through logic and ridicule and pave the way for christianity. Before he died at about the age of 90, Lucian had cordons of enemies for this reason, but was protected by the friendship of men in high places, even including for a period Emperor Commodus who had appointed him to a high government position in Egypt during his reign.

Lucian's return started with the interest in his work by Erasmus in the 16th century. Regarded as a leader in learning in Renaissance northern Europe and a great theosophical scholar who edited the New Testament in Greek, with a Latin translation, Erasmus' knowledge of

Greek led him to Lucian. He translated many of Lucian's works, including the moon stories, into Latin. Erasmus' In Praise of Folly shows the influence of Lucian. A close friend of Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, also translated Lucian into Latin, and adopted many of the techniques and ideas for his famed Utopia, published in 1516, from the moon stories. This was the first of the modern utopias that became a great tributary feeding into the mainstream of science fiction. Followed by The New Atlantis by Francis Bacon, which appeared more than 100 years later in 1627, and City of the Sun by Tommaso Campanella in 1637, it is fascinating to see that a science fiction satire fueled the tide of serious utopias.

Even more important, the great astronomer Johannes Kepler was also familiar with Lucian, and translated his moon stories into latin on his own initiative. As early as 1609 he had completed at least the first draft of a manuscript about a trip to the moon in a dream, which he titled Somnium. It may or may not have been a coincidence but one of Lucian's most famous speeches was also titled Somnium. In the introduction to Somnium, Kepler states: "I chanced upon the two books of Lucian's True Story, written in Greek. I selected those books as a means of learning the language. I was aided by the enjoyment of his very lively tale, which nevertheless gave some hint of the nature of the whole universe, as Lucian himself points out in the preface. Lucian, too, makes a voyage beyond the Pillars of Hercules into the ocean and is snatched aloft, ship and all, by a whirlwind that carries him to the moon. These were my first steps in the trip to the moon which I pursued at a later time."

In a letter to Matthias Bernegger, dated December 4, 1623, there is a hint that Kepler intended to include sociological criticism in Somnium but thought the better of it. "Neither More in Utopia or Erasmus in In Praise of Folly was safe," he wrote, alluding to the fact that disguise as fiction in the first case and satire in the second had not saved these authors from unpleasant reactions to their works. "Therefore, let us dismiss this political muck entirely and remain in the charming groves of philosophy."

It is evident that Somnium had a considerable and at times turbulent impact on writers concerned with science fiction even before its publication. The appearance of the book in Latin made it more generally available, but since no translation was published until a German edition in 1898, and the first American or English translation appeared as recently as 1950 when Everett F. Bleiler performed the task for August Derleth's anthology Beyond Time & Space, its direct influence was obviously limited.

The vogue for the interplanetary story in particular and science fiction in general in English, appears to stem from the first translation of Lucian's moon voyages which appeared as Certain Select Dialogues of Lucian, Together With His True Historie, translated from the Greek by Francis Hicckes and published in Oxford in 1634. From that point on there was a continuous flow of interplanetaries and utopias with Lucian the progenitor of them all. As can be seen there was no gap between Lucian and modern science fiction. It was his rediscovery by a group of famous men that led to the revival of science fiction.

-End of Excerpt-

FANCIFUL PREDICTIONS OF WAR

By William Ward Crane

Our actual war with Spain calls to mind the fanciful predictions of such a war which have appeared heretofore in American Journals. In one of these imaginative narratives, called "Our Late War with Spain," England and Germany are supposed to be allied with Spain against us, and heavy land fighting is made to take place in Canada. In a much earlier one, entitled "The End of New Yor," we are represented as in alliance with Chili, and our navy and coast-defences are so weak that this alliance is the chief cause of our escape from terrible disaster.

On the whole, so far as we can now judge, a comparison between these fictitious contests and the real war suggests what Mark Tapley said about New York--that it reminded him of old York quite vividly by being so unlike it. Yet "The End of New York," in spite of its extravagance, had an important effect, for it helped to call general attention to our depleted and old-fashioned navy and our unprotected harbors; and what was afterwards done to remedy these evils may be traced to the interest it had much to do with exciting in the subject. A similar result ensued from the publication in England of "The Battle of Dorking," just after the last war between Germany and France. That appalling picture of England's downfall in one battle, supposed to take place in 1875, roused the nation to a determined effort, which made it stronger for defence than it had ever before been.

A few years ago the favorite subject with the makers of such prophetic fictions was the danger to be apprehended from the immense apparent conversion of China into another "sick man of the East" have now made these apprehensions seem absurd; but it is by no means certain that the sombre cloud against which Europe was warned in the famous picture inspired by Emperor William is entirely harmless, after all. The vast population of China took no real part in the war with Japan, and has no incentive for action in support of the Manchu imperial government; but, at some time of European conflict or disorganization, a great Asiatic uprising, electrified by some common fanaticism, might be a fearful menace to the Aryan race. "The War of the Worlds," in which invaders from Mars, projected through space in cylinders, show their ability to reduce the human family to the condition of domestic fowls, is the most fanciful of all these fictions, and has been a good deal derided; yet it is not inconceivable that some swift and unlooked-for terrestrial peril might be able to destroy our social system through its utter unexpectedness and our undue confidence.

