

= Imagination (magazine) =

Imagination was an American fantasy and science fiction magazine first published in October 1950 by Raymond Palmer 's Clark Publishing Company . The magazine was sold almost immediately to Greenleaf Publishing Company , owned by William Hamling , who published and edited it from the third issue , February 1951 , for the rest of the magazine 's life . Hamling launched a sister magazine , Imaginative Tales , in 1954 ; both ceased publication at the end of 1958 in the aftermath of major changes in US magazine distribution due to the liquidation of American News Company .

The magazine was more successful than most of the numerous science fiction titles launched in the late 1940s and early 1950s , lasting a total of 63 issues . Despite this success , the magazine had a reputation for low @-@ quality space opera and adventure fiction , and modern literary historians refer to it in dismissive terms . Hamling consciously adopted an editorial policy oriented toward entertainment , asserting in an early issue that " science fiction was never meant to be an educational tour de force " . Few of the stories from Imagination have received recognition , but it did publish Robert Sheckley 's first professional sale , " Final Examination " , in the May 1952 issue , and also printed fiction by Philip K. Dick , Robert A. Heinlein and John Wyndham .

= = History = =

American science fiction magazines first appeared in the 1920s with the appearance of Amazing Stories , a pulp magazine published by Hugo Gernsback . The beginnings of science fiction as a separately marketed genre can be traced to this time , and by the end of the 1930s the field was undergoing its first boom , but World War II and its attendant paper shortages led to the demise of several titles . By the late 1940s the market began to recover again . From a low of eight active magazines in 1946 , the field expanded to 20 in 1950 , and a further 22 had commenced publication by 1954 . Imagination was launched in the middle of this publishing boom .

The groundwork was laid in 1947 , when Clark Publishing , the company that would publish the first issue of Imagination , was incorporated in Evanston , Illinois , by Raymond Palmer . He worked for Ziff @-@ Davis as the editor of Amazing Stories and did not leave until the end of 1949 , but he launched two magazines under the Clark name before that date : Fate , in the spring of 1948 , and Other Worlds , the first issue of which was dated November 1949 . Both of these magazines listed their editor as " Robert N. Webster " , a pseudonym Palmer adopted while he was still at Ziff @-@ Davis because of the conflict of interest . The second issue of Other Worlds reported that Webster and Palmer were going to edit together ; by the third issue , dated March 1950 , the pretense had been dropped and although there was no masthead listing the editor , the editorial was simply signed " Rap " (for " Raymond A. Palmer ") . At the 1949 World Science Fiction Convention in Cincinnati , held over the weekend of 3 ? 5 September , Palmer announced that he had left Ziff @-@ Davis and described his plans for Clark Publishing . He also met and hired Bea Mahaffey , a 21 @-@ year @-@ old science fiction fan attending her first convention , as his assistant editor .

With Fate and Other Worlds launched , Palmer began to plan for a new magazine , to be called Imagination . Material for the first two issues had been assembled by mid @-@ 1950 , but in the early summer Palmer fell down his basement stairs and was left paralyzed from the waist down . While he was hospitalized , much of the work of editing both Other Worlds and Imagination was done by Mahaffey , who coped well , despite her inexperience . An assistant , Marge Budwig Saunder , was hired to read the slush pile and help out . The magazine 's first issue , dated October 1950 on a planned bi @-@ monthly schedule , appeared on news stands 1 August 1950 . However , in September that year , Ziff @-@ Davis made the decision to move to New York from Chicago ; Palmer promptly contacted William Hamling , who did not want to relocate and suggested that Hamling take over Imagination . Like Palmer , Hamling had made preparations to leave Ziff @-@ Davis by establishing a separate publishing company , Greenleaf Publishing , and in November 1950 Hamling left Ziff @-@ Davis and became Imagination 's editor and publisher .

In 1954 Hamling started a companion magazine , Imaginative Tales ; in addition , his company Greenleaf Publishing was the publisher of Rogue , a men 's magazine modelled after Playboy . In

1957 the liquidation of American News Company , a major distributor , meant that many magazines had to scramble to find new distributors . Independent distributors often required that the magazines be monthly , and that they be in a larger format than the digest @-@ size common in science fiction magazines . The larger format required higher revenue to be profitable , but in many cases it proved impossible to attract the additional advertising income that would have kept the magazines afloat . By the end of 1958 , many titles had disappeared as a result , with Imagination one of the victims ; Hamling closed down both Imagination and its sister magazine to invest the money in Rogue instead . The last issue of Imagination was October 1958 , the 63rd issue , while Imaginative Tales , retitled Space Travel , ceased with the November 1958 issue . There was no indication in either magazine that the end had come , though the last issue of Imagination omitted its letter , book review and pen @-@ pal columns , all of which had appeared regularly in prior issues .

Circulation figures were not required to be published annually until the 1960s , so the actual circulation figures are not known . For comparison , the more successful Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction , which had been launched the previous year , is known to have had a circulation of just under 60 @, @ 000 copies for its first issue , dated Fall 1949 .

= = Contents and reception = =

The cover story for the first issue was " The Soul Stealers " by Chester S. Geier , a regular in the Ziff @-@ Davis magazines Amazing Stories and Fantastic Adventures . The story was a science fantasy tale of Leeta , a beautiful woman from another dimension stealing the souls of men to try to save her father . The cover illustration , by Hannes Bok , showed Leeta on her flying steed . Other contributors included Rog Phillips , another prolific magazine author , and Kris Neville , whose first story had been published only the year before . Neville 's work appeared regularly in the first few years of the magazine ; other prolific contributors included Dwight V. Swain , Daniel F. Galouye and Milton Lesser . Edmond Hamilton 's work also appeared frequently towards the end of the magazine 's life . The magazine often contained a long novel as the lead attraction .

