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ing to pay the additional cost of dual brakes. In my opinion the difference in cost would be so small that buyers wouldn't feel it. (The American Motors design consists of a simple mechanical separation in the master cylinder between the flow of rear-wheel brake fluid and the front-wheel brakes.) The industry has been busy selling a "new" brake innovation, disc brakes. The disc-brake patent is more than 40 years old and is in the public domain. . . .

The automobile industry used to be looked upon as the leader in quality control and reliability. In recent years these have been sacrificed because of higher labor costs . . . and the practice of including an obsolescence factor in design. . . .

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Project Orion

In "Death of a project" [F. J. Dyson, *Science* **149**, 141 (1965)], Project Orion is described as "a project to design a vehicle which would be propelled through space by repeated nuclear explosions occurring at a distance behind it." The author says that "Designs were worked out in detail for vehicles that could carry eight men and a payload of 100 tons on fast trips to Mars and back" after the vehicle had been "lifted into space by Saturn chemical rockets."

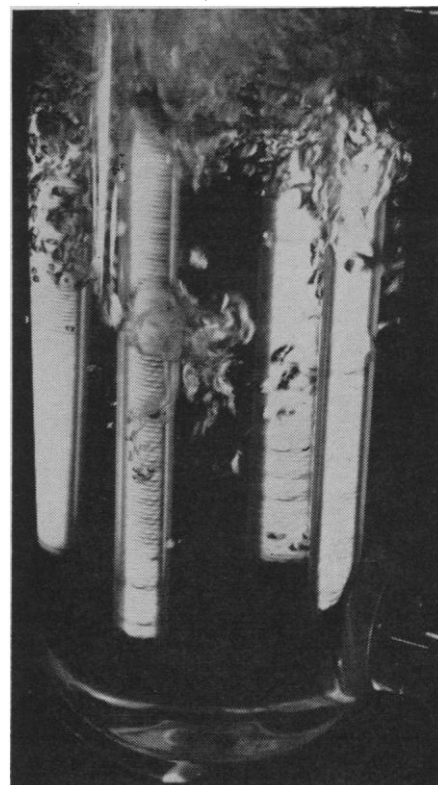
Space travel consists essentially not of being "propelled through space" but of acceleration, followed later by equivalent deceleration. The original acceleration given to the proposed vehicle by the Saturn rockets could, as is now standard practice, be later counteracted by the decelerative effect of returning through the earth's atmosphere. But where is there any discussion of the fact that all of the acceleration added by the *exotic* means of "propulsion" would have to be subtracted later by *conventional* means, since it is quite obvious that the new, exotic means could not be used for deceleration?

Perhaps that is why the project was dropped.

JO FISHER FREEMAN

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