The collapse of Prussia at Jena and of France at Sedan are standing proofs of the suddenness with which a laurel-crowned military system may be swept out of existence by an opponent it had confidently expected to beat. Before Sedan there were no such public warnings of a widely popular character as "The Battle of Dorking" and "The End of New York," and the French soldiers of the Second Empire who shouted "A Berlin!" in 1870 felt as sure of triumph as did the Prussian officers who sharpened their swords on the French ambassador's door-step in 1806. Each army in turn was ignorant that its own military suprem-

acy was a thing of the past, and that its enemy had developed a new power before which it could make no stand.

The appreciable value of these fanciful predictions of war is not affected by their being unlike, in detail, what really happens, or even by their not coming true in any sense, for they may help to prevent their own fulfilment. As notes of warning they may serve a useful purpose, and to treat them with contemptuous indifference is not reasonable. They are, in fact, strong evidences of that keener intelligence and wider outlook which distinguish our era from the days when magazines and newspapers were still in embryo, to say nothing of the still earlier time when it was popularly supposed in Western Europe that a Russian was an eccentric animal with one leg and no eyes.

- The End -

THE DESTROYER

by

Paul R. Heyl

The Destroying Angel hovered near the earth. It had been millions of years since he had passed this way;--space is large and his duties many. When the Destroyer had last seen the earth it had been a liquid, white-hot globe just beginning to solidify; but now its crust had cooled greatly. Land and water divided the earth's surface between them, and on the land there were little creeping things.

"Ay," said the Destroyer, "it is time that I returned. Your time has come, ye maggots. I have seen your like before on other balls, and I have done my duty."

Now, the Destroyer was cunning and resourceful and cruel; so, instead of crushing the creeping things, he put forth his hand and gently pushed the rushing ball slightly out of its circular path. Round and round the sun it sped in an ever-lengthening ellipse, and with each year's circuit the winters grew longer and colder and the summers shorter and hotter. A great sheet of snow and ice began to grow about the north pole, gradually covering the surface of the earth and driving the creeping things southward before it, so that many of them died from the cold. And the Destroyer left the creeping things to their fate and flew onward, laughing.

But the push had not been great, and by the time the ice-sheet had reached half-way to the equator the elliptical path ceased to lengthen, and slowly began to reassume a circular form. And so it was that when the Destroyer passed again that way, after some hundreds of thousands of years, he found the earth's path once more nearly circular, and the creeping things more numerous than before. Then the Destroyer's brow darkened, and he said, "This time shall ye all surely die." But as he drew near to crush them he stayed his hand, for he saw strange sights, the like of which his eyes had never seen before on any globe. Tiny sparks glowed here and there; some of the creatures traversed the waters on floating things; on land, caravans were moving from spot to spot where the creatures were most thickly gathered.

The Destroyer drew nearer and looked more closely. Here several of the creatures were gathered around one of the little sparks, beating something vigorously,--clink! clink! Others were making long, straight scratches in the soil with a crooked thing. And, most curious of all, some were making black marks upon sheets of white material, while others were gazing intently at pieces similarly marked.

The Destroyer withdrew his hand, saying, "Let be; let us see what will come of this. Yet they shall know that I am the master, and that I can destroy them at what time I will." So saying, he stooped and did blowgently upon a cluster of the creeping things. And it was so that when the creatures felt the breath of the Destroyer, they uttered piping little cries, and drew shining things from their sides, and, rushing forth to a neighboring spot, slew many of the creatures there. Then came others to the rescue of those that were attacked, and still others to support those attacking, until the fourth part of the world was at war. And the Destroyer laughed as he flew away.

Not many thousand years after that the Destroyer again visited the earth. The creeping things were now thicker than ever, and swarmed together by the tens of thousands in great clusters, where they did many wonders. Here one floated in the air, hanging to a little inflated bag, until the bag burst, and he fell to the ground and perished. At another place there was a great tube pointed upward towards the heavens, with a little creature looking through it. Upon one of the largest clusters the Destroyer breathed as before; but now only a few drew their shining things, while from all the rest there went up the hissing sound, --"Sh-sh-sh!"--until those who had drawn their shining things put them up again. And the Destroyer wondered at the failure of this magic; but, being full of resource, he strewed seeds of pestilence among the creatures, so that many sickened and died. And there went up a wailing noise, and those that were left gathered together the dead and dug great holes, wherein they buried them by the hundreds. And again the Destroyer laughed as he sped onward.

After but a hundred years the Destroyer returned, and saw that the creeping things were more in number than ever. Again he dropped seeds of pestilence among them and waited with a cruel smile. But this time the seeds took no effect. Then was the Destroyer angered, and he said, "What, ye puny ones! Are ye mightier than I?" And stooping low, he blew a great wind upon the earth, so that many of the creeping things were swept to destruction. And when he rose he was red and panting, for it had taken much of his strength; so he flew away, but this time he laughed not.

---The End---

BOOK REVIEW, reviewer unknown, Lippincott's Monthly Magazine, December, 1899.

A Queen of Atlantis by Frank Aubrey: "Mr. Aubrey, author of The Devil-Tree of El Dorado, places the scene of his latest romance on an island--the lost Atlantis--in the Sargasso Sea. Four people, three men and one woman, all young, are deserted by the crew of their ship in the masses of sea-weed of the Sargasso Sea. They succeed in getting the ship out of the tangle of weed, and eventually find the island of Atlantis. Their adventures on this island and others in the vicinity form the theme of this book,--Lippincott--in which the author displays the same skill that made The Devil-Tree of El Dorado so popular...Taken all in all, A Queen of Atlantis is a singularly diverting romance..."