



# Journey Planet Antique Space



# ANTIQUE SPACE

## A CROSS-OVER

### EVENT

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## Introduction to Antique Space: The Journey Planet Installment by Chuck Surface

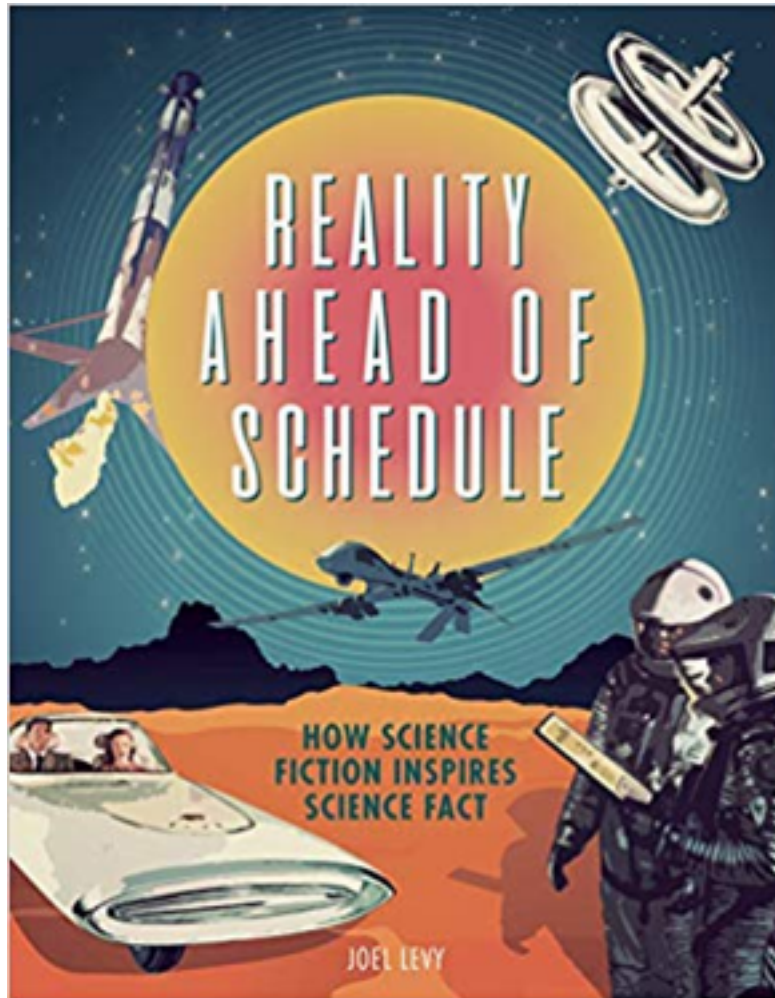
While perusing *File 770* online, I came across a link to a short review of Joel Levy's *Reality Ahead of Schedule: How Science Fiction Inspires Science Fact*, published in the United Kingdom as *From Science Fiction to Science Fact: How Writers of the Past Invented Our Present*.

Levy has produced a nifty starting point for discussions, including chapters on the military, lifestyle and consumer patterns, space and transport, medicine and biology, and communications. The book's perfect for any fan's coffee table, oversized and loaded with illustrations, not really in-depth but a launching pad for further inquiry. Important names from the past two centuries of science fiction appear: Wells, Verne, Bellamy, Asimov, Clarke, Shelley, Huxley, even less-known figures such as Camille Flammarion receive mention. Television and film enter the mix as well.

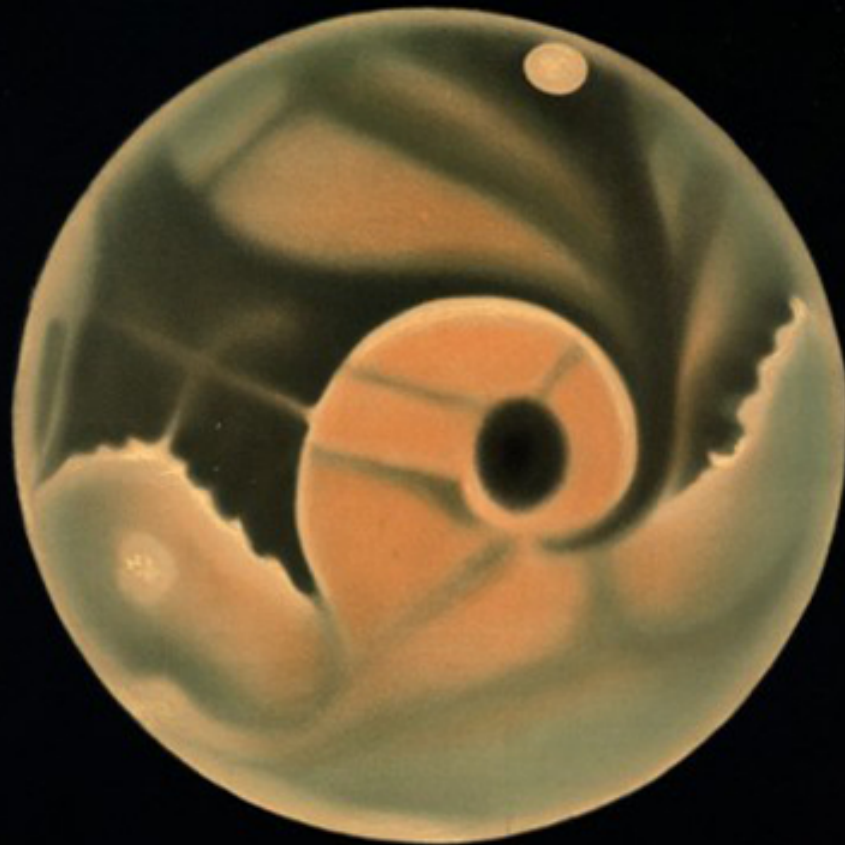
Only one section of one chapter, however, is dedicated to the subject of our multi-fanzine crossover extravaganza, *Antique Space*, uniting *The Drink Tank* and *Journey Planet* under the editorial eyes of Christopher J. Garcia, James Bacon, Alissa McKersie, and me. We've gathered fine writers willing to share their perspectives, offering broader knowledge and appreciation to me, and I hope to you as well.

Levy focuses on the relatively recent. But ancient space, of course, is rooted far back in our existence, beginning with myths crafted before telescopes, satellites, and space probes, the development of which were inspired by speculative writers as Levy points out, brought us clearer understanding. On July 5, 1989, I stood atop Mount Olympus. Behind me was Mytikas, the highest peak, and to my left was Stefani, the Throne of Zeus, or sometimes the Throne of God. Stefani indeed resembles an enormous, rugged throne, facing out toward the Aegean Sea and Turkey beyond. Below me was the Plain of Muses. I could visualize, as some Greek must have centuries ago, the Nine Muses dancing for Zeus's pleasure. I could picture Zeus looking up over the Aegean to Troy, which on a map is almost directly opposite on the Turkish shore, witnessing auspicious events unfolding there, and then turning to his fellow deities to discuss how they were going to complicate human lives further. And then my gaze went up to the stars, those wonderful constellations and planets, still symbolically divine in their awesomeness. It was on that evening, before returning to the hostel located conveniently on that mountaintop, that I said, "We know differently now, but I see it too, and like you I want to know more."

It started before the Greeks, before the Egyptians and Mesopotamians, right back to when our imaginations progressed enough to concoct possible whys and hows regarding the celestial dome. The advent of science would put wilder, myth-centered conceptions to rest, bringing the realization that many times our reflections on space were funhouse reflections at best. We'll continue painting possibilities and science will prove us off-base, but not without instilling wonder. Thank you to our contributors for their companionship in this journey.



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-ANTIQUE SPACE PART 2-  
EDITORS  
CHRIS GARCIA - JAMES BACON - CHUCK SERFACE



A VERY DANISH SCIENCE FICTION:  
HIMMELSKIBET AKA A TRIP TO MARS  
BY CHRISTOPHER J. GARCIA

My grandparents on my Mom's side were born in 1918, a strange year for film. The feature film had taken over and while there were still a lot of shorts, none were having the impact of the feature in those days. One of the great things was that since we were still in the silent era, it was easy to import films from all over the world. All you had to do was replace the title cards with the local language. That was easier and cheaper than making your own version. Many of the biggest profit-makers were foreign films.