In addition to less well @-@ known regulars , some more prominent writers occasionally appeared . Ray Bradbury 's " The Fire Balloons " was published in the April 1951 issue , under the title " ' ? In This Sign ' " ; the story was later incorporated into Bradbury 's fixups , The Martian Chronicles and The Illustrated Man . Robert Sheckley 's first story , " Final Examination " , appeared in the May 1952 issue . Other well @-@ known authors who were published in Imagination include Poul Anderson , John Wyndham (as " John Beynon ") , James Blish , Philip K. Dick , Harlan Ellison , Robert A. Heinlein , Frederik Pohl and Robert Silverberg .

Imagination is generally thought of by historians of science fiction as one of the weaker magazines of the 1950s , despite its relative longevity . Donald Tuck , in his Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy , dismissed the novels it published , saying , " not many were noteworthy , most being in the interplanetary / space opera / adventure field " , and Brian Stableford , a science fiction writer and critic , described it as dealing " primarily in routine space opera . " James Blish , writing under the pseudonym " William Atheling , Jr . " , which he used for some of his critical writing , remarked that it was a " widely unread " magazine . Hamling 's editorial policy was consciously slanted against intellectualism . In the November 1951 issue he commented that " science fiction was never meant to be an educational tour de force . The so @-@ called adult story is nothing more than an attempt to show the reader how dumb he is and how smart the editor is . " Imagination 's approach , he said , was to publish entertainment : " What we need is a little relaxation . And entertaining reading is one way to get it . " Some readers agreed with Hamling ; a 1952 issue of Rhodomagnetic Digest , a fanzine , contains approving commentary on Hamling 's editorial by Gregg Calkins , a fan of the period .

Starting with the April 1951 issue , a regular column on science fiction fandom began , titled " Fandora 's Box " . It was written by Mari Wolf , an active fan , for five years , and was taken over by Robert Bloch from June 1956 through the end . The column had an excellent reputation , and was one of the few such columns in the professional magazines . Every issue carried an editorial , and a letter column appeared in every issue but the very last . A book review column began in June 1953 ,

and appeared in every issue except the last one . It was initially by Mark Reinsberg , and was taken over by Henry Bott in May 1954 after two months in which both reviewers contributed to the column . A " Cosmic Pen Club " column , where fans could post requests for pen @-@ pals , began in February 1957 ; as with the book reviews it appeared regularly , excepting only the last issue . Beginning in September 1951 , the inside front cover was often used for an " Introducing the Author " feature , with short pieces by and about a writer or artist who appeared in the issue . These included photographs of the authors in question , a feature not typically found in other magazines . Among the better @-@ known authors featured were Heinlein , Evan Hunter and Philip K. Dick . " Introducing the Author " skipped four issues from October 1954 to January 1955 , and ceased altogether with the April 1956 issue . One issue , May 1953 , included pictures from that year 's World Science Fiction in Chicago , rather than a feature about an author . The most frequently appearing cover artists were Harold W. McCauley , Lloyd Rognan , Malcolm Smith and William Terry .

= = Bibliographic details = =

Imagination was digest size (7 @. @ 5 × 5 @. @ 5 inches or 19 @. @ 1 × 14 @. @ 0 cm) for its first 17 issues , and then shrank slightly to a short digest size (7 @. @ 25 × 5 @. @ 5 inches or 18 @. @ 4 × 14 @. @ 0 cm) for the rest of its run , a further 46 issues . The volume number rose by one at the start of each calendar year , regardless of the number of issues . Volume 1 , 1950 , contained only two issues ; subsequent volumes contained five to twelve issues , depending on frequency of publication . The overall issue number was printed on the spine (an unusual practice) along with the volume number . The first issue had a publication date of October 1950 , and the schedule was bimonthly through the September 1952 issue except that June 1951 was followed by September 1951 . The next four issues were dated October 1952 , December 1952 , January 1953 and February 1953 , and then a monthly run began with April 1953 that lasted without a break until the July 1955 issue . The next issue was October 1955 , which inaugurated another bimonthly period that ran with perfect regularity until the last issue , October 1958 . The price remained at 35 cents throughout .

The title of the magazine was initially " Imagination : Stories of Science and Fantasy " ; it changed with the October 1955 issue to " Imagination : Science Fiction " , though this change was only on the cover and spine and was never reflected on the masthead .

The first 28 issues were 166 pages long . The page count dropped to 134 with the April 1954 issue and stayed at that length for the remainder of the run . The cover layout initially strongly resembled that of Other Worlds but was changed with the fifth issue , June 1951 , to have a white background banner for the title . This format was retained for the rest of the magazine 's life , with occasional slight variations such as using a different color for the banner background . The spine also changed from a colored spine with pale lettering , which was similar to the spine style used by Other Worlds , to a white spine with red or blue lettering .

The publisher was Clark Publishing Company for the first two issues . The editor for those issues was Raymond Palmer , but as he was hospitalized much of the work was done by Bea Mahaffey . As a result , these two issues are sometimes indexed with Mahaffey as editor . With the third issue , Greenleaf Publishing Company became the publisher and William Hamling took over as editor , a position he retained throughout the magazine 's life .