

At a little later time, the Daily Cal ran a story that I happened to find in my files, and I am going to read some excerpts of this that I think you might find amusing.

The story goes as follows:

"The University of California Nuclear Metaphysical Laboratories have announced a startling new finding in the world of atomics. The new discovery is an entirely novel element named 'Percentium' by its discoverer, the 15 1/2 year old Leonardo da Vinci. The element, number 101 in the atomic series, follows element number 100, 'Centium.' The youthful da Vinci said that this was the reason for the new element's name, Percentium. 'The interesting fact about Percentium,' said Moosbrugger, 'is that it has a negative half-life. That is,' he went on, 'its radioactivity and total mass increase 1 percent every 100 years. Probably it is the first of a series of elements that spontaneously integrates the successive members of the series.'

"'Percentium is characterized,' said M. Morris, a lab assistant on the project, 'by a satellite proton revolving around the nucleus inside the electron sheath. Preliminary investigations indicate that all the higher elements beginning with number 101 have similar binary nuclei. The satellite proton of number 101, it is believed by the department, picks up neutrons and protons from surrounding matter.'"

"The process is presumed to continue up to element number 202; at this point the twin nuclei are of equal mass. When number 202 adds another proton to the satellite, the latter becomes more massive than the primary nucleus, and the resulting short-lived atom of element number 203 undergoes fission with emission of a proton and a neutron, and becomes two atoms of number 101."

"Apparently natural processes are incapable of producing any of the elements beyond number 100. If they were so capable, the universe would be overflowing with Percentium. It would appear that the artificial production of Percentium has initiated a slow cosmic revolution in the atomic population. It is estimated that after 101 billion years all the matter in the continuum will consist of the elements from 101 to 203 inclusive."

"But this is nothing to worry about," said Kidder with a grin; "we'll all be dead by then."

And by the way, I would also like to call your attention to the fact that in 1972, in a journal that came out periodically, Adventures in Experimental