In that world, it makes total sense that a Danish science-fiction film should hit the American public with such impact, so, following *A Trip to the Moon*, there was a wave of 'trick films' in the United States, with J. Stuart Blackton being the best-known producer of them. His works, including the legendary titles *Princess Nicotine* and *The Thieving Hand*. Méliès kept doing his thing for a few years, producing some amazing stuff, including more than a few films that would serve as the basis for European science fiction. There were many Spanish, German, and Swedish films that took Méliès' ideas and played with them. You could argue that German expressionism was heavily influenced by Méliès's use of imagery. The funny thing is that subject matter wasn't a huge factor. Yes, there were science fiction films, but few space-faring sci-fi flicks. Why? Even then, they were expensive to make.

Danish film has a long history. They were doing great stuff as early as 1899, largely using cameras that were from stolen Lumière or Edison designs. Silent Danish cinema was awesome, and some of it happened to be genre adaptation of pieces like *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. There was a lot of great stuff, and a wonderful Danish film called *The Star Prince*. *The End of the World*, from 1916, was another great one, though I've never seen anything but a few stills from it. *A Trip to the Moon* was still likely the most famous film worldwide, and it does make sense that when *Himmelskibet* was distributed worldwide, it would take a title that harkened back. There had been a previous film called *A Trip to Mars*, produced by the Edison company. It was 1910, and the film totally shows it. It's a tableau, and the acting is MASSIVE, even compared to what you'd see in 1915. There, a scientist discovers "reverse gravity" and ends up flying off to Mars, meets Martians, and all is well. This is far more complicated.

The film is really interesting. It's a feature film, and like everything European between 1915 and 1920 it was

a story in response to World War I. A scientist devises an airship capable of going to Mars. He goes off to Mars, and ends up meeting the Martians, who are all pacifists, not to mention lentil-munching vegetarians. He meets and teams up with the daughter of the Martian leader, and then comes back to Earth, finally extolling the virtues of the Martian way of life.

Now, that's a pretty obvious metaphor, right? I'd go so far to say it's a simile. The film itself is nothing like the Méliès film in presentation. It's 81 minutes, and it's quite of the moment. The action seems to take place in the then modern day, but once they get to Mars, it's a lot like those films where you see everyone in the future is a 1960s-era hippie. Everyone is wearing white robes; everyone is wearing beads. The visual markers for a century of science fiction film are all there. These mark it as a Utopian film, but that's a nice thing. If you watch the *Community* episode where they all become ruled by a game called Meow-Meow Beans, it's all in there too.

The idea that it takes a great journey like a trip to Mars to bring back the idea of a peaceful Earth, and that's a major theme of all science fiction of the 1910s and early 1920s, at least in Europe. We are presented as too dumb, too provincial, too rough. Aliens know better, have better technology, and are certainly more evolved. That's not played out, right? As our technology has increased, we've not gotten better/smarter as a people. It kind of washes out that we're roughly the same in brutality and "evolvedness," but maybe we're a touch better on the average.

The film is so much more evolved as a film that *A Trip to the Moon*, largely in the fact that the audience could easily accept that these visions were fantasies, The Danish did not have to make them of a mystical time (and if it were a postmodern world, I'd have called Méliès's work a 'pastiche', but that would be weird now, right?) which combined medieval imagery with some of-the-moment stuff. It was a combination which led to a sense of out-of-time that is so effective. Here, it is of the moment, with some things that might have been research stuff in astronomy.

This one's on YouTube, and while it's not super exciting, and it's a lot of work to get through. Danish film has always been big on the heavy, but it's worth your time!





# BON JOURNÉ: AIR AVEC LE VOYAGE DANS LA LUNE JAMES BACON

On the 11th May 2011, the rediscovered coloured version of *Trip to the Moon* by Georges Méliès premiered at the Cannes Film Festival with a new soundtrack from Air.

The original film had existed in black-and-white and hand-painted coloured versions, both released in September 1902, and was hugely successful. The coloured version was thought lost until 1993 when one was found in Spain by the Filmoteca de Catalunya although it was in a terrible state. A mixture of manual and technical work which took some time saw the film completely restored by 2010. The producers went to Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoit Dunckel from the French band Air and asked them to compose an original modern soundtrack for the film. Air went into the studio and really worked very, very hard to get the music completed in a month.

The film *Trip to the Moon* was received warmly.

Air's first album *Moon Safari* was fabulous, and the songs "Kelly Watch the Stars" and "Sexy Boy" really stood out for me. There is an intrinsic fresh feel to their electronica, and these two lovely were popular on the air waves.

Following on from the success at Cannes, Air went on to develop this project into an album, taking inspiration from the film. This allowed for some musical expansion, moving from the soundtrack of cinematic instrumentals to incorporate vocals of Au Revoir Simone and Victoria Legrand (Beach House). There is something about them, which makes me think of Vangelis and Jean-Michel Jarre, but they are distinct in their brilliance.

*Le voyage dans la lune* from Air came as a package of the album and DVD of the restored colorized film with Air's original film score, with only 70,000 copies available. The release date was the 6th February 2012.

As part of the release of the album, there were a series of events including one in London and Nicolas explained: "A *Trip to the Moon* is undoubtedly more organic than most of our past projects. We wanted it to sound 'handmade,' knocked together,' a bit like Méliès' special effects. Everything is played live ... like Méliès' film, our soundtrack is nourished by living art."

The Institut français du Royaume-Uni, Technicolor Foundation for Cinema Heritage, Groupama Gan Foundation for Cinema, EMI, The French Music Bureau Expert are pleased to invite you to

# TRIP TO THE MOON (1902)

BY GEORGES MÈLIÈS

UK PREMIERE ATTENDED BY AIR, COLOUR AND RESTORED VERSION WITH ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK BY AIR

on Monday 12 December at Ciné Lumière



**4.00pm** Film and restoration presentation by Gilles Duval, Managing Director, Groupama Gan Foundation for Cinema and Séverine Wemaere, Managing Director, Technicolor Foundation for Cinema Heritage

**4.15pm** Screening  
**4.30pm** Q&A with AIR [Jean-Benoit Dunckel and Nicolas Godin]  
**7.00pm** Cocktail reception

Georges Méliès' cult film, *Le Voyage dans la lune* *A Trip to the Moon*, was released in black and white and also in colour, hand painted, in September 1902. It was an immediate success worldwide and the first blockbuster in the history of cinema.

The colour version, believed lost during several decades, was discovered in 1993 in Spain, however in very poor condition. Three specialists in film restoration, Labster Films, Groupama Gan Foundation for Cinema and Technicolor Foundation for Cinema Heritage conducted a complete restoration in 2010, one of the most ambitious in the history of cinema.

The film was premiered on 11 May 2011 at the Cannes Film Festival Opening Evening.

In order to reach a new audience for this early landmark film, the two foundations approached the French band AIR and asked the artists to compose an original soundtrack.

Discover Georges Méliès' colour masterpiece brought back to life more than 100 years after its first release.

Spurred on by their work on *A Trip to the Moon*, AIR have developed a project inspired by the film. Their new album *Le Voyage dans la lune* will be released on 6 February 2012.

RDFP compulsory by Thursday 8 December  
020 7871 3521 or [rdfp@ambafrance.org.uk](mailto:rdfp@ambafrance.org.uk)  
This invitation admits one and is not transferable

Ciné Lumière at the Institut français  
17 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DT  
T. 020 7871 3575 - [www.institut-francais.org.uk](http://www.institut-francais.org.uk)

INSTITUT FRANÇAIS  
FOUNDATION TECHNICAL  
EMI  
LABSTER FILMS  
GROUPAMA GAN FOUNDATION FOR CINEMA  
TECHNICOLOR FOUNDATION FOR CINEMA HERITAGE  
AIR  
THE FRENCH MUSIC BUREAU EXPERT

Photo | Copyright A Trip to the Moon (1902), by Georges Méliès - original color version restored - 2011 © Labster Films-Groupama Gan Foundation for Cinema-Technicolor Foundation for Cinema Heritage

On Monday the 12th of December the UK premier of *Trip to the Moon* was screened at the Ciné Lumière presented by the Institut Français du Royaume-Uni in London. This included a screening and question and answer session with Jean-Benoit Dumckel and Nicolas Godin.

All of this allowed a lot of focus on the original work. The 14-minute film was the first to use science fiction as a theme, and it is fair to say that the likes of *The First Men on the Moon* and *From Earth to the Moon* by Wells and Verne respectively must have influenced the film.

The film was released in 2012 as a DVD and it included 'The Extraordinary Voyage' a feature-length documentary by Bromberg and Lange about the film's restoration and included interviews with Bromberg and Nicolas.



## Album Track Listing

1. Astronomic Club
2. Seven Stars
3. Retour sur Terre
4. Parade
5. Moon Fever
6. Sonic Armada
7. Who Am I Know?
8. Décollage
9. Cosmic Trip
10. Homme Lune
11. Lava

Today the soundtrack is available on Spotify.





# *Kaguya-hime: The 11<sup>th</sup> Century Superman Story*

## *Christopher J. Garcia*

neighborhood.

Still, they gave rise to the stories of visitors from another world.

Why? Because the moon is obviously the closest of the celestial bodies, and we can see some features that will allow for the formation of stories, of myths.

And so it goes that the Japanese created one of the most fascinating myths of all time, one that has ties to centuries of Western stories.

Taketori no Okina, which literally translates to “The Old Man Who Harvests Bamboo” which seems a little on the nose, is harvesting bamboo, as one does, and comes across a tiny human in the cut stalk of bamboo. She’s glowing, and obviously magical. She’s not much bigger than a thumb!

Now, instantly, you’re thinking, “Huh, this is like Tom Thumb/Thumbelina.” That is without question, and he takes her in, and they raise her as their own daughter. They call her Kaguya-hime, short for Nayotake no Kaguya-hime, “Shining Princess of the Supple Bamboo.”

They totally weren’t into the whole brevity thing.

From that point forward when cutting open bamboo stalks, the bamboo cutter finds GOLD!!! This makes the family rich and more than a little famous.

They keep the girl locked away as she grows into a beautiful young woman of ordinary height. In fact, she grows into an incredible beauty, the kind of beauty whose gorgeousness becomes legend even as they attempt to keep it under wraps. That sort of rep brings all the boys to the yard, and thus five suitors come to visit and see which of them get to take the hand of the beautiful young woman. They’re given a series of seemingly impossible tasks, and the suitors try to pass off fakes, but she sees through them.

And, of course, the emperor of Japan finds out, proposes, and she refuses him, because she’s not of his country – she’s a moon princess!

She spends much of her time becoming increasingly emo through the moon cycles, but she holds her feelings and truth close to her vest, but then ends up spilling the beans that she was a moon princess and has to return to the moon. She goes, leaving a bunch of stuff with the emperor, who then gives it to the family who raised her, who went all sick with grief. Kaguya-hime gets taken to the moon capital, where she forgets all her sadness and the love of the people of Earth.

The emperor, though, doesn’t forget, and tries to get her attention by sending a bunch of soldiers up Mount Fuji to burn a letter. It doesn’t work.

Now, how much can we tie to this one story?

A lot, of course. There's the idea that a being of great power lands on Earth and is raised by a loving family. That's Superman, even more than the idea that it was the Moses tale. She's far too beautiful to be a human, in the same way that Superman is far too powerful to be a human. Both are hidden away from the world by well-meaning parents (in some timelines for Supes) and neither can truly find human love. Well, Superman kind of can, but only kind of.

The one thing we don't get in the bamboo cutter story is the view of what the moon is like. It is a place of mystery, and is not one that was solved. We are given much detail on the world of Krypton in Superman, but we aren't given that level of detail.

The way the leaving is described is almost metal. In translation from a 17<sup>th</sup> century scroll:

*One night, the moon was covered by a cloud. This quickly began to descend towards the Earth, while the sky grew ever darker. A carriage manned by luminous beings arrived for the princess. She left a letter and a small bottle with the Elixir of Life for the emperor before leaving.*



We're given a few little tidbits --the carriage and the luminous beings. There's something very important about the luminousness of the beings, if you think about it. Endless civilizations have placed the homes of mystical beings, typically gods, in places that are out of our reach, with the moon being one of the more popular, and these beings are often described, across many different times and locations, as being glowing or luminous, and it would make sense why those from the Moon would glow. It is the brightest of all-night lights, and thus, wouldn't those who inhabit it be glowing as well?

Makes you think.

So, what did the princess's castle on the moon mean, to the Japanese of the time? I think, really, it's about solidifying the connection of the Emperor of Japan to the moon, to the idea that the entire universe is tied to a monarchy. It's most about giving the system in place the rub of something magical, mystical. The moon is a place of magic, far more beautiful than we could ever imagine, and the only one who can touch it, even slightly, is the emperor. And who wouldn't want to be in line with that guy?

# Purveyors of Antique Space Verne, Wells, and Jones

**“Weirdness is good to think with, and also its own end.” - China Miéville**

It's too easy to think Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865), H. G. Wells' *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), and Neil R. Jones' story "The Jameson Satellite" (1931) are quaint. From our twenty-first century technology-riddled lives, it's easy to think they missed the mark in so many ways. Taking this approach overlooks the contributions to the rich history of space travel stories in our genre. Verne shot for the moon and others followed: Wells, Isaac Asimov, Frank Herbert, DC Fontana, Connie Willis, and Lois McMaster Bujold, to name but a few.

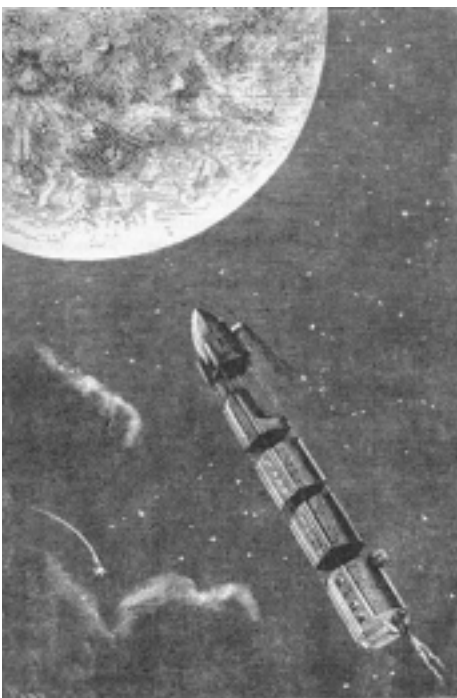
I acknowledge Verne's place in genre history as the author who blazed the trail to space travel. But *From Earth to the Moon* reads like part "how-to" guide with some of the instructions missing, and "watch how silly these men are."

I can give you the ninety-foot cannon, the enormous hole in the ground laden with enough explosives to cause all 30,000 onlookers to be thrown to the ground. I'll even give you the hollow cannonball holding three men making the ride to the moon.

What I cannot give you, is the ninety-foot cannon pointed at the moon without reinforcing braces to keep it from wobbling as it shot forth its payload. Pedantic as that may seem, it's a point which bothers me.

I also cannot give you Florida containing the "highest mountain in America" as the place to make this shot. Yes, yes, I know. Cape Canaveral is in Florida. But I refuse to even entertain the idea that Jules Verne had a major influence on locating Patrick Air Force Base there. As he was writing his book, and doing the research he was so proud of in the Paris library, surely he could have found a high mountain in New York? Or Vermont? Or Maryland even.

Verne's writing chews the scenery:



The effect of the shock, aided by a westerly wind, was felt upon the Atlantic to a distance of more than 300 miles from the American coast. An artificial storm, utterly unexpected ... seized upon the ships with untold violence.

When an American has an idea he looks out for a second American to share it. If there are three of them they elect a chairman and two secretaries. If four, they appoint a recorder, and the committee is in working order. If five, they convene a general meeting, and a club is formed.

Nineteenth century hyperbole.

Aside from the journey to the moon, Verne's story is about white male veterans of the American Civil War with nothing to do but fret about how they no longer get to play with their artillery. Such grouching over the "disastrous peace" which has fallen over the country. *From the Earth to the Moon* is also part ode to the love affair Americans have with firearms. It's frighteningly relevant to the Second Amendment battle we're experiencing now.

These veterans form the Baltimore Gun Club and lay their plans. Verne walks the reader through every step doing what he did best, extrapolating from known principals and materials. Thus, a cannon shooting a hollow sphere cushioning three men into space. More precisely, to the moon, a romantic myth lingering softly above the Earth and the adventurers determined to make her acquaintance.

Verne scholar R. G. A. Dolby, wrote: “Verne did not know how to make stories of the future believable, who knows what will happen next?”

On the other hand, China Miéville writes: “Wells’s theory of plausible, rather than narrowly possible, extrapolation is what makes him such a seminal figure of science fiction.”

And more readable, with interesting characters, even if one of them is the odious, greedy Bedford. Wells pits science against capitalism, commenting on the greed of those who seek to make a profit off the innovations of distracted scientists.

Of course, it begins innocently enough, Bedford scarping from an undischarged bankruptcy finds himself a cozy cottage not far from Cavor’s lab. Bedford is convinced he can make some money by writing a play, but like all writers is easily distracted. The two meet on one of Cavor’s daily walks and the adventure is on.

Capitalism looks down on anything which doesn’t make money, loads of it. Bedford’s description of Cavor: “He was a water-drinker, a vegetarian, and all those logical, disciplinary things.” Yes, let’s look down on the man who doesn’t indulge in rich, fatty meals served with beer and wine. Cavor, in Bedford’s thoughts needs to loosen up a bit and learn to live a little! The irony here is rich, that a man with no money, an undischarged bankruptcy, and no discipline for actually writing his play, looks down upon the scientist focused on solving a problem.

Then too, there’s Bedford’s attitudes towards Cavor’s lab employees. “They were the merest labourers; all the intelligent work was done by Cavor. Theirs was the darkest ignorance compared even with my muddle impressions.” Ah yes, the capitalist’s belief that because they are workers, they cannot be intelligent. Certainly not intelligent enough to understand the scheming which goes into making money. If our narrator can’t understand the scientist, how could the simple laborers?

Wells’s rich imagination provides details of the environment of the moon. Not the desolate place we have become accustomed to. This moon has mysterious plants and topography, moon calves and Selenites, insect like creatures. Underground is a labyrinth of canals and trails, and a society rich in specialization, and gold.

We mustn’t forget the gold. Bedford dollar signs remarks on the abundant wealth he sees in the chains used as restraints. Cavor, ever the scientist pokes and prods, carefully observing and hypothesizing. The two personality types have turned into stereotypes by now. One cavils on about any number of things not to his liking especially being taken prisoner, and resorts to violence to escape imprisonment. The other doing his best to learn and communicate peacefully, while keeping his companion from doing something idiotic.

Of course, it comes as no surprise that upon escape, the two become separated. Bedford makes it back to the capsule gold in tow, and leaves Cavor behind. In all fairness, Bedford does attempt to look for Cavor, waiting at their agreed upon hill, but eventually leaves Cavor in the hands of the Selenites.

Wells continues to get his jabs in a capitalist society as Bedford returns home, cashes in his moon gold, refuses to pay his bills, and retires to Italy to write his play. If there was any doubt, Bedford continues to be portrayed as having no moral center and no shred of decency.

*The First Men in the Moon* could have ended here satisfactorily. Cavor’s fate is left to the reader’s imagination and we’ve had a grand adventure along the way.



But no. Reading like an afterword, the story continues with messages telegraphed from the Moon by Cavor relating the rest of his story. He teaches two Selenites English, rises enough in estimation to meet the Lunar monarch who hears more than he wants about the violent nature of humans. Cavor is taken prisoner again, his attempt to send the recipe for Cavorite ends abruptly, with Bedford believing great harm has befallen his compatriot.

H. G. Wells's vision of space travel and adventure is more entertaining, and believable than Verne's. Nearly everything Wells does serves the logic of the larger story, that of getting two men to the moon to have a look around. Wells imagines a lunar society filled with class structure, plants and animals which serve as food, a travel system, and as a direct reference to Thomas More's *Utopia*, gold is used to enslave citizens not enrich them.

The last of the three Antique Space stories is "The Jameson Satellite" by Neil R. Jones published in 1931. The version I read came from *Before the Golden Age* with commentary from Isaac Asimov. Jones's idea of antique space involves a casket outfitted with radium repulsion rays sent into orbit 65,000 miles into orbit housing Professor Jameson's body. For some inexplicable reason, he wants to keep his body from decaying after death and so has decided the absolute zero of space would keep it safe. And that's just the set up.

40 million years later, Jameson's satellite is picked up by a ship of Zoromes, a galaxy trotting race of adventurers. Jones described them this way:



The bodies of these queer creatures were square blocks of a metal closely resembling steel, while for appendages, the metal cube was upheld by four jointed legs capable of movement. A set of six tentacles, all metal, like the rest of the body, curved outward from the upper half of the cubic body. Surmounting it was a queer-shaped head rising to a peak in the center and equipped with a circle of eyes all the way around the head. The creatures, with their mechanical eyes equipped with metal shutters, could see in all directions. A single eye pointed directly upward, being situated in the space of the peaked head, resting in a slight depression of the cranium.

Jameson's satellite is pulled aboard the Zorome ship, and he is reanimated into one of their spare bodies. After 40 million years, mind intact, Jameson is brought back to life as though he'd never died at all. The fascination with immortality continues.

Oh, as does telepathic ability. Once Professor Jameson has adjusted to his new body, he discovers communication is telepathic. No one need ever be alone again.

A mere 65,000 miles later the Zorome ship with Professor Jameson aboard encounters Earth, deader than Jameson's former body. Nelson's Earth has stopped spinning, one side always pointed towards the sun, leaving a narrow strip of planet which can be explored safely. The Earth is a gray wasteland, everything a shadow of its former self.

How Nelson deals with the question of im/mortality is interesting. Not just in the reanimation of Jameson's brain after being in Earth's orbit for so many years. Jameson gets separated from his group and loses telepathic contact, leaving him lonelier than he'd ever imagined possible. While he panics over this loss, he begins to mourn the loss of the planet he once called home. Would it have been better to jump off a literal cliff because humanity was gone, leaving completely alone? Contemplating such an ending, he is shown what life could be like with the Zoromes exploring the galaxy. "Why jump?" asked the machine man. "The dying world holds your imagination within a morbid clutch. It is all a matter of mental condition. Free your mind of this fascinating influence and come with us to visit other worlds, many of them are both beautiful and new."

To wrap the three together, there's this to consider: each advances beyond the previous story. With Verne we got a how to story about the Baltimore Gun Club building and launching a cannonball to the moon. Science in the how-to, fiction in the characters and setting. Wells gave us a complete fictionalized story including

Cavorite to get us to the moon and Selenites to greet us upon our arrival.

Jones gives a sort of inverse exploration. Jameson's revived self returns to Earth only to find it dead and humanity gone. The Zoromes give him the opportunity for immortality leaving the

Earth behind for the excitement of adventuring through the galaxy.

All stories explore how space can be imagined. No one knew what to expect. Dreams of going into space, landing on the moon were still decades away. There was no scientific knowledge explaining what was out there. The three writers in this piece imagined what it would be like. Thousands of others did too. Verne led the way, making it possible to consider space travel at all.

The thrill of a NASA moon shoot still courses through my veins when I think about it. I wanted to be in the control room, more than I wanted to go into space. Space programs would certainly have come about in their own time, but science fiction/fantasy got there first and offered readers the possibilities to "... go where no one had gone before." How thrilling!





## LUCIAN'S TRUE HISTORY: THE WATERSPOUT TO THE MOON BY CHRISTOPHER J. GARCIA

The beginning of science fiction is a story of a trip to the moon.

What? You say, thinking that Frankenstein isn't about the Frankenstein, created by the doctor with the same name, getting to the moon, and you'd be right. Dead right. The reality is that Frankenstein is 100% the beginning of modern science fiction, but in the before times, there were myths, some of which could be a collected origin of science fiction. In the second century, we got the first work that could fall into the role of science fiction novel.

Ironically, it's called *True History* by Lucian.

Now, calling it *True History* is an interesting turn, because right off the bat, Lucian says that this entire story is a lie, false. It's a satire, a parody, and one that is saying something about the writing of the day. A LOT of writers, especially Homer, were citing sources that were using ancient 'sources' as the basis for their books. So, instead of just doing researched stories and history, he did the thing where instead of just commenting and working in

the way he thought things should go, he leaned in and did a purposely unsourced work, but told everybody that it was a fake. It's a smart thing to try even today, but as the guy who probably did it first, Lucian was an Andy Kaufman-level forward thinker.

The story starts out like all stories, with Lucian and his friends on a boat sailing out beyond the Pillars of Heracles. After a bit, they come upon an awesome world! It's got rivers of booze, and fish, all sorts of fish! and the trees look like women. In other words, it's all about the wishes of all the male sailors! I think this is a direct jab at Homer, because of all the story of *The Odyssey*, they're all basically Sailor wish/nightmare fulfillment. Lucian mentions that the wine river is full of fish that get you drunk when you eat 'em. I believe that drunken eel goes back to at least the Roman times, so that makes sense, especially with the need to keep fish fresh on long journeys. The trees look like women, and the sailors make out with them. That says a lot about sailors, right? At one point, a sailor has his way with one of the sext sexy trees, and it basically absorbs him. The single best line of the entire story talks about the return – “We left them there and hurried back to the ship, where we told our tale, including our friends' experiment in viticulture.”

Not exactly the best of friends, right?

After that, they set sail after filling up with river wine, and they're swept up in a waterspout and end up 350 miles in the air, but somehow still sailing. They land and run into the king of the moon, who treats them well, knowing that they're Greeks. Of course, the Moon King knows that the Greeks are all sorts of awesome, which is 100% in line with the thoughts of Greeks at the time, and especially by those who can spare the funds to pay for the writing of a work of fiction. They talk, Moon King tells them the story of why they're about to be thrown down with the forces of the King of the Sun.

Now, the moon is a seriously fucked up place, straight out of a Hunter S. Thompson ether binge. The inhabitants are extremely creepy: horse-vultures (I'm picturing a distant relative of Pegasus that you wouldn't find on Lisa Frank binders), salad-wings (described as “These latter are also enormous birds, fledged with various herbs, and with quill-feathers resembling lettuce leaves.”), millet-throwers and garlic-men (these feel like *Plants vs. Zombies* characters), and from the north, flea-men and wind-couriers. It's a motley crew, to us, and to those of the time, they are somewhat tied to legendary creatures that would have been familiar to the readers of the day. They were all armed in a fascinating way – “their helmets were made of beans, which grow there of great size and hardness; the breastplates were of overlapping lupine-husks sewn together, these husks being as tough as horn; as to shields and swords, they were of the Greek type.”

You see that part about the shields and swords being of Greek type? Yeah, that one there. It's important. You see, one of the roles of the writers of the era was to establish that the Greeks were the premiere warriors of the time, and thus even the super-powered Moon forces REQUIRED Greek arms and armor.

The sun people weren't any less bug-shit.

There were horse-ants, ants the size of horses, and sky-gnats. The people apparently had horns, though it's not entirely clear.

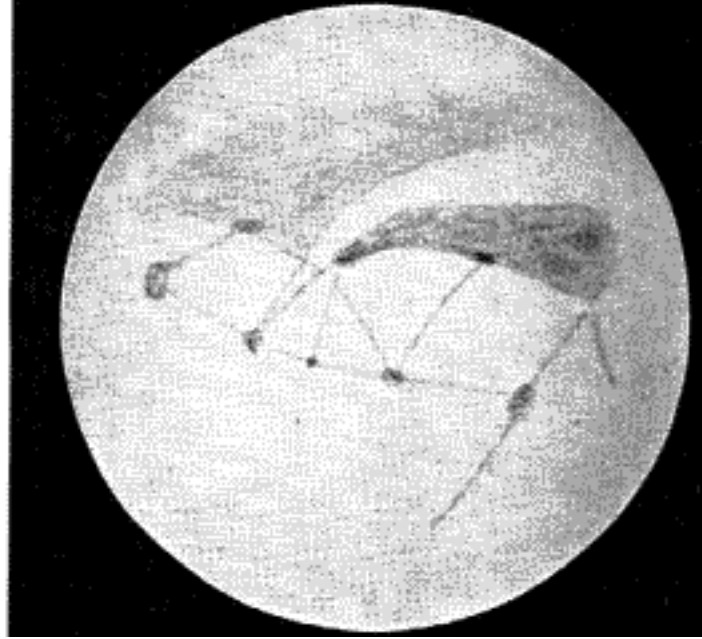
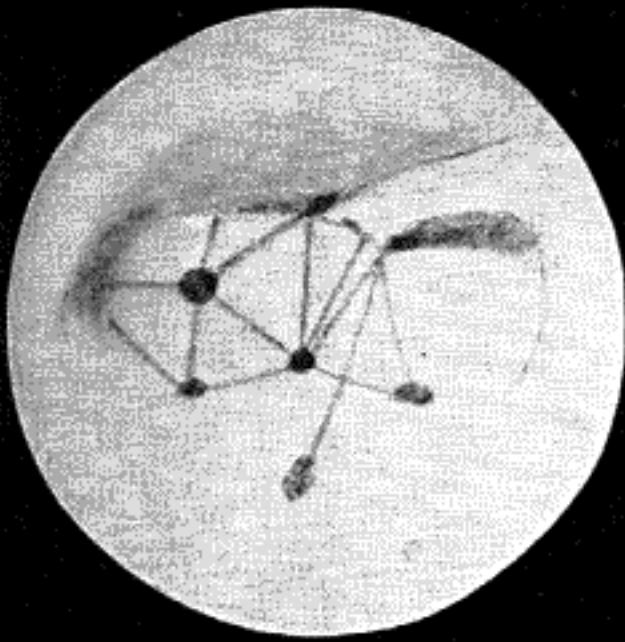
The idea of the moon and the sun as full of inhabitants wasn't new, because the few of the universe was informed by the world they could encounter. There was some astronomy, though it was based on the naked eye. There was an understanding of the natural world, and the idea of fantastical beasts was widely accepted. Does that mean that the Greeks were simple? Only in response to our current state of understanding. What's the difference between the Greeks looking at the world and assuming the rest of the universe, as they understood it, was the same and the way that people today believe that what they have observed around them is what everyone has observed and experienced? We are the sum of our experiences, and we hang new potentials on a naïve template, right?

The Sunnites win, and there's a peace treaty. Something very interesting is that the King of the Sun builds a wall that blocks the sun's light from falling on the moon. That basically says that the ancients understood, at least to a degree, that the moon did not originate its glow from within, but it was reflective.

The entire piece, and it's quite short, is fascinating, and if a short filmmaker were to create a film version of it, I'd program it! It's bizarre, and the later portions include Homer, only reimagined as a Babylonian. It's a nice jab, especially the way he treats him.

Overall, it's a fun piece, and it's one of those Greek works that has none of the style in the writing (which is, admittedly, probably in about three-folds of translation) but full of amazingly stylish characterization and scenarios.





## PERCIVAL LOWELL AND THE INVENTION OF MARS BY BOB HOLE

It can be argued that astronomer Percival Lowell had as much or more influence on early science fiction as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. This is directly certain regarding the treatment of Mars, and indirectly through the works inspired or shaped by Lowell's description of the red planet.

Lowell began this influence in 1895 with his book, *Mars*, the first semi-popular detailed description of the red planet in English.

Percival Lowell (March 13, 1855 – November 12, 1916) came from an upper-crust Boston family. One of his brothers would become the president of Harvard, and a sister would marry into the Roosevelt family.

Percival studied mathematics at Harvard University, graduating in 1876 with honors. After graduation, he managed a cotton mill for a time, and then travelled in Asia. His publishing began with several books on Japan and Korea among other things.

He returned to America in 1893, and at some point in that year read Camille Flammarion's book *La planète Mars* (1892, published in English as *The Planet Mars*, 1893) Lowell became fascinated by the planet, especially the canals first observed and mapped by Giovanni Schiaparelli in 1877. Schiaparelli wrote a book on the canals was published in English in 1893 in the book *Life on Mars* (original Italian title *La vita sul planet Marte*).

As has often been noted, including by Lowell in his book, the Italian word "canali" that the Italian Schiaparelli used in his work can be translated as channel, or canal, or even duct. However, what is not generally mentioned is that Schiaparelli eventually was persuaded by Lowell that what they saw were the works of a civilization, so his canali really became in his mind "canals" also.

In 1894, drawing on his family wealth, Lowell established an observatory at Flagstaff, Arizona (now Lowell Observatory) specifically to make observations of Mars. At Lowell's insistence, the observatory was sited at Flagstaff for its elevation (almost 7,000 feet, 2,100 meters) and for the stability of the atmosphere above the location. This was the first observatory in the world specifically located for atmospheric and other viewing conditions rather than the convenience of the astronomers.

During the period 1894-1895 Lowell and his colleagues at the new Flagstaff observatory made observa-

tions of Mars. His 1895 book is the resulting relatively popular account of their findings.

The volume starts with some of this history, and early on introducing his main conclusion that there is life on other planets even if not Mars, saying "...modesty, if not intelligence, forbids the thought that we are sole thinkers in all we see." This is something many scientists and others continue to support today.

Lowell was obviously aware of Charles Darwin's then 35-year-old book *On the Origin of Species* (1859). Without referencing the book directly, he offers the observation that life on another world, with differing conditions, would result in differing life forms. He expects them to be different, but believes they will be similar enough to need atmosphere and water. This idea of differing conditions producing differing results flows directly from Darwin's theory of natural selection.

Lowell goes so far as to say, "The existence of extra-terrestrial life does not involve 'real life in trousers,' or any other particular form of it with which we are locally conversant. Under changed conditions, life itself must take on other forms." Star Trek writers and makeup artists beware.

Lowell is fully conversant with the history to his date of Mars observations and with other recent major developments in science. He cites published observations and references other works up to 1893 at least, including coming down in strong favor of gravity waves, only suggested in 1893 by English physicist Oliver Heaviside.

The initial chapters of the Mars volume are a description of Mars's known (at the time) and supposed physical characteristics, how both have been determined and deduced through observation, and how the various physical properties relate to each other.

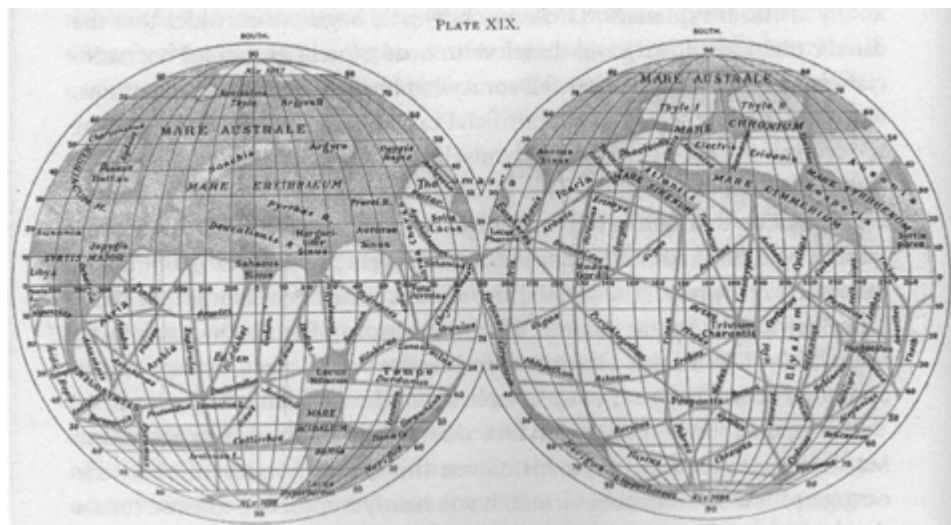
Many of Lowell's findings have been supported, with refinement, by subsequent study. He, for instance, declares there is a Martian atmosphere, and gives an argument for its composition. His reasoning, based on the data he had at hand is not too bad.

However, he also argues for no appreciable weather on the planet, or at least no "obscuring weather." He says his views of Mars were only vary rarely if ever compromised by anything he could interpret as clouds on Mars. In this he was either very lucky, or very far off the mark. We now know something about the major dust storms that can obscure the surface of the planet for quite some time.

One thing Lowell notes, and relies upon in several cases is that "there is a certain peculiarity about the surface markings of Mars, which is pretty sure to strike any thoughtful observer who examines the planet's disk, with a two or three-inch object glass, - their singular sameness night after night. With quite disheartening regularity, each evening presents him with the same appearance he noted the evening before . . ."

He also argues for the presence of liquid water on Mars, describing at length why the polar caps cannot be made of frozen carbon dioxide. Because his calculations and suppositions of the temperature and pressure of the surface of Mars were quite wrong, he was dead wrong on this point. Liquid water cannot exist on the surface for long, and the polar caps on Mars actually are the frozen carbon dioxide he declared impossible.

Much of the rest of his observations and suppositions about conditions, and about life on Mars come from this one error – that there is liquid water on the Martian surface.



Based on his water-ice deduction, Lowell makes an argument about how the melting water of the polar caps would flow out over the landscape around the cap. There is a large dark ring around the southern hemisphere that is obvious during the southern hemisphere summer as the larger southern ice cap melts. Earlier observers Schiaparelli and Flammarion believed this dark ring to be a sea made up of the meltwater.

Lowell argues, correctly, that this dark area could not be a sea because he observes not a flat surface like an ocean, but one with peaks and valleys. He suggests the dark color is due to large areas of vegetation, forest or swamp, watered by the meltwater which flows underneath the plant cover.

We now know these darker areas to be basalt, thrown up long ago by volcanic activity. The large reddish areas of the planet covering the northern hemisphere and parts of the southern he believes to be mostly featureless land. By watching the edge of the planet as it revolves, he can't see any hint that there are much in the way of peaks, so he declares the surface to be fairly flat and worn down in comparison to Earth.

Going further, he assumes these flat land areas must be desert as no watercourses can be seen (other than the canals) and therefore water is very limited on Mars, and that the major problem for any supposed Martian or Martian civilization would be water.

For each of his conclusions about physical characteristics, Lowell provides rather thorough arguments based on the observed phenomena. Based on what he sees and his understandings, his conclusions may be considered sound.

The fourth chapter of the book is devoted to the canals of Mars.

Lowell claims that they must be real, despite not every observer seeing them. He was one of only about twenty people in the world that had seen them at that point, many other astronomers had not, and most of them did not believe in their existence. He declares the failure of others to see the canals were the result of poorer atmospheric conditions and lesser instruments at their observatories. Remember that the location for the observatory at Flagstaff was chosen for the atmospheric stability.

Schiaparelli saw 79 canali, while Lowell and his coworkers at Flagstaff found 183 canals. Lowell could not find twelve of Schiaparelli's but found all the others. Lowell was using a much more powerful telescope than Schiaparelli was, which, Lowell says, is the reason for the higher number.

Interestingly, Lowell mentions that Schiaparelli found his canali only when Mars was at its most distant from Earth. When Mars was much closer, the canali were nowhere to be seen. This, Lowell takes as further proof that the canals must be real, because they were more visible when viewing conditions were worst.

He notes the canals are extremely regular in shape, and always in the same place from one observation to the next, even when they weren't visible for a time. He declares any differences or changes in the canals among observations and observers are further proof that the canals are real, stating "it confirms by not conforming."

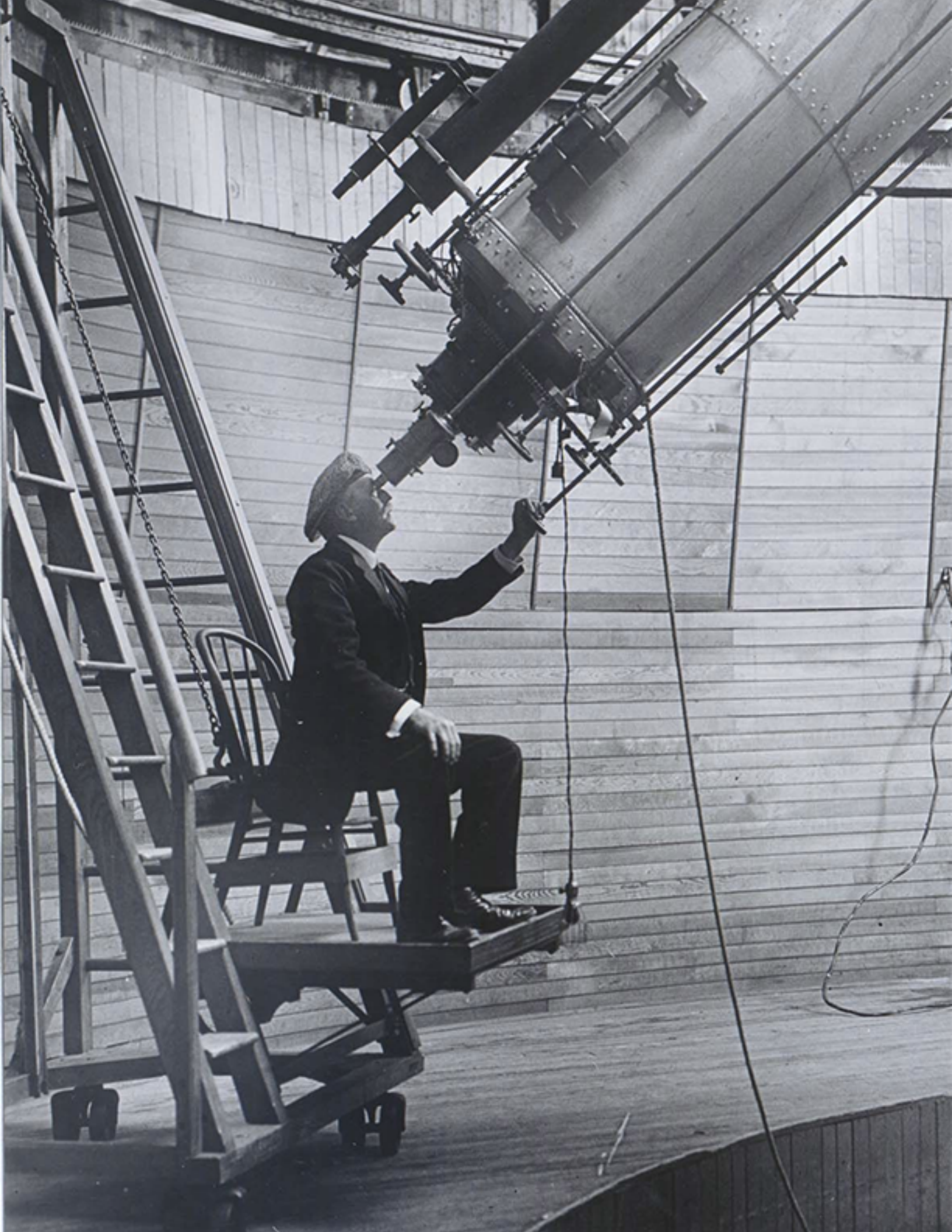
Lowell argues for their artificiality, that they were built by Martians, because they are the same width from one end to the other, that they are straight or part of what seems to be concentric circles, and that many of them converge at "special points," which he suggests could be oasis's. These, he says are proof of their artificiality.

Lowell did understand that most would not believe, nor did he, that a simple narrow Earthlike canal would be visible among planets. His explanation for the Martian canals being visible was not just the width of the canal carrying water, but the agricultural band he assumed would follow their course through the Martian desert. He says the smallest objects to be seen with his telescope would be about thirty miles across. He understood that as on Earth, most things on Mars like buildings or roads would not be visible at that scale. Lowell compares the banks of the Martian canals to the midwestern U.S. farmland. An individual Earth farmer's field might not be visible from Mars, but the aggregate of all the thousands of farms certainly would be.

He argues further that while a single point, such as a building or a single farm might be hard to see at that distance, a line of such points would be much more visible. To put a modern spin on his argument, a differently colored pixel on a computer screen might be missed, but a line of them would be much more visible.

Lowell says the reason for building the canals is obvious to him. Mars is an old world. Mars "...is older in age, if not in years; ... his smaller size, by causing him to cool more quickly, would necessarily age him faster" than the Earth. The planet has lost most of its free water over its long history, the Martians would have created the huge canals to move water from the southern polar ice cap to the increasingly arid northern latitudes.

Lowell is most famous generally for his promotion of Martian canals, and many think that might be his



greatest contribution to science fiction. I suggest though, that his greater legacy in the genre is this idea of Mars as an old, resource poor, perhaps dying world.

This influence on science fiction began shortly after the publication of *Mars* in 1895. Just two years later, in 1897, Kurd Lasswitz wrote *Auf Zwei Planeten* (The English title is *Two Planets*, though it was translated and published in English only in 1971). This book was influenced by both Schiaparelli's 1893 and earlier work, and Lowell's. Lasswitz's Mars included the canals, but the planet was also seen as an old and advanced world.

Hugo Gernsback, who founded the first science fiction magazine, "Amazing Stories," was originally from Luxembourg and was familiar with Lasswitz's popular novel as a young man. It likely influenced his taste in Science Fiction, and through Gernsback, the whole of the genre.

A year after *Auf Zwei Planeten*, H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* (1898) was published and though it doesn't have any direct scenes on Mars, Wells starts off the book as follows:

It (Mars) must be, if the nebular hypothesis has any truth, older than our world; and long before this earth ceased to be molten, life upon its surface must have begun its course. The fact that it is scarcely one seventh of the volume of the earth must have accelerated its cooling to the temperature at which life could begin. It has air and water and all that is necessary for the support of animated existence.

Yet so vain is man, and so blinded by his vanity, that no writer, up to the very end of the nineteenth century, expressed any idea that intelligent life might have developed there far, or indeed at all, beyond its earthly level.

Those words could have been written by Percival Lowell himself if he had a more literary flourish. Though Lowell would surely have included mention of the canals.

Slightly later, Edgar Rice Burroughs was well aware of Lowell's ideas, and relied to a great extent on those ideas for his Barsoom series, starting with *Princess of Mars* (1912).

By Burroughs' time, the idea of Martian canals was in great doubt, though not all astronomers doubted. However, Joseph Edward Evans and Edward Maunder, a pair of British astronomers, conducted experiments in 1903 that showed that the canals could be optical illusions rather than real artifacts. In 1909 the first telescopic photographs of Mars were published by Greek astronomer Eugène Antoniadi (working in France). The photos did not show the canals, and most astronomers were convinced by this they did not exist.

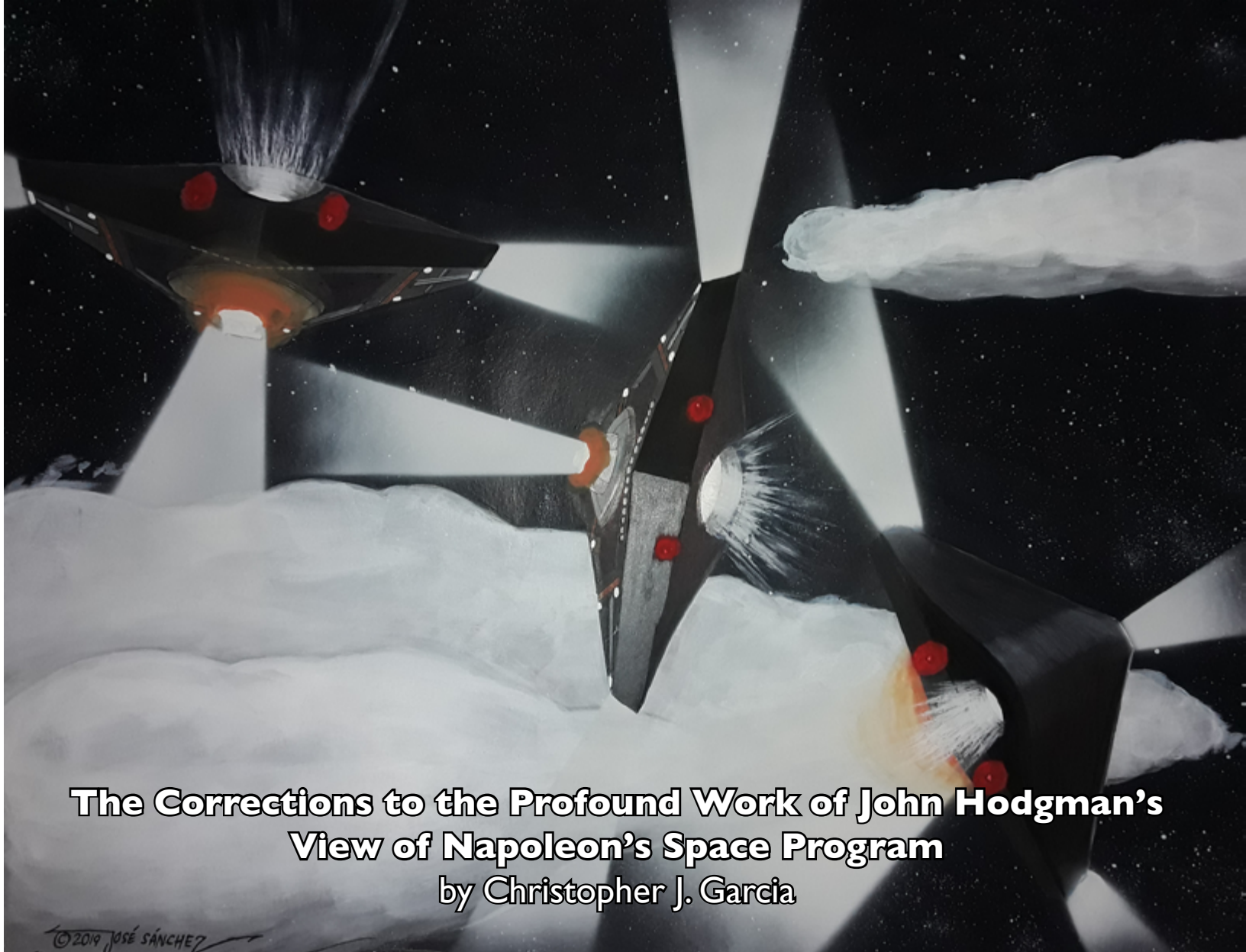
Lowell clung to his theories, however, until the end of his life in late 1916. The idea that the canals on Mars were real was only really put to scientific rest in 1965 by photographs of the planet's surface from the Mariner 4 spacecraft.

Of course, Martian canals do continue to pop up in fiction from time to time. The canals are featured as ancient artifacts of long-dead builders, for instance, in Colin Greenland's *Take Back Plenty* (1990). But Lowell's idea of Mars as an ancient, sometimes advanced, sometimes decaying world, has persisted more regularly whenever native Martians are supposed.

And this is really Lowell's persistent, and greatest, contribution to science fiction.

## References

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**The Corrections to the Profound Work of John Hodgman's  
View of Napoleon's Space Program**  
by Christopher J. Garcia

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There is no better work of non-fiction than John Hodgman's *More Information Than You Require*, even if the prior works it built on were also in the Pantheon of great books. While it is a marvel to behold, not unlike the works David Foster Wallace (and have I mentioned I knew him???) foisted upon the world, there are moments where a particular lacuna can be found. Sadly, it is in such a dead spot in Hodgman's vision where his chapter "The Secret Moon Landing" dwells.

The basic gist of the chapter is this – Napoleon sent his men to the Moon in 1803, and while they were there, they established moon bases, which laid there, undiscovered, and nearly forgotten, for almost 200 years. This, of course, is patently untrue, but it is not fully the fault of the former literary agent turned minor famous television personality John Hodgman; it is largely the fault of the lazy jackass known as Jules Verne, and his terrible, and thankfully untranslated, novel *Le stuffe correcte*.

Let us begin with the basic statement – Hodgman says, "But were you aware that the Louisiana Purchase also included all of Napoleon's moon-bases (*bases-sur-lune*). While this is an accurate translation of "moonbases" and is exactly what that talentless hack Verne referred to them as. In real life, Napoléon referred to the bases as Forteresse de la Lune or more simply as the Palais Lointain when he was feeling grand. The fortifications were not considered merely bases, but as enhanced forts designed to withstand attack from both the moon men, and the Portuguese who would surely make it to the Moon at any moment. This proved to be less of a problem than

Napoleon had anticipated, but it showed how serious old Nappy took the moon. The Portuguese concept for achieving the Moon, a modification of a whiskey-still, the design itself stolen from the Scots, who the Portuguese were in the process of subtly conquering using their popular culture. These were not only prone to explosion, but also had the left-over fumes from their first incarnation that led first to drunken driving through the vacuum of space, and then had the unfortunate problem of exploding as the alcohol vapor aerosolized and then caught fire. Still, this was an advantage over the methods employed by the French, Dutch, and especially the Greeks.

The next matter is that Hodgman claims the first astronauts were songbirds and snails. This is true, for values of true that are less accurate than a post-wedding reception whiz. Yes, songbirds, specifically the ortolan bunting, Post-landing meals, where the Bunting's head was covered with a napkin while the diner ate the bird whole save for a few large bones, was initially a treat for the sanitizing scientists, who were the ones that recommended that the suits be changed from the traditional, non-delicious horse leather, to confit. The snails, though, were simply found in the gardens of Versailles, and were just plain old snails.

The idea that Napoleon was stuck for ideas is, of course, ridiculous. Napoleon had those designs all along! Many forget, including famed robber of the Mona Lisa Luigi Perugia, that DaVinci was actually a wholly-owned subsidiary of France for much of his life. It was during the reign of Francis I (Francois Premiere) that Leonardo developed his early concepts. They were based on having observed the way that a wine bottle, when dropped into a fire, would eventually blast its cork out, invariably sending said cork into the eye of the most high-status individual in the room. The famed design in DaVinci's most famous codex is merely a giant wine bottle with a cork designed to hold a human surrounded in all the comfort afforded by cork, and the lesser-known sketch of the moon, the highest-status object in the night sky, with a cork in its eye, was drawn on the reverse of the more serious plans.

Napoleon did set foot on the moon exactly as Hodgman declares.

The issues with the portions of Hodgman's description of the events as they unfolded on the moon are flawed. First off, there descriptions of the lack of confit suits for the horses leading to them to explode in the vacuum of space. This, of course, is ridiculous. The truth is, as they were on the dark portion of the moon, the horses nearly instantly froze to the death. These horses were flash-frozen, and indeed there were tiny horse parts strewn across the moon. Verne, having limited access to the writings of those who had been on the moon, but having heard that the horse bits were all over the goddamn place, figured they must have exploded. The truth is that the frozen horses were stock-still until the battles between the moon men and the French, when the bullets (which Hodgman correctly described as traveling around the Moon and striking those soldiers whose shots were off their mark traveling around the moon and hitting them in "the back of their dirty French necks") flew, many struck distant frozen horses, shattering them.

The moon men are noted as not having eyes, which is correct, but they did have a form of scent that produces an image-like mapping of their surroundings. They knew what the French were doing, but like so many others, they couldn't believe they had the balls to do it. The few surviving moon man records of the events are largely of the "Who the fuck did that guy think he was???" variety.

Hodgman does make a significant error that did not come from the work of Verne. He says the French left behind a statue of an exploded horse as they left the moon (after having eaten all the horse-



meat that was laying around, frozen) which is not actually what happened. The statues, in fact, was not placed on the moon until AFTER Verne wrote his pile of garbage. The French returned to the moon, after the cannon that had been used to send the original French Astronauts was reused by Georges Méliès in the film *La voyage dans la lune*. The cannon was brought back to working condition, allowing the French government to return a small group of French astronauts to the moon. Waiting for the two-week period scheduled between the general strikes across the country, they sent a team to plant a statue in memorial. The statue was, in fact, NOT actually of one of the exploded horses, but a simple statue of a regular, unexploded horse, designed by Georges Braque. That was the last, non-faked moon-landing until 1954, when Alice Kramden landed hard in the Sea of Tranquility.

Hodgman, quoting Verne, mentions that after Napoleon shot himself back to Earth, the remaining soldiers were forced to survive on “stale bread dipped in moon man eggs, now known as French Toast.” This is true, in one sense, but the savory version was referred to as “pain lunaire,” was delicious, and caused only minor monsterism.

Hodgman’s lack of independent research is obvious throughout, and this is obvious when he describes Verne’s novel *Le stuffe correcte* as “terrific.” Nothing else declares Hodgman’s ignorance better than that statement, though Abel Gance’s filmed version of the novel, partially projected across three screens, and running more than eight hours (not including dinner break), is not without its charms.

